

LEWA WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

NEWSLETTER NO. 14

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Photo: Demery Family

100% INCREASE IN LEWA'S RHINO POPULATION SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER. YES, IT IS REAL!

The biggest dividend of everybody's hard work in developing and supporting Lewa is to be able to record the birth of four black rhino and four white rhino calves since our last newsletter. When Anna started the Ngare Sergoi Rhino Sanctuary in 1983, we struggled to find a single rhino to initially stock the sanctuary. Whoever thought we would be reporting eight rhino births in a mere six months! What's more; three of these are born to females that were themselves born within Lewa. We can confidently say that if we maintain stable security and monitor the stocking rate, we are really now contributing to Kenya's overall rhino population. Our total rhino population currently stands at 32 black and 33 white rhino. We have translocated three white rhino back to Meru National Park and one black rhino to II Ngwesi Group Ranch. I anticipate over the coming five years that we will be moving more black and white rhino back into these new areas in order to maximize the production of rhino from within Lewa.

Inevitably in life the road is not without corners and bumps and sadly one of the calves born this year was killed by a large male leopard. To our knowledge this is the first time such an incidence has been recorded. (See accompanying story on Mawingo).

The other significant achievement over the past six months is that II Ngwesi has been selected as one of 22 finalists from 400 participants in the Equator Awards to be given at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg at the end of August 2002. Again it is hard to conceive that such a humble initiative and commitment by this community can lead to such a high level of international recognition, but the fact remains that it has and if this commitment continues the sky is the limit both for the wildlife and this community.

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In recognition of the significance of Lewa's Grévy's zebra population, we anticipate focussing more attention on trying to find out the reasons why the populations outside of our boundary are declining whilst at the same time our population is booming. This will be the specific task of Belinda Low and her Earthwatch teams in the coming year under the guidance of Princeton University and Dan Rubenstein. Lewa recently provided 20 Grévy's zebra to Meru National Park and it is only through this continued research and monitoring that we will be able to develop a programme in conjunction with KWS to restock the National Parks and suitable community areas. The little that we have learned to date is showing that these animals outside of Lewa are moving enormous distances and we are yet to identify what specific reasons drive these movements. An interesting story should unravel over the coming years with the Grévy's zebra.

The Kenya Wildlife Service count of the elephant within the areas with which the Conservancy is working showed a total of 1,536 animals whereas five years ago this was just over 300 animals. The reasons for this incredible increase are diverse and many. I believe the three prime reasons for this incredible success are the continued ban on international trade in ivory, the steady application of Kenya Wildlife Service in the protection of these animals and the dedicated commitment of these communities to protect and benefit from their wildlife. The elephant are clearly responding to the protection provided and moving back to areas where they were previously. With continued stability and community commitment I believe we can look forward to ten good years ahead of us both for elephant and people.

Ian Craig – Executive Director

Mawingo's calf

Mawingo, meaning 'cloud', is a partially blind female black rhino and came to Lewa from Nakuru National Park in 1989. Her damaged vision is a result of fighting when young. Since her arrival at LWC she has calved three times. Due to her poor sight she has unfortunately had difficulty in rearing her young; her first calf was killed by lion, the second, Omni, was abandoned and hand-reared on Lewa, and tragically her most recent calf was killed on 17th August, exactly one month after birth, by a huge male leopard.

On the morning of the 16th Mawingo was reported without her calf, twenty-three security staff, along with the LWC Supercub for aerial assistance, set off immediately to the area where she and her calf lived. We were optimistic that the calf had been left behind under a bush and that we would find it. After two sweeps of the valley with a line of men just a few yards apart we did bump into three fully mature black rhino (which produced some fast beating hearts, but no calf). Deep in the valley below Anna's house, something the size of a warthog was noticed in the fork of a fig tree. On closer inspection and to our dismay, there was the rhino calf. As we approached a very disgruntled male leopard rushed out of the underlying undergrowth and told us what he



thought about our presence.

This was a most disappointing end to so much time and effort spent by Lewa security staff who had been monitoring Mawingo prior to her giving birth and over the following month. We thought that the critical period of danger had passed, but we were wrong. The next calf that Mawingo has will be monitored for around one week (to allow it to receive adequate colostrum for survival) and will then have to be removed from its mother to ensure its survival. This is not desirable, but we feel that it is the only course of action to take in this circumstance.

Waterbuck translocation to Il Ngwesi

On 3rd July this year, 14 waterbuck were translocated from Lewa to Il Ngwesi, with the assistance of KWS in an effort to boost the population of waterbuck already living around the lodge.

Unfortunately, shortly after their release, one female was killed by lion. However, the others seem to be doing well and a group of seven are regularly seen in the area of the lodge. It is hoped that they will remain there to interact and breed with the few that originally resided in this spot.



Richard Moller – Security and Wildlife Coordinator

Elephant-patrol

It is not only the rhino that have had a good year on Lewa – numerous calves are to be seen amongst the herds of elephant patrolling the conservancy. Indeed, the security staff at Manyangalo gate had a shock in July when a large cow elephant calved in the middle of the road, not 100 meters from their post!



Il Ngwesi wins Equator Initiative Award

At the end of August Senior Chief Simon Kinyaga and Head of Security Edward Paya from Il Ngwesi Group Ranch attended the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. They were invited there to represent their community at the Equator Initiative Awards. Largely as a result of their efforts, Il Ngwesi was selected as one of six winners out of 400 applicants for this prestigious global award.

Senior Chief Kinyaga and Edward returned amidst great fanfare with \$30,000 and many new friends and contacts involved in sustainable development from all over the world.

Well done Il Ngwesi!



Giraffe Translocation in Nakuru National Park

The Lewa Capture team was invited to help in a combined operation between Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and Lewa aimed to translocate 11 Rothschild's giraffe from Nakuru National Park to Kigio Wildlife Conservancy (also near Nakuru). It was the first time that we had been invited by KWS to assist in a translocation operation and we were very excited.

There is a theory that Rothschild's giraffe

are more sensitive to the darting drugs, so this was overcome through developing a new cocktail together with Elisabeth Wambua and the rest of the KWS vets, and it proved to be most effective.

The BBC were there filming a one hour special with Joanna Lumley, which brought the profile of the event up in everybody's eyes and although the afternoon rain and morning fog did little to help filming, the spirit and excitement was not dampened. The event was



supported both by the Born Free Foundation as well as our long-term supporters, Tusk Trust.

For the Lewa team it was ironic to be involved in this translocation seeing as it was 30 years ago that Alec Douglas (Ian's grandfather) saved this sub-species through buying those remaining from the government and protecting them on the Soy estate in western Kenya. From Soy they were later moved to Nakuru National Park and Giraffe Manor in Nairobi where they have been growing in numbers ever since.



Jessica Craig

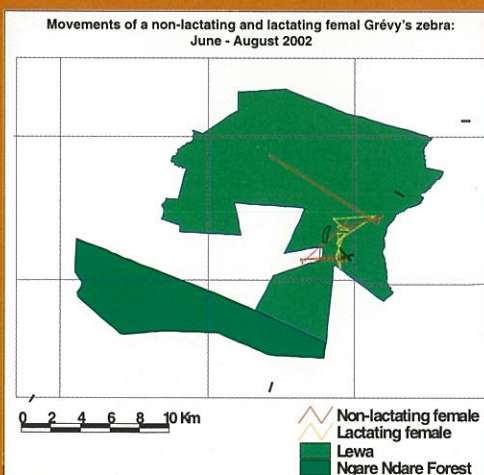


Grévy's zebra

A new Grévy's zebra radio-collaring project is underway, funded by the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Lewa is in the unique position of having a substantial proportion of the global population of Grévy's zebra within its boundaries and having the logistical capability to monitor these animals. The map of Lewa below shows the home range movements of a non-lactating female (red) and a lactating female with a young foal (yellow). Tracking the movements of known individuals in this manner and recording who they are associated with over a period of time provides valuable insights into resource use and population dynamics. This information will hopefully give an insight into why Grévy's numbers have fallen dramatically over the last 30 years and help us understand how best to continue to protect and strengthen the remaining populations. To this end GEF funds will be used to extend the current monitoring of Grévy's zebra beyond Lewa's boundaries in order to make comparative analyses between the sub-populations of Il Ngwesi, Namunyak and Lewa using radio tracking technology. The pictures show some local morans assisting in a collaring in Namunyak earlier this year. By tracking known individuals, valuable information can be gathered on the movements and vital demographic rates of Grévy's zebra. The project is under the supervision of Princeton scientist Dr. Daniel Rubenstein and will be coordinated on the ground by Belinda Low and Geoffrey Chege.

Belinda Low – Earthwatch



LWC security has not been idle for the past six months!

In brief, Lewa Security comprises 120 men. This includes: armed groups (Kenya Police Reserves), tracker dog teams, armoury guards, radio operators, gate attendants, night watchmen, predator monitoring team, orphaned animal attendants, airstrip attendants, school escorts and this leaves a remaining 52 people who play a very important role as General Security personnel. The General Security personnel daily monitor all rhino within LWC and keep a close eye on all other wildlife and security-related issues. Lewa's security is led by John Pameri, Maparash Sadira and Michael Ntosh.

LWC's armed teams and tracker dog teams have been involved in many follow-up operations over recent months, from our close boundaries with neighbours to as far afield as Tsavo East National Park. Many of these operations are combined with the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Kenya Police and the Anti-Stock Theft Unit in an effort to curb poaching, banditry, robbery and cattle rustling. In the last six months, 19 follow-ups have involved Lewa Security, in other words nearly one per week. 90% of livestock theft has been returned to the owners, 27 poachers dogs have been destroyed, one AK 47 and one G3 automatic rifle has been recovered, seven men arrested, several hours flown in LWC light aircraft patrolling and surveillance and all of this is outside of LWC's boundary. We shall continue to work very closely with relevant authorities in protecting the people and wildlife both within LWC and surrounding areas. On behalf of Lewa, I would like to thank all the organisations and people that have assisted financially to enable our Security operations to continue with the success they have shown.

Richard Moller – Security and Wildlife Coordinator

Handaxes on Lewa

For several decades, prehistoric archaeologists have known of a dense concentration of stone handaxes made by early humans at Lewa Downs. The handaxes are all made of lava volcanic rock, and are strikingly similar to abundant Acheulean handaxes, dated approximately 800,000 to 1 million years old.

The Lewa Handaxe Site appears to represent an excellent example of Acheulean stone flaking, the longest-lived form of early human technology. This Early Stone Age technology was produced by hominids over a period of at least 1.3 million years, and distributed over parts of Africa, Asia, and Europe.

The Lewa Handaxe Site may represent one of the largest areas of concentrated Acheulean handaxes known in the world.

Dr. R. Potts of the Smithsonian Institute and National Museums of Kenya

Omni's news

Omni's move to Il Ngwesi has been a real success. He did begin to roam too far and began to give his attendants some strife when they tried to herd him back into his high fenced boma (enclosure) at night. You may ask – why does he need to be enclosed? Well with an increasing and hungry population of lion at Il Ngwesi, Omni is on their menu, and is still not quite big enough to fend them off. He is now in a wired off area of about 10 acres and is lured into the boma at nightfall with some assorted bitings and water. Omni is full of beans and growing fast. We need to grow with him and provide a female black rhino sooner than later. He is a real asset to Il Ngwesi and we hope and plan to have more rhino here before long.

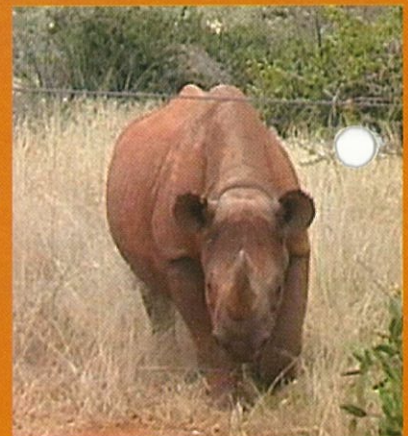
Richard Moller – Security and Wildlife Coordinator

Rewarding 20 minute security flight over Il Ngwesi

An early morning flight in early August produced some very rewarding sights from a wildlife point of view for the Il Ngwesi/Lekuruki area. In fact in just 20 minutes, 12 different types of animals were seen, including: lion chasing three warthog, leopard, jackal, greater kudu, eland, klipspringer, waterbuck, baboons, impala, dikdik and giraffe. Although the most common of the larger animals to this area were not seen, there was plenty of evidence in the luggas of elephant.

The Big Five can definitely be seen in this area with the presence of Omni the Black Rhino now at Il Ngwesi. Happy game viewing!

Richard Moller – Security and Wildlife Coordinator



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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 let's keep going!

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SAFARICOM MARATHON

You never know whom you'll meet at the starting line ...
.... people from 16 different countries, men dressed like giraffes, runners in bare feet, the Kenyan Minister for Sport, 81 year-olds, Maasai Morans in traditional dress, runners in shoes made from old tyres, 16 year-olds, game guards, even the two world record holders in the marathon event, Paul Tergat and Catherine Ndereba.

Many of the competitors didn't know whom they would meet just beyond the starting line. Seven am was the planned starting time, however the race had to be delayed by several minutes while the race helicopter cleared an elephant from the course!

The runners were watched over by Lewa game guards, the Loisaba helicopter and a light aircraft. Elephant and lion had to be moved from the course, which is run on dirt roads through the conservancy. The runners saw zebra, giraffe, waterbuck and much more. One runner said on the day there was a complete role reversal; it was the wildlife watching us, instead of the other way round.

As runners crossed the finishing line they were presented with medals and a goody bag. This year the crowd of thousands were entertained by an acrobatic group from Nairobi who made sure that the spirits of those cheering the runners through the finish did not wane.



Photo: Tim Jackson

The event was conceived in 1999 by Lewa and Tusk Trust. Since the first run in 2000, organized by Caroline Thouless, the event has gone from strength to strength and has now become a hugely popular and successful race. We have realised our limit in terms of numbers and will be restricting the 2003 race to 450 people. In 2000 we raised US\$40,000, in 2001 US\$90,000 and in 2002 \$71,400 so far and we have still got sponsor money coming in. These funds are to be split between five local projects ranging from schools to rhino monitoring, but all with a common theme, to conserve the wildlife and habitats of Kenya.

The Safaricom Marathon is unique. Apart from being the only marathon in the world run inside a game park, or boasting the largest number of bare footed runners than any other, it provides a stage for all the up and coming Kenya runners to pit themselves against the world's best. Most importantly it is the one race where the competitors see at first hand what their fundraising efforts are helping to protect.

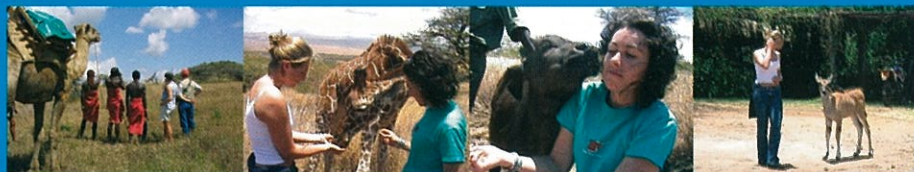
For more information on the 2003 event please contact Sara at Lewa: lewa@swiftkenya.com or Sarah at Tusk: sarah@tusk.org. All 2002 race results can be seen on the Lewa website www.lewa.org

Conservation activities for visitors on Lewa

In addition to its existing wide range of activities, Lewa has developed an exciting list of conservation activities which allow visitors to learn about and get actively involved in conservation and community activities making the Conservancy a unique educational experience. The list of activities available on the Conservancy now reads as follows:

Wildlife-oriented

- Day and night game drives
- Guided nature walks
- Horse and camel rides
- Visits to game blinds
- Visits to Lewa's orphaned animals – currently we have a baby giraffe, a baby buffalo and a baby eland
- Horseback rhino patrol (for experienced riders only)



Education / Community-oriented

- Educational slide shows on the history, development and day-to-day operations of the Conservancy
- Guided visits to Lewa's hand axe sites and prehistoric rock hewn game boards
- Visits to Lewa supported schools and participation in school activities such as dramas, art / drawing and music
- Visits to water schemes and other community development projects
- Assist the fencers on fence patrol
- Accompany the tracker dogs on daily training / exercise
- Days or half days out with the research department learning about Lewa's Grévy's zebra project
- Accompany the lion tracker, in vehicle only, to get data on Lewa's resident lion population
- Half- or full-day guided trips to the Ngare Ndare Forest Reserve to look for the elusive population of black and white Colobus monkeys, to learn about the indigenous flora and its local uses and to visit the community-managed tree nursery
- Visits to Lewa's visitor center incorporating a small 'museum' and a lovely shop from which all the proceeds go to LWC.



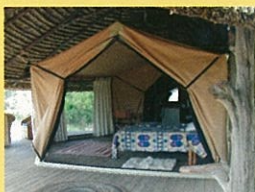
Annelise (Lulu) Clark and Felix Githaka – Lewa Tourism Office

Renovations at the Lewa Safari Camp and Wilderness Trails

Lewa Safari Camp

New deluxe safari tents are the order of the day!!! The first is complete and a great success with all the guests. Offering a large spacious verandah, panoramic view from your bed, and a stone bathroom made from local materials. During the off-season in November another three will replace some of the existing tents.

Sean and Judy-Ann Hartley



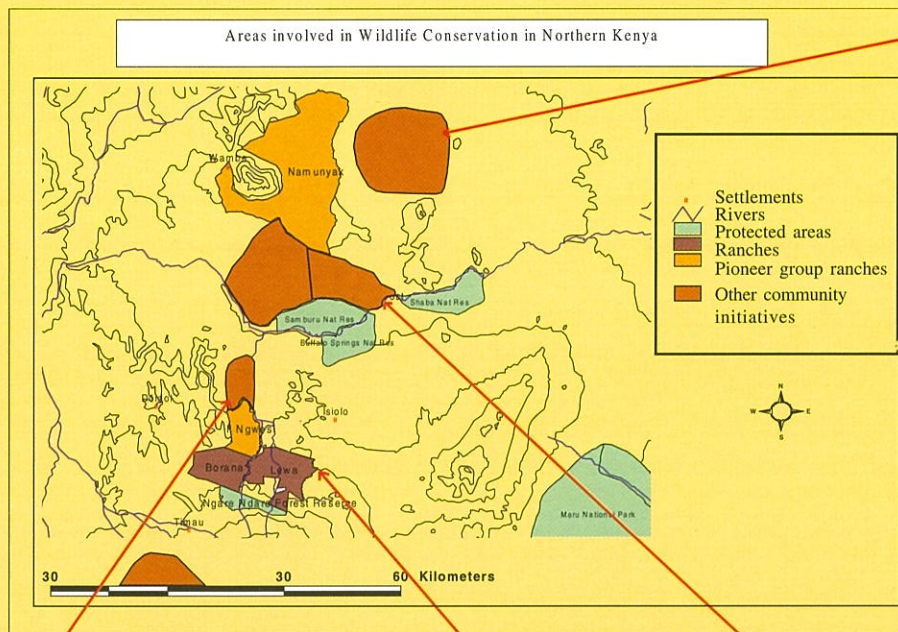
Wilderness Trails

'So romantic!' 'Very comfortable and beautiful and the wind in the thatch at night sounds just like the ocean and lulls you to sleep' These are a few comments about our three new cottages, the most recent of which opened this past safari season. With such positive reviews we plan to go ahead with replacing one of our original cottages with a new double room.



Community news

The Lewa community development programme has continued with its efforts to encourage local communities to take responsibility for managing and conserving their wildlife through community conservation schemes. With the aim of building partnerships with LWC's neighbours and, particularly, the communities living in the wildlife dispersal areas, the programme has initiated community conservation projects in the north. The map below illustrates the areas involved in conservation in the region.



Lekuruki

The Lekuruki community conservation lodge, Tassia, built on the Il Ngwesi model, was developed to enable the community to benefit from wildlife through tourism and at the same time open up the migration corridor and ensure greater safety for wildlife on its way to the north. The project acquired communication equipment through GEF funding in June 2002. This new link in the region's communication network has significantly improved the general security for animals and people.

Rugusu springs water project

The Rugusu community on the Eastern Boundary of LWC is fortunate to have a freshwater spring. This water source is the lifeline for the people of Rugusu and other communities further downstream. In recent years pressure on the eye of the spring has resulted in degradation of the head water and put the source at risk. To protect this vital source of life, LWC in partnership with the community has constructed a water pressure pump to provide safe water for livestock and people. This has been generously supported by Lewa UK.

James Munyugi
Community Development Officer

Sera Project

The Sera area, locally known as 'Kisima Hamsini' (meaning 50 wells), is located far to the north east of Lewa. Due to prolonged insecurity as a result of cattle rustling and poaching by 'shifta' (bandits), there is no permanent settlement in the area although it is still used for dry season grazing. Because there are few people in Sera, small pockets of wildlife still persist around the permanent water sources in this arid habitat, most notably resident buffalo and migratory elephant herds. However, with a continued presence of *shifta* in the area, poaching remains a very real threat to the remaining wildlife. The location, low human population levels and the interest of surrounding communities to benefit from their wildlife as they have seen at Namunyak and Il Ngwesi make this area a priority for community conservation. The first aim of the Sera project is to enhance security for the wildlife and the people in the area and to create awareness of the potential of the area to the communities.

LWC is working in conjunction with Flora and Fauna International and the KWS to assist the communities involved to initiate this project.

Kalama Conservation Project

The Girgir group ranch is between Samburu National Reserve and Namunyak and is therefore a critical area for wildlife dispersal in the Samburu eco-system. Through technical assistance from the group ranch the Kalama Conservation project has now been established, and is now operational with management setup and security network.

The Lewa Education Trust

The faces of the five Lewa supported schools are changing gradually. Most students can now comfortably sit in desks and have most learning resources including textbooks, exercise books, pens and pencils. The parents are immensely impressed by what wildlife can do in shaping the livelihood of its neighbours.

We have recently completed two very smart classrooms at Ntalaban School, which is a feeder school for Leparua Primary School – also supported by Lewa. The classrooms are for nursery and standard one pupils and funds for this were kindly donated by Steven Walker. Now the young children of the Ngare Sergoi area don't have to walk long distances to get quality education!

Also of note is the generous pledge by Stephen Matheson to complete the administration block and teachers' staff room of Munanda Primary School, which has been "stuck" at the lintel stage for almost one year. We hope to get the finishing stages of this building done by the end of the year.

Anne Ruihu – Education Officer



Ruth Naitore

Born in Ntumburi Division of Meru District, Ruth is 18 years old. Her father died when she was two. Ruth lives with her mother Susan and her four siblings to the east of the Conservancy.

Ruth is a Lewa Education Trust beneficiary and a fourth year student at Katheri High School before she got caught up with a mitral valve heart complication that saw her into Mater Hospital in Nairobi. Her diagnosis showed that she needed urgent heart surgery to replace a malfunctioning mitral valve, at a cost of Ksh. 650,000. Her village friends, school and a very generous Education Trust donor, gave some Ksh. 230,000. The Mater Hospital generously offered to cover the balance. Ruth was operated on the 17th July, she is now out of hospital and recovering well. Both her family and Lewa thank all who made this operation possible so much for this act of mercy that has returned Ruth to the normal path of life. It gives her an opportunity to go back to school and repeat form four year 2003.

James Munyugi – Community Development Officer

