Editorial

MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY and readers of *SWARA* will wish to join us in congratulating President Moi and the Government of Kenya on the quick return of law and order after the disturbances on Sunday, 1st August, 1982. (See Horizons on page 18.)

AMBOSELI—featured in this issue—is an interesting sanctuary because of the effort made to create a National Park which benefits the local population instead of merely depriving them of their traditional lands.

For wildlife to survive in significant numbers over a long period it will always need the tolerance of local people; and certainly people will be more tolerant if they gain direct benefits from wildlife. Ideas formulated in Amboseli are also being applied in other areas—for example in the Masai Mara National Reserve—and this is all to the good.

But efforts to ensure that local people benefit directly from wildlife sanctuaries in their home areas must not cause us to forget two other aspects of conservation.

Firstly; people all over East Africa benefit from wildlife through the substantial foreign exchange earnings and job opportunities created by the tourism industry. The mini-bus driver, the waiter, the lodge manager and the supplier of vegetables all benefit from conservation even though wild animals may not exist in their own home areas; and in a steadily developing country these arguments will gradually become more powerful.

Many industries and developments make use of land without necessarily benefiting the local people. Nairobi's new Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, for example, makes use of land which was formerly used for grazing, as do the new Firestone and General Motors factories just outside the city. In such cases the needs of a modern, developing country overwhelm local interests because they offer employment opportunities and other benefits to the whole nation.

In the same way there may be some areas where conservation should be given over-riding importance even if the local community suffers; and it is arguable that some of Kenya's National Parks and Reserves should be enlarged to accommodate an expanding tourism industry.

The second point to be emphasised is that wildlife is not merely an economic asset. It certainly makes good sense to exploit wildlife and earn money from this asset on a sustained-yield basis; but wildlife is also an aesthetic and cultural asset which should be preserved for its own sake. And, again, in a steadily developing country this argument will also become more powerful. It is out of date to suggest that this concept of wildlife as a cultural heritage is irrelevant to traditional African values; so is golf and so is the cinema, but there is no shortage of Africans on the golf courses and in the cinemas of Nairobi! Similarly more and more citizens now find the money to visit National Parks in Kenya to enjoy this heritage for themselves.

There are presently over 60,000 members of the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya, in schools throughout the country, all of whom will be adults with a knowledge and interest in wildlife before the end of this decade!

Of course it is important to design National Parks and Reserves in such a way that they benefit local people and achieve good relations with them. But this should only be part of a larger aim: to preserve a **unique** heritage of steadily increasing value in our ever-more crowded world.

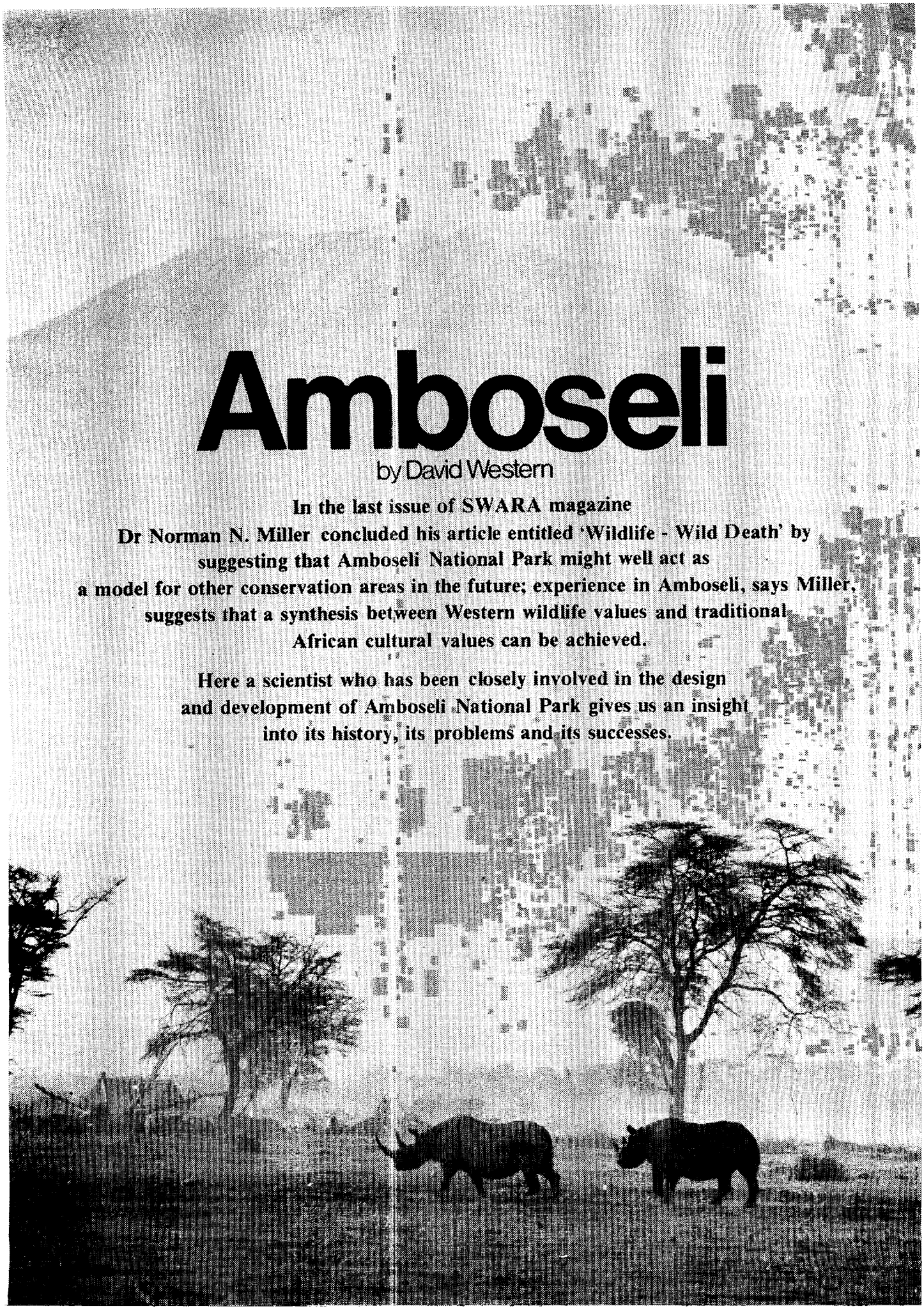
FIRST PUBLISHED in July, 1978, *SWARA* is now four years old. We are proud of our steadily increasing circulation (we are printing 20,000 copies of this issue) at a time when many other magazines are folding both here in Kenya and elsewhere; so we have indulged in a little narcissism by publishing some of our fan letters on page 36.

Amboseli

by David Western

In the last issue of SWARA magazine Dr Norman N. Miller concluded his article entitled 'Wildlife - Wild Death' by suggesting that Amboseli National Park might well act as a model for other conservation areas in the future; experience in Amboseli, says Miller, suggests that a synthesis between Western wildlife values and traditional African cultural values can be achieved.

Here a scientist who has been closely involved in the design and development of Amboseli National Park gives us an insight into its history, its problems and its successes.



David Keith Jones

Peter Davey

Maasai Giraffe and acacia trees against the backdrop of 19,340 foot Kilimanjaro.

Joseph Thomson the Scottish explorer and naturalist barely lived to provide the first report of Amboseli to the outside world. Narrowly escaping a rhino attack and the belligerence of the Maasai, he continued on from his entry to Amboseli on 14th August 1883 to become the first European explorer to penetrate the hostile interior of Maasailand. He acknowledges that the absence of the entire warrior population of the dreaded Loitokitok Maasai, who were busy raiding in Ukambani, Kavirondo and as far as the coast, accounted for his success, where earlier he had been repulsed when attempting to pass south of Kilimanjaro.

If the reputation of the Maasai was reason to restrict the entry of outsiders to Amboseli prior to the turn of the century, it hardly accounts for its continued neglect until well after the 1940s. Only a live-and-let-live attitude of the British colonial government towards the Maasai, and the remoteness of the inhospitable "Njiri Desert" guaranteed its insularity from the outer world. Consequently time stood still in Amboseli a half century longer than most geographic regions in East Africa, where culture and environment were changing at an accelerating pace, displacing wildlife and disrupting their ancient ecological cycles of migration.

The power of the Maasai collapsed late in the 19th century after a series of disasters including the devastating disease, rinderpest, which spread through their cattle herds, a severe drought, and finally smallpox. It took most of the early decades of this century for them to recover, by which time their isolation was disturbed by the *Il-ashembai,* (the Europeans) inquisitive of their ways yet anxious nonetheless to change them. Rinderpest innoculations, water schemes and medical clinics were introduced into Amboseli during the early 1940s and each contributed to the welfare of the Maasai and their herds and was thus adopted enthusiastically after initial suspicion and resistance. But perhaps more than any other benefit, boreholes and dams were most easily appreciated and had ultimately the single largest influence on changing the ecology of the parched landscape. Where before, Thomson had noted the restricted distribution of water within the Amboseli swamps, new sources made available great tracts of land formerly too far afield during the dry season to be reached by livestock.

> *"In the plain of Njiri we have a spectacle which in certain aspects is as impressive as Kilimanjaro itself. . . The exceptional nature of the site is emphasized by the stupendous mass of Kilimanjaro, the pyramidal form of Meru, the double peak of Ndapuk (Longido) and the dark height of Donyo Erok, which are faintly traceable through the dull grey sheen. In spite of the desolate and barren aspect of the country, game is seen in marvellous abundance. . . The inquiry that naturally rises to one's mind is How can such enormous numbers of large game live in this extraordinary desert"*
>
> Joseph Thomson 1885

The cattle populations began to increase apace, fed by new grazing sources, and protected from diseases. Though the health of the Maasai also benefited from medical services, their rate of growth was substantially slower than their livestock. Meanwhile the colonial administration more forceably urged the Maasai to sell their livestock in order to contribute to national productivity and to benefit from a cash economy. The resistance of the Maasai to selling cattle was surprising to range officers and within a few years the ambitious large-scale grazing schemes they had planned were abandoned.

In retrospect I believe that the Maasai, in resisting change, were doing so for no better reason than the greater wealth they were suddenly enjoying in response to their proliferating herds. Individual holdings increased to over twice traditional levels, a wealth unprecedented as long as the Maasai could recall. So what reason was there to change their practices when life was improving after so many years of duress?

It was also in the 1940s that the curiosity of the *Il-shembai* finally focused on the scenic and wildlife spectacle that Thomson had described in the Njiri Desert. At first a few wayward photographic safaris bumped their way along a rutted 50 mile trail from Namanga to view the remarkable herds of zebra and wildebeest Martin and Osa Johnston had filmed in the 1930s when

...Amboseli

conducting their pioneering air safari throughout eastern and central Africa. Later visitors were equally and unfailingly impressed by the diversity of wildlife, by their seeming indifference to humans, and by the elegant groves of fever trees backed by the "stupendous mass of Kilimanjaro". As yet the Maasai were considered an integral part of the scene, a benign influence on wildlife and perhaps the reason it still persisted here where elsewhere human pressures were displacing it. For their part the Maasai were indifferent to the presence of visitors who posed them and their land no special threat and, in a variety of small ways, were beneficial, providing a few minor items otherwise unobtainable, and if nothing else, some mild amusement. But the impressions the visitors departed with, and the photographs shown to other curious *Il-ashembai* was soon to change their relationship with the Maasai.

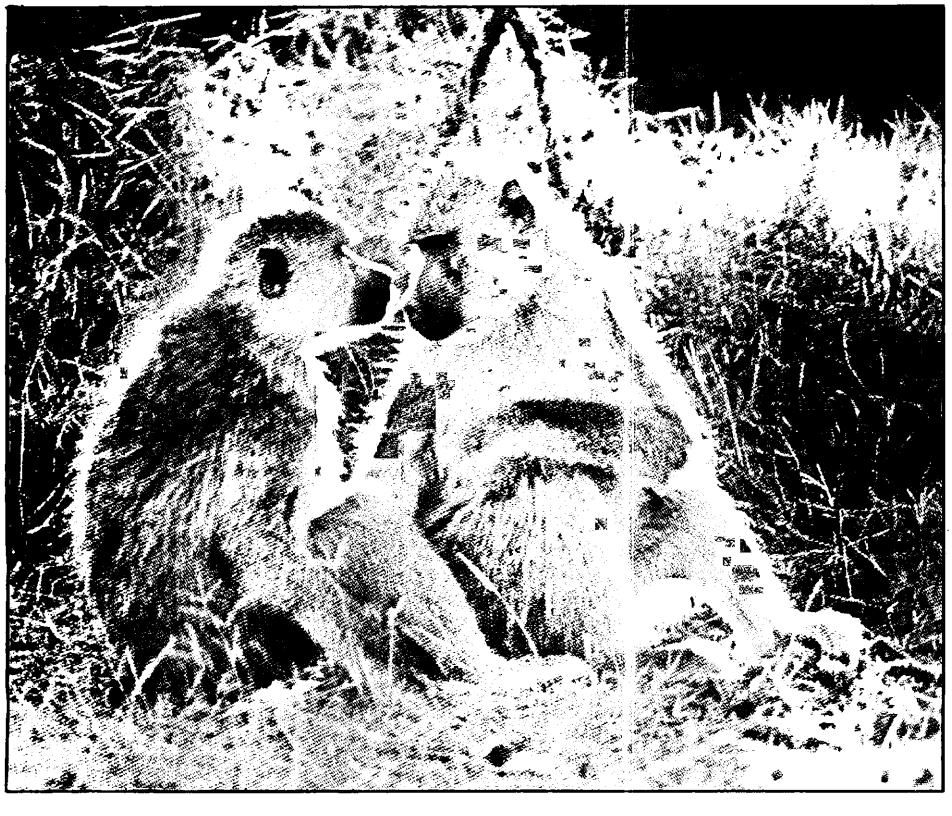
From historical experiences in Europe, later on in North America, and simultaneously in Southern Africa, there was an early consciousness amongst a number of Europeans in East Africa that its unique wildlife, however abundant it seemed, could soon be exterminated unless measures were taken to protect it from slaughter and encroachment. Surprising as it may seem to us now, serious discussions on wildlife protection in East Africa were held in the 1890s amongst various colonial powers, largely due to the mounting concern over indiscriminate slaughter of elephants for ivory. The Southern Maasai Reserve, established in 1899, was in part a response to that concern, and in part an area guaranteed to the Maasai for their own use. In effect this enormous area, which encompassed both Narok and Kajiado Districts, allowed the Maasai and wildlife of Amboseli to continue interacting as they had done for centuries. Though poachers did find their way south, the increasing vigilance of the Game Department restrained the killing, which never amounted to much around Amboseli by virtue of its isolation.

By the 1930s it was obvious that the reserves were inadequate to fully protect wildlife since they catered equally to humans, whose interest would inevitably predominate once their numbers and activities increased. An appreciation of the security offered by national parks took root and, following a long struggle, led to the establishment in 1947 and 1948 of Nairobi and Tsavo, and to other parks soon afterwards. To create a national park however, meant forceably removing whatever people traditionally claimed its land and in many circumstances that was impossible, however spectacular the wildlife populations. Land for certain of the parks like Tsavo was chosen not because wildlife was abundant, but because it avoided human land claims. In other cases rights were simply waived for lack of legal land ownership and the insignificant political clout that could be mustered. In yet other areas, amongst them Amboseli, Mara and Samburu, the pressure of human numbers denied such radical measures. Instead another conservation category, the national reserve, was instituted. The reserves nominally accepted existing human occupation and land practices, but discretely presaged the intentions of the Kenya National Parks, who administered them to create a fully fledged national park at the first opportunity.

Amboseli was established as a national reserve in 1948. Covering 1259 square miles, it was a wedge carved off the former Southern Reserve which ostensibly gave protection to the wildlife concentrations that centred on the swamps around Ol Tukai, within the ancient Amboseli lake basin. In practice the reserve boundaries were arbitrary and

Joe Cheffings

Sometimes there are too many tourists! Lions seem to tolerate this kind of overcrowding; but cheetah are often disturbed and inhibited in their hunting.



Michel Van Steene

Olive Baboon in Amboseli National Park.

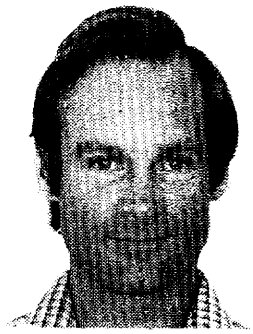
failed to cover the wet season dispersal areas. Most of the reserve lay west of Ol Tukai and included vast areas of waterless thorn country little used by Maasai, or by the migratory herds it was supposed to preserve.

From 1950 onwards, the drama of Amboseli unfolded with quickening pace as visitors, Maasai and livestock numbers and their use of the area grew alarmingly, drawing international attention to the seeming victims — wildlife and habitat.

The livestock proliferation was an inevitable outcome of water development. What was not so obvious was the time lag in the growth of the Maasai population and the consequence it was to have on their traditional livestock practices by the early 1960s. The decade opened with the largest drought of the century, so severe in fact that over 70% of the cattle reportedly died. With more Maasai than ever before depending on livestock around Amboseli, the government was obliged to provide enormous quantities of famine relief to avert a disaster. Whereas human numbers would in the past have been reduced, they instead continued to increase. Cattle recovered shortly afterwards and for a brief interlude the Maasai returned to their traditional livestock economy, hoping they could sustain the wealth enjoyed over the preceding twenty years. They were also acutely aware by now that the Kenya National Parks, under pressure of increasing numbers of annual visitors, was laying claim to a substantial portion of Amboseli for exclusive wildlife usage. Between 1950 and 1960 Amboseli's reputation as a wildlife mecca, and its continued ease of access, led to a growth in visitors from a few hundred a year to over 15,000. By 1968 the numbers had doubled to 30,000, and by then the growth of livestock had slowed as severe food shortages were felt once more. Visitors were no longer seen with bemusement, but rather as a looming threat to Maasai livelihood at a time when land was running short.

There was an inevitability in the simultaneous growth of livestock herds and tourism in Amboseli: inevitable that the Maasai would be challenged for the land because of its widening wildlife fame; inevitable that the alien interests would be challenged once their numbers increased and the traditional economy of the Maasai faltered once again. The conflict was aggravated by two further factors however, that could not have been anticipated. First, with approaching independence and the conviction that the Maasai should be managing their own affairs, the Kenya National Parks in the early 1960s handed control of Amboseli to the Maasai Kajiado County Council, which administered the region. The Council took over the management of the reserve and reaped its mounting profits. Second, the picturesque fever tree woodlands began dying at an alarming rate. A number of noted conservationists drew the obvious conclusion that the burgeoning cattle populations and the lack of constraint imposed on their use of Amboseli now that the Kajiado Council had taken over, was leading to ecological destruction through overgrazing. "Amboseli Becoming A Dustbowl" was a frequent news headline prompting international indignation and the conscience of the newly independent Kenya Government.

Arriving in 1967 I was aware of the intense controversy that loomed over Amboseli and in fact had chosen the area for ecological study largely because of it. Daniel Sindiyo*, a young Maasai who had risen through the ranks of the Game Department and returned with a wildlife management diploma from the United States, had recently taken over as Warden. Responsible for wildlife in Amboseli, yet culturally aware of the plight of the Maasai, he inherited an impossible task — a reserve run down through neglect in the years since the Council took over, and little authority or financial backing to resolve the clash of interests.



David Western, born in Tanzania and now a Kenya citizen, has been involved in research and planning in Amboseli since 1967. Through his work there he became involved in planning for the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife and in 1978 established the Wildlife Planning Unit. A former East African Wildlife Society Director, he is now a Kenya Wildlife Fund Trustee. Since 1973 he has been supported by the New York Zoological Society who have been closely associated with the development of Amboseli National Park.

Nevertheless, his dynamism and dedication were vital in containing the hostilities of the Maasai against wildlife and in upgrading the management of the reserve. Perhaps the most far-reaching action Sindiyo took was to establish a wildlife committee in order to discuss mutual concerns; each member obtained a small sitting allowance for his attendance. There is no doubt that the committee's influence and Sindiyo's concerns did much to reduce the pressures on wildlife. But already large numbers of rhino were being speared as the Maasai protested their ire at the overriding interests of wildlife and tourists. Over thirty animals were speared within a five year period. In most cases the horns were never removed.

My own intentions were to understand the significance of Amboseli ecologically to wildlife and to the Maasai, and to determine their numbers and seasonal migrations. It was impossible however to ignore the clash of interests for long, and in the coming two years I worked closely with Sindiyo, considering and proposing alternatives for the future of Amboseli.

A number of important factors became evident from my research. Wildlife migrations moved well beyond the boundaries of the reserve, which therefore failed to provide adequate protection. The seasonal migrations of the Maasai were broadly similar to those of wildlife, and brought them back to the basin each dry season because of limited water elsewhere. At the end of each season forage remained in areas too far for water-dependent species to reach. With the aid of Charles van Praet I was also able to determine that the fever trees were dying due to salinization of the area following a natural, climatically-induced change in the water table. But although vindicating the Maasai of destroying Amboseli, this finding did not solve the conflict of interests which had intensified to the point where the government were threatening to take over the area.

To relieve the conflict, Sindiyo and I proposed that the Council should establish a 200 square mile park. The idea of a national park had been raised earlier, but failed, because it ignored the rights of the Maasai. We proposed instead a County Council Park, perhaps administered by the Kenya National Parks, but with the revenues being returned directly to the Maasai. To enable them to relinquish their dependence on the swamps, we also proposed a series of wells in areas beyond reach of dry season grazing. Frank Mitchell of the Institute of Development Studies, Nairobi University, aided greatly in showing the enormous profitability of Amboseli to Kajiado and the nation, and its pivotal role in a booming tourist industry.

The economic arguments held great sway and convinced key Kajiado District politicians that it was time to take strong action on the park if they were to forestall a government takeover. However, with the elections approaching and the land issue prominent in the minds of the local Maasai, the winning platform was the call for their exclusive land rights to the entire Amboseli region.

The Council were powerless to stave off the repercussions which followed. With annual visitation approaching 90,000 and revenues well in excess of K.Shs.2.5 million, the government could no longer ignore the pending loss of Amboseli when alternative use under livestock yielded a fraction of that amount. In the final analysis, the economic arguments tipped the balance and the area was declared a 150 square mile sanctuary by President Kenyatta in 1970. The plan was accomplished after Sindiyo had left Amboseli, but did guarantee that the Maasai would be given alternative water sources elsewhere, as we earlier proposed.

However, I was concerned that the solution was far from adequate, since it overlooked an obvious imbalance.

*Now Director of Kenya's Wildlife Conservation and Management Department. *Ed.*

...Amboseli

Although the sanctuary would protect wildlife within the region of the permanent swamps in the dry season, it failed to cover the migration routes soon to be designated ranches for the Maasai. They were justifiably outraged that having lost the Ol Tukai area, wildlife would still migrate to the new ranches. The Maasai were also concerned that alternative water would not be provided there and that Amboseli would become a national park, not merely a wildlife sanctuary. The Kenya National Parks were undeniably anxious to take over immediately and pressed hard to do so.

Meanwhile the New York Zoological Society and the World Bank were approached by the Kenya Government to finance the alternative water supplies for the Maasai. The New York Zoological Society strongly endorsed the need for the Maasai to benefit from the sanctuary, given their crucial role in maintaining its wildlife. Their endorsement of the principle, and their contribution financially to the development scheme, lent credibility to the plans and weight to the negotiations then underway between World Bank and the government in which benefits to the Maasai were a key component.

But why should the Maasai be included in the benefits of the park when a Presidential Decree had already ensured that wildlife would be preserved? The main reason was the changing attitudes and land rights of Kenyans. If the national park could only survive in its present form through the continued migration of its wildlife to the dispersal areas, then surely it depended on the good will of Maasai who were fast changing in their lifestyle, political awareness and intolerance of concessions they were continually forced to make for wildlife. Their position was simple and inarguable: "Why should we abandon Amboseli for the sake of wildlife only to have the animals follow us onto our own private lands where they consume forage reserved for our livestock? If we are not permitted to graze our own cattle on government land, why should they be allowed to graze their animals (wildlife) on ours?" In short, their answer was a declaration that unless the imbalance was rectified, they would destroy whatever wildlife they could, deny them access to their traditional migratory areas, and burn the vital Amboseli swamps.

This was no idle threat. Rhinos were now being speared at the rate of more than 12 a year and, despite increased antipoaching activities, there was little that could save the population which had plummeted from some 150 in the late 1950s to less than 30 by 1973. Without the cooperation of the Maasai, and without continued access to their land, Amboseli would lose the majority of its animals. In short, despite the Presidential Decree, there would be nothing much left worth conserving.

Frants Hartmann

A Black Rhino wallowing in the swamps of Amboseli.

With the Ministry of Wildlife and Tourism I worked on a formula which both acknowledged the costs to the Maasai and endeavoured to include them in the benefits of the park. This took a variety of forms. First, I calculated how many livestock the Maasai lost in allowing the migratory wildlife to use the land and proposed they should receive a wildlife utilization fee to cover those losses. Second, to relieve the pressure on the park from buildings and tourism, I proposed that the new headquarters be located outside the park boundaries where its school and dispensary could be used by the Maasai as well as park staff. In other words, it would become a rural centre which directed the growth centres away from the principal wildlife concentrations. Finally, I also proposed that the campsites and other tourist facilities also be located on the outer edge of the park boundaries where they would relieve the pressure of tourism in Amboseli, and at the same time ensure that the revenues from bednight fees would go to landowners within the region, whose goodwill was vital to wildlife.

It was to take a long time before these proposals were endorsed, for in the meantime the Kenya National Parks had successfully lobbied to take over the park and saw little reason to cater to the problems beyond its boundaries. Indeed, they had no mandate to do so, and only the informal negotiations that Joe Kioko, the incoming warden, held with the Maasai forestalled a disaster. Quick to appreciate the precarious status of a park devoid of its crucial dispersal areas, he reconvened the wildlife committee that had first been established by Sindiyo. Nonetheless, Kioko's position was under sufferance of the County Council and he possessed few legal powers. Instead he worked by persuasion and tact, and soon restored a measure of control over the

Frants Hartmann

A buffalo with an attendant Cattle Egret.

disastrous state into which the park had fallen. Despite his constant patrols, the rhino however continued to die by Maasai spears. In 1977 when it formally became a park, a mere 8 animals remained, such was the wrath of the Maasai at their impending losses.

Meanwhile protracted negotiations were underway in Nairobi between the World Bank, the Kenya Government and the New York Zoological Society. The need to cater to the larger area used by wildlife was eventually accepted by the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife who commissioned me, aided by Phil Thresher and the Kajiado Wildlife Management Project, to prepare a comprehensive development plan for Amboseli. Completed in 1973, it became the model for justifying a similar approach in other reserves in Kenya and the negotiations with the World Bank grew into a comprehensive programme for wildlife and tourist development throughout Kenya. Amboseli was eventually to receive nearly $6million for carrying out the developments we had proposed.

In the mid-1970s Amboseli suffered a severe drought which was widely regarded by the Maasai as the worst this century. By the time it ended early in 1977 over half their cattle had died. The disaster made the Maasai even more acutely aware of what they were about to lose in Amboseli and they argued forceably that they could not survive without some swamp grazing. Further concessions were made by handing back to them a portion of the swamps contained within the park boundaries in exchange for a portion of the drier bush country to the north. It was a move unpopular with conservationists, but, responsible for the drawing of the park boundaries, I could see no other option that would lead to long-term coexistence. In the final year of the drought, the pipeline providing the Maasai alternative water sources beyond the park, was

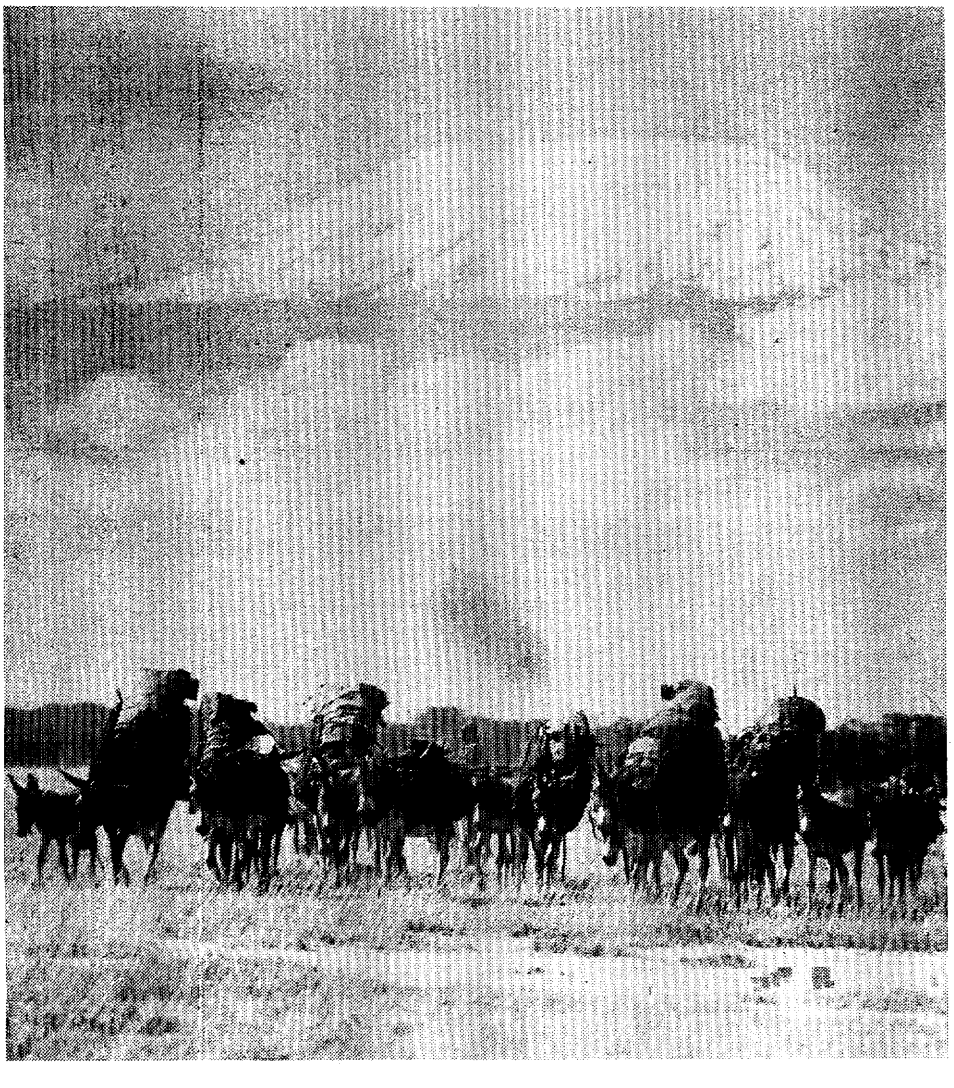
David Keith Jones

Amboseli is notorious for its dust, formed from the fine volcanic soils; but for this elephant a dust bath is a luxury.

finally completed. It was time for the Maasai to relinquish the park — but because the severity of the drought their exclusion was delayed until the rains returned in mid-1977 and until some of the benefits we proposed for them were made possible. Nonetheless to relieve the pressure on the park, the water was provided immediately and large numbers of Maasai vacated it to gain access to the new grazing areas made available in the north.

A last minute flurry of activity was undertaken to ensure that by the time the Maasai were denied further use of Amboseli, they would begin to receive financial benefits from it. It was in stony silence that the Maasai were told of their final exclusion by Minister Ogutu, but once the benefits they were to receive were announced, there was a measure of relief that their interests were not after all going to be ignored. Sindiyo's presence at the meeting was significant. He had, since he left Amboseli, risen to Deputy in the newly amalgamated National Parks and Game Department (the Wildlife Conservation and Management Department) and was in a position to lobby strongly for the Maasai benefits he had promoted nearly ten years earlier. And so, on 22nd of July 1977, Amboseli finally became a national park.

The last five years have seen some remarkable successes, as well as a number of notable failures in Amboseli. With the exodus of Maasai livestock the numbers of wildlife in the park have increased greatly. Buffalo have risen from 480 to over 800 animals, wildebeest and zebra by some 30% and most other species by a similar amount. However, it is the numbers of elephant and rhino that demonstrate most clearly what has been accomplished. Whereas the numbers of both species have continued to decline throughout Kenya as a result of poaching, the numbers have risen sharply in Amboseli. The rhino have in-



Arthur Christiansen

Maasai people on the move in Amboseli, at the foot of Kilimanjaro.

...Amboseli

creased from 8 in 1977 to 14 in 1982, and elephant from some 480 to over 620. Not a single rhino and only a few elephant have been poached. Without doubt the welfare of wildlife can be attributed directly to the rapport between the Maasai and Amboseli wardens. The wildlife utilization fee the Maasai receive has made them one of the wealthiest group ranches in Maasailand and they have used it to build their own school. They have also benefited greatly in other ways, such as fees from road building materials and firewood. On July 1st this year, the campsite was finally relocated on their land and they now receive all tourist revenues from it. The new headquarters is complete and could soon relieve much of the pressure of numbers around Ol Tukai.

The present warden, Bob Oguya, continues to use the Maasai Wildlife Committee as a forum for dealing with the mutual concerns of the park and the landowners in the dispersal areas. His talents in such negotiations have been crucial to Amboseli's success. Like Kioko and Sindiyo earlier, he has appreciated the need for a reciprocal arrangement with the landowners who most directly affect Amboseli. New viewing circuits are being constructed, some of them beyond the park boundaries.

Despite the success, the water scheme threatens to undermine the reciprocity that has evolved. Designed on the assumption that the Maasai would become sedentary, it has proved inadequate to deliver water to the far reaches of the pipeline where periodically large congregations of livestock gather. As a result, the Maasai have received insufficient water to provide for their needs and in the last two years have had to depend partly on the park swamps. This has also allowed them to take advantage of the situation by grazing their livestock in the park. If they had one main fear about the entire Amboseli plan, it was that the government would not be able to provide adequate water where it was needed, and their resentment has steadily increased as another drought has set in. Upwards of 3,000 cattle have entered the park in recent dry seasons, and though well below the 20,000 that regularly used it during the 1960s, their presence has stretched credibilities that Amboseli is after all a national park.

In an attempt to upgrade the pipeline, the New York Zoological Society has been working on a new plan with the Wildlife Conservation and Management Department. This will call for a further $140,000 investment, of which they have donated 65%, and the government the remainder. However, delays by the Ministry of Water Development in attending to the improvements have also stretched the Maasai's credibility of the project and new efforts are underway to enact an emergency plan.

Frants Hartmann

An elephant enjoying the mud in the swamps of Amboseli.

Two other related problems have plagued Amboseli since it became a park. Firstly, 400 acres were retained by the County Council around Ol Tukai Lodge to guarantee them its revenues. Despite earlier proposals, the area does not come under national parks control, and no constraints have been placed on the proliferation of buildings, lodge beds or on the quality of services. An unsightly sprawl of huts and buildings has developed, generators roar continuously without any effort at noise abatement. No attempts have been made to lanscape the unsightly results. It is only with firm management and planning that Ol Tukai township can be prevented from destroying the naturalness that attracted visitors in the first instance.

The second and related problem is the overwhelming visitor numbers that plague Amboseli even before the physical developments underway are completed. The result is both an unnecessary pressure on wildlife, especially cheetah, and a level of crowding around them that is sufficient to deter many of the tour companies from sending clients there. Unless the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife takes control of the number of beds in and around the park, its attraction will continue to decline as visitors travel elsewhere to seek more natural viewing conditions.

Looking ahead it is inevitable that the Maasai will continue to change as they become increasing commercial. But given the arid nature of the region, it is unlikely that the population will increase in proportion to the more arable areas. There has in fact been a steady emigration to surrounding arable and urban areas. Provided the changes in land tenure and ranching are anticipated, and provided the landowners continue to profit from Amboseli's wildlife, there is no reason why the annual migrations should not persist as they have done for millenia. The more immediate challenge is to balance conservation and tourism in the park and this can only be accomplished by long-range planning and by visitor management and interpretation, two aspects that have barely been addressed in any of Kenya's parks.

Cover photograph:
Crowned Crane with chick.
Robert Palmer.

The Impala antelope is the symbol of the East African Wild Life Society. Swara (sometimes pronounced Swala) is the Swahili word for antelope.

Swara

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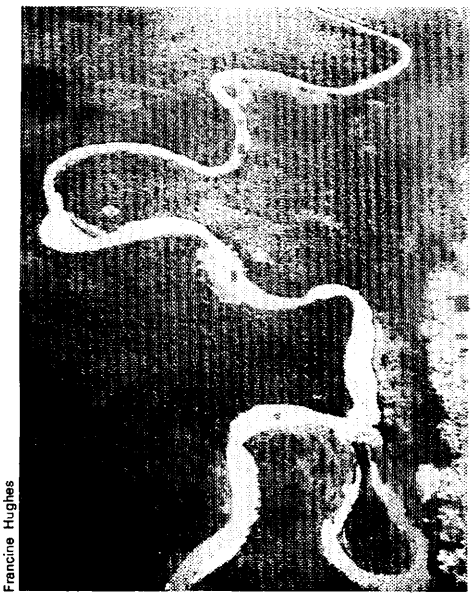


Francine Hughes

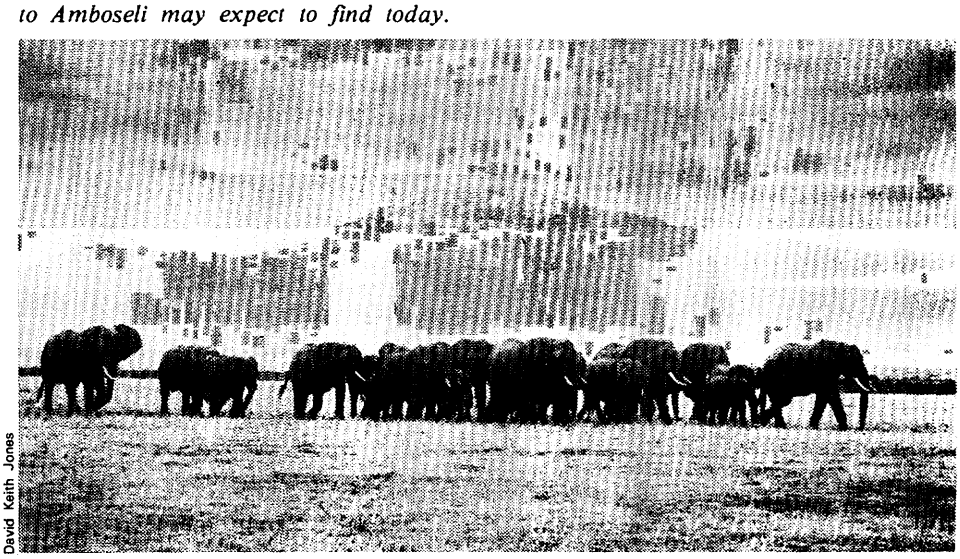
The lower Tana river.
A scientist, whose research was partially funded by the East Africa Wild Life Society, writes on this important but vulnerable ecosystem.

Loving leopards.
An exceptional photo-feature shot in the Aberdares National Park.

Amboseli National Park.
Dr. David Western, a noted authority on Amboseli National Park, writes on the history and development of this important sanctuary and explains how the interests of the local Maasai people have been considered in drawing the Park's boundaries.
Clare Shorter writes on what visitors to Amboseli may expect to find today.

Contents

The salt-mining elephants of Mount Elgon.
The fantastic story of how elephants in Mount Elgon National Park penetrate deep underground to mine salt in total darkness.



David Keith Jones