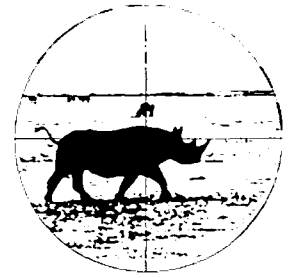


# H.O.R.N.



Volume 5, Issue 3

*Help Our Rhinos Now*

Spring 1993

**The Official Newsletter of the Ngare Sergoi Support Group**

## The Coming of the Rains & the Catching of a Rhino

Reported by Anna Merz

**T**he year started not so well with my somewhat accident prone mare getting herself concussed with a kick on the head, but then, our long awaited rains finally came to our great joy & relief. There has been much getting stuck in the mud but it is glorious. Our world has become miraculously alive once more, the day vibrates with the calling of crickets & the night with happy toads & frogs. Tortoises, hidden away in nooks & crannies for two long years trundle everywhere with a total lack of regard for other road users. They are convinced that with head & legs withdrawn, they are inviolable, their ancient brains unable to conceive the dangers of vehicular traffic. Always I carry them to safety & invariably forget their propensity for urinating copiously when disturbed. All animals, for so long listless & dying, have rebounded & now have the energy to play, fight & mate once more. The clarion calls of embattled zebras enliven the nights, & the valley below my house, so long barren & desolate, has become a raging river & the thunder of the waterfall, which has only functioned as such four times in ten years can be heard

throughout my house.

In the middle of the month the newest member of my family arrived by plane from Nairobi; an adorable jet black roly-poly puppy with the teeth & biting capacity of a miniature crocodile. His name is Valdimar Bagheera &

despite his destructive & puddle producing capacities, I am enchanted. The rest of the pack have distinct reservations but so far have restrained themselves from demolishing him.

As soon as I returned home to the  
*(Continued inside—Anna's Report)*



Crating caught wild rhino

*Photo by Andy Lodge*

*(Continued from cover—Anna's Report)*

sanctuary after my two months spent in America I was told that there were rumors of a rhino whose tracks had been seen to the north of the Mathews Range, somewhere in the vast area of desert plain & mountain between Marsabit & Lysamis. The K.W.S. acted quickly in employing a local elder to try & keep tabs on it & report its whereabouts. Occasional rumors filtered down to us that it had been sighted & was thought to be a young male. He seemed to be covering huge distances but the center of his range appeared to be a mountain called Elim. The Somali shifta have always been a threat in that area but suddenly the whole situation was vastly worsened by the arrival of the U.S. Marines in Somalia. As the Marines moved in huge gangs of heavily armed thugs moved out. They were intent on occupying their time with raiding, looting & murdering until such time as the Marines removed themselves & they could return home to carry on with their clan warfare. Their chosen hunting ground was, of course, the N.E. of Kenya, as could have been clearly foreseen if anyone in charge of this operation had shown some compassion for the wretched Kenyans. How many have been killed no one knows but the numbers are considerable. Their stock which has been looted must run into thousands & their whole way of life has been compromised and placed under threat.

Sometimes at night I would lie awake & think about this rhino & in my imagination would see this great grey creature endlessly searching through the lands where his ancestors roamed, seeking always for the scent of his own kind & seeking always in vain. Could his mind conceive that he was nearly the last of his kind & how near his race was to the void.

The logistics of the capture were worked out between Ian & Francis & the K.W.S. Their new vet. Dr. Richard Koch, was in charge of the Capture Unit & would be responsible for the capture. We would supply the Mercedes Lorry & Supercub donated by AAZK through Bowling for Rhinos.

Halvor Astrup very kindly allowed the use of his helicopter with Mark, its highly skilled pilot. There was to be no question of building a holding boma up north to allow time for the animal to calm down after capture; if he was to be moved it would have to be at once & under a heavy armed guard for the paramount consideration was evading the Shifta & this meant moving at speed before they got wind of the operation. When I went to the East Gate on the morning of Jan. 19th to feed my horse I was told to be ready to move north in about 2 hours. My camping equipment was ready so it did not take long to load the car with that & petrol, diesel, water & some spares. Peter, our mechanic came with me & the capture lorry followed. At Isiolo we met up with Richard and the Capture Unit and proceeded north in convoy, Richard leading & my Suzuki bringing up the rear. The arrival of our longed for and belated rains did not improve the road which is deplorable; huge corrugations & vast potholes competed with each other & mud & dust alternated as we drove in & out of showers. The scenery there is always spectacular with the vast Mathews Range to the west & elsewhere mountains & kopjes rising out of the plains. Now all was green & glorious. Sadly enjoying the view was not possible most of the time. Hanging onto the wheel & negotiating the obstacles of the road was a full time operation, added to which most of the other vehicles using the road were stuck, some we could help, others we had to crawl round. Soon after dark we knew we had to turn west onto another track but we could not find where. Eventually we found someone to show us & soon we were close enough to hear Ian on my car radio & with his help we found where he & Mark had made camp with the helicopter & Supercub & one of our Toyotas sent up the day before with a team of trackers. The journey of just over 300 kms had taken 10 and a half hours.

In the morning I crept out of my tiny mountain tent to find myself in a vast meadow of flowers near Mt. Elim with the Ndoto mountains to the west & Marsabit to the north. It was beautiful & lush beyond belief with flowers growing everywhere & reminded me of

the last time I had been in this area nearly 20 years before when Karl & I came on holiday to Kenya from Ghana. Then, too, there had been unexpected rains & the whole area, normally semi desert, had been carpeted by flowers. Our teams & some from the capture unit were made into teams of 3 & Mark took them in the helicopter & dropped them into strategic areas. This enabled them to search a huge area for tracks which would have been impossible if all had to proceed on foot from the camp. Ian flew endlessly in the Supercub & with his radio & his vast knowledge of the country supervised the whole search. I flew with him as spotter. The area was vast, beautiful but very empty. There were many deserted bomas but no people & no flocks & herds taking advantage of all the new grass, only gazelles, oryx & ostrich, & once two cheetah. Eventually Ian flew over Lysamis where there is a police post & a KWS post to speak to the latter on the radio. Then we saw why there were no people—Lysamis looked like a refugee camp. All the nomadic herdsmen from far & near had assembled there with their flocks & herds for safety. Their lives were disrupted & their animals unable to take advantage of the grazing. For them, intervention in Somalia spelt total disaster.

In the afternoon Ian flew once more, this time taking Richard with him & I went to walk along the north edge of Elim to check out something I had seen but been unable to identify, & to see if I could find any fresh tracks. It was a most beautiful walk with the scent & sight of flowers everywhere & the vibrant feeling of fresh growth. Above my head larks danced in the sky singing & rejoicing. The creature I had been unable to identify turned out to be an oryx & I found no trace of rhino but once heard a lion up on the mountain above me & we heard them again that night. Later that evening when the search had been called off for the day we heard that one team had discovered tracks only 24 hours old to the east of where we had been searching. We laid our plans to move all vehicles over there in the morning & concentrate our search in that area.

*(To be continued . . .)* ■

**Now that the Ngare Ndare Forest fencing project is complete, I've received many letters from the farmers that have small farms along the new fence. Here are a few of these letters.**

**—Andy Lodge**

Mrs. Esther Nugnjq Nducha  
Mithatene Village  
Plot No. 553 Kisima Box 40  
Timau, Kenya

Dear Mr. Lodge,

The problems encountered in the past include: The menace of elephants: I have been spending sleepless nights whenever the elephants were around, beating drums to scare them off but with very little success.

The elephants are not selective and could eat whatever they came across from wheat, potatoes, maize, cabbages, sweet potatoes, beans, peas, sugarcane and even bananas.

To make matters worse, the elephants usually came at night in the homestead to feed on some exotic shade trees. More often than not a family member has failed to reach home in the evening for fear of meeting or encountering with an elephant.

Other times children have failed to go to school because a certain elephant used to go back to the Ngare Ndare Forest anytime from 6.00 am to 9.00 am in the morning.

Some diseases are known to be transmittable between wildgame and domestic animals, such as Trypanosomiasis etc. Other animals (Carnivores) have also been a problem.

Since the installation of the electric wire fence I the above named and family feel more secure. Above all I am assured of growing food crops and harvesting them without interference of wildgame.

I sincerely wish to thank the personnel concerned, and highly appreciate their good work. Otherwise farming was becoming a hopeless occupation for most of us neighboring the Ngare Ndare Forest. May God bless you.

Thank you, Yours Faithful  
Farmer E.N. Nducha

Julius Mwebia  
P.O. Ex-Lewa  
Isiolo, Kenya

Dear Mr. Lodge,

Well I'm very happy this moment while I'm appreciating your work on the electric fencing. I must express my gratitude for the excellent work. Since it was put up, we have been sleeping very comfortably and peacefully. Also we've eaten maize while in the shamba and also the maize has dried while in the shamba without being disturbed by wild animals. Also lighting fire during the night was a habit but these days there is none. Do not forget sir that this fire was only to scare them since nobody could dare to go near them. So you have really done something good that will not be forgotten by people living along the fence line. May I give my sincere thanks to those who have contributed to the production and putting up of the electric hot-wire. Thanks and bye, God bless you.

Yours Faithfully  
Julius Mwebia



Elephants destroying a small farm along the border of Ngare Ndare Forest

Photo by Ian Craig



Farmer left with trampled field and food supply gone.

Photo by Ian Craig

Jacob Margte Karanga  
Farm No. 554. Kenya

Dear Mr. Lodge.

First is much congratulations for the installation of the fence. This thanks will go to the engineers of the work and the workers who were involved. Actually the workers who were installing the fence were friendly to the residents and I thank them so much for their amiability. Also the persons should receive congratulations for the work which has been done. Therefore the following are some of the abundances which I as a resident on the forest line benefit from.

1. Stray animals from the forest which have been destroying crops are now prevented.
2. There will be conservation of wildlife in the forest which will ensure rapid growth of tourism industry.
3. As a part of environmental conservation in the country this part will ensure natural habitat since there will be proper control of the forest.
4. The fence will act as an incentive to each individual to plant trees which will ensure rainfall and environmental conservation.

5. Now with no stray animals, the residents walk during the night without fear.
6. No more contamination of wild animals parasites to some sick ones since they will be all grazing in the forest.
7. There will be higher income in the area due to high production of crops.
8. The electric fence is again going to ensure security in the area in the case of cattle thieves.
9. The purpose of the installation of the electric fence has surely been met since from now on receipts for the collection of firewood will be issued to stop those who go unlawfully to collect firewood.
10. Government revenue will increase due to the buying of firewood and posts by the residents.

In the case of disadvantages the residents should be warned about the dangers of the electricity.

Also residents should be warned the act of entering unlawfully in the forest and the gullies.

Yours Faithfully  
Jacob Margte Karanga

## Please Help!

Even though C.I.T.E.S. (The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) has banned the international trade in rhino products, five countries still blatantly continue this bloody practice. The governments of these five countries, Taiwan, China, South Korea, Thailand and Yeman turn a blind eye to this trade and it is allowed to flourish. Please help save the Rhino! Boycott products made in these countries.

To order your copy of the book by Anna Merz,  
***Rhino At the Brink of Extinction***  
 mail \$20.00 plus \$2.50 shipping and handling to:

**Ngare Sergoi  
 Support Group**

P.O. Box 29503  
 Columbus, Ohio 43229



Please send me \_\_\_ book(s)  
 Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*All proceeds from the book go directly to  
 Ngare Sergoi Rhino Sanctuary for the continued  
 operation and success of the sanctuary.*

## Learn more about the plight of wildlife . . .

Andy Lodge is available for public lectures (school,  
 civic groups, etc.) His presentation is a multi-media  
 program. Please call 614/337-0676 to schedule.

## Become a Member . . .

Receive a year's subscription to *H.O.R.N.* newsletter.  
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## Editorial Policy

The staff of *H.O.R.N.* welcomes serious conservation  
 articles and/or editorials for publication. Although the focus  
 will be on rhino and other large mammal conservation, we  
 encourage articles on any relevant or legitimate conservation  
 topic. Articles must be 2000 words or less, and we request  
 that any editorial or controversial article be based on  
 verifiable facts. Photographs and illustrations are also  
 welcome. Photos may be prints or slides. Prints must be at  
 least 3½ x 5, and slides standard 35mm. Submitted articles  
 and pictures will not be returned. The staff has the final  
 decision on publication and articles may be edited for  
 brevity. Views of contributing authors are not necessarily the  
 views of The Ngare Sergoi Support Group.  
 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, Carl Gyarmaty,  
 Andy Lodge, Stephen Rayburn, Angele Wood.



# H.O.R.N.

**Ngare Sergoi Support Group**

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## Children's Column

By Missy Betcher



Student classroom at Ntugi Primary School

Photo by Andy Lodge

**T**he Ngare Sergoi Rhino Sanctuary is located on Lewa Downs ranch. Just outside of Lewa Downs there is a school, the Ntugi Primary School. When someone says the word "School" you probably think of all sorts of things, from riding the bus to your favorite teacher to the games you play at recess. In some ways school in Kenya is much like yours, and in other ways it is very different.

The Ntugi Primary School, located in the Meru District is a typical rural Kenyan school. Since it is a primary school, Ntugi has grades 1 through 6. There is one class for each grade. The school does not have indoor plumbing. Whenever a pupil wants a drink or has to go to the bathroom, the child has to go outside to the pump and outhouse. In class, the students learn Kiswahili (the native language), English, Math, Science and Agriculture, History, Geography, Arts and Crafts, P.E., Music, and Home Science.

Since Ntugi is a rural school, most of the students are children of farmers. Some have to walk 5 or 6 miles a day to come to school. Although they cannot ride a bus to school, Kenyan children are a lot like American children. They are eager to learn and they also like to have fun. The following excerpts from letters by children attending Ntugi Primary School tell a little bit about their lives.

"My name is Douglas Guantai. I am

12 years old. I live in Kenya. Kenya is in Africa in Africa continent. In Kenya we have 46 district and 8 providence. In East Africa there are three countries and in Africa there are 49 countries. I have two pet rabbits called Tom and Jim. I help my parents during the holidays to care for our cattle. We have one cow, six hens and one sheep. I have one brother and two sisters. My mother and father live in the village. My hobbies are playing netball and handball."

"My name is Jesca Karambu. I am 13 years old. I am in standard six at Ntugi Primary School. We have many subject to study such as English, Math, Kiswahili, G.H.C., C.R.E., etc. My favorite subject is Kiswahili. I have 2 brothers and 4 sisters. My father and mother work in our shamba. I help my parents during the holidays to care for our cattle. We have two cows, sheep and no goat. I have a pet dog named Shimba and a cat called Puppy. My hobbies are playing netball and mopanya together with my friends. In Kenya we keep many types of animals such as donkeys, pigs, hen, sheep, goats and cows. After school my little brother look after our cattle. In our class there are 52 pupils and 15 teachers in our school. The class master of our class is Mrs. Mworira. She is a good teacher. In our 15 teachers there are 3 male teachers together with our head master."

"My name is Lucy Kendi. I am 13 years old. I am in standard six. My school is not far away from home. I take about 1 kilometer to reach school. My hobbies are playing netball, mopanya, reading story book. I have four brothers and three sister. My father works in town at Nanyuki and my mother works in our shamba. I help my parents during the weekend to care for our shamba. In my country the favorite animals are elephant, giraffe, warthog, and lion."

"My name is Paul Kimmi. I am 14 years old. I live in Kenya. I am in standard six at Ntugi Primary School. In standard six we have many subjects but my favorite subject is English. I have two brothers and two sisters in my family. I help my parents during the holidays to care for our goats and sheep. We have 2 sheep and 7 goats. My main hobbies are playing football or Kabia. Here we are not allowed to dance after school. We go to help our parents."

If you would like to write to a pupil at Ntugi Primary School a letter can be sent care of Jane Craig, Lewa Downs, Private Bag, Isiolo Kenya. Unless you use an airmail stamp it will take a long time for a letter to get to Kenya. And, do not be discouraged if it takes a while for a letter to get back to you. These children often do not have spare paper to write letters on or the spare money to buy a stamp. ■