

H.O.R.N.



Volume 8, Issue 2

Help Our Rhinos Now

Summer 1999

The Official Newsletter of the Ngare Sergoi Support Group



LEWA UPDATE

Since our last newsletter, the most exciting news is that everyone's investment of time and effort towards the Rhino has resulted in seven births in the past nine months, thus raising our Rhino figures to 23 black and 28 white.

All the wildlife has benefited from the wonderful rains of last year, with a big flush of 'El Nino' calves. The Grevy's zebra have risen from 517 to 632 in the past 12 months, which possibly makes Lewa the most productive Grevy's Zebra population in the country.

Security

Lewa's security team continues to act as a major deterrent to any poaching both within the Conservancy and the adjoining community areas. There has been no elephant poaching within Lewa or Ii Ngwesi since the incidents in April 1998. There have been no serious attempts on the rhino.

Through information gathered over a period of weeks, we were able to arrest the leader of a particularly notorious gang that had been causing trouble in the area for the past 18 months, and was a serious threat to the rhino. The arrest of this individual has undoubtedly acted as a big deterrent to the rest of the gang. This operation was conducted in conjunction with the Kenya Police and the Kenya Wildlife Service, with intelligence provided from our informers. In early January we were called in with the aircraft to assist KWS in a contact with eleven armed poachers just south of Samburu Park. The aircraft proved to be a crucial success in coordinating this operation, as the gang was identified when they repeatedly opened fire on the aircraft. This led to the subsequent arrest and recovery of three people and two firearms. This is the third time in the last twelve months that our aircraft has come under small arms fire in the support of such operations and we are presently looking into the practicalities of providing some protection for the pilot and crew.



Photo Andy Lodge

Tracker Dogs

Murphy and Bonnie, the tracker dogs, carry on proving their worth and have been employed in a number of theft related follow-ups external to Lewa. They remain on a 24-hour standby to move anywhere either by foot, vehicle or aircraft in response to any incident requiring their expertise.

Kisima Farm is kindly sponsoring the feeding of the dogs by providing a monthly contribution to their diet. This has been greatly appreciated by the Lewa budget and the dogs themselves!

In March, thanks to donations from Cincinnati Zoo and Cecil

Gibson, British Army engineers were able to build new and more secure kennels for the dogs beside their handlers' accommodation. This month the British Army will be providing further support for the dogs by sending one of the handlers previously involved to conduct continuation training. This will ensure that both the dogs and their handlers retain their high standards.

Rhino

We have had a stable nine months with no fights or any dramas, and our numbers show a net increase of 16% for this period. We are hoping for a further three black rhino and two white rhino calves in the coming 12 months. All the animals are looking well, and

although the November rains failed as we write we have had wonderful rain over the past weeks. All things being equal we hope this will continue to the end of April. The increased area available to the rhino is clearly showing dividends, with a reduction in the number of fights, an increase in our birth rate and an improvement in the general condition of the animals.

The orphaned male black rhino calf, Larangoi, is doing really well and bravely expands his territory. He no longer comes back to Ian and Jane's house to spend the night in the stable but lives out with his keepers, who camp wherever he chooses to spend the night. He is now 18 months old and still fed milk and horse cubes twice

a day; this is planned to continue for another six to nine months. He feeds for most of the early part of the night and then comes and puts himself in between his two sleeping keepers for security! He is obviously a thinker and should have a future within the Lewa population.

Both he and us owe a big thank you to Daphne Sheldrick and Susannah Rouse, who provide the financial and logistic support to look after him.

Community

The Lewa Community programme goes from strength to strength. I1 Ngwesi is an unprecedented success with bookings running at 61% occupancy after only two years of operation. The Lodge remains a first in Africa, in that it is owned and managed by the community. Meetings are held every three months under the chairmanship of The Speaker of the National Assembly, The Honorable F.K.X. Ole Kaparo, who has guided the project since it's inception.

The elephant have rapidly come to understand the protection provided to them within the Group Ranch, and whereas previously this was part of a migratory route, they are now resident within the ranch. The next challenge on this project is to increase the level of management of the Lodge to be able to host overseas tourists, and to initiate a translocation programme of surplus wildlife from Lewa to boost numbers within the Group Ranch. Clearly, wildlife is now a new resource for the members of I1 Ngwesi, and the future of this concept is secured for the foreseeable future.

The Kenya government recruited, trained and armed five of the I1 Ngwesi game guards as Kenya Police Reserve. This gives them rights within the law for search and arrest, and they have been armed with semi-automatic weapons in order to provide security within the Group Ranch. Whereas in much of the surrounding areas security continues to be of concern, within I1 Ngwesi the situation is stable and there is a clear commitment from the community to maintain this situation. This is an excellent indication of the strength of an adapted neighborhood watch programme, where the communities are effective and willing participants, as opposed to more traditional forms of law enforcement.

Namunyak

Namunyak continues its success. The Acacia Trails camp has been very busy and has produced the first significant flow of any revenue back to the landowners. All the guests visiting the camp have enjoyed themselves and have been impressed by the remoteness and the pristine wilderness. The new found wild dog population in Namunyak, numbering up to 70 dogs, is considered by the Canine Specialist Group to be possibly the most significant remaining population in Kenya.

Five elephant were poached north of Namunyak in October. Through the perseverance and commitment of the Namunyak Field Officer, Michael Lenemaido, he was able to recover all the ivory and initiate the arrest of the individuals concerned, and their firearms. This will act as a major deterrent to any future poaching.

Through the kind support of Tusk Trust and Charlie Mayhew in London, the British Army has had an engineer squadron working within Namunyak for the past three months. They have completely refurbished the original KWS offices in Wamba which will be

used by the Namunyak Trust as its new headquarters, built three new water tanks within Wamba town for use by the schools, repaired a large dam at Loididikio, put in approximately 28 kilometres of access road and constructed one airfield. This development is of major significance to the whole area in that it helps to establish the security and the basis of a tourist industry, which will provide employment and revenue back to the landowners. The assistance and commitment of the British Army in undertaking this exercise is a major contribution to the community and development of an area that has previously been the focus of little attention. General Sir Roger Wheeler, Chief of the General Staff, visited the project and was very impressed by the work of the Namunyak team in bringing together the whole concept.

In mid February alarming reports came in through the radio of an outbreak of cholera affecting the Samburu herdsmen on the East Side of the Marsabit road, all of whom were members of Namunyak who had moved out due to the drought. Through the offices of KWS and the Director Dr. Richard Leakey we were able to coordinate a programme of treatment using the Kenya Army and the helicopters. This is the first time we have worked with the Kenya Army and they proved to be very willing and able partners. In the first five days of the outbreak ten people died and over 100 were affected. After the involvement of the Army there have been no further deaths, and the outbreak has been brought under control. If Namunyak and its communication systems had not been operative, this outbreak definitely would have been much worse and could have resulted in the loss of many more lives.

Lion and Leopard

We brought in six new lion from Ol Pejeta with these animals being individually darted and transported in the back of a small lorry. The original plan was to catch four, but the opportunity arose to catch an additional two, which meant the amount of immobilising drug proved to be inadequate to keep them tranquil.

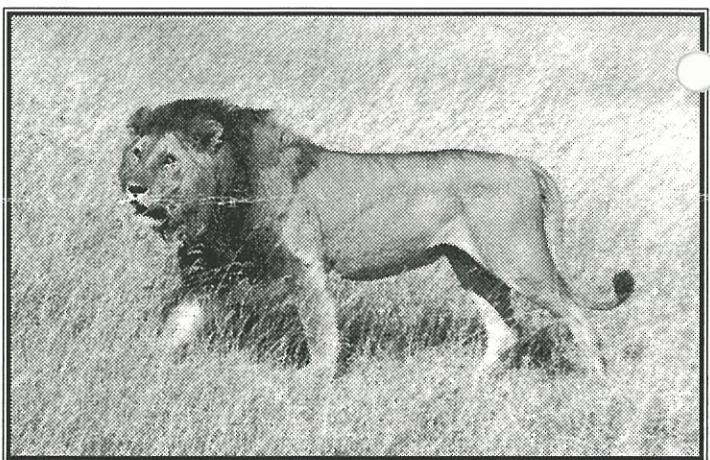


Photo Andy Lodge

lised for the whole journey. This led to a rather interesting development in the centre of Nanyuki town when two of the six started to wake up! A serious panic ensued as the capture team in the lorry attempted to find a source of more tranquilliser. They were extremely lucky to find a chemist open early in the morning able to supply the relevant drug. The possible consequences have been the subject for many amusing discussions, with the story becoming more hilarious than the truth subsequently proved.

The pride of three partially habituated lion proved to be an extremely valuable tourist attraction, ensuring that many more tourists on Lewa are able to view lion during their stay here. The remaining three were completely wild and have been absorbed into the existing population of 11 animals.

An amazing phenomenon appeared on Lewa during December when reports came in of a black leopard. This was regarded as being highly unlikely due to the fact that this genetic variance, known as melanism, is generally considered to occur only in montane environments at high altitudes. It was confirmed by members of Wilderness Trails who had a grandstand view of this superb animal over a period of two to three weeks whilst it lived below the dining area. A BBC film crew managed to get in on the action and spent three days at Wilderness Trails capturing it on film. Guests at Wilderness Trails now regularly see this animal.

Game Count

In February this year we conducted a game count of the Conservancy using a new system which proved to be more accurate than those previously used. This confirmed an increase in all the wildlife with the exception of gerenuk which died from a blue tongue virus during El Nino. The reticulated giraffe have risen to 240 giving us a 100 more animals than our recommended stocking rate. We plan to try out a new method of capture and translocation of these giraffe and, depending on the success of this, a decision will be made as to whether they can be moved.

	1998	1999		1998	1999
Beisa Oryx	127	141	Impala	698	825
Buffalo	159	245	Warthog	233	367
Eland	227	299	Waterbuck	220	240
Elephant (migratory)	247	170	Zebra Plains	1552	1756
Giraffe	186	240	Zebra Grevy	517	632

Schools

The Conservancy in conjunction with the Gemini Trust and Cooper Motor Corporation continue to support 22 bursaries for secondary school students that have graduated from the four primary schools supported by Lewa. The first students to have benefited from this programme have now completed their university exam and we are awaiting their results to know whether this support will continue to the university level. The plans to improve the standard of all schools are presently on hold pending the employment of a Community Officer, with effect from June this year, when a major effort will be made to identify the needs and source appropriate funding to bring the four primary schools adjoining the Conservatory up to an acceptable level.

Mr. Josef Shuel of I1 Ngwesi, whose schooling was financed by the I1 Ngwesi Group Ranch, has now qualified as a Certified Public Accountant and will be taking up the post of bookkeeper for the Group Ranch in May.

Development

Ian and Jane's trip to the US and Europe was both interesting and successful. As a result of this trip, and the generosity of all concerned, we were able to meet planned development for the year. In view of the increasing responsibilities and success of the Conservancy's community and endangered species programme, the Conservancy Board have decided that this trip will need to be an annual occurrence. It is planned that Ian and Jane will be in the US for three weeks in late September, and will be concentrating on the West Coast and Canada.

The Board has decided to establish an endowment fund within the US to cover the incremental costs of the Conservancy. Lewa's rhino will forever need a high level of security, and the community programmes will require a degree of management support into the foreseeable future. The establishment of this fund is now a major focus in all our development plans. Although the Conservancy is looking at different opportunities to increase our income from tourism, in such a changing world it is felt only prudent to have a fund which can maintain the operation in the case of a drop off in tourism.



Ntugi School
Photo Andy Lodge



A VISIT TO LEWA

By Mary Wykstra-Ross

In March of 1998 Janet Wiard and Pilar Hayes (Oklahoma City Zoo), Dawn Neptune and I (Utah's Hogel Zoo) had the opportunity to visit the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. In 14 days we stayed at 7 very different accommodations. We slept in guest rooms and dined in the homes of Francis and Bimbi Dyer, Evi Bernhard, Simon and Caroline Marriott and Ian and Jane Craig. At the beautiful I1 Ngwesi Lodge (managed by a Masai village with profits supporting their community) Mike Watson was our host. John Cook was host at the Lerai Tented Camp - a tourist facility known for bird watching, and knowledgeable staff to identify birds. At the Wilderness Trails Lodge we went horseback and camel riding - getting very close to animals who shy away from vehicles. We met Charlie and Carole Wheeler who took us hiking in the Ngare Ndare Forest and taught us how native Africans use plants as medicines and tooth brushes. We also met Shadreck Muya to whom each rhino sighting is reported daily for the database used to study behaviors and territory of black and white rhinos. We had tea with David and Delia Craig who donated the original land to start this rhino sanctuary.

Each morning we woke to a beautiful sunrise and each evening we enjoyed "sun downers" while watching spectacular African sunsets. Under the full moon we heard and saw some of the night life of the animals. At the Dyer's we were greeted in the yard by Pumba, an orphaned warthog, trying to nurse on our legs. At the Craig's we joined morning walks with an orphaned black rhino, Larengoi, who is being raised for future release. (A 400 pound rhino gets very excited at the prospect of new playmates. We found out how NOT to play with a rhino when he got so rambunctious that he knocked Janet down and fell on top of her!) We met orphaned buffalo and ostrich who can also become dangerous as they show their affection to their human foster parents.

We visited some schools that receive support from Lewa. At the Lebarua Primary School we delivered school supplies and pen-pal letters from Salt Lake's Benion Elementary students. We took Polaroid photos of each Lebarua child - imagine how kids who have never watched TV reacted to watching their own picture develop! (The kids included their photo in the letter they wrote back to the Benion Students.) At the Lewa Primary School we distributed more school supplies and received a proud performance by their marching band. We took Polaroid group photos of each class and the faculty and distributed pen-pal letters from Salt Lake's Lakewood Elementary 4th graders.

During the flight from Nairobi to Lewa, Francis explained that Kenya received over 70 inches of rain. During our stay, I photographed washed out roads, rivers over maximum capacity, trucks over the hubs in mud or water, and toppled trees. Some hoofs stock were reduced in numbers because of diseases related to the unusual rains. Predators, especially the cheetah, were having to move south where the grasses were not as tall in order to find their prey. The bird life could be heard all around us, but the birds were difficult to see through the lush greenery.

On game drives we saw herds of giraffe, elephant, hartebeest, eland, bessa oryx, defassa waterbuck, common and Grevy's zebra, impala and Grant's gazelle, warthog and cape buffalo. Of the more elusive mammals we saw dik-dik, gerenuk, clipspringer, greater

kudu, mongoose, and leopard. On night drives we saw bush baby and 2 spectacular male lions. We saw many of the 250 bird species of this region, ranging from the large ostrich to the tiny bee-eater. On walks we found a variety of beetles, butterflies, spiders and reptiles. Of the 52 rhino at Lewa at the time of our visit we identified 12 black rhino and 15 white rhino.

I would like to extend a special thanks to our gracious host at Lewa. My stay at Lewa was a dream come true because of the wonderful people I met. Anyone traveling to Africa should look into staying at the tourist accommodations at Lewa for personalized attention and excellent game viewing.



CHILDREN'S COLUMN

By Missy Betcher

Did you ever want to see a mermaid? Well, they really do exist, although the real mermaid does not look anything like the mermaid portrayed in stories and pictures. It is thought that the manatee may be the animal behind the mermaid myth because of its physical similarities to the mermaid. Historians and scientists think that sailors on their long journeys saw the curious and non-aggressive sea mammal and made believed it was a beautiful sea maiden. Even the manatee's scientific name, Sirenia, relates to the myth. Sirenia is Greek for siren, a mythical woman who lived in the sea and called sailors.

But, what is a manatee? The manatee is a marine mammal related to elephants and aardvarks. There are three species of manatees; the West Indian, West African, Amazonian; and two other members of the Sirenia family, the dugong and the Stellar sea cow. The Stellar sea cow was first discovered in the mid-1700s, and within 30 years it was hunted to extinction. Unfortunately, the other species of manatee are now either endangered or threatened, in particular the West Indian manatee which is found in the south Atlantic and Caribbean.

The Florida manatee (a subspecies of the West Indian manatee) is found primarily around peninsular Florida but can be found as far north as Virginia and as far west as Mississippi. The West African manatee is found along the African coast from Senegal to Angola. And, the Amazonian is found in the fresh water rivers of the Amazon basin, primarily in Brazil.

Manatees live in bays, rivers, canals, and coastal areas with plenty of seagrass and other vegetation to eat, as well as fresh water to drink.

The average size of a manatee is 10 feet and they weigh between 800 and 1200 pounds. Females are slightly larger than males. The Amazonian is the smallest of the manatees, with the largest individual recorded being 9 feet and weighing 1000 pounds.

Manatees have a streamlined body that is full around the middle and tapers to a paddle shape tail. By moving the tail up and down manatees are able to glide through the water. Manatees generally swim at 2 to 6 miles per hour, although they have been known to go 15 mph for a short distance. They are grey-brown in color, but often algae grows on the skin and affects their color. Manatees have

two small flippers, called pectoral flippers, on the upper body. These flippers help the manatee steer its body through the water. They are also used to bring food to the mouth and to assist in this function, each flipper has 3 or 4 fingernails (Amazonian manatees do not have fingernails). The upper lip of the manatee is very flexible, each side can move independently. This helps in guiding vegetation into the mouth. Large whiskers are also present. Manatees have 24 to 32 molars, its only teeth. The front molars are continually worn down while eating. As the molar wears down, a new molar grows in the back and pushes its way forward. These new teeth make sure the manatee has a good surface for biting and chewing. However, it makes it very hard for scientists to tell a manatee's age.

A manatee's life is very simple. They spend most of their day eating (6 to 8 hours) and resting (2 to 12 hours). An adult manatee will eat 32 to 108 pounds of vegetation a day. The rest of their time is spent traveling, investigating, and socializing. Manatees are very curious creatures and love to investigate new things in their aquatic world.

Although manatees are aquatic creatures, they are mammals and must breathe oxygen. Manatees can stay underwater for up to 20 minutes, most come to the surface to breath every 2 to 3 minutes. And, often they will glide along the surface of the water with their noses just above the water line.

Male manatees are mature at age 9, females at 7. The average life-span is 50 years. After a gestation period of twelve months, one calf is born. The baby will nurse underwater within a few hours of birth and will be nibbling plants after a few weeks. Young manatees are weaned after one year but often stay with the mother for another year. The mother must teach her young about feeding areas, rest areas, travel routes and warm water refuges.

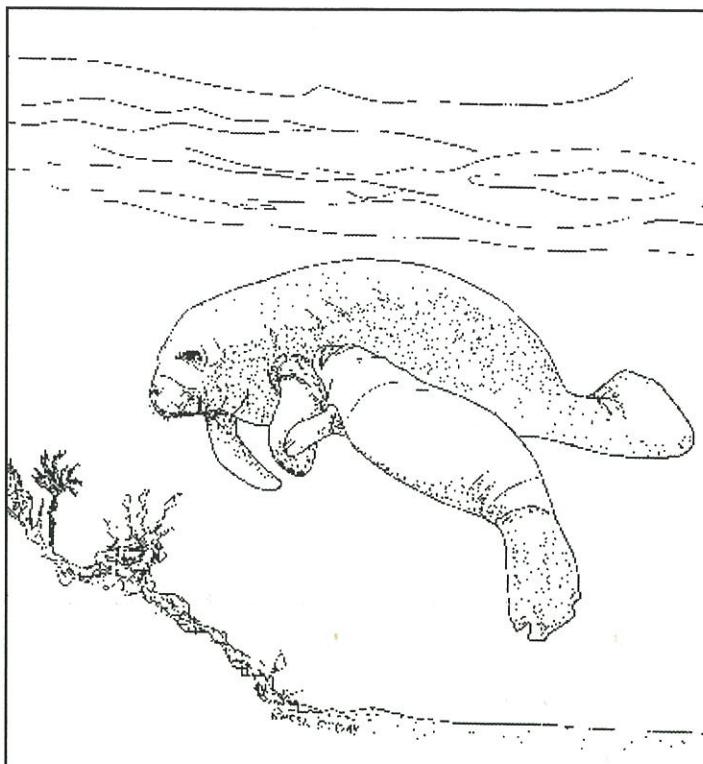
Because they like warm water, over 70 degrees, manatees migrate to warmer waters when the temperatures drop. For the Florida manatee, in the past that meant traveling to southern Florida or the Caribbean. But, today manatees migrate to, and congregate at, power plant outages and other warm water discharges.

This change to the Florida manatees migratory pattern is not the only negative impact man has had on the manatee. Historically, manatees have had few natural predators. An occasional young or sick animal might fall prey to a shark or crocodile. Most manatees died due to a cold water snap or disease cause by parasites. In the case of the Amazonian manatee drought often led to starvation.

But the human factor has led to a dramatic increase in manatee deaths and injuries. The primary culprit is boat related incidents. Manatees are often injured by boat propellers and in collisions with boats and barges. Boat accidents are the number one human-related cause of manatee death in Florida and it is estimated that 80% of Florida manatees bear some scar from a boating accident.

Manatee deaths also occur when the animals get trapped in flood gates and drown, are crushed by remote control gates, and when the animals get entangled in fishing and crab lines. Habitat destruction also leads to manatee deaths. And, some are hunted and poached "just because".

The decline in the manatee population in Florida is dramatic. In 1987, 120 Florida manatees died due to unnatural (i.e. human-related) causes. In 1991 it was 181 and by 1996 the number had skyrocketed to 415. Today, scientists estimate that there are about 1900 Florida manatees left. Although there is no accurate count for the other species, scientists believe their populations are declining too.



Line drawing by
Karen Day Bolan,
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

All species in the order Sirenia are endangered and there are international, federal, and state laws to protect them. And organizations like Sea World are helping by caring for injured manatees. Whenever possible the animals are healed, rehabilitated, and released back into the wild. If release is not possible, they are cared for in captivity. We can only hope that the laws, work by marine organizations, and the interest and caring of individuals will save these animals for future generations. We do not want the manatee itself to become a myth, like the mermaid.

For additional information look for these books at the library or search the following websites.

Corrigan, Patricia. Manatees for Kids. 1996 (ages 9-12)
Harman, Amanda. Manatees and Dugongs. 1997 (ages 9-12)
McDonald, Mary Ann. Manatees. 1998 (ages 4-8)
Silverstein, Alvin. The Manatee. 1995 (ages 9-12)
Staub, Frank. Manatees. 1998 (ages 4-8)

Manatee Haven

<http://www.greyhawkes.com/fun/manatee.html>

Save the Manatee Club

<http://www.savethemanatee.org>

Sea World/Busch Gardens Animal Information Database

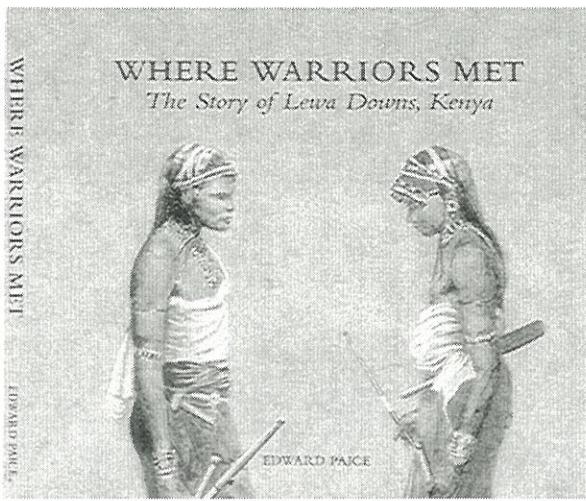
<http://www.seaworld.org/manatee>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Endangered Species Page

<http://www.fws.gov/r9endssp/endspp.html>



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Where Warriors Met - The Story of Lewa Downs
By Edward Paice - Illustrated by Sarah Elder

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to the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy to assist in their conservation initiatives.*

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Before reprinting articles in local publications, contact H.O.R.N. of your intent. Articles should be exact reprints and should give credit to H.O.R.N. and the author.

Newsletter Staff: Missy Betcher, Andy Lodge, Stephen Rayburn.



H.O.R.N.

Ngare Sergoi Support Group

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