

NAIROBI OFFICE
P. O. Box 49918
TELEPHONE: (+254-2) 607893
TEL/FAX: (+254-2) 607197
EMAIL: lewa@swiftkenya.com



LEWA DOWNS
PRIVATE BAG
ISIOLO, KENYA

LEWA WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

NEWSLETTER N^o: 6 — JUNE 1998



—*— UPDATE —*—

From January to April El Niño continued to wreak havoc and destruction on the roads, fences, buildings and most significantly finances. Literally for three months, we were unable to move within the Conservancy by road and all work was by foot or by aircraft. At some stages it was impossible to cross the Lewa River even by vehicle. This phenomenon has been the single biggest influence on the Conservancy during the past six months. We have had essentially no revenue from tourism, filming or wildlife utilisation. This has given the administrative side the unenviable job of trying to balance a very difficult budget.

SECURITY



AN OBSERVATION POST

With the abundance of surface water north of Lewa and the apparent increase in interest in ivory, commercial poaching of elephant has started again. Throughout the whole six months we have been maintaining observation posts north of Il Ngwesi in conjunction with KWS with considerable success. These consist of two men spending up to six weeks on a strategic high point. They are equipped with radios, solar panels, night optics and telescopes and have proved an extremely cost-effective way of looking after elephant outside of conventional protected areas. Since November, six poachers have been killed. In late April 15 poachers were again reported and in the subsequent follow up with the KWS and our personnel four men were arrested and four automatic weapons recovered. The presence of these OPs is undoubtedly a major deterrent to any poacher as the timing of their presence and their position changes regularly. Within the Conservancy, we are happy to report no poaching incidents. There was, however, one attempted entry by four armed men which was thwarted at an early stage. With effect from the beginning of June, we are deploying one patrol of two men to operate on horseback; in South Africa this is a method regularly used to cover large areas economically.

RHINO

The rhino are all in beautiful condition and amazingly there have been no births or deaths during the past six months. We anticipate that all the breeding females should now be in calf and look forward to a heavy calving in the coming year equally from all the other species of wildlife which have benefitted from the abundance of vegetation.

COMMUNITY

Income generation for our community programmes has suffered in much the same way as Lewa and so although both community lodges are well established, income for their first six months has been down. However, the cohesiveness and commitment of these communities to wildlife and the benefits from it continue to grow and every day and month that these projects move forward, the future of the wildlife in these areas looks brighter.

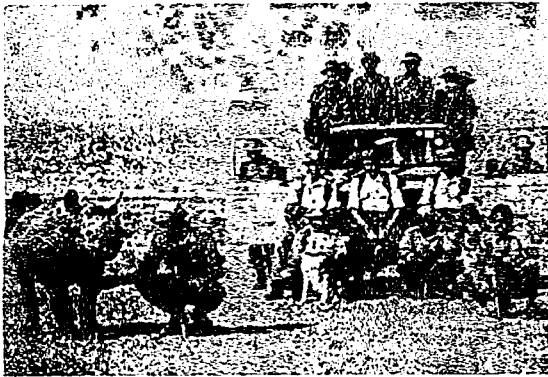
AIRCRAFT

The SuperCub has proven invaluable during the unpredictable weather in supplying rations, radios, etc. to patrols we were unable to reach by road. Ian & Jane's son Bavian, having obtained his flying licence in South Africa, has been doing most of the flying over the past two months.

—*— WILDLIFE —*—

RHINO

The orphan black rhino calf Larangoi continues to thrive and grows bigger by the day. He has another year or so on milk before we have the challenge of releasing him completely into the wild. He presently spends the day free in the Conservancy



MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY STAFF, LARANGOI, MURPHY, BONNIE
AND THE VEHICLE DONATED BY THE TUSK TRUST

with two handlers and returns in the evening to the protection of his stable. He is a wonderful character when he is in a good mood and very entertaining to spend the morning with. We again want to say thank you to Susannah Rouse, Jill Woodley and the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust for their continued support and help.

Both the black and white rhino are all in excellent condition. Interestingly there has been no change in the home ranges with the improvement of the vegetation and no reports of any aggression. Our Staff Ecologist Shadrack Muya continues to run the Home Range Programme Records of individual rhino, which is proving most interesting and helpful when we need to look for missing animals. We fully expect a new crop of calves in the coming year with three Lewa born blacks at breeding age and our original two females, Solio and Stumpy with adult calves at foot, could give birth at any time.

GIRAFFE

Six giraffe were successfully translocated to Namunyak but we were unable to radio-collar these due to the circumstances of the capture. The game guards in Namunyak report that they are quite a bit tamer than the indigenous ones and are easily recognisable. It is anticipated that we will move another 10-14 animals in the latter part of the year depending on the availability of a helicopter. We hope to continue this on an annual basis, as it is a much more rewarding and acceptable exercise than having to cull the population in the Conservancy.

ELEPHANT

Six elephant were poached just north of Il Ngwesi in late February, which resulted in an orphan calf ending up within the Conservancy. He initially tagged along behind a breeding herd but being only 18 months old his condition deteriorated eventually he was left on his own. The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust kindly offered to take care of him and to move him to Tsavo, as we did not have the facilities to look after him here. This took place in April and the little animal was flown to Voi where he is doing very well and is together with other orphaned animals.

Elephant are monitored on a monthly basis both for their distribution and numbers and it appears that we are home to over 200 animals, at times rising to just under 300. We have been involved with Save the Elephant in placing satellite collars on four of the original collared animals. The results from these collars should prove most interesting as they give two hourly positions as opposed to monthly positions, which we have worked with since 1991.

We had an unfortunate incident of a man being killed within the wildlife corridor during April. There is a serious conflict developing within the corridor between illegal agriculture and wildlife and this is an issue which we are going to have to resolve in the medium term.

LION

We have radio-collared two lion within the Conservancy in an effort to obtain more information on their habits and distribution. With increasing human pressure throughout the country, suitable habitats are reducing and in the long-term we would like to provide protection and a safe environment for them. The exercise is proving very interesting in that the lion are living daily amongst us all and it is only through the radio collars that we have learned their habits. The Conservancy presently has seven lion but with the increasing wildlife numbers, we could support a substantial increase.

GAME COUNT

We conducted a wildlife census in March. The exercise is extremely testing due to the large concentration of Grèvy's and Burchill's zebra. At the best we feel that we are within 75% of a totally accurate count and have erred on the low side. With the ongoing increase in Grèvy's zebra, Lewa's is undoubtedly an extremely important population.



SY-BHL CHECKING THE BOUNDARIES



THE CONSERVANCY LORRY MOVING GIRAFFE

STOP PRESS

On 20th June, the Game Guards reported a lioness with 3 small cubs raising the Conservancy lion population by 30%.

—*— INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT —*—

UPGRADING INFRASTRUCTURE

Thanks to the generous support of The Tusk Trust in London and The Foundation for wildlife Conservation in Milwaukee, we are currently building two new Junior Staff complexes, which should be completed by mid-August. Housing continues to be a major challenge for us to provide the standard of housing required for all levels of staff.

Matunda Gate will represent the public face of the Conservancy when it becomes the main entrance onto Lewa from the Nanyuki-Isiolo road. The development of the Gate and security staff accommodation there is essential and urgent. This project will be funded by The Tusk Trust.

Phase 1 of a Social Hall for the staff will begin shortly funded by public donations and money raised by the Lewa staff themselves.

We employed the services of an external consultant Paul Clarke who worked with the Management team over a period of a week to identify all the issues and costs of strategy in future planning of the Conservancy. This proved invaluable to everyone as it identified all our requirements in vehicles, infrastructure, personnel, equipment and finances and is the first time that we have sat down as a team to map out the future. Based on this document, we plan to approach various institutional donors to assist on issues which we see as of a national interest as opposed to of direct benefit to the Conservancy. This would include schools, community development, the Ngare Ndare Forest Working Committee and the protection of endangered species. (Copies of this document are available through the Conservancy office.)

TRACKER DOGS

In early March the British Army gave the Conservancy two trained tracker dogs. We considered that with a well trained tracker team this would act as a big deterrent to any potential poaching. Thanks to the help of Colonel Macdonald at the Army's headquarters in England and Colonel Tony Blanch who commands the Army's training staff in Nairobi, Murphy and Bonnie arrived with two handlers, Staff Sergeant Tredwell and Corporal Alec Bares. Both dogs had seen operational service in Northern Ireland and it took several weeks for them to acclimatise to the heat and the conditions. The four Conservancy trainee handlers proved extremely adept and once they had learnt to believe the dogs more than their own eyesight, the training proceeded very well. Since their arrival they have been used operationally three times resulting in the arrest of four armed poachers. They received enormous local recognition with Government and local police.



BONNIE WITH HER NEW HANDLER

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Acacia Trails started operations at their new Sarara Camp in Namunyak. This is a very exciting development as it is the first revenue-generating scheme in a Trust area after seven years of operation. If the Trust is to have any long-term future it is imperative that we develop a source of revenue that is linked to the wildlife. Although with El Niño it was an extremely difficult first three months, Acacia Trails and the Trust feel that the terrain and the wildlife are ideal for an eco-tourist destination. Plans are under way for the Trust to purchase a shareholding in this Camp so as to be stakeholders in its future.

Il Ngwesi continues to work well with a majority of the bookings coming from within Kenya. On 5th April the company declared a dividend of 1 million shillings which went back directly to the Community. This was announced at a colourful ceremony attended by members of the World Bank, the donor community, local politicians and community members. The Management of the lodge under Simon Dufresne changed at the end of May and is now being managed directly by the community. Bookings are through Let's Go Travel in Nairobi. Il Ngwesi has been home to very large numbers of elephant over the past few months and with the increase in poaching has proven to be a safe haven for the elephant.

SCHOOL BURSARIES

The School Bursaries scheme received a very welcome boost through a kind donation of US\$15,000 from Sir Adrian Swire's Charitable Trust (Hong Kong). This will help our Bursary Fund reach a level to provide full scholarships for up to 20 students indefinitely. In view of the tight financial constraints over the past six months, we have been unable to allocate funds towards schools improvements.

THE MISSION CLINIC

The Clinic continues to operate under the auspices of Grace Kirera. With the abundance of water we have had our full share of health problems - mainly malaria. The construction of this clinic has proven a great success and is providing a far better service of health care to our staff and the local community than was previously available.



THE ROAD
LEADING TO THE
MAIN GATE
BECAME A RIVER



—*— DONATIONS & FUND-RAISING —*—

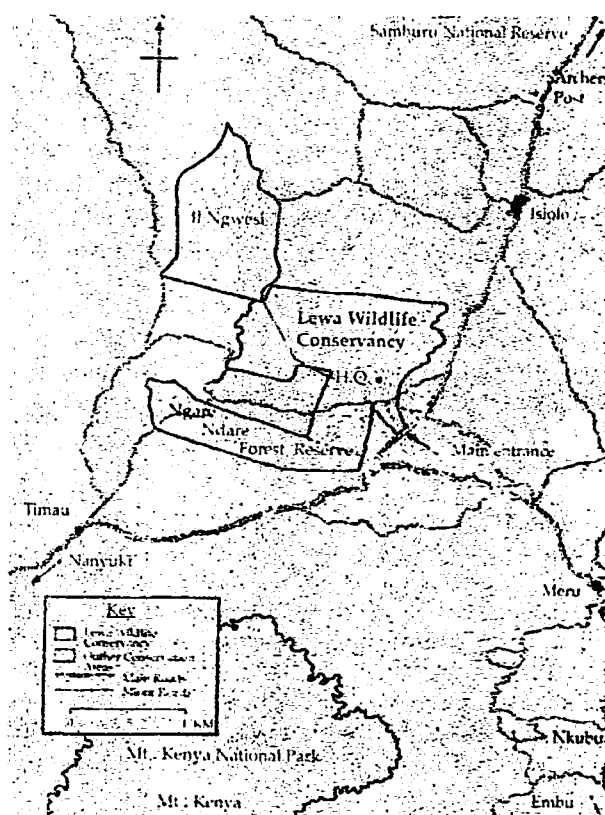
We are indebted to The Tusk Trust and CMC Motor Group for their very generous donation of a vehicle to the Conservancy which releases another vehicle to the Security section. There are now two vehicles and drivers on 24-hour stand-by to react instantly to any threat of an incursion.

Ian Craig will be undertaking a promotional trip to the United States in late September and early October. He will, together with Jane, visit Washington to meet with institutional donors, New York for a dinner organised by Deborah Gage; from there they will visit Philadelphia for

another fund-raising dinner. They will attend the American Association of Zoo Keepers' Conference in Indianapolis. Ian will then give a talk at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago and travel to Toronto to liaise with donors in Canada. From the US, the Craigs will return to the UK and Europe to see donors and lay the groundwork for future fund-raising efforts for the Conservancy.

The Board and Management of the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy would like to thank the following for their kind support since the publication of our last Newsletter:

The American Association of Zoo Keepers (USA), Bernadette Andrey (Switzerland), Born Free Foundation (USA), British Army Training Liaison Staff Kenya (Kenya), Edward and Claire Burdett (USA), Marcel Burgraver Foundation for the Protection of the African Elephant (Switzerland), Richard Buthe (USA), Martin Clarke (Hong Kong), CMC Motors Group Ltd (Kenya), John Cook (Canada), Warrick Cumming (Zimbabwe), The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (Kenya), Dan Drake (Zimbabwe), Henk du Bruyn (South Africa), Eden Wildlife Trust (UK), Martin Forster (Kenya), Foundation for Wildlife Conservation (USA), Gemini Foundation (UK), David Gilliard (Zambia), Yvonne L. Houser (Switzerland), Charles & Karen Johnson (USA), The Kenya Wildlife Fund (Canada), Gill Martin (Zimbabwe), Mr. & Mrs. Andrew G. Matthes (USA), Mrs. P.J. McIntosh (UK), The Metcalf Foundation (Canada), Anthea Montgomery (UK), Ngare Sergoi Support Group (USA), Omni Computer Products (USA), Edward Paice (UK), Herbie & Patty Pearthree (USA), Christine Phipps (USA), John & Elizabeth Pierce (USA), Pittsburg Zoo (USA), Brad Raffle (USA), The Rhino Trust (USA), Susannah D. Rouse (USA), Angus Selby (Zimbabwe), Sir Adrian Swire's Charitable Trust (Hong Kong), Joanne Stefanatos, DVM (USA), James Stewart (Canada), The Tusk Trust (UK), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USA), Morten Werring (Norway), James Winchester (USA), Mary Wykstra-Ross (USA), Zoo Atlanta Docents and AZAD 97 (USA), Zoological Society of Milwaukee County (USA), Zürcher Tierschutz (Switzerland).



Special thanks must also go to those who run our principal fund-raising organisations overseas:

Tim Lapage

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Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (USA) Tel : 435-649-4655

10 Claimjumper Court Fax: : 435-649-4655

Park City, Utah 84060, USA Email : safari@sisna.com

Hugo de Ferranti

UK Registered Charity N°: 1069800

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (UK) Tel : 0171-225-2656

5 Anderson Street Fax : 0171-225-2659

London SW3 3LU, England Email : lucy@noblehouse.uk.com

Paul McIntosh

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (Asia/Pacific) Email : rhino@asiaonline.net

