

Fearless females

With so many strong, passionate women role models in the history of &Beyond, and what with it being Women's Day and Women's Day weekend, we thought a couple of tales of fearless females would be a good idea... It is no wonder that we have achieved so many firsts when it comes to women rangers. Dee Adams, who came from Londolozi with her husband Tony to help build up &Beyond Phinda Private Game Reserve, was &Beyond's first female ranger.



Vicky Sinbeye, &Beyond Ngorongoro Crater Lodge.

Adamant on passing the course in spite of strong resistance from Hugh Marshall (Group Field Operations & Lodge Manager at Londolozi at the time), Dee not only made it with flying colours but became one of the strongest arguments for changing Hugh's mind, so that the very first group of trainees to qualify at &Beyond Phinda had two women members.

Tanzania eventually followed suit, with Aziza Mbwane training at Mwewe and becoming &Beyond's first female ranger in Tanzania in 2004 (and among the first in East Africa).

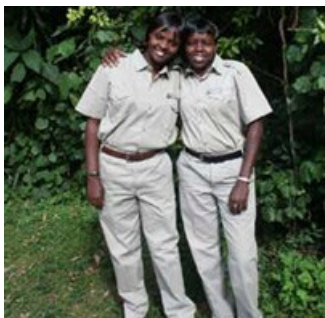
Inspired by her travels around the country with her parents as a child, Aziza had the goal of becoming a ranger firmly in mind as she grew up. Qualifying in Arusha, she worked on town tours, river cruising, snorkelling and diving trips before returning to her first love, the Masai Mara, and joining &Beyond, first at Lake Manyara Tree Lodge and then at Ngorongoro Crater Lodge.

In neighbouring Kenya, Charity Cheruiyot was determined to prove that it was possible for women to work as rangers. Without a valid license or passport, but equipped with fierce determination, she set out to prove everyone wrong. In less than two weeks, she completed her driving lessons and obtained a temporary passport and earned herself a spot at Mwewe.

En route to the training school, there were more obstacles, but they weren't going to dampen Charity's spirit. Due to poor road and weather conditions, they had to spend the night in the open safari vehicle in the middle of the Serengeti, without food, water or something to keep them warm. The Grumeti River was flooded, so they then had to cross the river on foot using ropes and then immediately join the first ranger training lesson without having eaten for more than 15 hours. Boosted by her father's firm admonition that he would not accept her coming home in defeat and &Beyond's belief in her to achieve in a field traditionally dominated by men, she passed her training and became &Beyond's first female guide in Kenya in 2006. In 2010, Charity earned the prestigious title of Most Responsible Safari Guide in the Mara Triangle.



Amy Attenborough and Lee-Anne Davis. Amy is currently the only female ranger in the Group to have earned her Grade 2 walking qualification to view high-profile game on foot with guests. Congratulations Amy!



Charity Cheruiyot & Lucy Ketere.

A full ocean away, Ratna Singh grew up in a feudal Hindu family that claims no woman had ever worked in its regal, 500-year-old history.

Surrounded by animals that included exotics such as leopard cubs and elephants in her family home and severely jealous of the naturalists she encountered in India's national parks, Ratna at first studied history and international law, working with Afghan refugees. Nevertheless, the lure of her dream career was too strong to resist and, when she heard Taj Safaris and &Beyond were looking for people interested in wildlife to take part in their groundbreaking jungle lodge initiative, she jumped at the chance.

Supported by her parents in spite of dissent from the extended family, Ratna underwent training and became &Beyond's first female naturalist in India. Although her driving the big 4x4 vehicles into the parks initially caused a stir, the sensation this created has all died down now. While she still observes age-old traditions and ways of dress at home,

Ratna is completely confident that her community takes pride in her thoroughly modern career choice.

In true, pioneering &Beyond style, these women all defied the norms and succeeded in the face of seemingly overwhelming challenges.

We are proud of them all and look to them as the inspiration for yet another generation of exceptional women conservationists.

&Beyond women in the wild

&Beyond has always been proud of the fact that we encourage, mentor and empower female rangers. We currently have 12 hardworking and talented women who are succeeding and dominating in a field traditionally reserved for men. In addition to these 12 ladies, we also have 3 female rangers-in-training now enrolled at &Beyond Inkwazi Ranger Training School.



When I'm big I'm going to be just like my mom!

&Beyond's 12 qualified female rangers - the Fearless Dozen:

- Callie Haden-Smith,
&Beyond Phinda Mountain Lodge
- Lee-Anne Davis,
&Beyond Ngala Private Game Reserve
- Amy Attenborough,
&Beyond Ngala Private Game Reserve
- Caitlyn Gane,
&Beyond Ngala Private Game Reserve
- Aziza Mbwane,
&Beyond Ngorongoro Crater Lodge
- Vicky Simbeye,
&Beyond Ngorongoro Crater Lodge
- Charity Cheruiyot,
&Beyond Kichwa Tembo
- Sophie Sadera,
&Beyond Kichwa Tembo
- Lucy Ketere,
&Beyond Kichwa Tembo
- Alice Mantaine,
&Beyond Kichwa Tembo
- Ratna Singh,
Banjaar Tola Tented Camp
- Sadhvi Singh,
Banjaar Tola Tented Camp

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