

# THE DAVID SHELDRIK WILDLIFE TRUST



2002 *newsletter*

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**2002 NEWSLETTER**

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**Our News**

That time of the year again, and an opportunity to wish all our friends and supporters worldwide **A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS YEAR 2003.** It is also an opportunity to thank each and everyone of our donors, who, through their financial assistance have empowered the Trust to make this one of the most rewarding years ever in terms of conservation achievements. Particularly we would like to gratefully acknowledge grants given by the following organisations in support of our **Orphans' Programme** which is a costly commitment we are unable to shoulder alone.

**Care for the Wild in U.K., Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas in Germany, The International Fund for Animal Welfare, Vrienden van de Olifant in Holland, Amara Conservation Ltd., Globio and Gerry Ellis whose beautiful book "Wild Orphans" so sensitively portrayed the Orphans' Project giving credit where it is due, to the Keepers. We would like to also thank the numerous supporters and individuals all over the world who have not forgotten the orphans and our work.**

**Importantly, we owe a great debt of gratitude to all who have supported our on-line Fostering Programme for the elephant orphans, something that has proved extremely popular. We are deeply indebted to our Web Master, Paul MacKenzie, and Daphne's younger daughter, Angela, who, together have designed and operated our on-line Fostering Programme. We are also deeply grateful to those faithful donors who make the regular contributions which have enabled us to keep the anti-poaching wheels turning in Tsavo.**

This year, our financial support to the Kenya Wildlife Service has exceeded that of all previous years. Over and above donations of diesel and Avgas, we, with help from IFAW, have assisted financially towards the clearing of vital firebreaks along Tsavo East's extensive and critical Eastern boundary that poses a great fire hazard to the Park in the dry season.

An important donation by the Trust was the purchase of a reconditioned engine for the Tsavo East Surveillance Aircraft flown by Daniel Woodley, badly needed to keep it aloft and the Warden alive. The coughing and spluttering of this machine as it passed overhead left us in no doubt that Delta Whiskey was tired of flying and needed some

financial input! Bits and pieces and the block itself taken from the old engine will enable another two aircraft to take to the skies.



Fourteen hand held radio sets, plus all the recharging necessities have been a vital donation to enable KWS to respond to poaching emergencies rapidly, also equipping our de-snaring teams with better communication ability at the request of KWS., who, we are proud to say, view our teams as partners.

With the aim of making the Ithumba Headquarters in the Northern Area of Tsavo self sufficient in terms of drinking water, and save them the expense of having to truck it in from Voi 100 miles away, we have provided and installed much needed rainwater tanks and repaired the old well which was leaking.

At the request of the Regional Assistant Director Tsavo East, the Trust purchased 6 Containers, to be used as secure anti-poaching out-stations, that can be moved when necessary.

Most significant of all has been the success and difference we have been able to make through the ongoing operations undertaken by our four de-snaring teams who work in conjunction with K.W.S. Rangers along some of Tsavo's sensitive boundaries, and which have starkly highlighted the seriousness of this threat to Kenya's wildlife. Some trapped animals found still alive have also been able to be released and spared untold suffering.

**We owe a sincere debt of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Joe Cullman III for their substantial support of this project, to Marty Moore of the Moore Foundation, The Kerrigan Waves Trust and Safaricom for their support of the local schools abutting the boundaries we work. To achieve success, it is essential that de-snaring operations go hand in hand with a community component We would like also to acknowledge the support from KWS that has made our work possible, particularly mentioning Peter Leitoro, Tsavo East's energetic Regional Assistant Director.**

Daphne has been honoured to have been made a Member of the Burning Spear (MBS) by the Kenya Government, an important accolade in recognition of the Trust's conservation contribution. She was also proud to have won the BBC's very prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award announced at a black Tie function in London on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

She is deeply aware that these accolades represent the work of our entire team and the financial support we have enjoyed that has made it all possible. Heartfelt thanks to all our Trustees who steer the direction of the Trust imparting encouragement and support and to our loyal workers and trusted donors.



**Now for some not so good news.** This year has been filled with a very heavy work schedule and a fair share of negative events as well. Kenya has suffered a mini war of terror of its own caused by escalating crime, which, of course, pales into insignificance beside the big picture elsewhere, but nevertheless impacts on one's daily living, which does not become any easier. Increasing poverty in our society forces the unemployed to parasitise on those more fortunate, victims of a shrinking economy due to the high level corruption and plunder that is bringing the country to its knees.

Where, we wonder, were our old wild buffalo friends, affectionately named "Helmut", "Hardnut", "Horatio" and "Hellier", who spared us the armed robbery last year? Certainly, on the night of October 26<sup>th</sup> they were conspicuous by their absence when four armed gunmen descended upon us at midnight and relieved us of all the money on the premises.

Our nocturnal visitors, who, on this occasion, escaped the attention of Helmut and his ilk, were, at least, polite, thanking us profusely for the loot once they had cleaned us out! Their captives included our two obviously non-vigilant Night Watchmen and a comatose night Elephant Milk Mixer all of whom were frogmarched to Jill and J.F.'s pad with a gun to their heads and ordered to report that one of the Nursery Elephants was very sick! Such interruptions to a night's rest are not unusual, for there have been many occasions when we have had to get up in the middle of the night to deal with an ailing elephant baby. Recently, it was orphan "Burra" who blew up like a balloon and needed the attentions of a Vet urgently and since we had just de-wormed the seven Nursery inmates, it was quite probable that one of them had suffered a bad reaction.

Without a second thought, Jill was out of the door and promptly also "captured" as the other captives cowered on the floor and were bundled and locked into the bedroom. Then, under threat of death for non-compliance, she and J.F. (her French other-half) were forced to visit all the many hiding places where the Trust's money was sequestered in preparation for month end float renewals, etc.

It should be pointed out that in Kenya one is much more at risk making regular visits to the Bank, so what we were holding was a substantial amount. The fact that the intruders knew exactly how much we were likely to have, and where, smacks disturbingly of the usual "inside element", but identifying exactly who that inside culprit could be, is another matter!

There is, however, always a positive spinoff to such events and in this case it has prompted us to tighten our security. KWS have been more than cooperative, and have kindly supplied us with an armed guard by day, whilst the Night Vigil is now undertaken by a Professional Security Firm. We have panic buttons, alarms, and a fortified vehicle that comes regularly to relieve us of the responsibility of holding cash, but, most importantly, no one was injured in this "wake-up call".

However, the downside is that Jill and J.F. have decided that the time has arrived to make some life changes. They have decided to take their two little girls back to France early next year affording them the opportunity of exposure to French culture and affordable education. There, at least, they will not be exposed to robbery with violence because there, they will have nothing worth taking!

It goes without saying that we in the Trust will miss them sorely. It will, indeed, be difficult to replace Jill's lifelong experience and the expertise she has acquired that has contributed to the saving of so many animal lives over the years. It will be difficult also to replace J.F.'s spirit and dedication overseeing the practical side of all our projects. Their combined input created and motivated our four de-snaring teams. Their replacement will have to be a versatile and dedicated person with the necessary practical skills and the same passion for wilderness and its wild inmates.

There is no doubt that the actions of Mr. Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe have left all white born Africans feeling somewhat vulnerable, articulately expressed in a recent article by Max Hastings in the London Daily Mail, which described us as the white "flotsam" washed up on the shores of Africa, legacy of Colonialism. Those of us born and bred in Africa feel that we really do belong and have been shocked by the treatment of the white Zimbabwean farmers whose roots reach back as long as the Americans have been in America and who have contributed so much to the economy and self sufficiency of that country in the past.

This came close to home when the Trust was faced with the threat of a "land grab" on our little patch of land abutting the Tsavo National Park, home to one of our de-snaring teams and the site of the new Trust Building which by law we have had to build. Opportunely, however, this particular headache solved itself when "the grabber" killed himself in a car crash on the main Mombasa/Nairobi road just before the case was due to be brought before Court.

The Trust building is now almost complete in a wonderful setting overlooking the Athi river, and is something of which we are all very proud. When necessary it could serve as

the Trust's permanent Headquarters in the future, and is a fitting Memorial to the Park's pioneering Wardens.



### **Of Elephants and CITES**

For Africa's elephants, the year ended badly when CITES (The International Convention for Trade in Endangered Species) gave the green light to the Ivory Trade by sanctioning the sale of the ivory stockpiles held by three of the wealthiest countries in Africa - South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. This, too, although serious for the future of elephants, could have turned out worse had it not been for the spirited struggle put up by the Kenyan and Indian delegations, who fought for the elephants, and not for their ivory. The good news is that at least the sale cannot take place until May 2004, and then supposedly only if there is not an escalation in poaching due to an easing of the 1989 ban.

This ban has now stood for 13 years, aimed at allowing time for the African elephant as a species to recover from three decades of genocide which saw the population fall from 3.5 million to less than 200,000. The decline continues. Burgeoning human populations cutting ancient migration routes, elephants forced into tiny forest refuges, in danger every time they step out because they find themselves in conflict with human interests, are all factors that continue to impact negatively on Africa's elephants. Those same forest refuges are also now under threat from illegal logging and charcoal burning so the elephants are under siege, and it is a battle they cannot win. The 2002 CITES decision has cast the die even more heavily against them, for as long as there is a commercial value to the tooth of an elephant, and affluent societies that will purchase ivory trinkets, there will be poaching perpetrated by poverty stricken people to fuel this Trade - a trade centred in the richest countries of the world. Furthermore, illegal ivory proceeds fill personal pockets as opposed to a country's coffers. For this reason we see countries where poaching is known to be rife still supporting legal sales, so that illegal stocks can be laundered into the legal system.

Elephants born following the 1989 Ivory Ban when the poaching genocide was brought under some control, are still only 13 years old, identical in terms of age to a human child of the same age. Furthermore, the social fabric of elephant society in all the elephant range states that suffered that onslaught is still disrupted and in chaos. The elephants have lost the wisdom of their elders - those high ranking Bulls and those wise old

Matriarchs, upon whom the survival of the herds depends in times of hardship. Today, young teenage Matriarchs do their best to lead fragmented herds whose ranks have been swelled by hordes of orphans tagging along, severely handicapped by the absence of survival knowledge when the going gets tough. Young teenage bulls often behave in an anti-social and unruly manner, lacking the discipline and example that would have been imposed by higher ranking male elders.

Yet, in our human society, money talks louder than ethics, and CITES is an organisation where trade incentives dominate, so endangered species are the mere pawns in a Big Money Game. Every two years when the CITES Parties are set to meet, we see an upsurge in poaching, but none are so blind as those who do not want to see, and who know so little about the nature of elephants that they regard them only as a commodity. Others want to perpetuate the illegal trade for their own selfish ends. The fact that it takes an elephant twenty years to reach maturity, and another twenty to become wise, seems to have escaped their notice. Only numbers and the financial spin-off have been taken into consideration. One cannot underestimate the importance of experience and age in long lived species. Indeed, it is a vital component to survival.

There follows just a few excerpts written at random in the Trust Diary since the last Newsletter, which speak volumes:-

**Christmas Eve 2001-** Swiss Air Flight intercepted with Ivory, Rhino horn and leopard skins, destined for China.

**December 2001** -5 Elephants poached North of Meru National Park. Price of ivory jumped from K. Shs. 300/- per kilo to over K. shs. 3000/-  
Trader in the Coastal town of Malindi offered a tourist **leopard skins, belts, ivory and even rhino horn, given a few days' prior notice. Where from, the tourist enquired - Tsavo National Park was the reply!**

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2002** - 10 Elephants poached at Elephant Bone Corner in the Northern Area of Tsavo East National Park. 14 tusks recovered, 2 still missing. 1 Somali shot at 4.30 a.m. in an ambush. Ammunition, AK 47's and a Rocket Propelled Grenade Launcher recovered.

**26<sup>th</sup> April 2002** - Another 3 bandit poachers shot and more weapons and ammunition recovered.

**12<sup>th</sup> July 2002** - 6 tons of illegal Ivory worth £570,000 seized in Singapore.

**20<sup>th</sup> August 2002** - 160 kilos ivory found with a woman trader in Guinea.

**23<sup>rd</sup> August 2002** - Thai Customs recovered 121 pieces of fresh ivory (362 kilos) worth US\$ 238,095, shipped from the United Arab Emirates (where no elephants exist)

**3<sup>rd</sup> October 2002** - 3 tons of Ivory and Hardwoods seized in China. This haul included 654 packages of Ivory, (303 whole tusks, the heaviest of which was just over 10 kg., 408 smaller baby tusks, the smallest of which was just 1 kg.) Shanghai authorities admitted that ivory smuggling had increased dramatically over the last two years and that no less than 16 tons of illegal ivory had been seized in China this year.

**15<sup>th</sup> November 2002** - a Traveller through Southern Mozambique saw the carcasses of 16 poached elephants.

**The Kenya Wildlife Service acknowledges that some 80 elephants are known to have been poached in Kenya this year, as opposed to some 59 last year. This does not take into account those that have never been found and who have died beyond the boundaries of the Protected Areas. Most elephant Range States cannot adequately protect even the elephants within their National Protected Areas due to financial and manpower constraints, let alone the vast areas beyond where elephants habitually roam.**

Forums such as CITES highlight the worst side of human nature - greed for money, bribery, vote swapping, computer hacking and bugging plus strong armed tactics and threats levelled at all who dare oppose the trade bias of the seasoned utilizers. The sad fact is that wealthy Southern Africa has more bargaining chips at its disposal than the poverty stricken north. **It is the trade in ivory that fuels the poaching and we feel very strongly that ivory should never be allowed to be traded, but destroyed. Africa's elephants are precious and worth far more alive than dead quite apart from the moral ethics of subjecting an animal that duplicates us humans in terms of family ties, memory, sense of death and emotion to such suffering.** How deeply the world felt for the human relatives and victims of September 11th. Would that the same compassion could be extended to others that have the misfortune of having to share our space.

One of the conditions of the stockpile sales is that the CITES Secretariat must confirm that any potential buyers can effectively regulate their domestic ivory markets. Since the last CITES Meeting in 2000, over 50 metric tons of elephant ivory has been confiscated and over 1,600 African elephants are known to have been poached. One could safely quadruple this figure, for those found, are few and far between in countries where law enforcement and protection is inadequate. **The fact is that CITES has never yet been able to control the trade in illicit ivory and nor have the countries that buy the legal stockpiles i.e. Japan and China.**

Furthermore, the MIKE monitoring system is unworkable, impractical and has never even got off the ground. Hauls of illegal ivory speak for themselves. Monitors are hardly likely to be in the hot spots where elephants (and people) are being gunned down with AK 47's. Just one week after the end of the CITES Conference, a headline in the Daily Nation speaks for itself - **"Elephant tusks seized after ease on Ivory Trade"**. It goes on to read, "armed detectives intercepted a vehicle ferrying two elephant tusks to Nairobi and arrested three people". The tusks were en route from the Masai Mara Reserve.





### **The Bushmeat Crisis**

This year, it is the rampant and escalating bushmeat trade that is causing most concern. The monthly reports submitted by our four de-snaring teams that operate in Tsavo National Park make chilling reading and highlight the unsustainability of an offtake of wildlife at a level that is more than simply subsistence. It is commercial as well and it is growing.



Snaring for the bushmeat trade is indiscriminate, targeting everything on four legs, including elephants. Snares range from small nooses made from the wire in old car tyres, disused telephone lines, thick winch cable, electric cables and high tensile wire stolen from electric fences. Snares are set on game trails along boundaries and around watering points, even deep within the Protected Areas - in fact, anywhere where wild animals still exist, and having snared an area out, the poachers penetrate ever deeper in search of their quarry. Sometimes, grassfires are deliberately set along Park boundaries to promote a flush of green that will entice animals towards the snares in dry seasons.

Giraffe meat is a favourite, and giraffes are often deliberately targeted, with snares set in trees to snag an animal around the neck. One recent de-snaring patrol came across no less than four giraffe hanging in trees along a Park boundary. Elephants are also now being targeted by thick steel cable snares laid on their trails. The more the animal

struggles, held fast to the tree by the cable, the tighter the noose becomes and in some instances a stricken animal has pulled the tree down on top of itself; in others it is held fast until it dies of thirst and starvation or is killed by a hail of arrows should the poachers turn up whilst it is still alive.



So far, the Trust has only managed to mobilise four de-snaring teams to assist K.W.S. stem the scale of this slaughter of the country's wildlife. The need for further help is urgent and vital. **The dedication and enthusiasm of the young African graduates that head our four teams must be applauded, for it is a depressing, difficult and endless task.**

The Ithumba Team's area of operation is the entire Northern Area, providing vital support for KWS. Our teams are always accompanied by Field Force Rangers and fall within the jurisdiction of the Security Division and Warden. **Between January and October this year this team has retrieved 6,156 snares and the Rangers have apprehended numerous poachers.**

The Mtito Team's area of operation is the Mtito river up to the Chuyulus, the Triangle between the Athi, the main Road and the Tsavo river including all railway landhies, and waterholes. This team works with Rangers from Tsavo West National Park and have uncovered the seriousness of snaring, arrow poaching and hardwood logging deep inside that side of the Park. (Poaching and Logging are intertwined in all the areas). It has become urgent that another team be mobilized to help cover Tsavo West. **Since January 2002 the Mtito Team has retrieved 2,168 snares.**

The Burra Team was only mobilized in March following the rescue of our little elephant orphan, "Burra", who was close to death trailing his herd, tightly snared by a steel cable that had cut a deep groove in the back of his neck, slicing one ear almost into two distinct halves. The cable was so tight that he could not suckle his mother and being only about 6

months old, and milk dependent, was literally dying of starvation. Had he not been spotted from the air and rescued, he would most certainly have joined the other victims of the cruel bushmeat trade within a day or two.

The Burra team's area of operation is any hotbed they can unearth from informers and covers the Private Ranches around Voi, the entire boundary from the Tsavo (where the Mtito Team operational area ends) and down as far as Buchuma. This team is led by Isaac Maina (formerly i/c the Tsavo Orphans) and **since March they have recovered 4463 snares, 90% of which have been intended for large animals such as buffalo, zebra, eland and giraffe, with many found actually inside the Park near Irima just behind the Voi Safari Lodge.**



The mobilisation of the new Burra team has been made possible through a kind donation of \$10,000 from **Amara Conservation Ltd.**, which helped to fund their Pick-Up vehicle.

The Peregrine Team (or Home based Team) patrols and care-takes the Trust land abutting the Athi River and that portion of Tsavo's boundary including all the privately owned land along the Athi up to the Kambu river. This team operates on bicycles and is responsible for an on-going and vigorous community input. **They have retrieved 255 snares since January, set mainly at night and visited by poachers at first light to avoid detection.** Our Home Based Team reports heightened nocturnal activity in the dry season, when a lot of lamping takes place i.e. blinding an animal at night by spotlight, and clubbing it to death from behind.



***This year alone our Teams have recovered over 14,000 snares which at a modest 5% daily success rate, could account for some 260,000 animals a year, highlighting the seriousness of the bushmeat trade. The Kenya Wildlife Service has its hands full dealing with Ivory and Rhino poaching and need help with the bushmeat threat, particularly since elephant poaching is set to escalate following the CITES decision.***

*What we can currently support financially is a mere drop in the ocean and we would urge other N.G.O.'s to help us do more, since the Trust has been able to build a good working relationship with KWS in this respect. Recurrent expenditure per team is roughly K. Shs. 1.2 million per year, or £12,000 sterling.*



The Trust also has a very active Community Component overseen by our de-snaring team leaders who encourage Wildlife and Sports Clubs, Tree Planting, and Bird feeding tables, in all the schools they visit along the boundaries. Both the Ithumba and Mtito Teams have mobile cinemas, and both have been able to make text book donations to schools in their area from specific donations given for this purpose.

**We are deeply grateful to The Kerrigan Waves Charity for the donation of the text books for the little Kwa Kimwele Primary school closest to Ithumba, to Safaricom for their generous donation of books for Miasenyi Primary School near Buchuma and to the Moore Foundation who sponsored books for Iviani Primary School near Mtito Andei.**

School field trips into Tsavo West National Park have also been organised for wildlife club members through the kindness of Safaricom and individual sponsors. These have proved extremely valuable and popular. Five such trips have taken place through the Mtito Team, and two through the Burra Team, all in the KWS buses hired for the purpose.

In short, through the bushmeat, logging, and charcoal trades, Kenya is importing the desert. The consequences for future generations do not bare thinking about, and there is no doubt that the sins of the fathers will be visited upon their children and grandchildren.

That said, this Election Year brings the promise of change and the hope for better governance and a curb on corruption that will revive the ailing economy of our country.



## The Orphans Project

There is never a dull moment with our Orphans' Project. The Trust has now successfully hand-reared no less than 43 orphaned elephants and with a family of this size, it would be naïve to think that there would not be elephant sized problems attached as they grow up and gradually become absorbed into the wild elephant community of Tsavo East National Park!



Just before Christmas 2001 Daphne received a friendly call from an Insurance Broker. An elephant had apparently picked up the K.W.S. Husky aircraft from the Park's Airfield at Voi, carted the plane off and dumped it in the bush, somewhat mangled! Was this possible, she was asked, and could an elephant truly have done this and why?

Immediately 16 year old "Olmeg" sprang to mind, for long ago he developed an antipathy to the plane after having been showered in grit by its propeller as he crossed the Airfield one day. His grudge extended to the Airport Attendant, whom he associated with the plane and who flapped rudely at him whenever he approached! On one occasion he inserted a trunk through a window and helped himself to the Airport Manager's clothing, which he piled on his head, and carted off into the bush.



Having assured the Insurance Broker that the culprit was not one of our "Big Boys", but an adult wild elephant (Simon Trevor having been rapidly asked to take a look at the offending footprints around the plane) she was able to breathe a sigh of relief, because

these were those of an adult wild elephant and not a teenager. She assured the Insurance Broker that an elephant was certainly capable of picking up, and trashing a light aircraft left unattended on a bush strip. As to the reason? The animal might have been merely bored, viewing the plane in passing as something that did not belong, a noisy intruder that was an affront to its sensitive ears!

Christmas Day was marred by a report of another "rogue" elephant, this time at Kilaguni Lodge, who apparently had tusks of about 1 ft. in length, and who was chasing after vehicles and people, refusing to be deterred by thunder flashes. He was viewed as a threat, especially when a hairy trunk appeared unexpectedly over a shower wall, above the occupant's head, stemming the water flow, and sending the terrified occupant fleeing in his birthday suit!

After further enquiries, we had the uncomfortable feeling that this might well be "Imenti", who, along with Ndume and Lewa had earlier been moved to the Ngulia Valley of Tsavo West, having discovered the delights of a piggery when some wild friends led them astray across the Park boundary into Voi town. The saga of Ndume, Imenti and Lewa is written in detail on the Trust's website.



Hurriedly, we sent two Keepers to Kilaguni to identify the "rogue" elephant and sure enough, it turned out to be none other than "Imenti". In full view of the lodge tourists, curious bystanders and K.W.S. staff, our Keepers approached and called him by name. He swung round, ears outspread, and racing up to the two men stopped short at the last moment, enveloping them lovingly in his trunk, and rumbling repeated joyous and excited elephant greetings, whilst many of the tourist onlookers found themselves overcome with emotion and burst into tears! To their amazement, this "rogue" elephant was, in fact, a friend that was simply searching for a friendly human.

He must have been deeply puzzled as to why no-one was responding to his overtures, a thought that dampened our Christmas spirits. He had obviously been desperately unhappy, all alone as a "wild" elephant before his time, deserted by those he loved and in a strange and unfriendly place! So began the saga of "Imenti's Long Walk" back home, which is also documented in detail on our [web-page](#).



Those of us who orchestrate The Orphans' Project from our base in Nairobi have learnt some important lessons from this Chapter in the Orphans' story having moved Ndume, Imenti and Lewa to the Ngulia Valley in Tsavo West in October 2001 with their safety and wellbeing uppermost in mind. Ndume immediately did a U-turn and headed back home, turning up at the Elephant Stockades in Voi three weeks later looking very "peevish" having walked back 100 miles. Imenti (who is less outgoing by nature) lacked the confidence to make the journey on his own, and had to be walked back the 100 miles accompanied by his human family and a mobile camp in the back of one of our de-snaring Pick-ups, and only little Lewa seems to have stayed put (but might yet turn up in the fullness of time when he is a little older, for elephants **never** forget!). However, since Lewa was more independent, and also much younger, we are hopeful that he has been successfully absorbed into a wild Tsavo West herd.

The lessons learnt from this saga are (1) that an elephant, most of all, needs its family and friends above all other considerations, (2) that elephant friendships are forged when young, and are enduring and (3) that it would be futile to move any of our orphans anywhere in Tsavo's 8,000 square miles of bushland, for it is but a little stroll for them to get back home. We know now from the experience of Ndume, as well as from the wild bulls moved from the Mwalanganje Sanctuary at Kwale that elephants are able to navigate unknown terrain by mysterious means we humans have yet to understand. Finally, we now know that the orphaned bulls, who, being bulls, leave their family as teenagers to apprentice themselves to higher ranking wild bulls, would be better growing up in the interior of the Park, rather than near boundaries that border human settlement.

We have always been extremely diligent about **never ever** feeding our elephants "junk food" by hand (other than their bottles of milk in infancy). They have never been taught to expect food from strangers, and nor do they ever seek it. They are never fed fruit, vegetables, peanuts or sweets - only natural browse that they source for themselves and which is cut and placed in their Stockades at night whilst they are vulnerable to predation by lions.

With this in mind, we have sought permission from the KWS authorities to establish another Orphans' base further from a sensitive boundary, so that our young bulls can integrate into herds that utilize the interior of the Park, further from areas bordering human settlement. The authorities in Tsavo East have identified a point North of the



Galana River called Thabangunji as a suitable place for this new base, and we now await the green light from K.W.S. Headquarters in Nairobi.

New Years Eve found us up all night fighting for the life of little "Seraa", the tiny calf rescued when almost drowned in a deep rock catchment near Shaba National Reserve and who arrived on our doorstep in a Helicopter in October 2001. We had long been puzzled by moisture dripping from Seraa's trunk, something we had never seen before. That night, it became obvious that the calf's lungs were filled with fluid, for she suddenly had to fight for every breath and sank into a coma. We now know that an elephant cannot cough, so one gets no prior warning of things going wrong in the respiratory system. That night, we brought the year in, massaging little Seraa's chest with essential oils, administering injectable antibiotics and coaxing down colloidal silver and homeopathic pillules all combined with the most essential ingredient of all, a great deal of tender loving care from two Attendant Keepers and Daphne and the family. We only just managed to bring her back to life and Seraa is now a healthy yearling, although still small for her age. She is set to become the Mini Nursery Matriarch when Thoma, Burra, Solango and Sosian leave the Nursery to join the Tsavo contingent at the beginning of December, leaving Seraa and Mpala in the Nursery with the tiny newcomer from the Imenti Forest called "Wendi", (the Meru word for "hope"). She, like Imenti, is another mini miracle and triumph for the Trust who came in brand new, never having even suckled her mother, and consequently deprived of any natural immunities to equip her for life in the big wide world. We owe her life to blood taken from "Thoma" under anaesthesia, plasma of which was infused into the baby's ear vein also under anaesthesia the next day, as everyone held their breath, wondering whether she would be able to survive such a procedure. She did, and is now a bouncing and spirited miniature 2 monther, who charms all who meet her and who rivals "Mweya" in the popularity stakes through the fostering scheme.



Mulika and Nasalot were transferred to Tsavo at the end of January 2002, and received a joyous reunion from the elephants that had shared the Nursery with them and preceded them to Tsavo. The lorry that took them down returned with "Burra", the snared calf mentioned earlier. Burra epitomized the brutality and cruelty of the bush-meat trade. It was touching indeed that his mother seemed to understand enough to stand quietly by and allow her baby to be taken by humans, obviously accepting that this was the only possible help he could have.

Having been easily overpowered by the ground team, which included Isaac Maina the Voi team's Supervisor, the steel cable was cut away from his neck with great difficulty and he was loaded onto the De-snaring Pickup and taken back to the Elephant Stockades in Voi.

The next day, he travelled to Nairobi in the lorry that had taken Mulika and Nasalot from the Nursery. Upon arrival, he was on his last legs. His wounds were syringed out with magic Calendular and saline solution before being packed with antibiotic powder, and after an injection for shock, and an antibiotic, a 48 hour painkiller to ease the agony of wounds that were fearful, he slept wrapped in a blanket between two Keepers. Every time he stirred he was gentled and offered milk, which was rejected and we feared that he was unable to even swallow. However, in the morning he managed to down a few soft leaves, and then we knew that all was not lost.

After five hours of patient pleading, he managed to take his milk, sucked a Keeper's finger and asked for more and it was then that we knew that he did, in fact, have a chance. This was cause for celebration, indeed, and today "Burra" is a bouncing and healthy 18 month old calf, with fat cheeks and a gentle forgiving nature. He will grow into a fine bull that will always be recognisable since he has three ears that flap, instead of just the usual two! He achieved fame when Members of the United Nations Security Council were given him as a fostering gift by the U.K. Mission to the United Nations to mark Sir Jeremy Greenstock's handover as Chairman of that illustrious body, and coming as it did, just before CITES, the publicity left us all hopeful. The elephant "Burra", Sir Jeremy said, epitomized all that was good and all that was bad in Africa - the good being that he had been saved and could look forward to life where he rightly belonged - in the wild - the bad being that he had been a victim of poaching and the subject of so much suffering.

May saw the departure from the Nursery to Tsavo of our mischievous little Ugandan elephant, "Mweya" and "Sweet Sally" from Sweetwaters Ranch, named "Sally" to in honour of a brave cancer victim, Sally Dunn. These two ex Nursery inmates were assured of a rapturous welcome from Mulika and Nasalot (and, of course, all the others), and swelled the ranks of "Emily"'s adopted family to 24.

The month of May also brought a new arrival into the Nursery - little "Mpala" from Mpala Ranch in Laikipia, whose mother was found dead with gunshot wounds, obviously a runner from further North, since there had been no poaching activity on the ranch itself. Her orphaned baby ended up trailing a herd of cattle, (unnerving the herdsman who expected the mother to appear at any moment). Eventually, he was captured by the Ranch Manager, driven to our Nursery and placed in the stable next door to Burra. Although thin, he took milk readily, and his chances of survival looked good from the start, although he has been one of the saddest little elephants for a very long time, and has only just begun to thrive.

The next day we moved him into the old Stockade of our rhino Orphan "Magnum", in order to calm him before allowing him out to join the others. It so happened that Magnum, who is now with the wild rhino community of Nairobi Park, turned up that day, and was extremely upset to find an intruder in *his* pad! Having "sussed" the situation out from every angle, staring fixedly at the occupant, he started to demolish the door, and had to be hurriedly enticed away so that Mpala could be removed! Since then, Magnum, who is free to come and go as he pleases, seldom misses a day to return home and check out his stockade, just to make sure that it still really is his! Whenever he is upset, or is roughed up by a wild rhino, he returns to the security of his Nursery Stockade to sleep in the hay where security is guaranteed!

We, and Magnum, suffered a terrible loss on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February, when his inseparable Nursery companion and our precious female orphaned rhino, "Magnette", was found dead, and clandestinely buried at night, barely half a km. from our premises. When her body was discovered, she had obviously been dead for some days, and the horns were intact, but removed before burial by KWS, who suspected Anthrax to be the cause of death.

Since she and Magnum normally returned together on a daily basis, even though they were ostensibly now "wild", we missed Magnette when she failed to turn up with him on the 19<sup>th</sup>, which was probably the day she perished. We noticed that he was obviously unusually traumatised but suspected that Magnette might have been consorting with a higher ranking bull who had rebuffed him, so were not unduly alarmed until five days later. It was then that we heard a whisper that a rhino had died and been buried near the Workshops.

Since rhinos seem to be being targeted again, five having been shot by Somali poachers in Tsavo East in February and another five recently found snared in Solio Ranch, (formerly a bastion of the species in Kenya) with yet more lost in Nakuru, we were naturally suspicious that Magnette had been poached, particularly in view of the shroud of secrecy that had accompanied her death. However, we will never know for sure, because permission to exhume the body was denied us. Her death left us deeply shocked and upset, and Magnum grieved sorely for his friend for many weeks, and even now, 10 months later, is still not quite himself.

The good news is that our other Rhino Orphan, Makosa, who was born in the holding pens of a mother translocated from Nairobi Park, is now a bouncing and very **big** three year old, almost the same size as six year old Magnum. Accompanying him and his Keepers is orphan "Lucky", a young male warthog rescued as a newborn by our Vet, Dieter Rottcher. Since the Keepers have difficulty pronouncing his given name, it has been changed to "Rugby", which suits him better, although he was, indeed, "lucky" to escape the jaws of a hungry lion one evening. Having failed to return that night and absent most of the next day as well, we were beginning to mourn his passing, when he strode in, hackles erect, planted himself in his Night Box and took a long nap after what had obviously been a very harrowing experience and a long and sleepless night out! Since then, he is careful to keep very close to his Big Friend, but found himself a little too

close one day in the mudbath, when his tail accidentally found itself in Makosa's mouth, and got chomped off half way down!

Makosa managed to scare Angela witless the other day when he came through the front door of her house with a crash of breaking glass in the early hours of the morning. Suspecting robbers, she set off the alarm, which brought Daphne out of her bed at the double. She, in turn, collided with Makosa who by now was at her front door, so she immediately suspected the cause of the commotion, and went in search of his Keepers instead of robbers! Since then, we have all learnt that it is very unwise to come out of the house, irrespective of the reason!

Another newcomer to our Nursery is hardly an infant, but a strapping 2+ year old, who, we were told by the person reporting his presence to us, was "the size of a goat". Very fortunately, the only plane available for this particular rescue was a Grand Caravan, simply because one needed to rescue an elephant the size of a goat was not available on that day. Nor was there time to fly this calf directly to Tsavo, as we normally would have an elephant this age. Instead, he arrived, sedated, flown direct from Sosian Ranch after the Rescue Team had been on a wild goose chase trying to locate him.

The Ranch Owners had him hobbled and were feeding him on cabbages and sugarcane (a sure means of turning a young elephant into a potential crop raider in the future). With an Elephant Trainer in situ, they were obviously hoping to keep him, probably with lucrative Elephant Back Safaris in mind. However, KWS stepped in, and unwittingly we found ourselves unpopular when we turned up for the rescue!

Apart from swollen legs from having been hobbled, "Sosian" was not in bad shape and has been valuable in tutoring our younger Nursery orphans about the many uses of the trunk. He was extremely wild when he came round from his sedation, and quite big enough to inflict severe injury. The Keepers had to be secured on a platform within one of the Rhino Stockades, since the elephant was too large for the usual Nursery accommodation, and through gentle offerings of natural vegetation as well as the temptation of a bottle of barley and milk, within hours he had calmed down and followed the others, settling in like a veteran.

The adventures of all our orphaned elephants are chronicled on our website monthly through The Keepers' Diary which records on a daily basis their gradual reintegration back into the wild community of Tsavo East National Park, as well as all their daily encounters with other denizens of the wilderness, their antics, their moods, their disagreements and grudges and, in fact, all the traits one finds in one's own human children and grand children. Most noticeable has been the grudge Imenti holds against Ndume, whom he obviously regards as the reason for an unpleasant interlude in his life. Every time Ndume appears out of the bush to pay his orphan family a visit, Imenti makes himself scarce, wanting no part of being "persuaded" to go anywhere with Ndume again! We are pleased to find Imenti happy to accompany Edo and leave Emily's group from time to time for short spells, but of all our Big Boys, it is Imenti who is most "clinging" and reluctant to become a wild elephant, having no orphaned male friends his own age.

His feeling of inferiority manifests itself in the odd bout of aggression towards the Keepers that he can "dominate" whenever he has had his ego dented out in the bush. However, we have no doubt, that in the fullness of time, Imenti, who came to us just hours after being born, will take his place amongst the bull community, as he should, and toughen up in the process.

Meanwhile, we are concerned that Aitong seems to have fallen in love with Edo, and has been mounted by him on numerous occasions. In view of what happened to Malaika, this worries us (as it obviously does Emily), because Aitong is still far too young to fall pregnant. We have still not been able to identify a suitable birthing prophylactic that we can be sure does not have adverse side effects and the advice of other elephant experts is, just wait and see, because Malaika's death in childbirth could just have been a "one off".

What does become obvious from The Keepers' Diary is the fact that elephants are, by nature, peace-loving, timid and insecure when young, dependent on the wisdom of the elders for guidance. They enjoy chasing anything that will oblige by running away, and are thrilled to be able to keep a baboon up a tree! They "tremble all day" having touched a lizard, a millipede, a chameleon, or discovered that a tortoise is not just a ball like the one they used to play with in the Nursery, but something living with a head and legs that appear unexpectedly. Imenti looks upon himself as the "protector" and gets a kick out of seeing off larger animals such as buffalo (as long as they oblige by running away)! However, when the chips are down, the orphans will also protect their human family from any obvious threat, an instance of this was when the orphans accidentally found themselves in the middle of a hunt, in between a lioness and her zebra quarry. Immediately Emily took charge, and all the elephants encircled their Keepers, as she and Aitong faced and demonstrated in front of a very angry (and noisy) lioness, who eventually with a thrashing tail, teeth bared and ears back, was forced to about turn and beat a retreat! On this occasion, the Keepers as well as the elephants, were trembling! On many occasions, Emily and Imenti, backed up by Aitong and the others, have saved the Keepers from charging buffalo.

This year, despite the severity of a long dry season, most of our Big Boys have been absent. Dika appeared briefly just once in January, Ndume appeared to announce his return and only Edo has been a regular caller. Lissa, her calf and little herd which includes Mpenzi, call from time to time, but Mary and her baby, Olmeg, Taru, Chuma, Ajok, Lominyek, Uaso and Lewa seem to have made it back into the wild, even if it turns out only to be a second chance, their fate being no different to that of any other wild elephant.

In conclusion, and on a happy note, a flourishing herd of 25 Coastal Topi can often be seen near Satao Camp. Previously, only 1 had ever been seen in Tsavo by David Sheldrick in the early seventies. He also saw 1 Sable Antelope and we hope that this species will similarly reappear in the Park.

All orphans are wonderful ambassadors for their wild brethren. Our de-snaring teams have successfully hand-reared 3 kudu calves, a duiker and a bushbuck, all of which have

become treasured mascots of the Teams as well as the Rangers, who now view wild animals in a different and more compassionate light.

Our vision for the coming year includes finding the wherewithal to be able to mobilize additional de-snaring teams. We also hope for a permanent Veterinarian of Kenyan origin plus a vehicle for him and all the necessary equipment and drugs, on call at all times, to help save snared victims of the cruel bushmeat trade. Thanks to the fundraising prowess of "The Children of the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust" of Bury Church of England High School and their energetic teacher, Jackie Vet, who have already funded two Windmills in Tsavo, a third will soon be whirling away at the old borehole site at Dida Harea ("The Place of the Zebra" in the Waliangulu language). We hope to establish another base for some of our orphans further from a sensitive community boundary.

Finally, another piece of good news. Michael Wamithi has just been appointed the new Director of The Kenya Wildlife Service, replacing Joe Kioko, who is retiring after many years of sterling service. Michael has worked before within the Service, and as the Regional Director of The International Fund for Animal Welfare, so he has seen both sides of the coin. He is young and he is dynamic, so we look forward to a brighter future for wildlife in this country.

We do hope you will all keep in touch with events at this end through our website, and one last piece of good news to end this 2002 Newsletter – Thanks to Angela, who has relieved Daphne of a huge administrative workload, "The Book" is again, actually happening, after being on the Back Burner for so long due to 43 elephant orphans!





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*Everyone and Anyone can help save an Elephant by fostering an orphan directly through our website or by donating on line, and in so doing becoming part of that elephant's extended financial family.*

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