

LEWA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

13 APRIL 2001



Photo: DAN WATSON

The past 6 months have been a bewildering time, where we have seen just how vulnerable this fragile resource of Africa's wildlife really is. The impact of New York's horror was felt amongst all of the communities with whom Lewa works. Thanks to the firm response of the West, we are back to a stable world, but this brought home just what could happen with an extended time of such disarray. The rhino that I meet daily walking to work are here at our combined discretion, as are the giraffe, impala - down to the smallest bushbaby.

The world that we work in is just too small now for these animals to see their own way through a time of anarchy and chaos.

The impact of September 11th turned away our tourism and had an effect on our economy. Consequently, we cut back on employment, and the flow of cash back into the adjoining communities to Lewa reduced significantly. For many members of these communities the challenge of paying school fees became secondary to life's more pressing needs. This time has passed, money is flowing again, tourism is increasing, and we are once again looking outwards. This period has only served to reinforce our resolve to incorporate communities in our conservation strategy. If such disarray was to continue over an extended period, the protection of wildlife will remain firmly outside these communities: if it is not a resource perceived to be of real value to be cared for it will not be protected. The time for these attitudes to be set is NOW. "Philosophical" - perhaps - but true.

Ian Craig - Director

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The Grevy's are going places ...

An extremely exciting project took place in March: the translocation of 20 Grevy's zebra back to their historic range in Meru National Park. The selection procedure was advised by Dr. Daniel Rubenstein from Princeton University. It was based on experiences from a wild ass (*Equus hermionus*) translocation that he carried out in Israel, a species that exhibits the same territorial mating system as the Grevy's. Learning from that project, only two Grevy's territorial males were selected in order to minimise fighting at the release site. In addition, three bachelors have been taken to give them time to learn the landscape and establish their own dominance relationships. Fifteen females, comprising five young and ten adults make up the rest of the group.

The animals were rounded up during the week of 18th February. The Kenya Wildlife Service and LWC darted each animal individually and then transported it to a holding pen by Ian Craig's house, where they stayed for ten days. At Meru, they will undergo a 'soft' release, living in large temporary paddocks for three weeks, near to water and grazing. This will enable them to become acclimatised to their new environment.

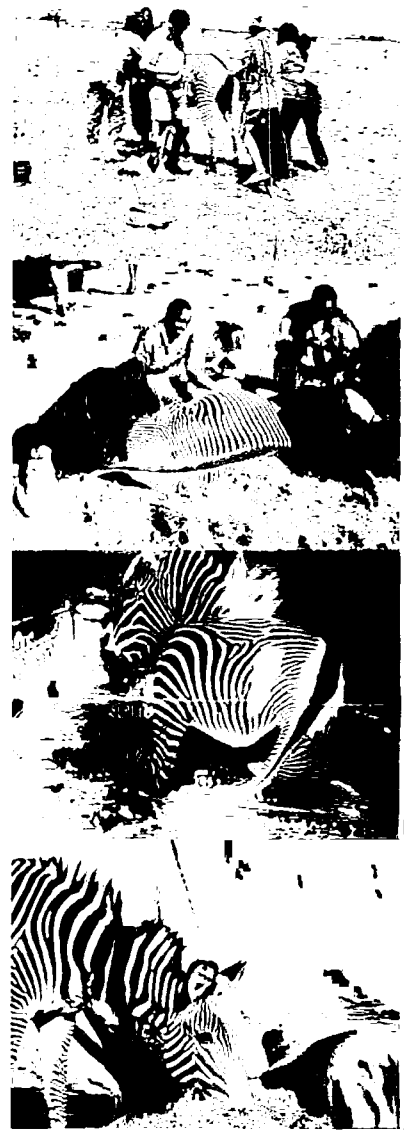
Two males and two females have been radio collared, so that monitoring by future teams of dedicated Earthwatch volunteers participating in the zebra research project at Lewa can be carried out. Long-term post-release monitoring is critical on such projects, so that we can both learn and adapt. To this end Dr. Melinda Franceschini, a vet and PhD student from Tufts University, is here to monitor stress and the acclimatisation process in the translocated zebra following their release in Meru. This approach is known as 'adaptive management', and is the only credible way to proceed when working with endangered species.

Belinda Low - Earthwatch Project Coordinator



as are the white rhino ...

One female white rhino was translocated to Meru National Park in the first week of March as the start of a large and very interesting project. Nine white rhino from all over the country will be translocated to Meru and put together in a holding pen of 300 acres. This is the second of three white rhino to be moved to Meru from Lewa. They will be tranquillised with a long acting tranquilliser for the first ten days to prevent them fighting with each other. They will be kept in the pen for between 6 months and a year. Then the fence will be pulled down and the rhino will be free to roam throughout Meru Park once again.



Zebra boom - Many barrel-shaped females of both Plains and Grevy's zebra were sighted before Christmas, and the New Year brought in a new generation of foals. The Plains zebra began giving birth during December and January, and are continuing to do so. The Grevy's zebra, which have a month longer gestation period than the Plains, are now following in hot pursuit, with new Grevy's foals being sighted every day (48 at the last count!). The Grevy's zebra 'nursery' by Wilderness Trails now has 13 mothers and foals but continues to fill up as imminent mothers seek other lactating females to associate with. Mothers of both species can sometimes be seen grazing together.

Black Rhino The black rhino population on Lewa rose to 30 in August 2001 following the birth of 'Rhinotek' to Juniper. Though we have been forced to supplement the feed of one of the old lactating breeding black rhino female with alfalfa, all the black rhinos are doing extremely well.

Omni, our hand-reared black rhino, moved to Il Ngwesi in the middle of March. Although he is missed around Lewa, his arrival at Il Ngwesi is a landmark for both rhino reintroduction and community conservation.

Lion - We now have three collared lionesses on Lewa. A total of nine lions are monitored every day within the Lewa boundaries.

Hippo - The two hippos on the Lewa swamps have been 'in good luck' with their favourite grazing patch on Richard's lawn. In the daytime, while perched in the Sitatunga blind, it is only patience that will reward you with a glimpse!

Sitatunga - are now a daily sighting. They are often coming out in the open and have been breeding well - with a few young ones being spotted amongst the reeds. From an initial population of less than ten, their numbers have increased to more than twenty.

All game benefited from the November/December rains. Fawns, foals and calves are numerous among all the grazers and browsers including eland, oryx, and buffalo. Each of these species' herds are now dotted with gregarious 'crèche' groups of infants.

Geoffery Chege - Research Department

2001 following the birth of 'Rhinotek' to Juniper. Though black rhino female with alfalfa, all the black rhinos are doing extremely well.

Rhino numbers on Lewa 1992-2001

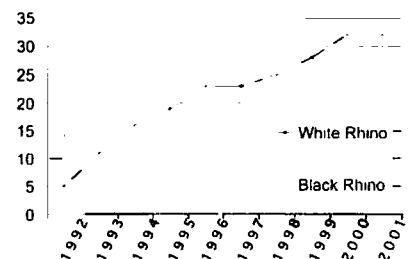


Photo: Fred Hoogervorst

Trip to the States –

After much deliberation we decided to go ahead with our annual trip to the States in November. Our objective was really just to maintain contact with Lewa supporters as we were very aware that people might react badly to fund-raising for a project far away in Africa when so much was happening at home. As it turned out, people were incredibly generous, not just with donations but with time and attention. We whizzed through Boston, New York, Toronto, Denver, Chicago, Washington DC and LA in ten days, quite a process especially as all sorts of alarms went off every time Ian checked in!

Upon our return, we were shortly able to report that we had raised \$250,000. Particular thanks to Betsy Searle and Jeff and Nan Bennett and to the George Cedric Metcalf Foundation. We still have lots to do but this support has been immensely encouraging in a gloomy time. We have also produced a new Lewa Wildlife Conservancy Brochure written by Annabel Heseltine (to whom many thanks). This document is intended to describe the history of Lewa and set its expanding activities in the broader Kenyan Conservation context. Please let us know if you would like one.

Alexandra Dixon – Overseas Director

KPSGA

As a part of the on-going efforts towards the improvement of standards, guides on Lewa and the Community Lodges are to become professionals in their field. Some have already qualified and others are training for the KPSGA (Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association) exams. It is our aim that all guides operating on the Conservancy will soon be qualified.

To the same end, Lewa Safari Camp has recently been the host to an in-house training course entitled 'Working with Dangerous Animals and Advanced Weapons Handling'. The instructor was Ian Johnson from South Africa, and attending the course were guides and rangers from Lewa Safari Camp, Wilderness Trails, Borana, Il Ngwesi, Sarara and Tassia. The course focuses on the safety aspects of weapon handling, but also covers communication with guests, awareness interpretation, orientation, survival and bush skills.

AnneLise (Lulu) Archer – Tourism Development Coordinator

Lewa Safari Camp –

New management at Lewa Safari Camp. On January 1st, John Clark handed over the reins to Sean and Judy-Anne Hartley. Sean and Judy-Anne are both Kenyan and have a great love of safari and the outdoors. Sean has spent most of his life in the safari business and Judy-Anne has a particular love of horses and gardening. Her influence can already be seen in the camp grounds.

John will continue to be based on Lewa while AnneLise (Lulu) continues with her job in Tourism Development. The Conservancy is grateful to them both for the efforts they have put into getting Lewa Safari Camp established as a first class tourism operation and a major contributor to the Conservancy.

Lewa Tented Camp has been renamed Lewa Safari Camp, and Bush Homes of East Africa – bushhome@africaonline.co.ke – has been appointed as the new booking agent.

Wilderness Trails

Wilderness Trails kicked off the New Year with a grand dinner in the bush, lit by the full moon, and dancing with our Maasai neighbours around a giant bonfire.

Needless to say, 2002 is off to a fantastic start! A lioness has taken up residence on the hill opposite the dining room and three large cheetah have been hunting baby Burchell's zebra next to Will's airstrip which has made for thrilling game drives within minutes of Wilderness Trails. Will has joined the Board of the Lewa Education Trust and has been busy delivering donated books and other school supplies to local primary schools, much to the children's glee! We look forward to see you back here at Lewa!

Will and Emma Craig



The Kenyan Portfolio –

Both Wilderness Trails and Lewa Safari Camp are members of a new association called 'The Kenyan Portfolio'. The Portfolio was formed mainly for promotional purposes and features ten properties, all of which offer similar high standards of 'safari experience' and have common themes of commitment to conservation and community related tourism. The Portfolio's inauguration was a Road Show to Europe, which took place in October 2001, with trade presentations being made in Paris, Frankfurt and London. The total attendance was 178 individuals from the media and the travel trade. The Portfolio is going from strength to strength and now has its own website www.kenyanportfolio.com

The Kenyan Portfolio European Road Show was shortly followed by the World Travel Market 2002, which took place at Earl's Court in London in November. WTM is recognized as the most important trade show for the international tourism industry and Lewa Wildlife Conservancy shared a stand with Borana Lodge. The Community Lodges were represented on the Laikipia Wildlife Forum stand.

AnneLise (Lulu) Archer – Tourism Developer

THE
Kenyan
PORTFOLIO



The Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and the Marwell Preservation Trust, the Conservation Charity that owns and is based at Marwell Zoological

Park in the UK, joined forces to protect endangered and potentially endangered species with particular concentration on Kenyan fauna and the rare Grevy's Zebra. Both organisations have a particular understanding of the special skills needed in the protection of threatened species and their cooperation is already bearing fruit. Lewa, with its unique on the ground experience and its home in northern Kenya, and Marwell, with its long association with wildlife protection, will combine in a partnership that will help both organisations towards their shared aims of protecting endangered species and the habitats in which they live and thrive.



Keeping an eye on community –

The past six months have been a positive time for the Lewa's Community program under James Munyugi's guidance. Anne Ruhu has moved across from the Tourism Office to Community Development and with her BA in Education she will be a big help in support of James' programme. All four schools benefiting from the Marathon funds have been building hard over the past six months and if this momentum can be maintained, I am confident that within 4 years the basic standard of buildings within the schools will have reached an acceptable level and we can then start focusing on other aspects within the school curriculum. The schools programme supported by LWC has been separated from the main stream operation of the Conservancy and is now under the LEWA EDUCATION TRUST. The Trust will allow a much more focused approach to Lewa School support with Trustees being selected from within the local school administration, by local community leaders and the Lewa Community Development Office. The Trust will still operate from the LWC HQ with all administration being with the existing staff and audited by Price WaterHouse.

There are 24 students in secondary schools through the Trust.

Ian Craig – Executive Director

LWC – KWS Range Competition

Boxing Day of 2001 saw the Conservancy's security team facing one of its most serious challenges to date! Mark Jenkins, Senior Warden Meru National Park had invited representatives from Lewa armed security to the Park, to test their mettle against his rangers in a shooting competition. Training began in earnest at Lewa a couple of days prior to the day with all weapons being zeroed and weapon handling skills perfected.

Boxing day arrived and eight rangers set out for Meru Park early in the morning, in trepidation at what the day might have in store for them. After a five hour journey they arrived looking rather dishevelled and were dismayed to find the KWS rangers on parade, looking extremely smart, awaiting their arrival. The competition had begun and Lewa was already feeling the heat!

A knockout system was used to narrow down the competition and as the morning progressed, both Lewa teams were still running. Finally, as the scores were compared, it became apparent that there was going to have to be a "shoot-out", to decide the winner of the morning's event. Much to their delight and not a little surprise, the two Lewa teams were involved in the decider! True to form team B managed to embarrass team A, probably with a little help from Stephen Kisio, who, in the excitement, began by shooting at the opposition's metal plates, much to their surprise. A Lewa one-two was very unexpected, apart from by the teams who informed everyone that the outcome was very much as they had predicted!

Magnanimous in victory rather than defeat!

The teams spent that night at Meru Park and were royally hosted by KWS, stories were in abundance and a late start the next morning made for a thoroughly enjoyable couple of days.

There is no doubt that this sort of competition and the joint training that we are lucky enough to conduct with KWS, is invaluable for the Conservancy's security teams. The 'esprit de corps' generated and partnership engendered will help in strengthening an extremely important working relationship.

Mike Watson – Security Manager

IL NGWESI REFURBISHMENT

Il Ngwesi Community Lodge underwent an extensive overhaul, mainly during November (when they were closed) and to a lesser extent through December and January 02 on the finer finishing points.

A huge thank you must go to the Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenburg Foundation, who largely funded the project to the extent of \$52,000 channelled through the African Conservation Center. Their support is very much appreciated. Special reference must go to Dr. David Western who has nurtured Il Ngwesi since its birth and continues to work closely in support of its development.

Logistically, and especially considering the time frame given, this project was a trying task, but the outcome has been well worth it and is pleasing, particularly when positive comments and feedback from recent guests to Il Ngwesi have come through.

In brief, all the original cottages have been reroofed and thatched, and two new cottages built, complete with large open verandahs on stilts for those who fancy a bit of "star gazing" or the like.

The swimming pool has been tiled making a big difference there, and the dining area is now larger and more attractive. Four new Solahart water heating systems are in place as well as extra solar panels for lighting the lodge. A new kitchen has been built with stores and ample space for all the new cutlery and crockery that has been purchased. The entire lodge has been re-plumbed with a new type of high quality pipe called PPRC, which has simple heat welded connections well suited for this difficult environment. The cottages have had swing doors fitted to assist with keeping out the occasional nocturnal visits from local game. Bed linen and mosquito nets are new also to complete the job.

Credit is due to all the staff, who worked very long hours to complete this job, and also to Clare Moller for help on the domestic side of things. Particular thanks to Graham "Crackers" Craker (pictured here with one of the troupe of habituated baboons) who assisted greatly in coordinating all the ongoing work at Il Ngwesi. With his continued input, it will not be long before he becomes a distinguished elder of the local community there!!

Richard Moller – Works Manager



Snared elephant in Samburu

Early one morning in January we got a call from the Save the Elephant headquarters in Samburu Park. They had just spotted one of their elephant with a snare around its leg. The Lewa Team took off immediately and within an hour we were on the site looking for the elephant. It was not very hard to find because the wound really slowed it down. The whole leg looked bent and bruised. The elephant was darted without difficulties and soon she (it was a young female, probably not more than five years old) was fast asleep on the ground and we could take a closer look. The wound was horrific. The snare was buried so deep in the leg so it took Ian about 15 minutes to dig it out. Finally we got it out and the wound was cleaned and she was given a huge amount of antibiotics. After she was given the antidote she came around very quickly and after a few seconds she was up and walking. All of us immediately thought that she looked much better. She was a very lucky little elephant. The snare had probably been buried in her leg for at least five weeks and without having it removed she would not have survived. In the last six months, Lewa has rescued three elephants from snares.



Orphaned giraffe from Sera –

Sera, the orphaned giraffe came to Lewa when she was about two weeks old. She was found by some cattle herders in Sera, a vast untouched wilderness to the north of Lewa. They found her following their cattle one day. We do not know what happened to her mother or how she ended up with the cattle herd but it is likely that she tagged along with the cattle as they passed by where she had been hiding in the bush. Sera has been a very welcome and amusing addition to the Lewa orphan family. She is growing up very fast and already going out on daytrips with her keeper around Lewa. Hopefully she will one day join a herd of wild giraffes here at Lewa.

Sara Spendrup - PR Department



Baby elephant rescued from well –

In late November last year a pitiful sight was beheld: an elephant calf of about 6 weeks stuck, in one of the series of wells at Sera. The poor little ele had evidently been in there since the previous day and, as we approached the well, it became clear that a lion had been trying to fish him out during the night.

Belts were quickly taken off and secured around the fore-feet. A length of bare fuel piping passed around his girth. After a strenuous and exhausting combined effort of tug-of-war & heaving, the little fellow popped out of the well within five minutes he was on his feet and glued to his new-found friends' side. Unfortunately he was so exhausted by his ordeal that attempts to reunite him with other elephants nearby did not succeed. He is now recovered and growing up fast at the Nairobi elephant orphanage.



Serial adoptions of a very different kind –

Over the last few months a Samburu lioness has become something of a celebrity! She adopted a baby oryx in January and then another one month later. As the first adoptee was killed by a resident lion, KWS decided that it would be best to take the second oryx away from its feline surrogate mother. This oryx was then brought to Lewa to be treated for dehydration and to be stabilised. After a three day stay it was deemed well enough to be moved to the KWS orphanage in Nairobi where it appears to be going from strength to strength. Over the Easter weekend, the lioness adopted yet another oryx and the good news is that the little calf has now returned to its true mother.

Photo: Rob O'Meara



Sir David Attenborough at Lewa –

In March last year, a BBC crew filming for Sir David Attenborough's new "Life of Mammals" series came to Lewa and stayed for a week at Lewa Tented Camp. The "Rodent" programme needed a sequence on porcupine, and "Tree Dwellers" required material on lesser galago – bushbabies.

Bushbabies on Lewa inhabit the plentiful acacia woodland and, in areas near human habitation, have become tolerant to people. We were able to film a charming sequence of Sir David standing in front of a 'leaping path' which the bushbabies use nightly as they travel through treetops.

Filming a porcupine would have been an altogether more difficult task as, on seeing humans, they predictably back away, their bristling rumps leaving you in no doubt as to what they think of you. But the KWS's Nairobi Animal Orphanage donated their resident porcupine, "Daisy", for the BBC to use with Sir David before releasing her into the wild on Lewa. A vast porcupine-proof *boma* was constructed in natural porcupine habitat, and a very suspicious Daisy released into it. Immediately, she set about building herself a remarkable little den in the long grass. When night fell, and the porcupine left the cover of the den, David walked into the *boma* carrying a torch fitted with a filter, rendering the light infrared, and the cameraman was able to film him talking about and watching the porcupine feeding on indigenous tuber plants.

Not only did the film crew leave happy with the results, but there was a happy ending in store for Daisy as well. She was kept in the *boma* for a few nights, and fed daily to accustom her to the smells and strange neighbours in her new home, but it wasn't long before tracks of another animal were found outside the enclosure. Another porcupine had actually dug its way into the *boma* and had fed on Daisy's dinner with her. This happened a couple more times until the morning when it was discovered that Daisy had left the *boma* and two sets of porcupine tracks led away from the escape tunnel under the fence ...

Natasha Breed

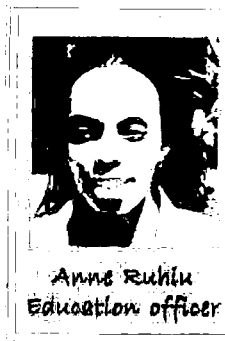


Peter Kiyaa and David Attenborough

Lewa Personalities



Felix Githaka
Assistant Manager,
Tourism



Anne Ruhia
Education officer



Isaac Njagi
Finance Manager



Kalsari and Mzee Kiplangat
Milk delivery

Mike and Sarah Watson

The end of February 2002 saw a sad day for Lewa. We had to say Good-bye to Mike and Sarah Watson. In short, Mike came to Lewa five and a half years ago and since then he has done a fine job in many roles. Mainly as head of Security and wildlife management, his hard work in the Security field has earned Lewa a reputation far beyond its own borders. In the Wildlife Capture field Mike has played a very professional role and has succeeded in coordinating several animal translocations including lion, giraffe, rhino, Grevy's zebra and, most notably, the mass capture-release of 106 Plains zebra from Lewa to Meru Park last year. Sarah Blomeley arrived on Lewa three years ago and, from what I understand, her stay was meant to be for only a few months. Amongst the many other projects that Sarah was involved in, she took charge of organising the first two Lewa Marathons. This she undertook with complete professionalism and commitment and achieved such fine results in the 2001 marathon that she has agreed to return to coordinate the 2002 event. Mike and Sarah were married last October. The Watsons will be back to visit Lewa and we all look forward very much to that day. They will both be missed. However, we wish them the very best of luck and happiness in the future and are confident that they will achieve this. Thank you both for all your hard work and successful efforts on Lewa.

Richard Moller – Works Manager

Peter Jenkins

On the 17th of September 2001 conservation, Kenya and his many friends, lost a great man, the Conservancy its very architect and inspiration – Peter Jenkins. It was Peter who, in 1982, brought to Anna's attention that there was a crisis with rhino and together with Anna conceived the idea of a highly protected fenced sanctuary. Again it was Peter who, in 1993, said "look elsewhere in Africa" as to the way in which conservation is moving. He and Sarah took us to South Africa opening every conservation door in the country. What we learned from this trip led to the formation of the Conservancy. Peter was always very close to Lewa and right up to the last weeks of his life he was still writing to us with advice on how the Conservancy could be stronger and the rhino safer. Peter's contribution to Kenya's conservation programmes for over 50 years is legendary. His name and achievements will surely remain with our generation for ever. We are privileged to have had such a close friendship & working relationship with Peter and, as he quietly watches the progression of time, it is our aim to never waiver from the ethos that he taught us.

Our thoughts are with Sarah, Mark and Siana. With Mark, now the Senior Warden in Meru National Park, there is every reason to believe that Peter's dynasty will continue and grow. "Chuma", go well and thank you.

Ian Craig – Executive Director

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LWC is a shared vision, with many individuals from all walks of life working together to achieve a common goal - to preserve and expand the wealth of wildlife and culture in Northern Kenya. Thank you all for your hard work and lets keep going!

LWC USA

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