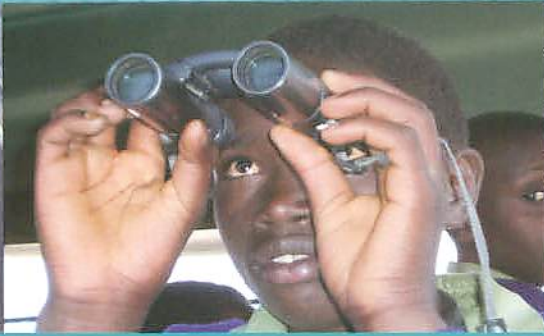


# All aboard!



Since the launch of the Environmental Education programme by the Laikipia Wildlife Forum at the beginning of 2004, the Bus and EE Officer have been much in demand.

In July alone, for example, the EEO, Ephantus Mugendi Mugo guided 11 primary and secondary school groups and one community group on educational visits to Sweetwaters Game Reserve, Laikipia Nature Conservancy, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and Mugie Ranch. Ephantus also gave a wildlife and environmental

talk and video presentation to 56 students and three teachers of Mary Immaculate Primary School.

We're still collecting pairs of binoculars for use on the Bus, and our thanks this time to Bob and Jo Dean, Mr and Mrs Doug Farish, Zeb Seers, Nomad Travel Store and Graham Scott / Suzuki GB. We now have 19 pairs, so need another 12 to ensure that everyone on the Bus can get a close-up view!

Cathy Dean, Director

ALL IMAGES: LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM



## Paying for the sins of our Fathers

At the age of seven, I saw my game warden father, Jack Bonham, shoot a rhino that had been creating havoc in a village about 20 kilometres away from the Chyulus. It was not a big event, as rhino were everywhere in those days, and already at that age I had made several speedy ascents up thorn trees to escape the attentions of an irate rhino. The story gets worse. My wife Tara is the granddaughter of another warden, the famous J A Hunter, who was given the job of shooting 1,000 rhino out of the Makueni area (which borders the Chyulu Hills) to make way for a settlement scheme.

Today we are working with the Kenya Wildlife Service to look after the descendants of those our fathers and the poaching debacle of the 1970s left behind. It's a double game of hide and seek. Finding the rhino is a challenge in

itself! They are seriously bush wise, never leaving the thickets and lava flows that have given them their last refuge. Tracking is virtually impossible due to the lava, and the visibility never more than five metres. This protects the rhino, but also makes finding poachers equally difficult.

Thanks to support from NGOs and individuals, including a recent grant of US \$42,690 from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, we now have a huge advantage over would-be killers. A Landrover, radio network, salaries, rations, tents, uniforms, rucksacks (all the things that make an anti-poaching network tick) are in place. We have seven KWS rangers and 15 dedicated community scouts specifically tasked with rhino surveillance. It's an arduous task: all patrols are on foot, often having to dodge elephant and buffalo, sleeping out, and ambushing snare lines.

The stakes are high in the Chyulus. This is the last black rhino population that hasn't been manipulated, but is so small that it is on the verge of being non-viable. We cannot afford to lose a single rhino. But things are looking good and we have calves - so they are breeding!

Richard Bonham, Chyulu Hills rhino project

The Chyulus' rhinos have been supported by Save the Rhino, Chester Zoo, the International Rhino Foundation, USFWS, Tusk Trust, and other NGOs and individuals including Anna Merz and Hans Klieber.

DAVE STIRLING

