A photograph of a man in a teal shirt crouching between two elephants in a savanna. The man is looking down at something in his hands. The elephants are brown and have large ears. The background is a bright sky with some clouds.

JUDITH
DAVID
SHELDRIK
WILDLIFE TRUST

2005 *newsletter*

As the year 2005 draws to a close, even though it seems just yesterday that we were writing up yesteryear's events, the time is upon us once again to wish Seasons Greetings, and a prayer for a prosperous, peaceful, healthy and happy 2006, to our many supporters. Time too to thank each and every one who has supported us this past year, whether in large or small measure, for any assistance, however modest, is deeply and most sincerely appreciated. We, and those who have helped us, can, I think, look back with pride on the Trust's achievements this year, despite the downside of having had to fight many battles for wildlife that should never have become necessary. From a conservation perspective in this country, the year 2005 has certainly proved challenging.

Patrick Dokata Mzee and Makosa

Over and above anxiety over the ever-present media bombardment of impending doom such as human pandemics, (definitely originating from the appalling treatment of all things furred and feathered in the Far East), the global threat of nuclear proliferation and the adverse and worrying trends of global warming exacerbated by the felling of the forests, both near and far, in terms of conservation the track record of Kenya's Coalition Government, which has now been in office for three years, has certainly been wanting. Unwelcome surprises have diverted the Trust's time from its core projects, and again relegated Daphne's autobiography to the Back Burner in order for her to deal with more pressing issues. However, as one year ends, and another begins, everyone faces the incoming year with optimism,



celebrating the end of one and embracing the next hopeful for better times ahead.

In so far as the Trust is concerned, the year has been punctuated by many highs, but also by some deep lows such as the tragic event that took one of our best and most dedicated Elephant Keepers from us as well as our much loved Rhino Orphan "Makosa". Makosa had been hand-reared from just day two of life, having been born to a pregnant Nairobi Park cow who should never have been moved to Tsavo in her condition in the first place.

Makosa was born in the Holding Pens at the other end, and due to the trauma of capture and the side affects of the drugs, his mother had no milk. Her baby was saved in the nick of time, and having been hand-reared in the Nairobi Nursery, he was grown and successfully integrated into the wild rhino community of the Park, independent of human care, and living as just another wild Nairobi Park rhino.



Keeper Patrick Dokata, on his way out to the elephants in the Park Forest at dawn of the morning of October 21st, followed by the still dependent young rhino named "Shida", unwittingly walked straight into six year old Makosa, who was hidden from view in a thicket some 2 kms. from the Trust compound. Patrick never even saw him and we suspect that the rhino probably did not see Patrick either, until suddenly he felt threatened by an intruder at close quarters, and by then it was far too late for a happier conclusion. Makosa responded in the way that any wild rhino would, tossing the Keeper who died instantly. Still in instinctive defensive mode when these ancient animals are not in control of their reactions, he also charged the Kenya Wildlife Service Rangers who came to guard the dead man's body pending the arrival of the Police and senior KWS personnel, forcing them to take refuge in a flimsy tree. Three warning shots fired over Makosa's head simply angered him further as he set about the tree and when it looked as though it might fall, putting two more human lives at risk, he was shot at close range, and his time on earth had ended.

Whilst Makosa had always been viewed as spirited and feisty, there was a gentle side to his nature as well, so much so that a Keeper could walk up to him and safely anoint his filarial sores. Hence, this was a "double whammy" for the Trust and a very sad day for us all. Both Patrick Dokata and rhino orphan Makosa were well loved and will be sorely missed.

Here, it is, fitting to acknowledge with deep gratitude the prompt response, understanding and proficiency with which the Kenya Wildlife Service handled the situation, ensuring that all the correct procedures and protocols were implemented as smoothly as possible. On that fateful day, insofar as the visiting public were concerned, life had to proceed as usual, for hundreds of visitors

arrived for the elephant orphans' noon mudbath, as they do on a daily basis. However, they could not have failed to detect the distinct atmosphere of gloom and despondency that enveloped the establishment that day, which was reflected also in the elephants' behaviour since they, too, are sensitive to such vibes.

All Trust personnel are, of course, fully insured, so Patrick's family will receive the Insurance settlement in due course, and in the meantime, having arranged for Patrick's body to be returned to his family in Voi for burial, the Trust will ensure that the needs of his immediate family are taken care of. In tribute, we have established an Education Fund so that his two young children can benefit from a good education when the time comes, just as he would have wished. We thank many of our Supporters who have already supported, or pledged their support of this fund.

Elephant Diaries

On a happier note, a "High" for the Trust has been the resounding success of the BBC Documentary, "Elephant Diaries", featuring our elephant orphans and their relationship with their Keepers over a year long period of filming. This was premiered in London on the 4th July 2005 on BBC 1, and ran for five nights in half hour episodes. It has been rated the most popular programme of the year,

attracting some five million viewers each night in England alone, including the night of the London Underground Terror Bombing. At the same time it was screened on the BBC Prime Channel and will be shown in America on 5th March 2006 on "The Animal Planet" Channel. In the meantime, the BBC plan a 50 minute update for Christmas, and we are hopeful that they will commission Series II in view of the success of Series I. Furthermore, the prestigious U.S. 60 minutes news program has expressed an interest in featuring the Trust on its programme in February 2006, and this will undoubtedly raise the Trust's profile further on that side of the Atlantic.

"Elephant Diaries" has resulted in a marked increase in the number of overseas visitors at the Nursery's daily noon mudbath hour, many of whom say that they chose Kenya as their tourist destination mainly to see the orphans. No amount of money could have bettered the publicity for Kenya than what our orphaned elephants have achieved, who through "Elephant Diaries" and our popular on-line fostering programme have more than rewarded Kenya, putting this country in the minds of millions of potential visitors and generating a much better understanding of the nature of elephants amongst the international community. Furthermore, hundreds of African schoolchildren flock to the Nairobi Nursery almost every day to see the elephants' mudbath, so the

little elephants are doing their PR bit locally as well.

Daniel and Nana Woodley

A significant development this past year, has been the move of Daniel and Nana Woodley, from Ithumba in the Northern Area of Tsavo East. This was necessitated for medical reasons, Nana having been diagnosed with a heat intolerant condition. Sympathetic to their plight, KWS transferred Daniel to Nanyuki to head the Problem Animal Control arm of KWS. Being a proficient marksman, well tutored by his late father, he will bring this expertise to this vital unit.

The Trust personnel

The departure of Daniel from Ithumba prompted the Trust to re-employ Emma Ayton, along with her fiancé, Anthony Childs, in order to monitor the Trust's many ongoing projects in Tsavo. The year has seen the Northern Area's important electrified boundary fence extended Eastwards from the Entrance Gate complex completed last year, to Umbi Hill where an Energiser House has been erected. Hence, 46 kms. of the boundary has now been secured. Sensitisation of the somewhat unfriendly community bordering the Yatta is an important pre-requisite to tackling the next section of the fence, but the line has already been surveyed and cleared in preparation for work to begin when



the community's cooperation can be assured. In this, progress is being made by KWS and our De-Snaring Team Leaders.

The Trust is deeply grateful to Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas Ev in Germany for their contributions towards the Boundary Fence in memory of their late Founder, Hans Rohring, and also for enabling us to acquire a much needed tractor for our work in the Northern Area. We thank Louis and Bonnie Lipomi sincerely for providing us with two water bowsers for the North and Care for the Wild who have also assisted with funding for the Northern Area boundary fence.

Emma Ayton and Anthony Childs will also keep a watching brief on the Tsavo end of the Orphans' Project, as well as monitor our six Anti-Poaching De-Snaring Teams and supervise our Community Outreach Projects which now encompass no less than 26 boundary schools. Earlier in the year, the Trust lost Emma temporarily to Cupid's arrow, but we were very fortunate to replace her with Lina Sideras, a very bright Kenyan of Greek origin, proficient in six languages, including Kiswahili. Lina has relieved Angela of what was becoming an onerous workload

and who knew David Sheldrick well. Daphne, has now past her three score years and ten, but is still up every day at 5.30 a.m., ready to put in a full day's work, although she has handed over the field projects and staff matters to Robert and Angela, in order to try and make time to complete her autobiography by the end of 2006, conservation dilemmas and animal welfare matters permitting!

Our Orphans' Project embraces most staff. Fifty two trained and experienced Elephant Handlers work in shifts at our three Elephant Facilities. Currently there are nine infant elephants in the Nairobi Nursery, plus 24 still Keeper dependent but in the process of reintegration within the Voi Unit and another 14 growing up at Ithumba in the Northern Area of Tsavo. In addition the Trust operates six fully mobile full time Anti-Poaching De-Snaring Units that constantly work the boundaries of Tsavo. The members of the Units are also heavily involved in our outreach educational programmes. Then there is the highly successful and fully equipped Mobile Veterinary Unit, which covers both Tsavo East and West, Amboseli, and the Shimba Hills plus neighbouring ranches abutting



generated by our expanding digital Fostering Programme, as well as the administrative burden of coping with some 120 Staff members, all of whom are key to the smooth running of our many conservation initiatives.

Despite the fact that the Trust has grown, expanding its conservation programmes considerably, still only three "Chiefs" run the Show, namely Daphne, Angela and Robert Carr-Harley, who enjoy the backup of their Kenya Board of Trustees plus an Advisory Committee comprised of people who have a lifetime of conservation experience

the Park boundaries. Other personnel key to the efficient running of the Trust involve a roving Mechanic who does the rounds on a monthly basis servicing all our far-flung vehicles, tractors, water bowsers, generators etc., a Messenger who runs around from dawn to dusk dealing with all the day's chores, a Book-keeper who is buried under mountains of paperwork sharing a tiny office with Lina, plus Yard workers such as the Canteen Cook, a Laundryman who washes the Nursery elephants' blankets and Keepers' uniforms in the interests of hygiene and several others who keep the grounds neat and in order.



Makena and Zurura

We thank all Trust Staff Members for working beyond the call of duty throughout what has been a very busy year for the Trust.

Our New U.K. Charity

Having attained UK Charitable status from the British Charities Commission, this year saw the establishment of the new U.K. arm of the Trust, and the recruitment of Robert Brandford to provide a professional personalised service for our U.K. supporters, write Proposals for Charitable Trust Income, handle legacies and generally generate public awareness. All these initiatives, plus retrieving gift aid benefits from the Inland Revenue on donations received from UK tax-payers and the establishment of a new CAF Bank Account to accommodate direct debits and online donations, has kept Rob very busy during this, his first year of operation.

We are deeply grateful to James Clark for his administrative assistance so freely given at the U.K. end and to Arnie Mitchell for his services as the go-between. We also thank Cath Mills in Scotland who has continued to

help by fielding and passing on the posted donations.

U.S. Friends

Across the Atlantic, our “US Friends” with “501(c) (3) public charity status” have taken the American arm of the Trust to dizzy and, for us, sometimes somewhat daunting new heights of efficiency, under the dedicated Presidency of Stephen Smith, and assistants Kathryn Fenley and Jeanie Hicks, all of whom work long hours for the Trust on a voluntary basis from Stephen’s law firm Krieg De Vault in Indianapolis. Serving with him on our U.S. Friends Board are a team of other highly successful business men and women who are long-suffering in patience when dealing with the “greenhorns” at the Kenya end, who are more proficient on animal issues than business matters. Not only did our US Friends Board all travel to the U.K. at their own expense to meet up with us in London for the year’s mandatory Annual Board Meeting, but they have been extremely generous both with their time and their pockets.

We most sincerely thank our US Friends Board Members and their

help-mates, all of whom work voluntarily and have been more than generous with their time to raise additional funding to bring many of our projects to fruition and who are striving to make others currently on the “Wish List” become a reality. In addition to Stephen, the Board members are Jan Doyle, Cheryl Leslie, Brian Miller, Sue Moore and Tim Mott.

We are also deeply indebted to Pablo Lo Moro for his professional expertise and assistance over the format and wording of many Trust Project Proposals. Not one of us could better his input.

Lastly, no words can sufficiently express the gratitude we owe to our wonderful Web Master, Paul McKenzie, who despite a new family, and his own growing workload connected with his firm Elehost, still finds time to handle our website entirely free of charge. Bless you, Paul and thank you for everything.

Refurbishment of Trust Headquarters and Nursery

The Trust Headquarters in Nairobi National Park and the Nairobi Elephant Nursery underwent a much needed face-lift

this year, and not before time, for many of the stockade timbers had been destroyed by termites and were not sufficiently robust to confine any sizeable wild orphan until tamed down. **We are deeply grateful to WSPA for funding these much needed repairs.**

Similarly the Voi Stockades also enjoyed a much needed face-lift, very efficiently undertaken by Simon Dufresne and his energetic Sanyati team. **We thank him and his team for all their input on Trust projects this year.**

The Vehicle maintenance and repair work arm at Trust Headquarters out-grew the garage space where our long-suffering mechanic had to work under testing conditions. This dilemma was solved by concreting the space between two containers at the far end of the yard, and covering it with a roof.

Assistance to KWS

Direct assistance to KWS continued this year. In addition to the Northern Boundary electric fencing, gatehouses and energiser buildings, the Trust has continued to provide regular donations of security fuel to keep the anti-poaching forces mobile, as well as shoulder the repair and maintenance of the Park's three windmills in the Southern Area, plus the Ndiandaza and Kone Windmills in the North. Additional water catchment tanks have been erected at Ithumba, and the desalinating unit on the Ithumba borehole modified to produce a greater yield. The Trust's Staff housing at Ithumba has been donated to KWS to accommodate an injection of additional Rangers, and housing for our own staff is in the process of being erected nearer the Elephant Stockades. Dog kennels to house tracker dogs who will work with the Ranger patrols in the North will soon also be built. **We thank Wildize and The Moore Foundation most sincerely for donating the funding for this particular project.**

New Tented Camp in Tsavo East Northern Area

An important project of the Trust this year has been the establishment of a self-help tented camp near

the Ithumba Airstrip, as a start to opening up the North to tourism, and to provide accommodation for the many foster-parents of the Ithumba elephants, who are anxious to see how their chosen orphan is faring in the latest Reintroduction Facility. The Ithumba Camp, which has been built by Sunyati, is extremely attractive and eco-friendly and is due to be opened this month. Tented bedrooms surround the main structure which is on two levels affording breath-taking views across the wild and unspoilt expanse of the North with Kilimanjaro towering above a distant horizon. It is fully furnished and equipped, so that visitors just have to provide their own

The Orphan's Project

food and cater for themselves. It is envisaged that the bookings and upkeep of the camp will be the responsibility of the Trust in accordance with an MOU to be negotiated with KWS but the "Camp" will essentially be a source of revenue for KWS and is, ostensibly, a donation to the Park from the Trust.

By purchasing land whenever possible and when available on a willing buyer willing seller basis, the Trust continues to extend the very crucial buffer to two very sensitive Tsavo East boundaries, namely the Athi River and Mtito Andei watercourse boundaries. An airfield has been cleared on the Trust Land, which just needs levelling and a little more work before it can become functional. Strabag, the German Contractor currently working on the main Nairobi – Mombasa Highway has promised assistance in this respect when the heavy machinery reaches that stretch of the main road alignment.

Our on-line Fostering Programme has, once again, proved immensely popular with the global public, who for a minimum payment of \$50 per year, follow the life of an elephant "icon", chosen as the representative of all the others. Foster parents receive links to the monthly Keepers' Diary, which chronicles the adventures and progress of all the orphans on a daily basis, and is posted on our website monthly. In addition they receive up-dated photographs of their chosen



elephant (or rhino) a water-colour painting done by Daphne's daughter, Angela, and are kept informed of "hatches, matches and despatches". By logging onto the pro-active Map on the website, and pressing the name of their elephant, the place where it was found immediately becomes apparent, along with a description of the habitat and the problems that confront elephants in that particular area, so this provides an enlightening geography lesson as well! In essence, therefore, foster-parents are absorbed into the Programme and in the process cannot help but learn a great deal about elephant behaviour.

The Nursery Elephants

Inevitably, insofar as the orphans are concerned, and not unexpectedly, the past year has brought some notable successes but also more than a fair share of failures as well, the dreaded pneumonia having taken the life of several of the newborns retrieved from wells, water-courses and mudholes whilst others have arrived either too far gone or too injured for us to be able to save. There were, however, two puzzling deaths .

Nalitu:- "Nalitu" our precious little "white lily" rescued from the flooded Uaso Nyiro River in November 2004, who thrived for four full months and then died mysteriously and unexpectedly on the morning of 8th April just when we thought she was out of danger.



Earlier she had fallen heavily on rocky terrain and suffered ligament damage to a shoulder when two of the Nursery bulls were embroiled in a playful pushing match. The pain

With the infant elephants, the old saying applies – "To hear is to know, to see is to believe, and to do is to learn and understand". Even after 50 years of rearing orphaned elephants, we find there is still much to learn.

Nalitu was the beloved "baby" of motherly mini Nursery Matriarch, "Naserian", and when she was injured, yet again the intelligence, sensitivity and compassion of elephants to those younger, or in difficulty, was demonstrated. For instance, Galana, who by then was by far the largest female in the Nursery, but also the greediest, having arrived in a near-dead state of starvation unable even to stand, would remain behind with the limping baby, instead of sprinting ahead as usual to be first at the noon milk bar. Galana shared Matriarchal duties with Naserian, both walking slowly, one on either side of Nalitu as she trailed far behind all the others, whilst Sunyei, the third female and longest inmate of the Nursery, though not an eager "baby sitter", would rush back now and then just to check that the calf was receiving all the help she needed.



of this injury inhibited sleep, so the Vet prescribed a powerful painkiller to help Nalitu get the rest she so desperately needed. At the time of her death, the shoulder was almost

fully healed, and there were no other symptoms to suggest anything else was going wrong, until she refused her usual milk feed in the morning and was dead an hour later. The post-mortem told us nothing other than she suffered "peritonitis" of the stomach lining and although we will never know for sure, we suspect that it might have been a side effect of the painkilling drug.



Whenever the weather turned chilly, the older females would crowd close to Nalitu to impart body warmth, leaving her side only when the sun warmed things up enough for the Keepers to remove the blankets.

Jipe:- We have always known, of course, that rearing the infant African elephants is a very precarious task, full of unpleasant surprises, for baby elephants are essentially extremely fragile, and can be romping around one day, and dead the next. The death of little Jipe was yet another largely inexplicable blow, for, like Nalitu, he had been thriving for many months, with no tell-tale signs that things were going wrong until the night he died without warning. A frothy, milky coloured liquid oozing from his trunk whilst dying was the only clue to go by. We can only conclude that perhaps he had eaten something that made him vomit in his sleep, and that some somehow went down the wrong pipe before he was fully awake, unless, of course, the dreaded pneumonia had been silently brewing ever since he was retrieved from the mud of Lake Jipe. Since it is a physical impossibility for an elephant to cough, one gets no prior warning of pneumonia other than a wet trunk when the calf is actually dying, and by then it is usually far too late. As with Nalitu, little Jipe's passing was deeply mourned by many for he was also the chosen foster baby of hundreds of foster-parents worldwide, as well as being a great Nursery favourite with both the Keepers and the BBC Film Crew who came to know him intimately during filming of "Elephant Diaries".



Over the years we have managed to snatch only one pneumonia case from the jaws of death - Seraan, who is now a healthy four year old growing up within the Voi Unit in Tsavo. Although all the rescued calves automatically undergo a course of injectible antibiotic upon arrival, this seems only to delay the inevitable insofar as pneumonia is concerned if fluid has been ingested into the lungs. We have found that calves extracted from watering places heavily utilised by domestic livestock are particularly at risk, the dust from a build-up of cow-dung at such places resulting in death, even months later, from the klebsiella form of pneumonia.



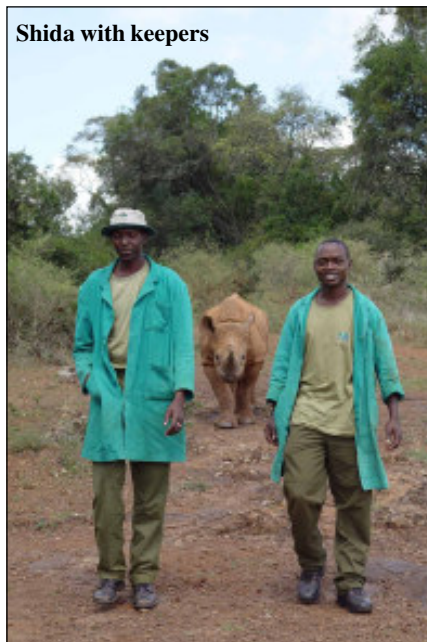
The loss of Nalitu and Jipe left the Nursery with seven older inmates, namely Sunyei, pulled from a well in Samburuland,, "Naserian" (another water victim and the baby featured in "Elephant Diaries" who was rejected by the wild herds of Samburu National Reserve, and almost drowned whilst attempting to cross the river with the wild herd); "Buchuma", another water victim having fallen through a jagged hole in the Mombasa water pipeline; famous "Madiba" from far away Botswana; "Ndomot" from Samburuland,," "Galana", the Tsavo East starvation victim; and little "Lualeni", the sad little star of Elephant Diaries, who was found asleep and waiting to die, all alone under a thorn tree in the Taita Hills Sanctuary, no evidence of wild elephants anywhere nearby and who grieved so long and deeply for her lost elephant family. However, the seven surviving Nursery inmates were not without smaller company for long for the month of April saw three more rescues.



Kora:- First was six month old “Kora” a baby bull found by an anti-poaching patrol 50 kms from the nearest water, wandering all alone along a remote track within Kora National Reserve. He had a serious jaw wound which we later determined could only have been inflicted by a bullet shattering the lower part of the jaw, possibly a ricochet from the one that killed his mother. Over the next four months, this injury necessitated a great deal of attention both from the Vet and ourselves, involving lengthy courses of injectible antibiotic to halt lethal septicaemia and the daily syringing of the wound which produced literally gallons of pus. Kora was amazingly brave, genetically honed so by aeons of natural selection living in a harsh and very challenging environment. It was extremely touching to see him subject himself to the inevitable each evening, which was excruciatingly painful. He would simply collapse into his Keepers’ arms, watery eyes and a heart-rending whimper the only hint of the agony he knew he would have to endure. It was almost as though he knew it had to be done in order for him to heal. As healing happened, he spat out pieces of broken dead bone, one the size of a finger. We were not optimistic about Kora’s chances of survival, especially as he also suffered a bout of diarrhoea that necessitated a course of Sulphadimidine on top of everything else, but make it, he did, and today is a plump, happy and very healthy member of the Nursery unit. Furthermore, his jaw is now

sufficiently healed for him to want to challenge pushy little “Buchuma” to a shoving match on a daily basis.

Buchuma:- As for Buchuma, who was the smallest of the three Nursery bulls until the recovery of Kora, he



Shida with keepers

loves nothing better than challenging the others to shoving matches in an attempt to demonstrate equality and gain their respect, yet he is extremely amiable and gentle towards all humans.

Rapsu:- Just three days after the arrival of Kora, on the 24th April, another two year old bull was rescued by Mark Jenkins in Meru National Park and named “Rapsu” after the place where he was found. Mercifully, although emaciated

having been deprived of his mother’s milk for at least two weeks, he was able to subsist on greens, but he arrived in an extremely wild and aggressive frame of mind, obviously harbouring a deep fear and hatred of all humans. Moreover one eye needed immediate attention if we were to avert blindness, which in a bull, would be a serious disadvantage when grown. Normally, the temptation of a bottle of milk proffered by the Keepers, combined with the input of the other Nursery elephants, is sufficient to calm a wild candidate, even one the size of Rapsu, but it took ten days before anyone could safely handle him. On the fifth we let him out, hoping that he would go with the others as a group, but instead he peeled off and fled deep into the Park. It was a very stout effort, indeed, that our Keepers managed to catch up with him, rope his front legs, and haul him back to his Stockade, where he remained for a further five days before accepting that the humans who fed him, and treated him kindly, were, indeed, friends and not the foe he thought. In the meantime, once he was sufficiently strong to be sedated, we were able to establish that corneal ulceration was the problem with the injured eye, and mercifully, this responded to treatment before any lasting damage had been done. Rapsu has since made a full recovery in every respect, sports two tiny tusks, and is a picture of good health. The turn-around in his attitude towards the Keepers has been amazing, yet again illustrating the



Naserian and Kora



Narripi

very forgiving nature of elephants. Today, he is the most loving and the most gentle of all the Nursery inmates, despite having the advantage of tusks. He loves nothing better than extending his trunk to grab a hand to suck on, as a baby would a dummy, and stands as close as he can to a Keeper all day long, leaving his side only to deal with Buchuma, who tempts him to a pushing match endlessly. What we thought would be a rather remote character has metamorphosed into the exact opposite!

Two Sad Losses:- The third rescue that month was an Amboseli calf rescued from the swamp, whose mother was missing from the elephant family after they crossed the border into Tanzania, as the Amboseli elephants are want to do from time to time. Since the mother had



Ndololo

beautiful long tusks, the Amboseli Researchers were pretty sure that she had either been poached or shot by the despicable Tanzanian licenced hunters who prowl along the border between Kenya and Tanzania hoping to bag one of Amboseli's famous large tuskers should it step across. Sadly, we were unable to save this calf, who was seriously starved, having been without milk for a long time. The dreaded pneumonia struck again within a day of her arrival, whilst another casualty from Samburu, whom tribesmen had monitored for several days prior to rescue, died of starvation in the rescue plane before it even arrived in the Nursery.



Makena

Narripi:- Nor did it end there, for the 29th August brought the arrival of little "Narripi", the tiny Amboseli calf whose trunk had been bitten by hyaenas after he fell down a well dug for cattle by Masai tribesmen near the Amboseli/Tanzanian border. He was discovered by a tribesman (whom we have since heard was one of the Research Scouts) and who walked ten miles to the Amboseli Park Headquarters to notify the authorities of his presence. They, in turn, alerted us, and Narripi was flown into the Nairobi Nursery the following morning. We knew his chances of survival were fraught, being another well victim and also exposed to the threat of inhaling cow dung dust, plus the fact that the damaged trunk necessitated surgery under anaesthesia. Sure enough, pneumonia struck yet again six weeks later, when he began to cut his first molars and yet again, we mourned the loss of this very brave little bull, who had become a Nursery favourite with

everyone, and who had proved so popular on the fostering programme.

Makena:- Since the death of Narripi, the Nursery has received another four inmates, bringing the Nursery total to nine. The first to arrive on the 20th September was a miniature female named “Makena” so named after a hill on Ol Ari Nyiro Ranch in Laikipia near where she was found wandering all alone. We are not sure why she was orphaned, but suspect that her mother might have been poached by Pokot tribesmen. Luckily, Makena arrived in fine fettle, and from day one has been a playful and mischievous baby, who makes up for her miniature stature with an overdose of personality! Since she arrived with her full quota of first molars, we were spared the teething hazards, usually accompanied by fevers and life threatening diarrhea, so although so small, she must have been over a month old when she came in. Since then she has batted onto Naserian, kneeling down to suckle Naserian’s tiny breasts whilst Naserian places a foreleg forward, as would a mother. Naserian is, however, extremely possessive of Makena, which has put Lualeni’s nose out of joint, for she would also like a turn at being “mother”. However, such aspirations are roundly rebuffed by Naserian, whose adoration of her latest acquisition is all consuming.

Ndololo:- The next newcomer was, indeed, a surprise – a month old baby bull, blind in both eyes, whose mother had given up all hope and was actually in the act of “burying” him by covering him tenderly with leaves, sticks and earth as he lay comatose by the side of a road not far from the Voi River in Tsavo East National Park. When the rescue team arrived the adult elephant with him calmly stood by just a few paces from them, displaying no sign of aggression, but seemingly quite willing to let humans take the calf from her. The Keepers found this so unusual that they concluded she must surely be one of our ex orphans, but we have since been unable to identify her as such from their photographic record of this amazing event. Possibly, she is one

of the elephants who fraternises regularly with the Voi orphans, and therefore could identify the Keepers to be ele-friendly people rather than antagonistic, as are the neighbouring communities of the area.

apart from being totally blind, so far is doing well, but for an initial stomach upset which we were able to control. At the suggestion of the Voi Keepers, he was named “Ndololo”, the name of David Sheldrick’s first base on the Voi River.

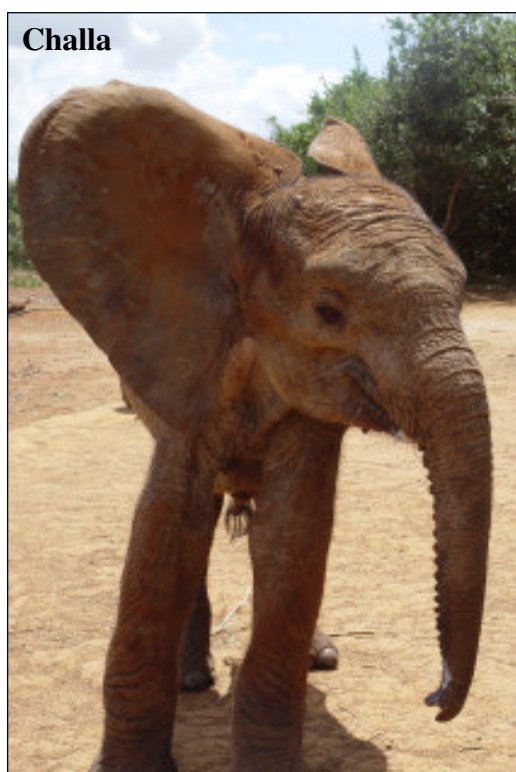


The baby was taken to the Voi Stockades in the late evening, more dead than alive, and no-one expected him to be alive by morning, but alive he was, and up on his feet, having been re-hydrated and given weak milk. He was flown to the Nairobi Nursery on the 17th October, and

The cause of his blindness is not known. We wondered if it could be the result of venom spat in the eyes by a Cobra, but the eye specialist suspects a genetic defect, (although we do not believe that he was actually born blind, since the pads of his feet have obviously done a lot of walking

in the month that he has been on earth.) Whatever, the cause, the challenge of dealing with a blind baby elephant is something we have never had to face. Already, his dependency and love of his Keepers, has endeared him to them and everyone he meets. He responds to his name, follows their footfalls when taken for a walk, the tip of his trunk pressed to the ground, and a Keeper alongside to guide him.

Yet again, we were witness to the mysterious powers of communication between elephants when little Makena on one occasion was kept back as company for him. Placing her head against that of Ndololo, she obviously imparted a silent message unheard to human ears, for when she strode ahead, Ndololo followed her surely and with much more confidence than is ever evident when just in the company of his human attendants. ***We are extremely grateful to Dr. Schwendemann, the very busy eye specialist who has willingly come on a weekly basis to monitor Ndololo's eyes, which, sadly have not responded as rapidly as he had hoped to the prescribed cortisone ointment. However, he and another kind colleague from the Kikuyu Eye Hospital agree that more time is needed.*** All options, including whether surgery could restore at least a little vision, will be investigated before any decision about the future of little Ndololo will have to be decided, something we all dread having to do.



Zurura: - The third new arrival was another baby bull aged about six weeks who fell into a deep pit dug to mine rubies in a mineral rich belt between Tsavo West National Park and the Taita Hills Sanctuary, which also yields the famous green garnets known as Tsavorites.

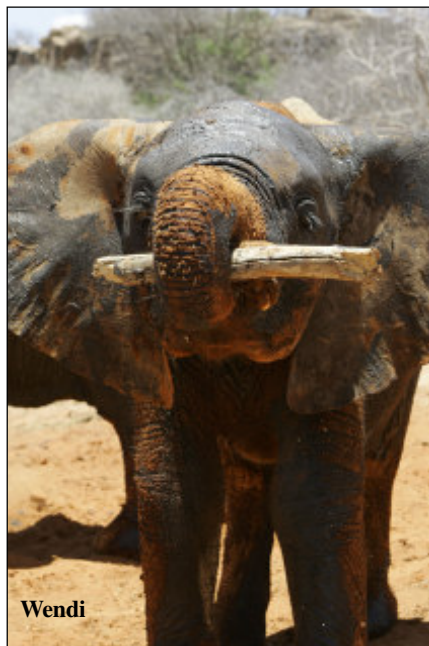
At dawn on the 29th October, muffled bellows led a search party to the pit, where disturbed soil around the pit was evidence of the struggle of the calf's elephant family to extract him during the night. However, since this is an ancient migration route between Tsavo West and East through which elephants have to "streak" under cover of darkness for their own safety, by dawn the family had long gone. The fact that the miners had been led to this particular place by an elephant, was viewed as a lucky omen, especially as this particular pit had yielded some rubies the day before, so the calf was rescued and taken to Mwatate Police Station. The Police alerted the Tsavo East authorities, who mobilized the Trust's Voi Unit Elephant Keepers who fetched the baby from Mwatate and drove it to the Park's Voi Airstrip, from whence it was airlifted back to Nairobi. The word "Zurura" written in felt pen by the miners on the calf's one ear, is the name by which he is now known, and which, in Swahili means "The Wanderer".

Little Zurura is a very tough baby, who never cried at any stage during his traumatic rescue. When pulled out of the pit, and surrounded by a curious mob, all prodding and touching to feel the texture of an elephant's skin, he remained calm. Bravely he subjected himself without protest to all the travelling thereafter, including being bound and loaded into the rescue plane. At the Nursery he endured the mandatory anti-biotic injections without protest, which are administered as a matter of course to all newcomers in order to forestall potential problems brought on by trauma and stress. The very next day, he was out and about with the older Nursery inmates, even trying to push them around in a show of supreme confidence and strength. He has cut his first molars without the usual difficulties, and insists on his head being covered with a blanket before he will take his milk from a bottle. This makes all onlookers chuckle, because it is, indeed, a comic sight! In short, therefore, "Zurura, the Wanderer" lives up to his name, obviously endowed with fine genes that have the making of a dominant bull and a force to be reckoned with when grown.

Challa:- The fourth new arrival was "Challa", a young bull of about 15 months, who had joined a herd of Masai cattle near a place called "Challa" on Ziwani Sisal Estate abutting Tsavo West's Southern boundary. For four days he had been amongst the herd, though not allowed in the thornbrush corral with the cows at night, so he is very fortunate not to have fallen prey to hyaenas. The herdsmen alerted our Ziwani De-Snaring team who managed to capture him with the help of three strong teenage tribesmen, after which he was taken to the Voyager Lodge Airstrip, from where he was airlifted to Nairobi on 16th November. He arrived in a pitiful state, weakened through starvation, and trembling with fear, resigned to simply accepting whatever was next in store for him, too emaciated to care. Within just one night, he was amazingly docile, taking milk from a bottle by the next morning and eagerly accepting the cooked oatmeal and coconut "balls" that Daphne offered him to supplement his very weak mixture of milk. (One always

has to proceed with extreme caution with calves who come in so desperately emaciated, who invariably suffer both a deficient digestion as well as an overload of parasites to be able to cope with too much food too soon.) Challa, whose name means "Source of the Volcanic River" was too weak to even get up unaided from a sleeping position so he was confined to the Stockade for the first three days, until strong enough to be de-wormed. Having also been subjected to an overdose of cow-dung-dust from being amongst the Masai herd, he is at risk from klebsiella, so he has undergone a course of stronger than usual antibiotic as a precautionary measure. On his fourth day in the Nursery, he was allowed out to join the others and although still grieving for his lost elephant family, he is now gradually becoming part of the gang and adores the Keepers who care for him. In time he will lose his skeletal appearance, and, like Rapsu, we hope will soon be in good health again, a very lucky little calf to still be around.

The older elephants that come into the Nursery wild, and who have to be tamed down, are put into the Stockade occupied by Rapsu, where an elevated platform offers an escape route for the Keepers during the taming process. Rapsu therefore had to vacate his quarters for Challa, and because of this, has been a little antagonistic towards the newcomer whom he views as responsible for forcing him to move house, something that is never popular with

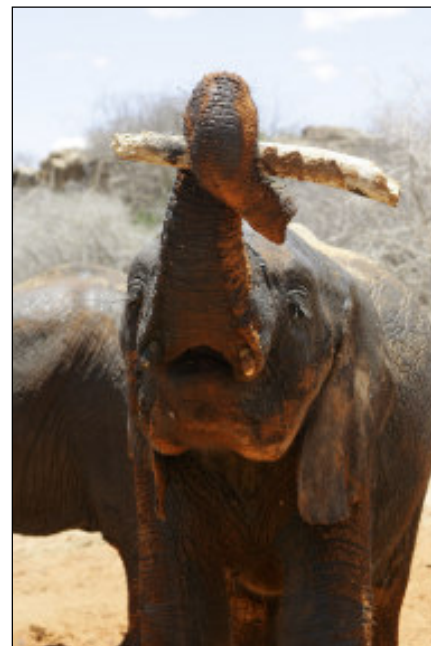


Wendi

Nursery inmates. Jealousy manifests itself through giving Challa the odd shove whenever the Keepers are not looking, something that is out of character for Rapsu, who is normally a very gentle member of the group. However, tone of voice and the wagging of an accusing finger is all it takes to keep him in line, but the solution lies, of course, in returning him to his erstwhile Stockade now that Challa has accepted the Keepers as friends and by so doing, this small, very human, temperament glitch will evaporate!

The Ithumba Orphans

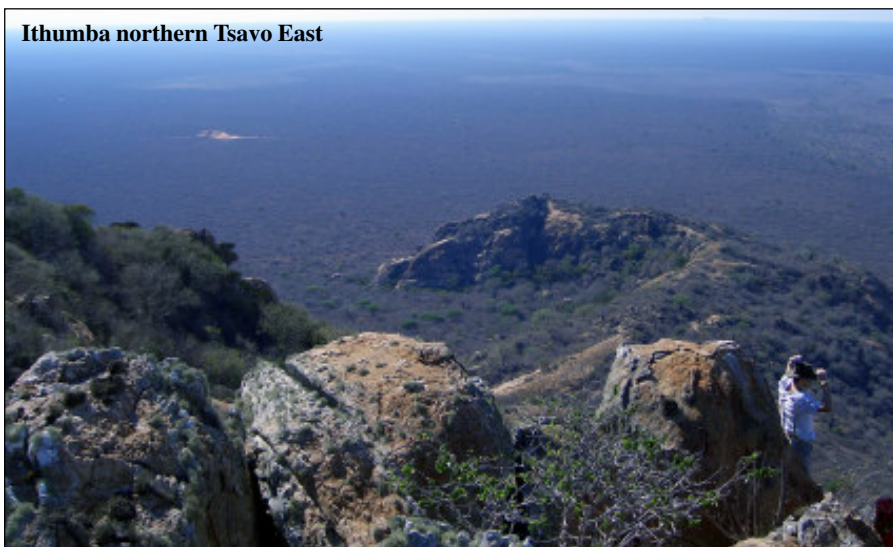
Because the Tsavo rains had been so poor, it was only after a great deal of thought that we decided to transfer four of



the older Nursery Elephants to the Northern Area Relocation Centre at Ithumba, where those moved last year were thriving, browse being very plentiful around Ithumba Hill. Elephants have again re-colonised the Northern Area, which was, in David Sheldrick's time, their main bastion until the rampant poaching of the late seventies and eighties drove them out.

Since the 2004 Newsletter, the Northern Area orphans have had just one brief contact with a wild herd and that was on the 30th December 2004, when they met up with four wild elephants, and spent a quality hour amongst them. Other than that, they have been visited on several occasions throughout the year by wild bulls, who have come to their Stockade under cover of darkness, but left before daylight. We are confident, therefore, that the word will get around, because it is the bulls that are the scouts of elephant society, who travel far and wide to investigate the safety or otherwise of new feeding grounds before encouraging the females and babies to follow. The presence of the four older females amongst the Ithumba set, given time, will prove irresistible to the bulls and provide the catalyst that will encourage more wild contact.

It took a full year for Imenti, who was the first candidate in the North, to befriend his wild peers, but at last he has accomplished this, and was last



Ithumba northern Tsavo East

seen in the company of a large bull whose friendship he does not want to lose by renewing his contact with humans. Perhaps it is he who has passed the message about the orphans to his wild male peers, and perhaps even he who brings them along at night to take a look. In any case, we are happy and relieved that Imenti, who was raised from the day he was born, and is now 11 years old, has at last accomplished the transition into a wild situation.

As at July 2005, the Ithumba Unit was comprised of the four, five and six year old females taken from the Voi Unit last year (Yatta, Mulika, Nasalot and Kinna) to provide leadership of the six ex-Nursery youngsters moved to Ithumba just ahead of them, namely Napasha, Wendi, Taita, Tomboi, Olmalo and Selengai, all of whom had thrived since being there, the only glitch being the rabid dog incident of 21st October, 2004 when Wendi, Olmalo, Taita, Selengai and Mulika were bitten on the foot. All have now undergone the same therapy as would a human, and now that a year has passed, I think we can safely say they are out of danger. The trauma of that incident has, however, left all the Ithumba orphans extremely scared of anything canine. Just the sight or sound of a hyaena or a jackal terrifies them all, and will always



remain a very unpleasant reminder of that fateful night, the trauma of which will be indelibly etched in their minds.

The next Nursery transfer was enacted was on the 2nd July, just before the Premiere of "Elephant Diaries", when, yet again, two large Safari vehicles rolled out at dawn headed for Ithumba, with Ndomot and Madiba in one and Galana and Sunyei in the other. Every departure from the Nursery out into the Big Wide World is an emotional experience for both the humans and the elephants left behind. The eight hour journey to Ithumba went smoothly enough, except that somehow Sunyei managed to tear the outer edge of one ear, which needed some attention at the other end, and will probably always make her easily identifiable in the future.

Wendi and Ndomot were inseparable during the time they shared at the Nursery, when Wendi took him under her wing as the Mini Nursery Matriarch. Therefore we knew the reunion of these two would be extremely touching to behold, and, indeed, we were not disappointed. Sunyei was also recognised and warmly welcomed by the six elephants moved last year who shared Nursery time with her, but they had difficulty in recognizing Madiba at first, who now looked very different to the tiny woolly mammoth they remembered. However, being Ndomot's best friend, he was soon embraced, so it was Galana who was the stranger, never having known any of them before. For a time she looked left out and forlorn but Olmalo took compassion on her, and moved in to comfort and befriend her. Being of Tsavo origin, and orphaned old enough to remember her time with her family, Galana had the advantage of being familiar with the techniques of digging up roots, and peeling nutritious bark from dormant branches of food plants such as *Grewia bicolor* watched keenly by the newcomers, who soon copied her lead. Within just a few days, it was as though all the newest arrivals had long been part of the group, for they had been completely absorbed into the unit, overseen and protected lovingly by all four of the older ex-Voi females.

The acknowledged Matriarch of the Ithumba Unit is Yatta, who shares Leadership duties with Mulika and Nasalot, whilst Kinna provides the discipline and the back-up to expel intruders whenever needed. Yatta has chosen Olmalo as her favourite baby, whilst Mulika has taken Selengai. Nasalot and Kinna enjoy keeping the boisterous little bulls in line, and Napasha, the oldest male of the unit, needs quite a lot of that, for he is larger than life and an extremely dominant character who features prominently in every Diary! Taita and Tomboi are firm friends, but also competitive, as are all young bulls. However, bullying is not tolerated by Yatta and her helpers and just one bellow from any of the youngsters brings all four rushing to the rescue and sending the culprit, which is usually Napasha, into solitary confinement for a while as punishment!

Sunyei astonished us all by her rapid adaptation to her new home. Within just two or three days she had the measure of the place and knew all the favourite paths, taking turns with Wendi to head the column to and from feeding grounds, and to and from the daily mudbath. It is obviously a great "treat" for youngsters to be allowed

to lead the column and the older elephants indulge the youngsters generously in this respect. Nevertheless, a Junior leader falls apart rapidly when confronted by something untoward, such as a tortoise, a dikdik, the ubiquitous baboons or a snake and then there is a frantic U-turn and a rapid retreat back to their Keepers, whilst



the older elephants move up front to deal with the problem. Napasha is usually one of the forerunners in such circumstances, whilst Tomboi and Taita lead the younger set as reinforcements from well back, with Madiba close behind them! Ndomot who is not known for gallantry, is usually pressed close to the Keepers!

An extraordinary incident, graphically described in the August 2005 Keepers' Diary, astonished us yet again and left us marvelling at the mysterious powers of perception of elephants. On this particular day, Sunyei, Olmalo and Wendi were allotted the privilege of leading the group to their normal feeding grounds in the morning, when suddenly Yatta, who was way behind, rushed ahead in a very agitated state, trumpeting in a high state of excitement and forcibly blocking their passage forward, determined to push them all back. Since such behaviour was very out of character in Yatta, it prompted the Keepers' to go ahead and investigate. They could not believe their eyes when they came upon a huge injured



puff- adder lying in the path, coiled and ready to strike. No-one will ever fathom how Yatta knew the snake was ahead or even that it posed a threat to her adopted family, for the

four more Nursery inmates, we expected those left behind to miss them and sink into the usual depression for a while. However, on this occasion, having undertaken a quick search for the missing four, and satisfied herself that they had left, Naserian seemed almost relieved to find herself now the main Matriarch, without having to share the babies with anyone else. Buchuma immediately targeted Rapsu as a sparring partner in the absence of Ndomot and Madiba, until Kora was healed enough to provide another substitute. And so, surprisingly, within just a day or two after the departure of Sunyei, Ndomot, Galana and Madiba, life at the Nursery returned to its usual normal daily routine.



Nairobi Nursery, and, as far as we know, has no prior experience of snakes, yet she somehow sensed the threat. Yet again, we look upon this incident as proof of the genetic memory with which all elephants are endowed in the interests of survival, and which becomes honed by exposure to a wild situation.

And "normal" requires mention of others who share our space on a daily basis - the warthogs, for instance, who for years have lived, mated and bred around us and whose trust has led to a wealth of observational knowledge about how they conduct their lives. For instance, how a new mother takes a daughter from the previous litter to help care for the tiny

piglets, usually born just before the short November rains and how, the next time round, the mother and nanny synchronize estrous and mating so that they both give birth around the same time, and are then able to cross suckle their piglets. The piglets, provide us with endless entertainment when they first emerge from the burrow, and some anxious moments as well, for all other resident pigs take to chasing them, and even killing and eating them if they can catch them. However, the little piglets escape by running around in such tight circles that their pursuers can't catch up with them, and after a few days, everything settles down again with the new generation accepted as belonging within the community. With experience, the mothers and nannies understand how to avoid trouble by turning up with the new brood when other pigs are occupied elsewhere. Surprisingly, unlike the domestic variety, only four piglets are born to any one mother at any one time.

Hordes of tiny tree squirrels, descendents of another orphan called "Tinky", have taught us how intelligent and endearing these tiny inhabitants of the garden are, as they run up and down the branches and in and out of our homes in search of tidbits. A large flock of helmeted guinea fowl amble around the premises all day long, periodically disturbed by a Martial Eagle and other feathered predators who target them from time to time. There are the smaller resident birds as well, who are known as the "Chippy Chips", who respond when called for their daily ration of meal worms and flutter, sing and



Shida



Magnum

rest in what today are huge trees planted as tiny seedlings 30 years ago when Daphne first moved into her Nairobi Park home. Amongst the Chippy-Chips are olive thrushes, robin chats, bulbuls, mouse-birds, bright yellow weavers and tropical boubous, whilst a pair of tiny house martins nest every year without fail in the timbers of the verandah and raise two, and occasionally, three chicks. A family of Hadada Storks nest in a wild olive tree nearby, their raucous shouts disrupting the tranquillity and peace of our surroundings, especially when their chicks take to the air. Another, but not always popular member of the local scene, is Horace and his wife, wild but very habituated resident tree hyraxes, whose annual two or three offspring are brutally ejected to make way for the next year's brood. Then the displaced offspring do their best to move into our homes as Mr. and Mrs. Horace make them understand in no uncertain terms that they are no longer welcome in theirs! A beautiful young male bushbuck who was orphaned old enough simply to subsist on the contents of the garden, is also part of the habituated fold, whilst many wild passers by enjoy the natural minerals from Lake Magadi, laid out for all on the rocks opposite the elephants' mudbath. Included amongst these are giraffes, elands, zebras, impalas, more bushbucks and the odd wild rhino. Today, sadly only very occasionally, because the Park's predators have been sadly depleted, we glimpse the odd lion, leopard or hyaena simply passing by.

Rhinos:- It was with tremendous shock that we heard of the sad death of Blythe Loutit which occurred on the 14th June this year. Champion of the Namibian desert rhinos and elephants, she will be sorely missed by her husband, Rudi, and other family members, but also by the Namibian community with whom she worked so closely, but most of all by the rhinos and the elephants of that harsh country who have long benefited from her protection. Blythe commanded enormous international respect and her passing is a serious blow to the conservation fraternity and the desert dwelling species she so loved in life. The Trust extends heartfelt condolences on such a sad and tragic loss.

On the Home front, the sad demise of our feisty rhino orphan, Makosa, leaves us with two year old Shida, who is still Keeper dependent doing the rounds of the dungpiles and urinals of the wild community to become known through scent and accepted rather than killed, plus eight year old Magnum, the son of "Scud", now living independent of human company and a member of the wild rhino community of Nairobi National Park. He still returns on a regular basis just to ensure that all is well back on home turf, after which he trundles back down the hill following his wheelbarrow of kitchen supplements and like the Pied Piper, trailed by a veritable army of warthogs of all sizes anxious to share his spoils.

It surprised us when the absence of Makosa's scent around the Stockades prompted Magnum to embark on an investigative quest, as have many of Makosa's erstwhile wild rhino friends. For the first time we noticed Magnum venturing into the Park forest behind the Stockades, closely monitoring the paths where Makosa's scent still obviously lingered, inspecting all the rhino middens carefully, and ending up where Makosa died and is buried deep inside the Park forest. It took Magnum a full two weeks to settle down and accept the fact that Makosa had gone, and gone for good.



Emily



Voi orphans

The Voi Orphans

The elephant called "Emily" raised in the Nursery from the age of just one month, who grew up to become the Matriarch of the orphans at our Voi Reintroduction Centre, is today just over 12 years old, and we believe pregnant. Her "Nannie", "Aitong", who was the baby that came in from the Masai Mara with a serious head injury which left her walking in circles for several months, is now 11 and we believe, also pregnant. These two females made it quite plain last year that they were old enough to be out and about during the night as well as by day, no longer wishing to be incarcerated during the night with the other still dependent 24 young elephants at the Voi Unit's Reintegration Centre.

Another young female from Sweetwaters Ranch named "Sweet Sally", who was deeply attached to Aitong, also made it clear that she wanted to be with Aitong at all times. She was so unsettled when Aitong was outside, and she was in the Night Stockade, that we decided to allow her out as well. Sweet Sally is now also a permanent member of what is known as "Emily's group". Sometimes "Emily's group" is swelled by other now rehabilitated ex orphans, such as Lissa and her two wild-born babies, Lara and Lali, Mpenzi, who served as Nanny to Lissa's calves, and six year old now independent bull named Uaso. We were surprised that none of Emily's "favourites" such as Natumi, Loisaba or Tsavo chose to leave the fold along with her in the same way that Sweet Sally insisted on being with Aitong

right from the start, but recently Tsavo has apparently changed his mind, and is now part of “Emily’s Group”. Thinking that Natumi might like to be with Emily, we left her out one night, but she made it quite plain that she did not approve of being forced to be “wild” and bellowed outside the Stockade until allowed back in! Since then, as the next oldest female, it is she who has assumed Matriarchal duties in the absence of Emily, ably assisted by Edie and Icholta. However, whenever Emily reappears to spend time with the still dependent group, Natumi automatically steps down to allow Emily to assume her previous role of Leader. Then, when Emily decides to leave the orphaned group, no doubt having passed a silent message to the others, she simply peels off and walks away, none of the others making any attempt to follow. Only the young bull named Salama voluntarily spent a night out with Emily’s group in February, but has



The Voi orphans joining a wild herd

All previous self appointed “Matriarchs” of the orphans, with the exception of “Malaika”, whom tragically was lost to us in childbirth, have been orphaned old enough to avoid the Nursery, and old enough also to remember their lost elephant family clearly. All joined the wild herds far younger than Emily and Aitong, so we had no idea what pattern Emily and Aitong’s association with their wild friends, and their adopted still dependent orphaned “family”, would take. Hence, for us, this past year has been an important learning curve. Never before has a cow elephant hand-reared from early infancy, grown up to become the Matriarch of an extensive orphaned “family” and then made the transition into a wild situation without them. The past year has demonstrated that although Emily, Aitong and Sweet Sally are now completely free spirits, their attachment to their orphaned “family” endures for they have kept in touch throughout the year, Emily, more so than Aitong and Sally.



Emily with the Voi orphans



Aitong, Sweet Sally, and Emily

chosen not to repeat the experience since. Laikipia is another young bull (now six years old) who spent a night out, but with a wild herd that contains one of his wild friends. As the oldest bull in the still dependent group, he is probably the next to become numbered amongst the independent “Big Boys” for Laikipia often leaves the orphans to accompany a friend in a wild herd, returning after many hours spent away.

For the first three months they turned up at the Stockade Gates to accompany the orphans out into the bush each morning, or else met up with them once out in the Park. After the rainy season, however, when water and food were more plentiful, they spent more time away. In May, Emily’s group was absent for the first nine days of the month and in June, they made contact with the others just once, returning with ex orphan Lissa and her two wild-born calves, Lali and Lara, as well as ex-orphan Mpenzi, whom we had not seen for many months, and who shares her life between Lissa’s unit and the wild herd headed by Eleanor’s wild friend, the cow called Catherine. On another occasion, ex-orphan “Uaso” turned up with Lissa’s family and in August Emily came back alone with Mpenzi. This was a surprise, indeed, for Mpenzi was never part of Emily’s orphaned group, having been one of Eleanor’s adopted family and is seldom apart from either Lissa or the wild family of Matriarch Catherine.

During July, Emily, Aitong and Sally made just one visit to the still dependent group and as the dry season progressed, they took to turning up much more often. It was then that we noticed a marked loss of condition amongst the three, particularly noticeable in Aitong, who began to take on a skeletal appearance. Obviously, their

attachment to the still dependent orphans inhibited them choosing to forage further afield with their wild friends, so it was decided to offer them some help in terms of famine relief whenever they called. This has since made a marked difference to their condition, and has helped them through what has been an extremely harsh drier than usual drought year in Tsavo.

Unlike the Ithumba unit, the Voi Orphans enjoy a great deal of wild contact during their daily outings in the bush. A wild Matriarch given the name "Naomi" is a very longstanding friend, and when she appeared with a newborn calf, this caused a huge stir amongst our elephants, all of whom are very prone to "baby snatching". This is common practice amongst orphans who don't have their own natural family and nor is it confined to just the females, for elephants of both sexes adore the babies, and even the young bulls are anxious to have close contact with tiny wild babies if they can. Naomi knows the form well, and holding her newborn baby firmly between her two forelegs, so that no-one could take it from her, she allowed the orphan admirers to touch it gently with the tip of their trunks. Other adult wild cows are not quite so accommodating, for baby snatching can trigger antagonism. Usually, the older orphaned females are forbidden contact with small wild babies, driven off by the mother and her female helpmates whenever an attempt is made but the younger orphans are allowed to touch the wild calf.

The "Big Boys", i.e. those ex-Nursery bulls now fully independent of human company, are Olmeg and Taru, both

now 18, 17 year old Dika, Edo and Ndume both 16, and 12 year old Ajok. Numbered amongst the "Big Boys" are others who were orphaned old enough to avoid the Nursery period, namely eight year old Uaso and seven year old Lewa. Having been transferred to Tsavo West along with Ndume and Imenti, Lewa decided to stay put, whereas the other two walked back home. Of our Big Boys, only Edo, Dika, and Uaso have put in an appearance this year.

The reappearance of any of the Big Boys is a major event amongst the orphans, who have great admiration and respect for those a lot older (and bigger) who are still regarded as extended family. Edo, who returned in January after an absence of nine months, is an especially popular Big Boy and a great favourite of all the orphans. Being extremely gentle, he even lies down in the mudbath so that the youngsters can climb and

romp playfully around him. Dika, who was last seen in May 2004, is also a very gentle and well-behaved elephant who paid a fleeting visit to the orphans just once this year, in October. His silent and unexpected appearance amongst them at first alarmed them as they were dozing under shade after the mudbath. Obviously bent on an appointment further afield, Dika paused just long enough to reassure each and every one by touching them fondly with his trunk before hurrying on his way.

Very touching has been the compassion and unselfish nature of the care extended to the weakest and most fragile member of the group, seven year old "Mweiga", by the little four year old Ugandan female, Mweya and a young bull named Sosian who is five. Ever since Mweiga was rescued when she was just seven months old, she has been the weakest member of the orphaned

unit, trailing far behind the others, and labouring up any incline visibly short of breath. However, invariably keeping her company, and assisting her whenever she stumbles, are Mweya and Sosian, who together have taken upon themselves responsibility for Mweiga duty. With the help of supplements, and still allowed milk, she has managed to cope well with this very dry year, but we fear that she will never make old bones. That said, however, whilst living, she enjoys dedicated and loving elephant company and can be assured of all the human help we can possibly extend to her.

In this respect, we thank our significant U.S. Friends contributor. Pete Fullerton, who

Mweiga and Mweya



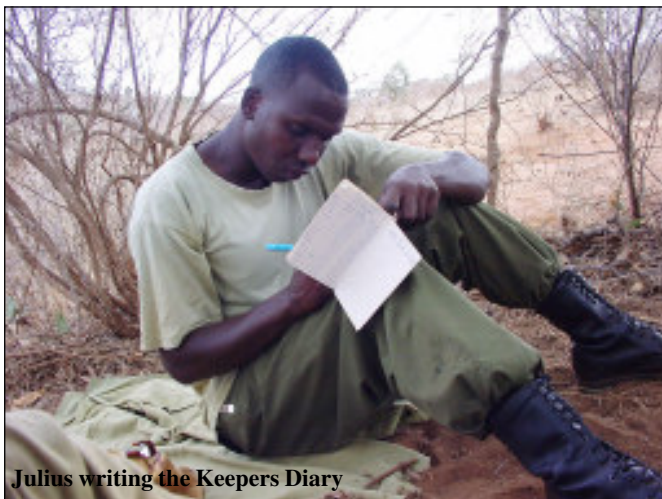
Dika



supports the cost of the “extras” that have made a difference in Mweiga’s life and assisted Emily’s group when needed.

The Keepers’ Diary, which is posted on our website monthly, endorses time and again the many noble traits that elephants possess in abundance, such as their extremely caring nature, their timidity and fearfulness of the unknown, as well as some of the less attractive characteristics prevalent in humans, such as showing off. Sweet Sally is guilty of this whenever she returns from the wild with Emily and Aitong. She stands apart “swanking”, looking down her trunk at all the others, in a very arrogant way, usually with legs nonchalantly crossed. It was six year old Ilingwezi, who graphically demonstrated the elephant capacity to plan. Plucking as much shrubbery as she could from a particularly tasty bush, she piled it onto her back so that she could take it away and enjoy it at leisure. Unhappily for her, this did not go un-noticed by the others, who homed in on the stash, forcing her to run off downing it in a hurry as she did so, so her best laid plan backfired!

Elephant sense of humour is also frequently illustrated in the Diary, an example being when, on a cold day when none of the orphans wanted to venture into the mudbath, Loisaba quietly and surreptitiously sucked up a trunkful and very cold water and turning quietly, holding it in her trunk, suddenly sprayed it in a shower over all the others, forcing them to retreat in disarray! Elephant timidity was graphically displayed by Mpala when he kicked a dung



Julius writing the Keepers Diary

beetle’s ball, dislodging the owner of the ball who inadvertently hooked onto his foot instead, something that unphased him completely and left him “trembling” fearfully pressed up against his Keepers for protection! Such stories in the Diary teach us a great deal about “the inside story” of the elephant mind and each month’s Keepers’ Diary is filled with them.

Pete Fullerton’s substantial generosity makes him the orphans’ most stalwart supporter this year, and to him we are eternally grateful as we are to Dave Garrett of Milk Specialties Corp for supplying nursing bottles. We are also indebted to the following organisations and individuals for their support:- **Care for the Wild International** for their sizeable annual grant in exchange for being allowed to embrace some of our orphans for their own fostering arrangement; **The International Fund for Animal Welfare** who likewise give us a sizeable annual grant in support of The Orphans’ Project; **Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas Ev**, longstanding and loyal supporters, who in addition to regular grants have provided uniforms and boots for the Keepers as well as the tractor for the Northern Area; and **Vrienden van der Olifant** in the Netherlands who are also very generous with financial assistance. Likewise, we are grateful to **Aktionsgemeinschaft Artenschutz (AGA)** in Germany, **Terre et Faune** in Switzerland and **Foreningen Forsvar Elefanterna** in Sweden for their help. We appreciate enormously the assistance given by **World Society for the Protection of Animals** for their help in renovating the Nairobi Orphans’ Stockade and to **Jane Lister** who kindly left us her Landcruiser and Camping Equipment when she decided to leave the country. **Wyeth Laboratories** in Taplow, Maidenhead have, as always, donated the re-worked elephant formula needed so desperately, without which the milk dependent orphans could not live, whilst **British Airways crew members** continue to bring a steady supply of personally purchased tins of milk formula plus blankets for the elephants. Grateful thanks are due also to **Nestles** who have been extremely generous in providing the formula milk for Shida the rhino and **Alcon Pharma GmbH** in Germany for a substantial donation of eye ointment that has healed Rapsu’s damaged eye and is treating little Ndololo’s two blind ones. We are enormously grateful to **Dr. Schwendemann and his colleague** for their professional advice on our blind baby and the many other kind people who have offered helpful suggestions; to **Carrie and Ronnie Wilkie** who have most kindly donated the Calendular tincture that has healed horrendous wounds over the years, including Kora’s shot jaw, as well as the Tincture of Thuya which keeps the elephants’ warts at bay. Grateful thanks also to our homeopathic Fairy Godmother, **Lesley Suter**, for all her ongoing donations of remedies and helpful advice; to the **R.A.F., British Army and British Peace Support Team** for assistance for our rhino orphans and transportation of the elephants’ milk, not forgetting **Natasha Weld Dixon** who, each year, gives us the hay we need for the Nursery elephants’ night bedding. We thank **Mike Seton and his Company, East African Air Charters and Boskovic Air Charters**, for allowing the Trust sizeable discounts on elephant air

rescues; to the **Kerrigan Savage Waves Trust** for their help towards the funding of a Keeper and lastly but by no means least we thank all who have supported the orphans through



our digital Fostering Programme, both on-line and by signing up at the Nursery mudbath. Finally, but by no means least, we thank our Veterinarians, **Dr. Dieter Rottcher** and **Dr. Sanjay** who are always on call, and who come so willingly whenever needed, irrespective of the time.

The Desnaring Project

The rampant, and totally unsustainable, commercial aspect of the diabolical bushmeat trade, is threatening the existence of many wildlife species in this country. The toll taken of wildlife is exacerbated by an already chilling take-off at the subsistence level by an ever-expanding and increasingly impoverished human community abutting Park boundaries. The Trust's six very active De-Snaring Teams who constantly patrol what boundaries we can cover of Tsavo National Park (see Map) have definitely made a difference by saving countless wild lives, and lifting mountains of snares, but this is just the tip of the iceberg. The bushmeat trade goes un-noticed by most people, a silent, sinister and deadly threat to every wild animal, whether large or small.

It is very demoralizing for our six De-Snaring Teams, who risk life and limb on a daily basis, to see the poachers they have managed to arrest red-handed, receiving such meagre sentences, some found with as many as over 50 dead dikdikis and sackfuls of game meat. It is unacceptable that a man found in possession of a rough ruby gets a heavier sentence than one who has slaughtered hundreds of animals, who is punished by given just a few days of community service before being allowed free to carry on his nefarious trade. Unless the Government, through the Magistrates at a judicial level, cracks down on the bushmeat menace, and imposes deterrent punishments to wrong-doers, wildlife numbers will continue to erode day by day until one day, and not far hence, there will be nothing left. Then, the blame must be placed firmly on President Kibaki's NARC Rainbow Coalition who will be held responsible for the destruction of Kenya's irreplaceable wildlife heritage and the subsequent impoverishment of the country through the loss of tourism, which is a wildlife based industry and the country's most important money spinner.

It sickens us that the Press laud the recovery of the tourist industry on an almost daily basis, yet seem impervious to the fact that the "product", i.e., the wildlife that tourists come to Kenya to see, is being killed off systematically at a most alarming and ever-increasing rate. We wonder when the Government will wake up to the fact that wildlife is their most precious resource, and that once gone, it is gone for good. Failure to tackle this menace at a high level will have dire consequences for Kenya and Kenyans in the future.

Whilst the actual number of snares recovered by our teams has diminished this year, simply because they have been picked up on a regular basis, the number of arrests made up until October 2005 has increased considerably - 148 as opposed to 23 in 2003, and 54 last year. Since images speak much louder than words, the bushmeat threat will, in this year's Newsletter, the 26 schools we have targeted





be depicted in pictures, for no words are strong enough to describe this very dire threat. Our Readers will be able to see for themselves what we have been talking about for so long, words that have gone unheeded by those empowered to do something about it.

*We are immensely grateful to **Safaricom, The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), The African Fund for Endangered Species (Kenya) (AFEW), the Dischma Trust and the Alexander Abraham Foundation** for their generous support of our De-Snaring initiatives which has spared the lives of thousands of animals that would otherwise be dead. We acknowledge with grateful thanks the back-up of the **Kenya Wildlife Service** who provide the armed Rangers that accompany the teams and protect them when involved in this dangerous work.*

Community Outreach

The Post Graduate De-Snaring team Leaders also undertake Community lectures, show conservation films at the 26 schools we have targeted along the park boundary and oversee the planting and after care of the trees grown in the Trust Nursery. Field trips are also organised on a regular basis, when KWS provide their bus to take students into Tsavo West National Park to enjoy the wildlife few have ever seen, never before having had the means to do so. A generous grant from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous has enabled the Trust to enhance the infrastructure of 15 of the schools we support. Guttering and water catchment tanks have been installed, doors and windows put in where before there were none, and desks provided for the classrooms. Maintenance of the Orma community's Kone Windmill is another community project of the Trust, and we also plan to build a school for the Orma people living on the Park's Northeastern boundary, for they have been very supportive of KWS in providing information about intrusion of Somali bandit/poachers.

We acknowledge with grateful thanks the input of Sue and Joel Gilbert who connect schools from all over the world to the Trust's little village schools through their Jambo Project. They have, and continue, to provide Text Books, Art materials, Stationery and Sporting equipment, and have also added desks. The Kerrigan Savage Waves Trust has also assisted our community input, as have the children of the Bury Church of England High School. Safaricom has funded some of the very popular student field trips, for which we are most grateful: and we are also immensely grateful to Marti and Sue Moore for their positive community involvement, and helpful advice.

It is heart-warming to see the wildlife returning to the land the Trust has so far been able to acquire and secure along the very sensitive Athi river/Mtito watercourse boundary of Tsavo East. Whereas last year we were lucky just to find the odd footprint of the odd elephant scout venturing in to take a look under cover of darkness, now bulls plus cows and calves are not an uncommon

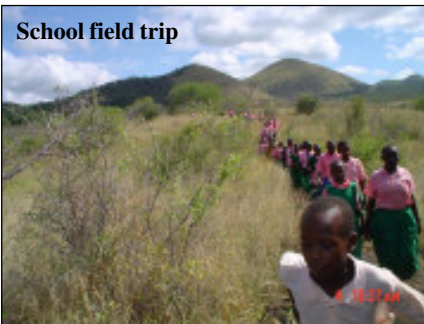
Donated desks



Mobile cinema



School field trip



sight on the Trust land and neighbouring private holdings. Buffalo, and antelopes such as impala and waterbuck, enjoy the open ground of the new Trust airstrip at night, and the tiny dikdik that have taken such a battering from the bushmeat menace are becoming more prolific. Sadly, we lost our little duiker who was rescued from dogs when a tiny baby by community schoolchildren and hand-reared at the Trust's Saa Nane House. He was grown and roaming wild and free, yet habitually put in an appearance back at base, returning at intervals. One day he returned extremely ill, and although we rushed down loaded syringefuls of antibiotic to try and save him, it was too late. He had come back to die where he was reared, at the Saa Nane House. We will never know the cause of death, but what we do know is that the passing of this tiny antelope, was a very sad event. He was much loved by all the Staff, even those drawn from the Wakamba poaching fraternity, who, by hand-rearing him, had grown to know, love and

understand him intimately, their previous attitude towards wild animals changed forever.

The Mobile Veterinary Unit

This has been an amazingly successful project of the Trust, and a very heart-warming one as well, for during the two and a half years that the Unit has been operational, eleven orphaned calves have been rescued and the lives of 58 other elephants saved, six of whom were suffering from bullet injuries, 28 from spear and arrow wounds, 11 from snares and 13 from wounds the cause of which remain unknown. Ten giraffes have been saved, as have five buffaloes, six lions, three Impala, nine Zebra, one waterbuck, one leopard, one Cheetah, one baboon and 150 trapped birds.

The input of our Mobile Veterinary Unit has also been helpful to KWS and contributed towards the success of the massive Elephant Translocation from the Shimba Hills National Reserve to Tsavo East a distance of 350 Kms. This was a highly specialised exercise with the necessary equipment and personnel available to tranquilize up to five animals at once, family units having first been located and steered to a suitable spot by Helicopter. Matriarchs and the very young were targeted first and loaded into a huge transportation truck with two compartments each capable of holding six elephants. The maximum number captured in any one day was 12 and within a month a total of 150 elephants were moved during Phase I and released at Thabangunji on the North Bank of the Galana River in Tsavo East. Those which became restive during the journey had to be slightly sedated en route in order to calm them down. Phase II, which will target the remaining 250 earmarked for relocation is planned for early 2006. To date, we understand that two bulls have tried to make the journey back, (and been killed en route), but that one cow and her calf have actually made it home. Another bull (No. 84), discovered by our Mito De-Snaring team with the ivory still

intact, apparently died of arrow wounds in the Tsavo Triangle and therefore became a victim of poachers. We sincerely hope that the majority of those left will settle in their new home, where they will face a much brighter future.

Many interesting stories surrounding the various animals our Mobile Veterinary Unit has managed to treat under field conditions this year can be found on the Trust Website under the Veterinary Unit Section. We are proud that this year alone, seven snared elephant calves under the age of four years, have been able to be reunited successfully with their elephant families following their immobilization and the removal of the snare. One with a happy ending involved a snared two-month old Amboseli baby seen near the Kimana Springs, still with its mother and family. Attempts to separate the calf from its mother proved fruitless (and fraught) so the mother was immobilized in order to try and secure the calf, but the family were having none of it, and went off with him in their midst, followed by the Vet. It was a good half hour before the Vet could get a clear shot as the baby was fleeing with the herd and then, unbeknownst to him, the calf finally succumbed to the immobilizing drug in a thicket. Having finally established that it was missing from the herd, and must therefore be down, he searched for about an hour but failed to locate it. By then, the need to reverse the immobilisation of the mother had become urgent, so he had to hurry back to do this, before continuing the search for her baby!

Eventually, the Unit happened upon the calf, but by then it was almost dark and both the mother and the elephant family had long gone. The calf was taken back to base, where it spent the night, given only water and kept warm until dawn, when another search party managed to find its elephant family again, and establish that the mother was back amongst them. The baby elephant was driven to the herd and was able to be reunited with its mother and family, received with a great outpouring of joy which was shared by all the



people involved. We, too, anticipating yet another orphan, were also mightily relieved and overjoyed to hear about a very much happier sequel.

Another heart-warming case involved a bull carrying huge tusks who was spotted by Daphne when he came to drink at night at the Tarhi Camp waterhole. Using Night Binoculars, she could see that he was limping and had an arrowhead lodged in the right foreleg. At first light, the Mobile Veterinary Unit was alerted, but it took two full days before they managed to catch up with the bull and successfully immobilize him. The arrowhead, which had contained poison, was removed and the wound dressed, before the great bull was woken up and sent on his way having had a shot of long-acting antibiotic in the rump. He was spotted one month later, striding along, completely healed, a magnificent and awesome animal whose tusks swept almost to the ground, reminiscent of the old days when the likes of him were plentiful in Tsavo. Elephants carrying such large ivory are a very rare find nowadays, so we were particularly glad to have been able to save him before the poison had a deadly affect. *We are deeply indebted to the **Austrian N.G.O., Vier Pfoten**, who have been such a pleasure to work with and who have provided all the funding needed for the equipment and drugs necessary to make this important project so successful. Included in their commitment has been the salary and emoluments of Dr. David Ndeereh, the Veterinarian seconded to the project from the KWS Veterinary Pool. We also appreciate the invaluable cooperation of the **Kenya Wildlife Service** in the secondment of Dr. Ndeereh and for its help over the importation and clearing of drugs. The Trust is very proud of what Dr. Ndeereh has been able to achieve and the many precious animal lives he has been able to save. He must surely now qualify as one of the most experienced field wildlife vets in the world!*

An Overview of Conservation Issues

The year saw many changes within the Kenya Wildlife Service as well as the Ministry under which KWS operates. No less than four different Ministers have headed that Ministry this year, unfortunately none of who were well informed on conservation issues or conversant with wildlife generally. Whereas we chose the "D" to highlight the negative conservation aspects of 2004, this year perhaps adding the prefix "A" would not be inappropriate!

There were few within the Kenya Wildlife Service who mourned the departure of the previous Director, Evans Mukolwe. Three weeks of intense lobbying by all concerned in an attempt to come up with a suitable name to fill the vacuum, proved to no avail for the new Minister, out of the blue, chose someone alien to conservation circles - this time a Lecturer from Nairobi University's Faculty of Commerce named Julius Kipn'getich. This appointment, plus the Minister's choice of a new board of largely unknown intellectuals again astounded everyone, and at the time was viewed as a wasted chance

by the Government to, at least this time, try and put things right. Happily, however, the new Director has turned out to be a very personable and diplomatic fellow, eager to listen and eager to learn, but his hands remain tied by the bloated and unwieldy compartmentalized political bureaucracy he inherited which is also very tribal-based.

Everyone hoped that he might be able to be the "silent assassin" who could trim the Service to a more functional level, but this has not been possible. Everyone has, however, been put on "performance contracts", although this means little, for within the Government system it seems impossible to dismiss anyone, irrespective of how dismal, or corrupt, their record! Not much has therefore changed in this respect and probably never will.

It was accepted way back when Kenya's National Parks were first created in 1948 that the country's wildlife heritage could not be risked under politicians whose priority is simply to appease their constituents in order to get voted in again. National Parks were therefore placed under an independent and informed Board of Trustees drawn from all sections of the community, whose brief was to ensure that the National Parks were protected from political expediency detrimental to the interests of wildlife, for the country's natural heritage had to be safeguarded not just for the current generation, but for future generations as well. Sadly, all this changed in 1976 when the Kenyatta Government of Independent Kenya dismissed the

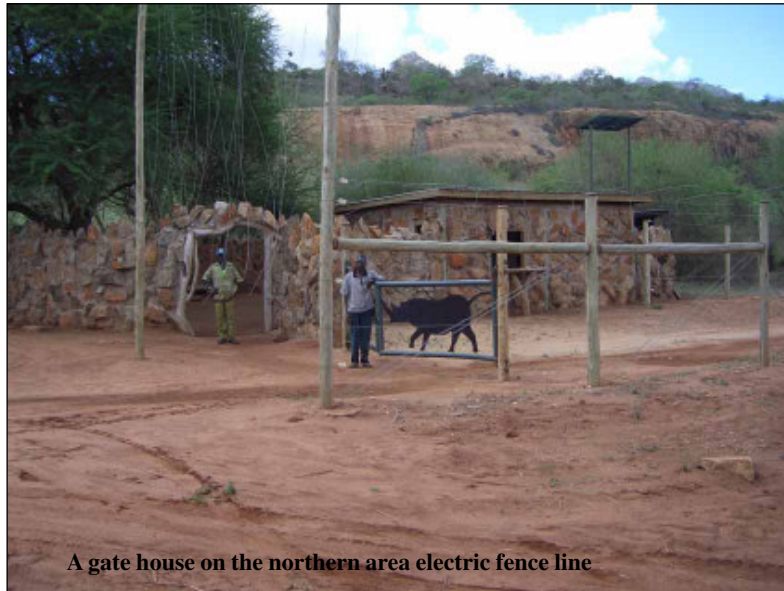
Board overnight, and amalgamated the National Parks with the Government Game Department, bringing the country's wildlife under direct Government control. The result of this remains a sorry chapter in the history of the National Parks which once enjoyed such a proud conservation record and were

employment for hundreds of thousands of Kenyans. Without wildlife, there would be no tourism and without tourism, Kenyans would face a very bleak future indeed.

The National Rainbow Coalition Government has now been in power for three years, in theory with two to go before the next general election.

There was widespread **anxiety** and **anger** when, overnight, the President downgraded the world famous Amboseli National Park (recognised internationally as an important biosphere park), and returned it to a National Reserve, handed back to the Masai Kajiado County Council to manage, whose previous record in this respect left a lot to be desired. The correct legal procedures entrenched within the Wildlife Conservation & Management Act necessary before downgrading a National Park were not followed, making this an illegal move.

"A National Park or Reserve can only be degazetted if the Minister first consults the competent authority; (in this case the KWS) and then publishes a detailed notice of intent in the Kenya Gazette plus at least one popular local newspaper inviting objections from the public within 60 days. Thereafter, following 60 days after the last publication of the Notice, the order must then go to the National Assembly for ratification." More worrying still was the fact that the gesture was viewed simply as an incentive for the Masai community of the area to accept the proposed new draft



A gate house on the northern area electric fence line



A portion of electric fence

acknowledged as the finest in the world. Tourism, which is wildlife based, brings into the country in terms of revenue, 42 Billion K. Shs. annually and as such is the country's most important source of foreign exchange, in addition to providing

Constitution, which was already proving a very contentious document.

Chosen to symbolize the “Yes” camp in favour of the new Draft were *Bananas*, whilst *Oranges* symbolized all those opposed to it. The *Banana/Orange* political battle became a very hot potato that literally **dominated** the political arena during the entire latter half of 2005, with all the Government’s Ministers out on the campaign trail holding rallies to persuade their supporters to vote either *Banana* or *Orange*, with the pro *Banana Camp* supported by the President doling out the country’s natural resources on an almost daily basis! Whenever a *Banana* rally was held, everyone held their breath in trepidation, wondering “What Next”! The Referendum on this crucial issue took place on the 21st November, and **amazingly** appears to have been won by the *Orange No Camp* and passing off relatively quietly.

Conservationists concerned about the Amboseli issue attempted a Court Injunction questioning the legality of the President’s decision, but this first attempt was dismissed by a High Court Judge. Another was then filed, and this time upheld by the High Court which confirmed that the Government had, indeed, acted illegally. At the moment, a stalemate exists, with KWS refusing to hand over the Park, and Masai tribesmen threatening to oust KWS by force in order to get their hands on the revenue. On this issue, the Government, so far, has remained silent but nevertheless, there is a great deal of public **alarm** that the Government can brazenly flout its own Laws. This unconventional state of affairs was again highlighted when, despite a Court Injunction, the *Bananas* handed out Title Deeds to illegal settlers only recently expelled from the Mau Forest, seen as a crucial water catchment to be preserved rather than destroyed through illegal logging and settlement.

Predictably, the down-grading of Amboseli created a dangerous precedent, threatening the sanctity of all the country’s National Parks. Immediately, the tribal neighbours of other Protected Areas wanted their share of the National Cake and since Tsavo happens to be bordered by no less than six different tribes, there wouldn’t be much left for the wildlife were such claims honoured! There was further **alarm** when, at a previous political rally, the President promised one of Tsavo’s six neighbouring tribes 10 percent of the Park’s Gate revenue, forgetting that the other five would demand the same. Fortunately, however, this seems to have been dropped. Tsavo is the country’s most important wildlife refuge. Not only is it the largest Protected Area, holding the country’s largest single population of elephants as well as Cape Buffalo, but there is no better form of land use for this particularly arid, and fragile, semi desert region that just happens to hold a greater biodiversity of wildlife than any other Park in the world, it being there that the southern and northern forms of fauna meet, doubling up on many species.

Another extremely contentious issue has been the proposed sale of wild animals to a Thai Zoo, something

negotiated by the President and his then Minister during a visit to Thailand last year. The first this country knew about it was a small piece in the Bangkok Post newspaper saying that 300 wild caught animals were to be “given” to Thailand for the Chiang Mai Night Safari Theme Park. Included in this “gift” were antelopes, rare birds, lions, cheetahs and leopards as well as lizards and other reptiles and even rhinos! The Thais, in addition to a hand-out of “bhats”, would send 20 officials to study wildlife management as well as tigers and mahouts to deal with the “problem elephant” issue, though quite how the tigers and mahouts would set about this was something that puzzled everyone!

Understandably, the clandestine manner in which this so-called “gift” had been arranged, caused enormous outrage, and after a Press Conference called by the Minister, everything went quiet and people were lulled into thinking that the issue had been laid to rest, especially as the Government repeatedly reassured everyone that no final decision had yet been made stating even that it was a “non-event”. Then, unexpectedly in November 2005, over a year later, the Thai Prime Minister turned up in Kenya on a State Visit, and the deal was announced as signed and sealed and a “fait accompli”! This caused public outrage both here and abroad. There were demonstrations, and despair, to which the NARC Government seemed impervious. Speaking through the local Press, the current Minister of Tourism & Wildlife claimed that Kenya had “too many” wild animals, and that sending them to a Thai Zoo was a better option than culling the surplus! This, in the face of the escalating bushmeat crisis, left everyone **astounded** and wondering where this surplus was, especially as it is known that Kenya has lost 60 percent of its wild animals within just the last 15 years, a statistic taken from UNEP’s regular Air Range Monitoring Programme.

A recent scientific study (Leslie M. Golden) confirms that the confinement on concrete of large animals such as rhinos, giraffes, buffaloes and elephants, is a certain death sentence, since the concussion affect transmitted through the legs to other organs of the body is proportionate to three times the weight of the body itself and has a detrimental affect on body tissues, particularly the alveoli of the lungs. This explains why so many deaths of large animals occur in captivity whilst the antelopes seldom live long when deprived of freedom, their natural instincts thwarted. Hence, the export of wild caught animals to a Far Eastern Zoo seemed serious enough, but worse was to come. A further report in Thailand’s Press proudly announced that visitors to the Park’s Vareekunchorn restaurant, which opens on New Year’s Day, would have the option of tucking into an “Exotic Buffet” of “tiger, lion, elephant and giraffe”, as though this was a treat!. The world’s Press and most Kenyans were **aghast**, many surmising that the NARC Government which is not known to be squeaky clean in terms of corruption, had joined hands with the Thais in being a party to the bushmeat business! Furthermore, Thailand is known to be one of the hosts of the deadly

Bird Flu virus, and its to-called "exotic menu" could generate further human pandemics, it having been established beyond doubt that SARS and even possibly AIDS, are the result of consuming "exotic" wild flesh, especially when animals are kept under cruel and cramped conditions. The small print of the signed MOU pledged an ongoing exchange



the dry season progressed. Whereas originally cattle were destroyed or confiscated when they encroached into a National Park, this infringement has become something that in this day and age seems to be accepted rather than confronted. The impact of domestic stock on the fragile and semi desert arid environment of Tsavo is all too clear to see, with

of "live specimens" between the two countries, which seemed to lend credence to the bushmeat suspicion. It was further rumoured that the Thai Prime Minister, who visited Kenya and who was accorded such a warm welcome by the Government, had personal vested interests in the Chiang Mai Zoo as well as its Carnivore-type Restaurant.

One piece of better news was the fact that the President returned to Parliament the Draft of a highly controversial new Wildlife Bill endorsing the legal culling and sport-hunting of wild animals. This had been subjected to intense lobbying from the pro-hunting fraternity and had been approved by a vote taken in the late evening when most Members had already left the chamber. Hence, it was viewed as not being representative of the views of the public as a whole.

Elephants and Ivory

The expanding human population occupying and cultivating more and more land traditionally used by elephants in their age-old migrations, routes that are firmly implanted in the elephant genetic memory, has led to the mounting problem of increased human/wildlife conflict. Elephants need space, and space in elephant terms is hundreds and even perhaps thousands of miles during seasonal

migrations to meet up with extended family members and friends. Nowadays, the elephants have been reduced to *streaking* through human settlement under cover of darkness, snatching what they can in terms of food on the way; food that is often the livelihood of poor peasant farmers. Harassment, such as intrusion and logging even deep within the elephants' forested last bastions has exacerbated the human/elephant conflict. It is not surprising, therefore, that elephants outside the Protected Areas have come to view humans as "the arch enemy" with many turning aggressive and killing the tribesmen who kill them and their loved ones. Who can blame them, but then who can blame the humans for hating the elephants who have killed their loved ones and destroyed their livelihood in passing, particularly where no social welfare handouts are available.

As usual, the Tsavo elephant population (which comprises all elephants within an ecosystem twice the size of the Park itself which are part of the Tsavo population) were counted earlier this year, and the good news was that their numbers were up by 1,297, from last year's count, the total now being 10,581. The bad news was that 38,000 domestic cattle were also illegally within the Park, and their numbers were expected to swell to 90,000 as

large swathes of the Park descending into a dustbowl, and visiting tourists complaining that they had not paid entrance fees to see hordes of cattle. This, like the bushmeat trade, is something that the Government will have to address if they want to save the wildlife.

Sadly, as long as there is a demand for ivory, and this still persists with no end in sight, the poaching of elephants will continue. The appetite for ivory in the Far East is undiminished, with China set to overtake Japan as a major buyer of all the legal and illegal stocks Africa can produce. Throughout the year, many illegal hauls have been intercepted proving that there is little hope of changing the Asian mind-set in this respect, and this is very bad news for the long-term survival of Africa's elephants, especially as the Chinese people become more affluent and can afford the ivory trinkets they so cherish.

Between 1977 and 2004, it is estimated that there has been a 70.2 percent decline in the **East African** elephant population alone, exacerbated, of course, by the expanding human population that denies elephants the space they need to exist, plus corruption which successive Governments have been unable to address. As recently as September 2005, an illegal haul of



Ndara windmill



Ndara windmill waterhole

ivory weighing 850 kgs was intercepted on its way to the Philippines from Kenya labelled "rough stones". Further afield, investigations have revealed a sharp increase in stocks of illegal ivory in the Sudan/Omdurman region, prices having risen from \$45 in 1997 to \$105 in 2005. There Chinese traders buy ivory openly, as they also do in Egypt. The Sudanese Army is said to be responsible for the massive slaughter of Central African elephants that has yielded most of these illegal stocks, but traders also say that some come from Kenya, Tanzania and Chad.

Shockingly, a separate investigation highlighted the fact that it is the United Kingdom, along with Germany, and to a lesser extent, France and Belgium, that are Europe's worst offenders for the illegal market in carved ivory with

many traders there flouting the law openly. This proves that even in Western Europe, the demand for ivory carvings is undiminished, and that CITES regulations mean little. It is estimated that between 6,000 and 12,000 elephants are poached annually, a figure that is likely to be an under-estimate, for slaughter on a massive scale is known to be taking place in turbulent regions such as the Congo, where monitoring is non-existent. The fact that Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park has reported a large influx of fleeing Congolese elephants should be proof enough. West Africa is known to have lost over half its elephants since 1997 and elephants are known to have been massacred in troubled Zimbabwe, (nine having been shot in front of tourists during celebrations to mark 25 years of Mugabe rule) and where they are also dying of starvation and thirst. They are also reported to be dying of starvation in Zambia as well as being poached, often with old fashioned muzzle loading guns.

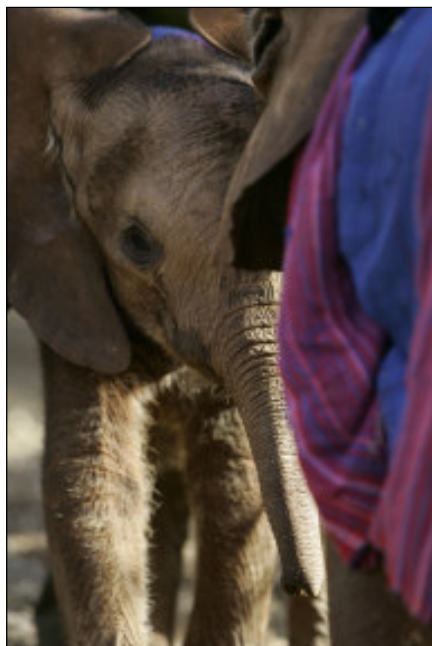
The elephants of Africa are still very much under threat, and now in their Southern African safe havens, the ghastly "culling" is set to start all over again with authorities claiming "too many" and that the "too many" will destroy the habitat and "trample other species underfoot". Everyone hoped that the grand dream of opening up the fences to allow for a vast Trans Frontier Park would accommodate all Southern Africa's so-called "surplus", but this has not come about for elephants are understandably reluctant to move into an area where they will be placed at risk. At risk in neighbouring Mozambique they certainly are, for there ivory is even on sale in the Duty Free Lounge at Maputo Airport. In short, therefore, there is no end in sight to the unhappy situation into which all elephants nowadays are born. Human greed cannot be appeased in any way other than placing all ivory totally off limits, and only then will there be a future for Africa's elephants. The ban on the sale of all ivory has, at least, bought elephants a little more time and now the time has come to **destroy** all legal stocks so that ivory never even gets to the markets and illegal stocks cannot be laundered into the legal system.

Disturbing is the fact that baby elephants are still being taken from the wild for sale to unsuitable destinations such as Chinese Circuses and Zoos, and this year not only from Southern African destinations, but also from Burkino Faso. The Trust was asked to try and intercede to save four baby elephants held in a stable 12ft x 12 ft., two of them infants of only about six weeks old. All were destined for either Middle Eastern or Far Eastern Zoos but before we could find out more, our informant was silenced, so we never did know the sequel to this sad saga. As well as being asked to help save baby elephants in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Namibia this year, Daphne has often again been called upon to issue Affidavits about the abuse meted out to captive elephants, surprisingly even in countries such as the United States and Europe, which should know better. This, in the 21st Century, is, indeed, **disappointing** to say the least.

In the face of the many threats to Africa's wildlife, the Trust will continue its programmes and will implement new conservation initiatives. It is through the assistance of our Supporters that we are able to carry on our work.

We end this Newsletter for 2005 with a somewhat emotional, but I think, relevant quote:-

“When the early Wardens look down at night, the Phantom Elephants rise and all of vanishing Africa is mirrored in their eyes”.



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On line donations can be made directly through the website and all details regarding donations to The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust can be found on the website under HOW TO DONATE

IN THE U.S.A.

We now have a “supporting charity” in the United States, the United States Friends of The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (“U.S. Friends”). The organization has been recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt “public charity” to which contributions, gifts and bequests are deductible for U.S. income, gift and estate taxes. Because U.S. Friends is staffed with unpaid volunteers, all amounts it receives are contributed to The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust.

Checks can be made out to U.S. Friends of The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and sent to:

**U.S. Friends of The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust
One Indiana Square
Suite 2800
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2079
U.S.A
Telephone: (317) 238-6218
Fax: (317) 636-1507
Email: ssmith@kdlegal.com**

IN THE U.K. AND THE REST OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF U.K. AND U.S.A

The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust has recently become a charity registered in the U.K. Charity No 1103836
Cheque donations made out to The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust U.K. by U.K. Citizens should be accompanied by the Gift Aid form which can be printed off the Trust Website www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org The Gift Aid form can be located on the HOW TO DONATE PAGE under U.K.

Donations can be sent to:

**The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust
PO Box 133
Ashtead
Surrey
KT21 9AB
UK
Telephone: +44 (0)1372 229 176
Fax: +44 (0)1372 229 176
Email: infouk@sheldrickwildlifetrust.org**

IN KENYA

**The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust
P.O. Box 15555
Mbagathi
Nairobi
00503
Kenya
Telephone: +25 420 891996
Fax: + 25 420 890053
Email: rc-h@africaonline.co.ke**