

The David Sheldrick WILDLIFE TRUST



Newsletter 2013

The Rhinos

And other Orphans



Rescued rhino calf called Sala

“Maxwell” came to us blind, just months old, in 2006 when his mother gave up on him in the nearby Nairobi Park Forest. Maxwell’s daily routine never changes since being blind in both eyes (with no retina and no optic nerve in either), he could never survive living wild. Bull rhinos have to fight for territory and rank in order to earn the prize of becoming a Black Rhino Breeding Bull, something to which every male aspires. In order to reach that pinnacle, a Bull Rhino needs eyes to be able to size up an opponent bent on the same quest. And so, never having known sight, Max is happy and contented in his dark world, highlights being the visits of Solio, whom he adores in a Black Rhino’s somewhat unusual way.

Max knows every inch of his spacious stockade and can take it at a gallop, never colliding with any object within. He enjoys his soft bed of hay under shelter and diligently marks every inch of his “territory” turning every pole white with his urine, even marking Solio one day by spraying urine directly into her face, which she did not appreciate. He knows when Solio is coming home long before she comes within human view, since rhinos, like elephants, are also endowed with mysterious perception. Through the behaviour of Max, we humans can anticipate the return of Solio. He becomes wildly excited and with tail erect, prepares himself for a thrilling and enjoyable sparring match, engaging her through the poles of his enclosure the moment she turns up.

In April the securing screw bolt to Max’s gate somehow came loose during a heavy night rainstorm and he found himself in unfamiliar territory, possibly having walked out following the scent trail of Solio, which he lost due to rain. Daylight found him confused and crashing around in Angela’s front yard near the Orphans’ mudbath. However calling his name and armed with bananas and a bottle of milk, the Keepers managed to lead him safely back home. Once inside his stockade, up went the tail, followed by a close scent inspection of the surroundings to confirm that he was, indeed, back on familiar territory, after which he relaxed, comfortable once more with his surroundings. Although Max can never live a life of freedom, nevertheless he plays an important PR role for his highly endangered species, entertaining the hundreds of visitors that come to see the orphaned elephants every day, most of whom would never otherwise have the opportunity of seeing a Black Rhino.

Solio was just 6 months old when her mother was poached on Solio Ranch in 2010. By the beginning of the year she was fully integrated into the resident rhino community of Nairobi National Park, having been escorted around the dung piles and urinals of the wild rhino community for the past 3 years by the Keepers – the only means of introducing a stranger into a resident Black Rhino community where territories are established and fiercely defended against “intruders” who do not belong.

Solio was a free agent during most of 2013, having made it quite clear to her human attendants that they were no longer needed, and that now she had been accepted, their presence was more of a hindrance than a help. She took to escaping from them, hiding in a thicket as they tried to call and follow her spoor. One can imagine how she must have despised human ability in this respect, since a Black Rhino’s life revolves around scent, memory and hearing, the eyes being needed only occasionally in combat. She also demonstrated quite clearly that she wanted the door to her stockade left open at night, so that she could come and go at will. Having taken to spending nights and days away from base before returning, the gate to her stockade is left ajar and only closed if she happens to arrive when visitors are around. Once the visitors have left, she bangs on the gate with her horn to alert the Keepers that she needs it opened up again.

The DSWT will open its doors to any orphaned animal providing that

having given it a safe and healthy upbringing, it can ultimately be returned to a normal wild life when grown. During the course of the year the Trust has taken on the responsibility of several orphaned wild animals including genet cats, lesser kudu, bushbuck, eland, gerenuk and several hyraxes.

“Geri” our amazing orphaned Thomson’s gazelle, who as a fawn escaped making a meal for a bush-meat poacher and later narrowly escaped being a meal for the Nairobi Park lions until Angela risked her own life rescuing her from them, is now two years old and fully healed after the mauling she sustained from her attackers. Geri wanders freely during the hours of daylight, fraternizing with wild impalas, and the giraffe, the resident warthogs and enjoying the daily human visitors, before returning to sleep in the safety of the office at night with a reward of dark chocolate, which she loves!

Several orphaned baby Hyraxes have been reared at the Nursery, fed soya milk initially by syringe, the first being “Oomphy” who grew up and occasionally still comes into the house for a treat of banana; the next was “Rax”, now grown with a wild-born baby of her own, which she allows the family to handle and whom she brings into the house to also enjoy whatever is on offer and then there is “Alfie”, rescued as an orphan at a nearby school and a rascal! Now almost grown, he dominates the entire household, perches on the human family’s “loo” to relieve himself and demands full time attention!

“Pembe” is an old resident female warthog, whom we patched up after she was also attacked by a lion and who is now so tame that one can handle her as well as her annual litter of 4 tiny piglets, usually born in November, who are overseen by a daughter taken from an earlier generation who is groomed to become the “Nannie”.

In Tsavo our Keepers are given orphans by KWS to hand-rear and have been tutored about the necessary husbandry and milk formula for each species. The Voi Elephant Keepers have successfully hand-reared several lesser kudus who are now living wild; one a female named “Aruba” who brings her wild-born young back to share with those who saved and reared her. Another is named “Shia” who also has a new baby, born in November. Several male kudu orphans are now also living wild and are seen from time to time either out in the bush or when they re-visit the Stockades. There is also the zebra foal named “Lualeni” who browses alongside the elephants, and in October a baby eland bull was brought to the Keepers named “Jengo” and who, so far, is doing well.

At our Kaluku Field Headquarters on the Athi River boundary to Tsavo, the staff are currently hand-rearing an orphaned gerenuk named “Nuk” as well as an infant bushbuck known as “Nyika”, and a young Kudu. In the past they have also reared several dik-dik orphans, one of whom was named “Mbee” who still lives around the compound with her wild-born offspring while the Staff based at The Trust House have reared bush duikers and habituated the banded mongooses whenever they happen to call during the rounds of their sizeable territory, who are known as “The Tamies”. At Amu Ranch in Lamu District the staff have raised orphaned bushbuck and now have an orphaned oribi.



Solio



Maxwell



Taru with Rak's wild born baby



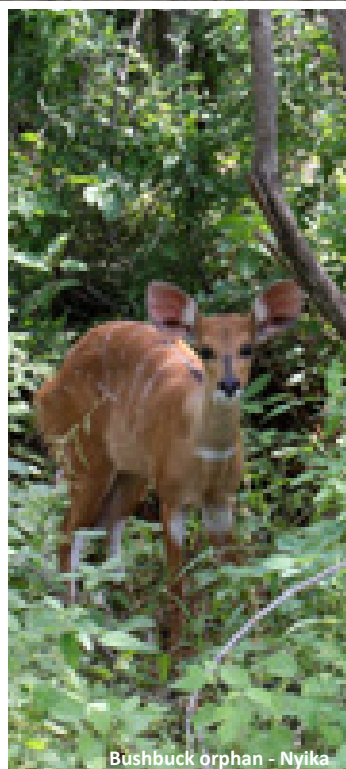
The Tamies



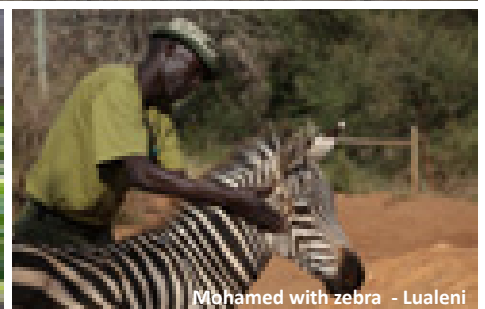
Wild rhino with her calf which later was rescued due to fatal lion wounds



Gerenuk orphan - Nuk



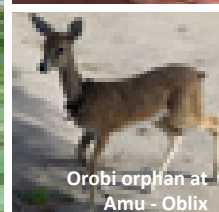
Bushbuck orphan - Nyika



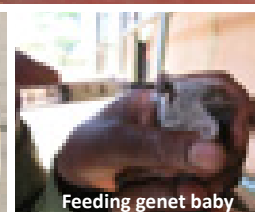
Mohamed with zebra - Lualeni



Orphaned genet cat babies



Orobi orphan at Amu - Oblix

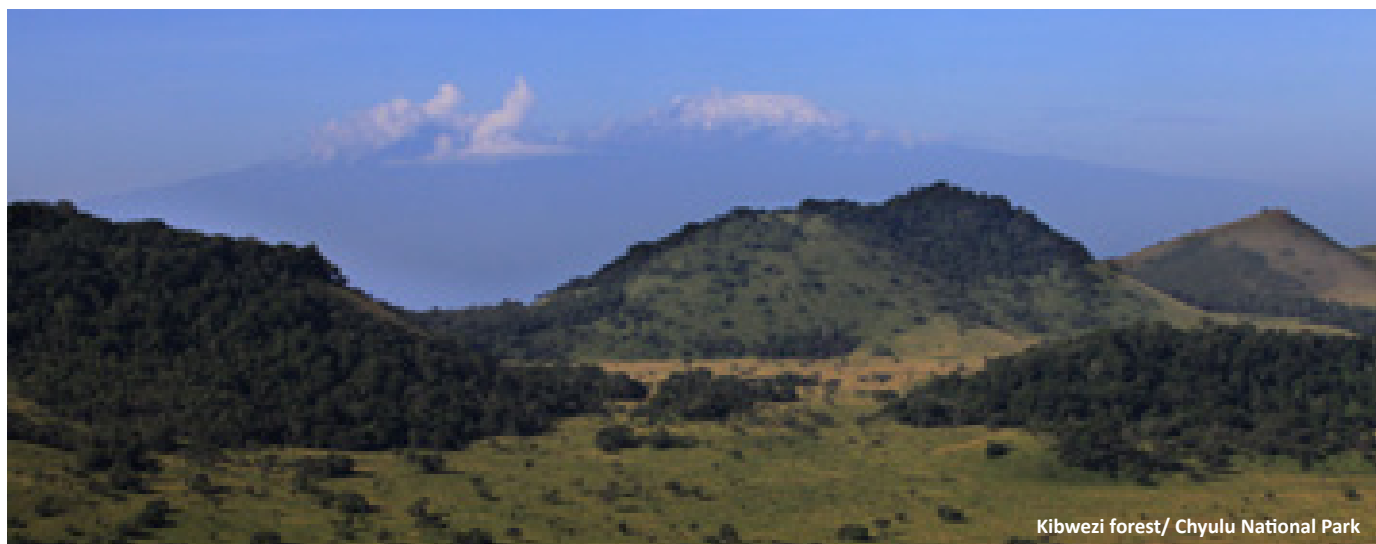


Feeding genet baby

Kibwezi Forest/Chyulu Hills National Park Elephant Rehabilitation Unit

With an ever-increasing herd of infant orphaned elephants being cared for at our Nursery Rehabilitation Unit in Nairobi, providing a safe future for all of them is of utmost concern. Several of the orphans have been left physically compromised by poaching and because they would be challenged coping with a wild life in Tsavo, we are thankful to have been able to formalize an agreement with both the Kenya Forest Service and the Kenya Wildlife Service to build a third Elephant Rehabilitation Unit in the Kibwezi Forest. The forest will provide a safe haven and a favourable environment for these elephants, with plenty of food and water available at all times. Importantly the orphans will still enjoy access to wild elephants, since the forest is electrically secured on three sides but left open to the Chyulu National Park on the fourth. Stockades to accommodate a maximum of ten orphaned Elephants will be erected in an environmentally friendly manner.

Kibwezi Forest Map



Special Thanks

Along with the loyal support of the global public who have so generously fostered many of our orphaned elephant calves and in so doing helped towards the funds needed for their care and rehabilitation, we are hugely indebted to many other special individuals and organizations who have given time, resources and financial support towards our Orphans' Project, too many to name individually but none the less deeply valued. Notable amongst these are those who have donated crochet and hand-knitted blankets for the infant elephants, as well as quilts for auction. Many have donated hand-made jewelry and trinkets for sale at our Shop Table during the one open visiting hour a day.

We are deeply grateful to the following Trusts and Foundations for their loyal and unwavering support; the Samuel J. & Ethel Lefrak Charitable Trust, Eric S Margolis Foundation, Maue Kay Foundation, Rettet Die Elefanten Afrikas for their steadfast support of the Orphans' Project and for maintenance support of the Ithumba fence-line, Aktionsgemeinschaft Artenschutz (AGA), Forsvara Elefanterna, Verein der Elefantenfreunde, Vrienden van die Olifant, Pengo Life Project for advice on veterinary issues, support and the helpful supply of much needed medication, Terra et Fauna, Kerrigan Savage Waves Charitable Trust, Care For The Wild, The Mackintosh Foundation, Tusk & Horn Wildlife Trust and Vier Pfoeten for support of the orphans and for the waterbowl they purchased that continues to be the lifeline for the Ithumba orphans during the dry seasons. The Orphans' Project simply would not be possible without this invaluable and loyal support spanning many years, so a heartfelt thank you to you all.

As always we give massive thanks to our Patron, Kristin Davis, for her love of elephants and her steadfast support, and we are deeply grateful to our valued Trust donor Geri Bauer for her ongoing support and supply of Lucerne for the elephants at all the Units. Sincere thanks go to Jon Araghi and Kathy Kamei for their generous donation of a new Milk Mixing Bay at the Nursery and two new Water Bowlers for Ithumba and Voi. We are at a loss as to how to adequately thank Mr. Jorge Perez Companc for funding the new Elephant Rehabilitation Unit in the Kibwezi Forest and are immensely grateful for his steadfast and generous financial support of DSWT. We are deeply grateful to Ruth Peck for her generous help for the orphans, to Julia Newmann and Cody Westheimer for their wonderful musical compositions for our short films, and to Natasha Weld-Dixon who so kindly donates hay from her plot throughout the year. We thank Gary Hodges for his design for foster packs and for raising funds for the Trust through many auctions.

Most sincere thanks go to Finlays for funding the duty payments on our vital milk shipments, to British Airways for complimentary flights, and freighting free of cost vast powdered milk shipments. We thank them further for promoting our work by airing an on-board film about the orphans in our care. We owe huge gratitude to East African Canvas for support of mattress covers and raincoats for the elephants, to GNLD for their generous donations of Vitamins and Cleaning products throughout the year, to Ultimate Security for discounted security services, to Roger McNamee and Moonalice for generous support both financially and through social media, to Wisla Narrow Fabrics Ltd who donated specialist strapping and fabrics to be used in elephant rescues. Many thanks go to FLOAT, for donations from the sale of their exclusive T-shirts, to FOX International Channels for fostering elephants for the birthdays of their employees' children; to Chantecaille for donations from royalties on their elephant palette makeup, with additional thanks to Kathy Kamei Designs and to Cheryl Kovarkis for donations of their beautiful jewelry to raise money for the orphans and also to Love Brand and Co.

Mobile Veterinary Units

The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust was proud to partner once again with the Kenya Wildlife Service in establishing the third Mobile Veterinary Unit launched in February 2013, this time for the Northern and Eastern Conservation Areas. We now jointly operate three exceedingly successful full-time Mobile Veterinary Units headed by KWS Field Veterinary Officers.

The new Unit, fully funded by DSWT, based within Meru National Park at the KWS H.Q. is providing veterinary assistance to the entire Eastern Conservation Area as well as parts of the Northern Conservation Area, whilst also helping the Lewa Mobile Veterinary Unit by attending to some of the emergencies they are unable to cover within the Laikipia/Samburu ecosystems. Since its inception the new Unit has greatly reduced animal suffering through its timely response to alerts. The KWS Vet who heads the new Unit is currently Dr. Bernard Rono who has a customized vehicle driven by a DSWT driver plus 2 KWS Capture Rangers to assist him.

KWS Veterinarian Dr. Campaign Limo joined the DSWT Mara Veterinary Unit team during April 2013, taking over from Dr. Dominic Mijele, who is now based at the main KWS Veterinary H.Q. in Nairobi, but is regularly called upon to attend to Sky Vet cases. The Mara Unit dealt with 56 cases this year, over 20 of which were predominantly spear wounds, (worryingly prevalent in his area of operation), followed by poison arrow attacks on elephants, giraffe and buffaloes. The unit rescued 6 baby cheetahs and several orphaned elephants during the year as well as treating 18 elephants for injuries related to poaching, carrying out 14 post-mortems on mainly poaching victims and taking part in a KWS initiative to fit GSM satellite collars on elephants for surveillance purposes. During the year disease monitoring was another of his mandatory KWS assignments.