

April 2003

LEWA WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER NO. 15

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Introduction

The past six months have been a fantastic breath of fresh air for Kenya, its people and its wildlife. We have had free, fair and peaceful elections, a new government after 24 years, a peaceful transition welcomed in this country by every man, woman and child and indeed the world. President Moi handed over the reins with dignity and our newly elected President, Hon. Mwai Kibaki has picked them up with a spirit of commitment, integrity and enthusiasm that is being felt throughout the whole country. Most of Kenya experienced the most wonderful rains over this time and here at Lewa we had the best growing season for the past five years. All these factors have come together to generate a real commitment by Kenyans to make Kenya a better place only overshadowed by the war in the Middle East. Lewa is part of this team and we will continue to contribute to this new spirit not only to wildlife but also to the people in whose hands its future rests.

Ian Craig - Executive Director

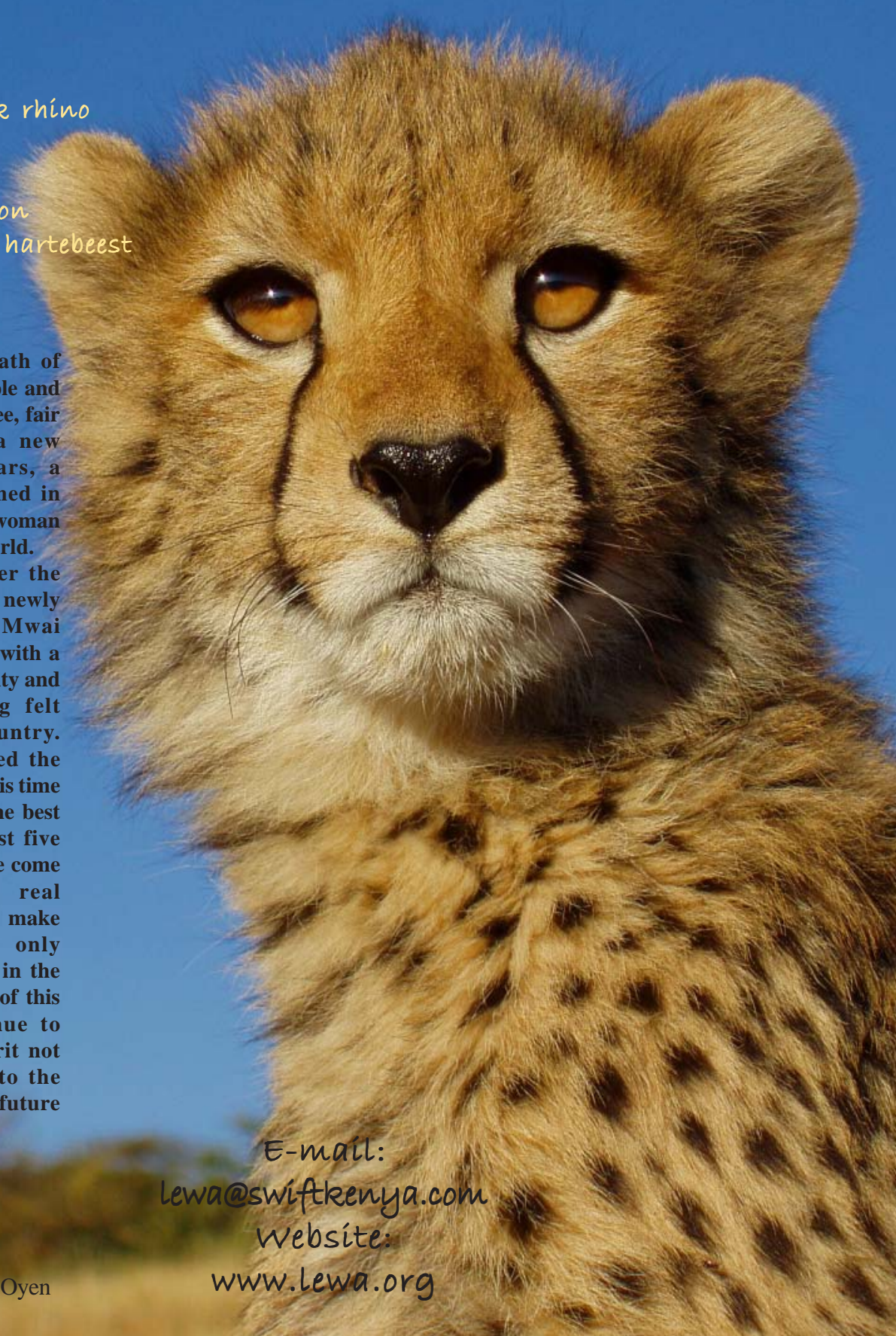
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Research

Rhino news

On 11th December 2002 the new calf of Tumbili, a white rhino, was welcomed by Lewa. Both black and white rhino populations currently stand at 32 each.

In February, a workshop was held at Sweetwaters with KWS, Manchester Metropolitan University and private rhino sanctuaries. A standardised vegetation monitoring system to be implemented in Kenya's rhino sanctuaries was agreed upon. This will allow for cross-sanctuary comparisons, and will be critical in determining the effect of browsing damage by elephant and giraffe on black rhino habitat.

Tracking James

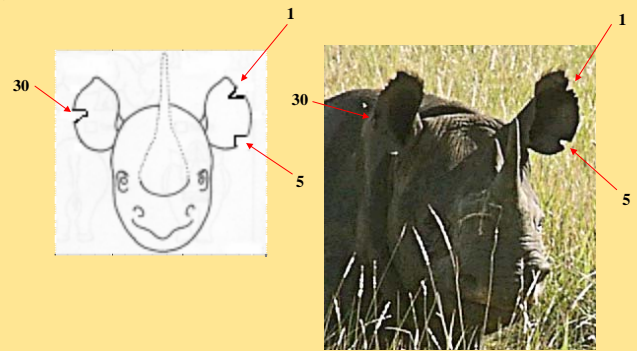
Being a black rhino that likes the forest, James has always tended to be somewhat elusive. However, with the new tracking technology available, this air of mystery was to be short lived. A small transmitter the size of half a matchbox with a 4" aerial attached was fitted into James's horn in February. His horn now emits a signal to a receiver making him easy to locate and of course ensuring his safety.



Ear notching the black rhino

When rhinos do not have any distinguishing features, they are known as 'clean' animals and identifying them can be very difficult, especially in thick bush. In order to make this easier, rhinos can be ear notched according to their ID code. The US Fish & Wildlife Service funded an ear-notching programme for Lewa and Sweetwaters to cover the costs of ear notching ten black rhino within each sanctuary. Using a helicopter piloted by Alan Root together with KWS, Lewa and Ol Pejeta teams, the operation was carried out successfully.

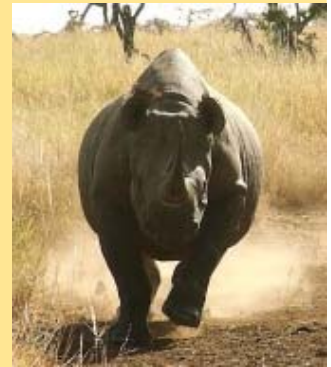
Being able to recognise individual rhinos is critical to their protection and, from the research perspective, being confident about the breeding performance of individual rhinos is important for predicting overall population trends.



Translocation

In November 2002, Baraza, a white rhino male, was taken to Ol Jogi. On release, instead of joining the existing white rhino on the plains, he took to the hills. Ol Jogi's manager, Kimani Kuria, then had the idea of leaving a trail of female dung to entice him down. Like most males, Baraza responded with enthusiasm and immediately followed the trail down to the plains, where he is now seen happily grazing with the other white rhino.

In January, Victoria, a beautiful female white rhino was translocated to Mugie ranch where she joined Boyo, a male white rhino from Ol Jogi. They will be starting a new population in Mugie's new 200 acre rhino sanctuary. Victoria and Boyo are now inseparable.



Kwaheri Kelele

Kelele (meaning 'raucous'), a male black rhino that has fathered many of Lewa's current black rhino population, went 'missing' for a week in December last year. He was subsequently found near Matunda gate, well outside of his usual home range. Observations have shown that Kelele is feeling the pressure from two other black rhino males whose ranges overlap his. To prevent him being killed in a future fight, Kelele was moved on the 22nd of March Meru National Park and became the first black rhino back in Meru since the last one was poached in 1987.

Helping Jackson's hartebeest

A forum for conserving Laikipia's unique Jackson's hartebeest (an intergrade form between Lewel and Coke's) will be meeting in March to take urgent action for this declining species. Lewa's own population has fallen dramatically, and across the plateau, these animals are fast disappearing. Several factors could be attributed to their decline, including lungworm, predation and poor rainfall in recent years. These intergrade forms are particularly interesting as they are in a state of active evolution (Prof. Morris Gosling, pers. comm.) and being unique to Kenya, they deserve to be a conservation priority.



Grevy's zebra

An education project funded by St Louis Zoo will link in with the existing GEF study beginning March 2003. The importance of community involvement in Grevy's zebra conservation cannot be underestimated: with only 0.4% of the Grevy's zebra range falling within official protected areas, their survival within community areas will depend upon the attitudes of the people living there. An education programme that builds upon the existing values placed on Grevy's zebra will be combined with outreach education, which we hope will shape the proactive involvement of communities in the future conservation of this species.

Belinda Low - Research officer

Earthwatch Institute Report

With the involvement of Dan Rubenstein, Phd Princeton University and Earthwatch Institute, the study on the behavioural ecology of the endangered Grevy's and its competitor, the Plains zebra got into its third year in January 2003 with Geoffrey Chege taking over as the Earthwatch Field Coordinator from Belinda Low who moved over to LWC as the Research Officer. In the two years that the Project has been running, new insights have emerged into how the environment influences the distribution and movement patterns of both zebra species on LWC.

The major ecological factor responsible for moving zebras about on the LWC landscape is the quantity, not the quality of vegetation. This is because zebras are non-ruminants and they can process large volumes of grass quickly, but inefficiently. Moreover, grass of high quality tends to be short and not sufficiently abundant to satisfy zebras' needs. The major difference between the two species is that whereas only vegetation abundance influences the movement of Grevy's zebra, Plains zebras are also affected by distance to the water. This is because Plains zebra need to drink more frequently than do the Grevy's zebra.

Data gathered from the Project is important in shaping the conservation and management strategies of the LWC's Grevy's zebra since the Conservancy's ultimate aim is to use its population of Grevy's zebra to restock their former habitats.

Geoffrey Chege - Earthwatch Field Coordinator



Cheetah cubs

It is hard to imagine how frail and tiny the cheetah cubs were when first they came into the care of Jane and Ian back in September. Now, at five months old they look set to take on the world. They have developed from malnourished fur balls into boisterous, cheeky brothers. Their characters as individuals has blossomed too. Toki, the smaller of the two is by far the more cheeky. On daily walks it is he who has taken to trying to trip up his human guardians, and even the dew-claw of a five month old cheetah cub can leave a significant hole in an unwary shin! Definitely time for long trousers. It is also he who shows greatest interest when it comes to games of tag or wrestling bouts, often dominating his larger brother to the point of anguished squeals. Sambu, by contrast, is more serious-minded. Of the (very amateur) attempts the cub have made at chasing prey, it is Sambu who seems to have the edge and a more focused attitude, and Toki tends to charge in regardless. Such cases have so far been directed at warthogs, the odd bird, lizards and hyrax, but none to date have ended in success for the cubs. Just as well when the quarry has been adult warthog, given that these animals can easily rip into a fully grown lion or leopard with their tusks if they are cornered or enraged. Fortunately, the increased speed and agility of the cheetahs is such that we can now allow them to be more adventurous with their targets, though we still discourage them from close approaches to elephants, rhino or large predators. This is done by us using an imitation of a female cheetah's warning growl, and so far it has worked perfectly,



Photo; Toki and Sambu two days after they arrived on Lewa.

freezing the cubs in their tracks, and if continued, sending them sloping off into cover away from the threat. This technique has been particularly successful when encouraging the cubs to be wary of humans on foot (other than their guardians of course). An essential lesson if they are to live a wild existence in a years time. Each month sees dramatic changes in the brothers, all of which we are documenting. We look forward to their continued development in strength and speed, and their gradual steps towards independence.



Photo; Bonnie (retired Lewa tracker dog) with Toki and Sambu, taken by Anna Parkinson.

Newsflash

On Thursday the 20th of February, Toki did indeed chase a family of warthogs. On this occasion he managed to close the gap between himself and the young warthogs, and incited the rage of the mother. In a matter of seconds he was attacked and injured, before we were even able to chase the mother off. His injuries were deep, but all fortunately missed his internal organs. By further good fortune, senior zoo vet Bengt O Roken was staying on Lewa at the time, and was able to assist tremendously with first aid and surgery. To date, Toki is recovering well. The wind has been knocked out of his sails, but perhaps this was the lesson he needed in order to exercise more caution in the field. He is a lucky cat!

Simon King - BBC Wildlife (Simon King is making an hour long documentary for BBC Wildlife on the two cheetah cubs.)

LIONS – from not enough to maybe too many?

As you can imagine, in the days when Lewa was a cattle ranch, lions were not made so welcome. They came and went, often causing havoc during their stays.

Lions have always been here in varying numbers, however they have not been easily and regularly viewed by visitors to Lewa and so from a tourist perspective, the need to try and establish a more reliably viewed population arose.

Two years ago if you saw a lion on Lewa everyone would hear about it. Today they can be seen daily and heard roaring every night and it is no big deal. In an attempt to address the situation, two years ago we decided to seek advice on what we should do from Gus Van Dyk, a reknown carnivore specialist from South Africa, and up to Lewa he came. He advised us in many ways and one of the first things he said was that there were more lions on Lewa than we thought. We collared some animals [which was not without moments of excitement], so as to readily and reliably find them, established a lion monitoring team [with a radio collar receiver], and used various ways of encouragement for the lions to associate with vehicles at a close distance. Over time, a very noticeable difference has taken place on Lewa, to the point of concern. We now know of between fourteen and twenty animals! There is a group of six males, that rule the roost, quite worrying for the foot patrols who have broken into a cold sweat at times. There is a lioness with two half grown cubs and another pair that by their behaviour should be adding to the population in a couple of months time. Visitors to Lewa now see lions regularly. We plan to collar one or two more, in an attempt to continue learning more about them. They seem to be far more settled here and we believe they are staying rather than passing through or lying low and not being noticed.

Richard Moller – Security and Wildlife

Il Ngwesi comes of age.

It has been six years since the start of business at the community-owned and hosted Il Ngwesi lodge; years that have seen it not only earn recognition twice as Kenya's best self-catering lodge (1998/2000) according to readers of Travel News and Lifestyle, but also be a runner up at the prestigious British Airways Tourism For Tomorrow Awards (1997). Il Ngwesi has now gone up one further, and introduced full-board options, which are proving extremely popular especially with non-resident guests. Intriguingly, the staff including the current Chef, are all from the local Maasai community. After undergoing the necessary training, they are able to whip up international standard cuisine, with an added twist of the exotic. By choosing the full-board option, guests now have the luxury of turning up at the lodge unfettered by food provisions. There is additional wildlife as a result of an on-going restocking programme. The spirit of cooperation with Lewa Wildlife Conservancy endures, with Il Ngwesi guests having opportunities for day game viewing visits at no extra charge. These factors will continue enhancing the visitor experience, and ensuring Il Ngwesi's place as the premier eco-tourism destination.

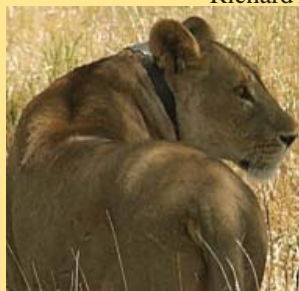
Felix Githaka - Tourism Officer

Trips to the United States and Canada.

Every year the Lewa team swings into action on a "trip to the North America" This year the team went twice on two ten-day safaris to nine cities, with the aim of thanking our existing friends and making new ones. With all the uncertainty in the Middle East and the various stock markets around the world, we knew that times are not good. Tourism is down and people are hesitant about committing to charities or work so far away. But Lewa's work continues and our supporters are very important to us - hence the trips. And we have a lot to be grateful for - thank you especially to our hosts - John Cook and Alexandra Montgomery and George and Susan Youssef in Toronto, Gil and Lilian Boese in Milwaukee, Andrew and Susan Weinstein in Miami, Betsy Searle and Mike Branham (now Mr and Mrs Branham!) in Boulder and Jeffrey and Nan Bennett in Corona.

The Lewa Team are planning another trip to the States in October 2003.

Alexandra Dixon - Overseas Director



Lewa USA

Maintaining our status as a 501 c(3) public charity is very important to Lewa USA, and by extension, to Lewa Kenya. To do this, we need to satisfy certain Internal Revenue Service (IRS) criteria which are applied to the amount and sources of our donations, over a period of four years. If these criteria are not met, Lewa USA reverts to being a private foundation which has significant and not very helpful consequences for our donors and for Lewa.

The good news is that thanks to a great deal of work by Tom Fey, Bill Rouse and Craig Potter, not to mention our new accountants, we have been able to satisfy the IRS of our public charity status so our supporters can continue to obtain tax benefits as well as heartfelt thanks when they contribute to Lewa.

On a different front, Lewa USA has undergone some major changes. Our Chairman is Willard ('Bill') Rouse (Philadelphia, PA), the Secretary is J. Craig Potter (Washington, D.C) and the rest of the board is composed of; Mr. Jeffrey Bennett (Corona, CA), Mr. Richard Buthe (Philadelphia, PA), Dr. Gilbert Boese (Milwaukee, WI), Mr. Tim Lapage (Park City, UT), Mr. Gordon Pattee (New York, NY) and Mrs. Betsy Searle (Boulder, CO)

Tim Lapage has become Chairman Emeritus and Tom Fey has resigned as Treasurer. Both have done an enormous amount to get Lewa USA going and have raised much appreciated support over the years for Lewa Kenya. We thank them both. We also thank Mac Macquoid who was the previous secretary and who resigned due to business commitments. Lewa USA continues to be registered in Utah but all its administrative operations have moved to Marshall, Virginia, home to our administrator, Mrs Helen Christian. Helen is an old (old in experience, not years) Africa hand having run Friends of

Community News

Rugusu springs

There was a successful opening ceremony presided by Honorable Kirugi M'Mukindia, the MP for Imenti Central, assisted by Gillem Sandys-Lumsdaine the representative of the donors that gave the funds for this project.

For a long time about 2000 cattle, sheep, goats and donkeys watered directly from the spring eye. This resulted into a lot of pollution and communities below the spring suffered serious water borne diseases such as typhoid and amoebic dysentery. The completion of the project now separates cattle watering from domestic use. There is now a wash area for clothes, some bathrooms and a toilet. Our thanks go out to:

Open Gate

Maurice Laing Foundation

The Dulverton Trust

The Noel Buxton Trust

The N. Smith Charitable Trust

The Rhododendron Trust

James Munyugi - Community Development Officer



Lewa Education Trust

The Lewa Education Trust has continued to support good education for children in our neighbourhood. The Trust is presently sponsoring 40 secondary, two university and five college students.

The competition between the five Lewa supported schools is ever increasing and for the first time Leparua Primary School, on the Northern boundary of the Conservancy and one of the poorest in infrastructure and pupil attendance, defeated Lewa primary school with the first pupil scoring 296 out of 500 marks in the national exam -KCPE 2002.

For more information please visit our website www.lewa.org.

Anne Ruhiu - Education Officer

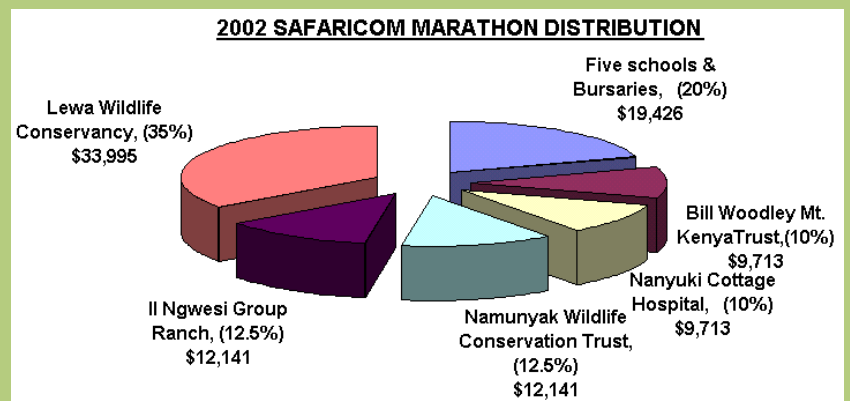
Safaricom Marathon

Last years marathon was a huge success. The final distribution in December came to \$97,128! This money has gone a long way to help various charities. See pie chart for details.

We would like to thank all the runners for the tremendous support for last years event.

This years event will take place on Lewa on **Saturday the 28th of June**. For more information please contact Sarah Watson (sarah@tusk.org) at Tusk Trust for overseas runner or Sara Spendrup for local runners (lewa@swiftkenya.com).

Sara Spendrup - PR Coordinator



Works

Throughout the year, there have been three people involved in running the Works Department on LWC. Richard Moller moved across to take over Security and Wildlife in March. In the interim until mid November, Ivan Smith was running this department which, at that point I took over. Subsequent to a British Army Logistics review, the job has changed slightly and the title adjusted from Works Manager to Logistics Manager reflecting these changes. All building, workshop, vehicles and machinery, water, roads, stores are under the Logistics Manager whilst, fencing remains under Security.

With Lewa, being so dry with a lot of grass, firebreaks are becoming a priority. From west of the swamp following the Fumbi road north has been mown. Mowing and burning road edges along the Subweiga fence line continues which should help protect the Ngare Ndare forest in case of a fire breaking loose.

As per usual, water tanks, pipe lines, electricity, housing maintenance and construction plus all machinery and vehicle maintenance continue to keep us busy, depressed or delighted as the case may be.

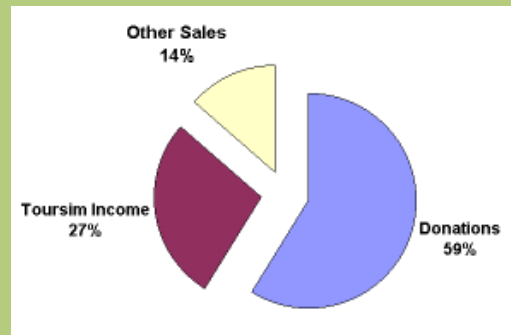
Simon Dugdale - Logistics Manager



Finance

Lewa is currently halfway through its current budget period ending in December 2003. We are still very heavily dependent on donor support (59% of operating costs), particularly in light of our significantly increased footprint in Northern Kenya. We are however, seeing tangible and positive results from our engagement in projects well to our north, particularly in relation to the benefits being generated for local communities and also of course in terms of securing a more inclusive and stable environment for wildlife. However, this does all come at a price our fund raising efforts are more critical than ever. During the year we have conducted a comprehensive activity based review of our budget in order to better understand, manage and fund our cost dynamics. This review has led to the development of a bespoke costing mechanism that allows us to identify and monitor in great detail the precise individual costs of each and every one of our conservation and community development activities. Some interesting statistics have emerged. For example, the cost of looking after one rhino is US \$6,100 per year; the cost of maintaining one kilometer of our game fence is US\$ 325 per year; annual security costs for each of our 55,000 acres in US\$6.50 per yearand so on. As can be seen from the chart we rely on tourism for 27% of our operating costs and of course the war in the Gulf may impact generate some new challenges in this respect but we look forward, as ever, to rising to it. We would like to thank all our donors who have been absolutely magnificent in their unqualified support for us here. We do feel your presence and most appreciate it. It has been through your efforts that we have been able to contribute to national conservation

Isaac Njagi - Finance Manager



Lewa Personalities

Sean and Judy-Ann Hartley - hosts at the Lewa Safari Camp



Jerry and Daisy - orphans on Lewa



Sumbiri Toki - Head of the Lewa Capture Team



Omni - Happy three year-old at Il Ngwesi



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David Parkinson

We welcome the addition of David Parkinson to the Conservancy as "Director Operations". This position has an enviable responsibility of coordinating all the different sections of the Conservancy at headquarters level. With David's background of 29 years in the British Army he is obviously ideally suited to take on this challenge. There were fears within the finance department of a parade and PT every morning! So far this has not been seen and we all welcome the professional approach already developing within the Conservancy's headquarters team and within our affiliated community programmes.

Ian Craig - Executive Director

Alex Rhodes

Alex came to Lewa as a volunteer fresh out of University looking for a new horizon and some adventure. He found both but his incredible level of competence, personality and commitment to detail landed him in the position of "Volunteer Administrator" filling a temporary gap until David Parkinson arrived. This is a pretty daunting task, facing a sea of e-mails, everybody's problems and no "field time". Alex's enthusiasm bubbled over all of this and he took the position in his stride earning the respect of all within the Conservancy. We all wish him luck in his plunge back into the real world and look forward to seeing him back once he meets the realities of his Western whirlwind. Alex, Thank you.

Ian Craig - Executive Director

Photo: Alex Rhodes



The Lewa web-site has been updated and has had a "face-lift". Please visit us on

www.lewa.org

We can now also take donations online!

LWS' mission

statement. "Lewa Wildlife Conservancy works as a catalyst for conservation of wildlife and its habitat. It does this through the protection and management of species, the initiation and support of community conservation and development programmes and the education of neighbouring areas in the value of wildlife".