

LEWA WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

(INCORPORATING NGARE SERGOI RHINO SANCTUARY)



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LEWA DOWNS
PRIVATE BAG
ISIOLO, KENYA

TEL/FAX: (+254-164) 31405
E-MAIL: lewa@swiftkenya.com

UPDATE

SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER, THE MOST EXCITING NEWS IS THAT EVERYONE'S INVESTMENT OF TIME AND EFFORT TOWARDS THE RHINO HAS RESULTED IN SEVEN BIRTHS IN THE PAST NINE MONTHS, THUS RAISING OUR RHINO FIGURES TO 23 BLACK AND 28 WHITE.

All the wildlife has benefited from the wonderful rains of last year, with a big flush of 'El Niño' calves. The Grevy's zebra have risen from 517 to 632 in the past 12 months, which possibly makes Lewa the most productive Grevy's Zebra population in the country.

White Rhino and Mt Kenya



SECURITY

Lewa's security team continues to act as a major deterrent to any poaching both within the Conservancy and the adjoining community areas. There has been no elephant poaching within Lewa or Il Ngwesi since the incidents in April 1998. There have been no serious attempts on the rhino.

Through information gathered over a period of weeks, we were able to arrest the leader of a particularly notorious gang that had been causing trouble in the area for the past 18 months, and was a serious threat to the rhino. The arrest of this individual has undoubtedly acted as a big deterrent to the rest of the gang. This operation was conducted in conjunction with the Kenya Police and the Kenya Wildlife Service, with intelligence provided from our informers. In early January we were called in with the aircraft to assist KWS in a contact with eleven armed poachers just south of Samburu Park. The aircraft proved to be a crucial success in coordinating this operation, as the gang was identified when they repeatedly opened fire on the aircraft. This led to the subsequent arrest and recovery of three people and two firearms. This is the third time in the last twelve months that our aircraft has come under small arms fire in the support of such operations and we are presently looking into the practicalities of providing some protection for the pilot and crew.

TRACKER DOGS

Murphy and Bonnie, the tracker dogs, carry on proving their worth and have been employed in a number of theft related follow-ups external to Lewa. They remain on 24-hour standby to move anywhere either by foot, vehicle or aircraft in response to any incident requiring their expertise.

Kisima Farm are kindly sponsoring the feeding of the dogs by providing a monthly contribution to their diet. This has been greatly appreciated by the Lewa budget and the dogs themselves!

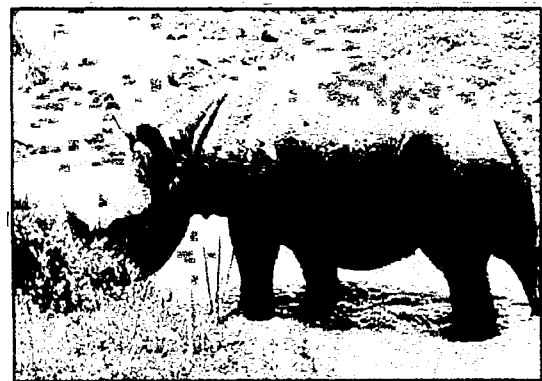
In March, thanks to donations from Cincinnati Zoo and Cecil Gibson, British Army engineers were able to build new and more secure kennels for the dogs beside their handlers' accommodation. This month the British Army will be providing further support for the dogs by sending one of the handlers previously involved to conduct continuation training. This will ensure that both the dogs and their handlers retain their high standards.



Bonnie

RHINO

We have had a stable nine months with no fights or any dramas, and our numbers show a net increase of 16% for this period. We are hoping for a further three black rhino and two white rhino calves in the coming 12 months. All the animals are looking well, and although the November rains failed as we write we have had wonderful rain over the past weeks. All things being equal we hope this will continue to the end of April. The increased area available to the rhino is clearly showing dividends, with a reduction in the number of fights, an increase in our birth rate and an improvement in the general condition of the animals.



Larangoi

The orphaned male black rhino calf, Larangoi, is doing really well and bravely expands his territory. He no longer comes back to Ian and Jane's house to spend the night in the stable but lives out with his keepers, who camp wherever he chooses to spend the night. He is now 18 months old and still fed milk and horse cubes twice a day; this is planned to continue for another six to nine months. He feeds for most of the early part of the night and then comes and puts himself in between his two sleeping keepers for security! He is obviously a thinker and should have a future within the Lewa population.

Both he and us owe a big thank you to Daphne Sheldrick and Susannah Rouse, who provide the financial and logistic support to look after him.

COMMUNITY

The Lewa Community programme goes from strength to strength. Il Ngwesi is an unprecedented success with bookings running at 61% occupancy after only two years of operation. The Lodge remains a first in Africa, in that it is owned and managed by the community. Meetings are held every three months under the chairmanship of The Speaker of the National Assembly, The Honourable F.K.X. Ole Kaparo, who has guided the project since its inception.

The elephant have rapidly come to understand the protection provided to them within the Group Ranch, and whereas previously this was part of a migratory route, they are now resident within the ranch. The next challenge on this project is to increase the level of management of the Lodge to be able to host overseas tourists, and to initiate a translocation programme of surplus wildlife from Lewa to boost numbers within the Group Ranch. Clearly, wildlife is now a new resource for the members of Il Ngwesi, and the future of this concept is secured for the foreseeable future.

The Kenya Government recruited, trained and armed five of the Il Ngwesi game guards as Kenya Police Reserve. This gives them rights within the law for search and arrest, and they have been armed with semi-automatic weapons in order to provide security within the Group Ranch. Whereas in much of the surrounding areas security continues to be of concern, within Il Ngwesi the situation is stable and there is a clear commitment from the community to maintain this situation. This is an excellent indication of the strength of an adapted neighbourhood watch programme, where the communities are effective and willing participants, as opposed to more traditional forms of law enforcement.



Community Game Guards - Il Ngwesi

NAMUNYAK

Namunyak continues its success. The Acacia Trails camp has been very busy and has produced the first significant flow of any revenue back to the landowners. All the guests visiting the camp have enjoyed themselves and have been impressed by the remoteness and the pristine wilderness. The new found wild dog population in Namunyak, numbering up to 70 dogs, is considered by the Canine Specialist Group to be possibly the most significant remaining population in Kenya.



Wild Dog in Namunyak

Five elephant were poached north of Namunyak in October. Through the perseverance and commitment of the Namunyak Field Officer, Michael Lenemaido, he was able to recover all the ivory and initiate the arrest of the individuals concerned, and their firearms. This will act as a major deterrent to any future poaching.

Through the kind support of Tusk Trust and Charlie Mayhew in London, the British Army has had an engineer squadron working within Namunyak for the past three months. They have completely refurbished the original KWS offices in Wamba which will be used by the Trust as their new headquarters, built three new water tanks within Wamba town for use by the schools, repaired a large dam at

Loididikio, put in approximately 28 kilometres of access road and constructed one airfield. This development is of major significance to the whole area in that it helps to establish the security and the basis of a tourist industry, which will provide employment and revenue back to the landowners. The assistance and commitment of the British Army in undertaking this exercise is a major contribution to the community and development of an area that has previously been the focus of little attention. General Sir Roger Wheeler, Chief of the General Staff, visited the project and was very impressed by the work of the Namunyak team in bringing together the whole concept.



38 Engineers Regiment at Wamba Boys School

In mid February alarming reports came in through the radio of an outbreak of cholera affecting the Samburu herdsmen on the East Side of the Marsabit road, all of whom were members of Namunyak who had moved out due to the drought. Through the offices of KWS and the Director Dr. Richard Leakey we were able to coordinate a programme of treatment using the Kenya Army and their helicopters. This is the first time we have worked with the Kenya Army and they proved to be very willing and able partners. In the first five days of this outbreak ten people died and over 100 were affected. After the involvement of the Army there have been no further deaths, and the outbreak has been brought under control. If Namunyak and its communication systems had not been operative, this outbreak definitely would have been much worse and could have resulted in the loss of many more lives.



LION AND LEOPARD

We bought in six new lion from Ol Pejeta with these animals being individually darted and transported in the back of a small lorry. The original plan was to catch four, but the opportunity arose to catch an additional two, which meant the amount of immobilising drug proved to be inadequate to keep them tranquillised for the whole journey. This led to a rather interesting development in the centre of Nanyuki town when two of the six started to wake up! A serious panic ensued as the capture team in the lorry attempted to find a source of more tranquilliser. They were extremely lucky to find a chemist open early in the morning able to supply the relevant drug. The possible consequences have been the subject for many amusing discussions, with the story becoming more hilarious than the truth subsequently proved.



Translocated Lion

The pride of three partially habituated lion have proved to be an extremely valuable tourist attraction, ensuring that many more tourists on Lewa are able to view lion during their stay here. The remaining three were completely wild and have been absorbed into the existing population of 11 animals.

An amazing phenomenon appeared on Lewa during December when reports came in of a black leopard. This was regarded as being highly unlikely due to the fact that this genetic variance, known as melanism, is generally considered to occur only in montane environments at high altitudes. It was confirmed by members of Wilderness Trails who had a grandstand view of this superb animal over a period of two to three weeks whilst it lived below the dining area. A BBC film crew managed to get in on the action and spent three days at Wilderness Trails capturing it on film. Guests at Wilderness Trails now regularly see this animal.



GAME COUNT

In February this year we conducted a game count of the Conservancy using a new system which proved to be more accurate than those previously used. This confirmed an increase in all the wildlife with the exception of gerenuk which died from a blue tongue virus during El Niño. The reticulated giraffe have risen to 240 giving us a 100 more animals than our recommended stocking rate. We plan to try out a new method of capture and translocation of these giraffe and, depending on the success of this, a decision will be made as to whether they can be moved.

	1998	1999		1998	1999
Beisa Oryx	127	141	Impala	698	825
Buffalo	159	245	Warthog	233	367
Eland	227	299	Waterbuck	220	240
Elephant (migratory)	247	170	Zebra Plains	1552	1756
Giraffe	186	240	Zebra Grevy	517	632

SCHOOLS

Laburwa School

The Conservancy in conjunction with the Gemini Trust and Cooper Motor Corporation continue to support 22 bursaries for secondary school students that have graduated from the four primary schools supported by Lewa. The first students to have benefited from this programme have now completed their university exam and we are awaiting their results to know whether this support will continue to university level. The plans to improve the standard of all the schools are presently on hold pending the employment of a Community Officer, with effect from June this year, when a major effort will be made to identify the needs and source appropriate funding to bring the four primary schools adjoining the Conservancy up to an acceptable level.



Mr. Josef Shuel of Il Ngwesi, whose schooling was financed by the Il Ngwesi Group Ranch, has now qualified as a Certified Public Accountant and will be taking up the post of bookkeeper for the Group Ranch in May.

DEVELOPMENT

Ian and Jane's trip to the US and Europe was both interesting and successful. As a result of this trip, and the generosity of all concerned, we were able to meet planned development for the year. In view of the increasing responsibilities and success of the Conservancy's community and endangered species programme, the Conservancy Board have decided that this trip will need to be an annual occurrence. It is planned that Ian and Jane will be in the US for three weeks in late September, and will be concentrating on the West Coast and Canada.

The Board has decided to establish an endowment fund within the US to cover the incremental costs of the Conservancy. Lewa's rhino will forever need a high level of security, and the community programmes will require a degree of management support into the foreseeable future. The establishment of this fund is now a major focus in all our development plans. Although the Conservancy is looking at different opportunities to increase our income from tourism, in such a changing world it is felt only prudent to have a fund which can maintain the operation in the case of a drop off in tourism.

DONORS

Much of Lewa's work and achievements would not be possible without the continued support and involvement of many individuals and organisations. *We consider Lewa to be a worldwide team with a focus on finding a future for people and wildlife in Kenya.* We would like to thank all the members of this team for the part they play without which this whole venture would not be possible. We would like to say a special thanks to:

Anna Merz at Woburn Safari Park

Halvor Astrup, Jane Beard, Mr. and Mrs. Bergauer, Evi Bernhard, Keith and Sandra Blackwell, Dr. Gil Boese, Fritz Bucher, Edward Bucklin, Richard Buie, Robert Bule, Alan Burnbosch, Richard Buthe, Mr. and Mrs. Butler, Jerry Chameles, Louise Charlton, John Cook, Mrs. Mary Cook, Francis Doyle, Thomas Fey, Deborah Gage, Cecil Gibson, Peter Hanson, B. Holdrup, Sandy Houston, Fred and Yvonne Howser, Karen Kane, Paul McIntosh, Gery and Judy Langenbach, Andy Lodge, Pamela Lunny, G. Mason, Charlie Mayhew, Brian and Kathy McKenna, Anna Merz, Johanna Metcalfe, Eva Metzger, Alexandra Montgomery, Patsy Moore, Phil Osborne, Edward Paice, Patty Pearthree, Jan Reed-Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, Art Roscoe, Mr. and Mrs. Rouse, Dr. Alex Rubel, Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Schnitzer, J. Schwmann, Daphne Sheldrick, Jeffrey Short, Charma Smith, Ann Stewart, C. Stewart-Hunter, Toby Tennant, Bernhard Trachsel, Winston and Lynne Trollope, Mrs. E. J. Tunnah, Hans Utsch, Tom and Anne Wamsler, Mrs. Dan Watts, Carole & Charlie Wheeler, J.C. Wieringa, Buzz Winchester, George and Susanna Yousef, Frederick Yvonne.



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Tim Lapage

U.S. 501(c)(3) I.R.S. N°: 87-0572187

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (USA)

10 Claimjumper Court Tel : 435-649-4655

Park City, Utah 84060, USA Fax : 435-649-4655

Email: safari@sisna.com

Hugo de Ferranti

UK Registered Charity N°: 1069800

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (UK)

5 Anderson Street Tel : 0171-225-2656

London SW3 3LU, England Fax : 0171-225-2659

Email: lucy@noblehouse.uk.com

Paul McIntosh

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (Asia/Pacific)

Email: rhino@asiaonline.net