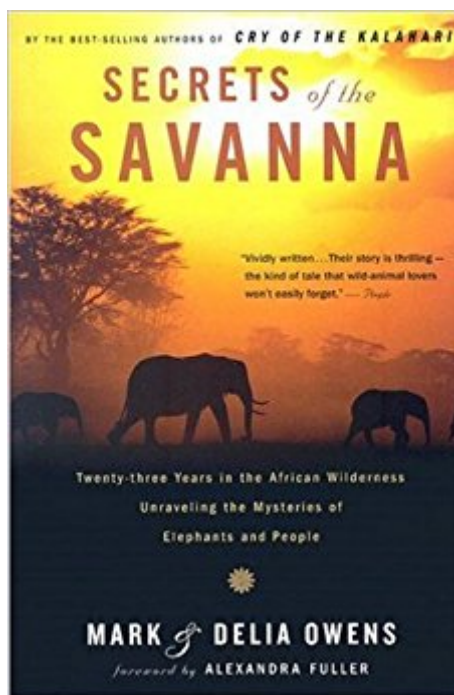




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# Secrets Of The Savanna: Twenty-three Years In The African Wilderness Unraveling The Mysteries Of Elephants And People



## Synopsis

In this riveting real-life adventure, Mark and Delia Owens tell the dramatic story of their last years in Africa, fighting to save elephants, villagers, and -- in the end -- themselves. The award-winning zoologists and pioneering conservationists describe their work in the remote and ruggedly beautiful Luangwa Valley, in northeastern Zambia. There they studied the mysteries of the elephant population's recovery after poaching, discovering remarkable similarities between humans and elephants. A young elephant named Gift provided the clue to help them crack the animals' secret of survival. A stirring portrait of life in Africa, *Secrets of the Savanna* is a remarkable record of the Owens' unique passions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. This is a fascinating look at the interplay of social and wildlife upheavals in Africa in the early 1990s and a worthy follow-up to the authors' *Cry of the Kalahari*. They describe traveling to the "remote and ruggedly beautiful" Luangwa Valley, in northeastern Zambia, to help save the North Luangwa National Park, where the elephant population had been decimated by poachers. The pair alternate writing chapters, with Mark presenting historical background to the region's human and animal problems and describing interactions with corrupt government security officers who eventually force the Owens from Zambia. Although Mark's writing is vivid, Delia's chapters present the book's most moving scenes, featuring the day-to-day life of the animals and the social disruption caused by poaching: she sees teenage elephants, deprived of adult guidance because their parents were killed by poachers, living "in an elephant version of *Lord of the Flies*." She also

lovingly showcases an orphaned elephant named Gift, whose journey from baby to mother represents hope for the region, realized with the current Zambian president's progress in fighting corruption and maintaining the Owenses' work. 8 pages of color photos not seen by PW; 2 maps. (May 24) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Mark and Delia Owens, who have studied lions in the Kalahari Desert (*Cry of the Kalahari*, 1984) and elephants in Zambia and Mozambique (*Eye of the Elephant*, 1992), now write more fully of their years in Zambia. When the Owenses arrived at North Luangwa National Park in the mid-1980s, the park had been abandoned to poachers. Corrupt local officials, and even the scouts who were hired to protect the park, were making huge profits while decimating the park's elephants. The couple began to work with local villagers, hiring people to build roads and start fish farms and helping with health care and education. They also continued their study of the elephants, documenting how the social structure changed when numbers were very low and how the survivors rebuilt their lives. The Owenses also saw strong parallels between human and elephant societies. This community-based approach to conservation, coupled with firsthand reporting of fieldwork in Africa, will find many avid readers. Nancy Bent Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Research for my trip to Africa included reading this inspiring memoir written jointly by Mark and Delia Owens. They each have chapters in the book, so you receive a male and female experience of the wilds they lived in for twenty three years. Aside from being a model marriage, shouldering burdens and hardships without complaint together, they are both exceptional writers. Especially, Mark who waxes lyrical on more than one occasion describing the remote landscapes and connections with the animals they were studying. Their ground breaking research provided a window into the behavior of our largest mammals. They formed an organization that helped provide jobs for locals, so they would not need to turn to poaching to survive. Their efforts turned the tide on what was the largest elephant poaching atrocity in all of Africa. Their work continues today by Africans who have learned how to work within the framework of the government to stop poaching and provide other means of survival for tribal communities.

An excellent summary of what happened to the authors after their first two books. More of the same experiences, but moving on to the era of using a helicopter to do all of the covering the vast amount

of Africa in their research and desire for more knowledge of their exposure to the beginnings of their first book. We went to hear them on one of their lecture tours (and hopefully fund raising support for their research and living in such primitive conditions, always to learn more. I went to college to become a wildlife biologist and nothing could have prepared me for make it in those experiences that they did. A must read for everyone with a desire to live and do research in primitive Africa.

This is a marvelous sequel to the Owens' "Cry of the Kalahari", one of my all-time favorite books. This sequel is every bit as well written, detailed and respectful of the wildlife as their first book was.

A joy to read and learn about the African outback. Mark and Delia are both superb writers who remain sensitive to telling the exciting lives of wildlife while also blending the tight relationship of the African locals with their environment. This book will take you to Africa.

Must read!

I have just finished Secrets of the Savanna - a most worthy sequel to The Eye of the Elephant and Cry of the Kalahari and I am starting it again. I feel I have been on safari to North Luangwa in Zambia - living with the people and the elephants. Delia and Mark Owens write beautifully and their work to save the elephants by saving the people moved me to tears and shouts of joy. I was amazed to learn how the elephants are rebuilding their society after the heavy poaching of the 70's and 80's. The parallels between human and animal behavior are thought provoking. I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves nature and wants to find a way for humanity to prosper along side of wildlife.

I loved this book. I respect the authors so much for what they accomplished! Well written...Very entertaining and I learned so much. Very grateful they shared there amazing experiences.

Learned a lot about Elephants and the big business of poaching. The people in the book who strive to help The elephants and the native people are heroes.

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