

Wildlife Conservation

LEWA RHINO UPDATE

by John Pameri | Head of Wildlife & Security.

Since our last newsletter, we have had lots of ups and downs with our rhino population on Lewa. While our rhinos continue to perform exceptionally well in terms of birth, with so far, five black and two white rhinos born in 2009, bringing our total population to 113 (67 black and 46 white rhinos), we also sadly lost three black rhinos. Our lovely and much adored Charlie, who had been abandoned by his mother on his second day after birth died recently of stomach complications and an irregular large sized liver (he was 10 months old); Jamili who was partially blind passed on following a fall down a 30-metre deep ravine; while BB lost her 5 days old calf after he was gored by a dominant male while he was attempting to mate her.

Despite these setbacks, Lewa's current rhino numbers are significantly important at the National level as they represent over 10% and 14% of Kenya's black and white rhino populations respec-

been positive when compared against standard benchmarks for evaluating the performance of black rhinos. These results would not have been achieved without the very generous support that we have continued to receive from the many conservation partners and supporters both from Kenya and overseas.

Such an extraordinary



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commitment from our partners and supporters has made us raise our resolve to not only continue offering maximum security and protection to the rhinos, and indeed all other wildlife on Lewa, but also to implement appropriate management techniques to ensure rhinos continue to thrive and pre-empt any imminent fatalities in the Conservancy. In particular, 2008 and 2009 has been very challenging as the rainy seasons have failed making browse and grazing fodder scarcer for all the wildlife. We have been forced to implement a wildlife feeding programme for the rhinos, especially, and have been supplementing the feed of mothers wherever possible who have calves that are less than one year, and those whose body condition has deteriorated, with Lucerne and Euphorbia cuttings from trees being cleared from a neighbouring farm. It has been quite interesting observing groups of over 10 rhinos feeding on the Lucerne.



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One of the devastating losses for Lewa this year was the death of our beloved orphaned black rhino, Charlie.

tively. Similarly, all the population performance indicators including growth rates, inter-calving interval, percentage of adult females calving in the year, age at first calving, sex ratio and proportion of calves in the population have all