**Project Update: June 2017**

I have spent the last month in Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique, which has been transformed by the recent rainy season. After 2 years of drought, the rain was welcomed by people and animals alike, but the associated explosion of vegetation has added some challenges to my ongoing camera trap survey of the park. Tall blades of grass have triggered the motion detectors of the cameras, and in some cases completely obscured the field of view of the camera! And just getting to the cameras has been a challenge, with grass growing up along the muddy roads.

Despite these challenges, I have made it to all 60 of my camera sites. Thanks to the support of the Rufford Foundation, I was able to replace any malfunctioning cameras, trade out the memory cards, and install new batteries so that they can operate for another 6 months. I also downloaded thousands of images of animals throughout the park, taken since my last visit in November 2016. I have only scratched the surface of these images, but already have been excited to discover lion and eland (two elusive and rare species in the park) at new camera sites. I look forward to sorting through the images, and have been working with the team at WildCam Gorongosa to expedite the process through which citizen scientists classify camera trap photos. Meanwhile, I have been working with some computer scientists to refine a machine-learning algorithm that can automatically identify species in the photographs, or at least sort out the images that have nothing in them. With hundreds of thousands of pictures to get through, I am happy for any help that I can get!



*An elephant investigates one of my cameras. WhenI downloaded these images, I found that the camera's steel security case had been completely crushed by this huge animal. But once I pried it apart the camera was miraculously still functioning.*