

Lewa News

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DEMAND FOR RHINO HORN RAISES THE SPECTRE OF A LONG CAMPAIGN

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As readers will be aware the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy ("Lewa") experienced its first-ever rhino poaching incident late in 2009 when two black rhinos were shot within the forest fringes in the south of Lewa, bordering the Ngare Ndare Forest. Despite Lewa security teams' swift reaction, which prevented the poaching gang from having time to locate the animals and remove the horns; the possibility that this would act as a deterrent to dissuade future attempts was dispelled, when in October 2010 the poachers struck again, killing a long standing member of Lewa's black rhino population, Stumpy.

Stumpy was Lewa's oldest female rhino and had given birth to eight calves in her lifetime. She was accompanied by her 1 ½ year old calf who sustained injuries in the attack. This was a devastating loss for Lewa.

With all on Lewa still reeling from the shock and dismay of this loss and desperately attempting to put in place enhanced measures

to address this huge increase in the threat to Lewa's rhino, another black rhino, Melita, was killed close to Lewa's northern boundary on 2nd December 2010. Again, swift reaction by Lewa's security teams, both unarmed and armed, ensured that the horn was not taken by the poachers, however the message was being rammed home; the rhino security paradigm within Lewa and Kenya, as with the rest of Africa had changed!

The emerging trend with poachers has been to hunt for rhinos in the night for obvious reasons. Lewa has increased the number of night patrols by high profile armed security teams equipped with night vision technology and additional well equipped and trained armed security are deployed in vulnerable areas, following key threat assessments. Aerial support is also at hand consisting of regular reconnaissance patrols and aerial back up to all KPR (Kenya Police Reservists) and general unarmed rhino monitoring teams.



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