

# Lewa Wildlife Conservancy

P. O. Box 49918, Nairobi, Kenya Fax: +254-2-607197  
Lewa Downs, Private Bag, Isiolo, Kenya Tel/Fax: +254-164-31405  
Email: lewa@swiftkenya.com

## NEWSLETTER N° 10

September, 2000

### In This Issue

- *Drought in Kenya*
- *Wild Dog pack around Lewa*
- *Translocations continue to Meru Park and dramatic hippo rescue*
- *Ongoing Grevy's zebra monitoring*
- *Lewa Tented Camp*
- *The first Safaricom Marathon is a huge success*

### Update

This year has been a hard one for Kenya. The north (including Lewa) has not been spared from the severe drought and the social problems that have come with it. On Lewa the rainfall in 1999 was exceptionally low, and the first half of 2000 has been even worse. It has been the driest 18 month period since our detailed rainfall records began in 1972. On Lewa there is still enough grass left over from the El Niño rains of 1997-8 for most animals to survive, but the buffalo and waterbuck in particular are looking very thin. If the November short rains fail again, we shall be in a sorry state.

Things are worse to our north. After years of heavy grazing by cattle, there are no grass reserves in the community areas. The Samburu and Maasai have come flooding south with their cattle, and desperate herders invaded many of the ranches in our area. Our excellent relations with our neighbours and good security have spared Lewa this fate. However, we have agreed to let 2,000 of our neighbours' cattle graze on Lewa to see them through this exceptionally tough time. They are allowed to graze specified areas, which we would otherwise have burnt, but people and cattle leave Lewa by nightfall.

The drought has also exacerbated the perennial competition for grazing between the pastoral people living to the north of Lewa. This year has seen a number of serious clashes, particularly between the Somalis and the Boran. These have not directly affected Lewa, but our security staff have been on a heightened state of alert for much of this year. Fortunately, our armed security staff have now been given Kenya Police Reserve status, and provided with police training and G3 automatic weapons, so we are better placed to counter any threat. This is the first time that a private game reserve in Kenya has been given this status, and it illustrates the importance

that the government attaches to our work. The British Army has provided two new tracker dogs, bringing the total to four. They have continued to prove invaluable both to Lewa and our neighbours, assisting with the recovery of stolen solar panels from Meru National Park and the capture of a gang that had attacked a tourist bus on the Isiolo road.

The first part of our grant from the UN Global Environmental Facility has come through, and the World Bank are impressed by the speed with which we have been spending it. New vehicles, tractors and a digger have arrived, and two new staff houses have been built. New offices are almost



completed, and we are planning to build enough housing to ensure that all our staff have adequate accommodation. The communities are also moving ahead with their part of the grant, and have organised important training and planning activities.



Digby & Omni



Omni - 9 months old



Wild dogs on Lewa



Grevy's zebra



Giraffe capture



Hippo and the capture box

---

## Rhinos

---

After the black rhino births of last year, we are not expecting any new ones for a while. Meanwhile two white rhinos have been lost. One was a calf killed by an adult bull white rhino, and the other was a female who died after breaking her leg in a waterhole. Omni, the orphaned black rhino, continues to live with Digby the warthog - who is finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with Omni on their walks.

Some of the black rhino with calves are having their food supplemented with alfalfa.

---

## Wild dogs

---

We are fortunate that a pack of wild dogs - one of Africa's most endangered mammals - has settled in the vicinity of Lewa. Although the main pack spends most of its time hidden in the forest, a smaller group of 4 animals has been seen several times on Lewa.



---

## Grevy's zebra

---

A recent survey of Grevy's zebra throughout northern Kenya has shown further declines outside protected areas. This underlines the relative importance of Lewa's population - which may now represent 20% on the world population of Grevy's zebra. Our collaborative study with Princeton University of the possible competition between Grevy's and the far commoner plains zebra is continuing. Marwell Zoo, which maintains the studbook of captive Grevy's zebra, has kindly agreed to support Lewa's costs of zebra monitoring.

---

## Wildlife Translocation

---

Lewa's programme of translocating surplus wildlife to less favoured areas continues, though at a reduced rate because of the drought. We successfully moved 13 giraffe to Meru National Park in May and four more fence-breaking elephants were moved to Meru by KWS using their purpose built truck 'Hannibal'. We have postponed the major plains zebra translocation but are working hard at preparing capture equipment and hope to move them once (and if) the rains come.

---

## Hippo

---

On a flight from Masai Mara back to Lewa, Ian and Jane spotted the gruesome sight of dying hippo in Lake Ol Bolossat in the Rift Valley. On landing, we estimated over 50 animals had died and approximately 60 animals remained in a mere 5 acres of mud. The situation clearly needed an instant response if these animals were to be saved. Together with KWS we sent a team across to start feeding them, and to stop the poaching which had been so easy due to the conditions. Thanks to the generosity and quick response of George Youssef and Susan Warren, we were able to maintain this operation for six weeks during which time only three more hippo died. After six weeks the drought broke and it was with enormous relief that the rain came and the lake started to return to its original size and there was grazing once again for the hippo.

On pulling our team out we were requested to assist once again in helping to resolve a similar situation at the Rumuruti swamp. Where there had once been over twenty hippo only five remained due to the lack of grazing from the drought. We made the decision to feed these five animals and, once they were strong enough, to translocate them back to Lewa for release into the Ngare Sergoi River. At the time of writing we have successfully moved one animal and the capture team are working on the translocation of the others.

## Community Development

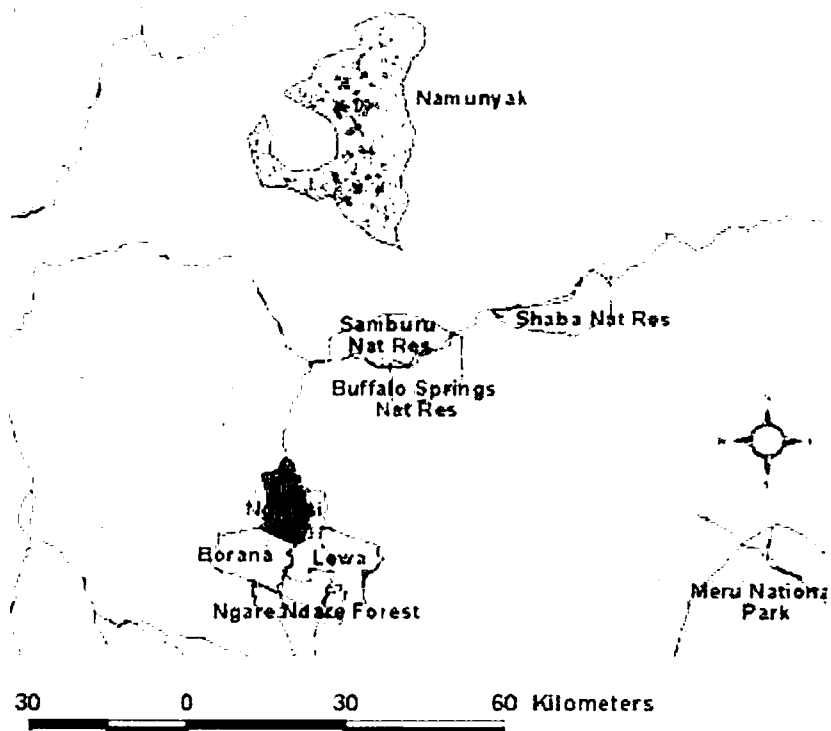
LWC's community development team has been further enhanced by the arrival of **Caroline Murimi**, who is trained as a lawyer and has a Master's in Environmental Law from Tulane University. Her writing and legal skills will ideally complement **James Munyugi's** many years of experience of working with the pastoral people of northern Kenya.

**Il Ngwesi** is going from strength to strength and is increasingly being used as a model for community conservation projects throughout Kenya. The lodge is operating at near full occupancy, and visitors continue to be impressed by the lodge itself and the standards of service. For the second year running **Il Ngwesi** lodge has won the prize for 'Best Self-Catering Lodge in Kenya' from *Travel News*.

The **Il Ngwesi Group Ranch** is increasingly feeling the need for more effective management of all their affairs and, to this end, held a management planning meeting sponsored by LWC, the African Conservation Centre and the African Wildlife Foundation. The elders who attended the meeting then took the recommendations from this meeting to the grassroots, and are about to modify them on the basis of these comments.

The **Namunyak Wildlife Conservation Trust** has been going through a more troubled time, but its problems are being resolved by the Trustees and the local community. The Trust is already showing signs of emerging from these problems as a stronger organisation. Earlier this year, the Chairman of the Trust and local MP, the **Hon Sammy Leshore**, was shot in the back during the course of an attempted car-jack in Nairobi. He is making a good, but slow, recovery in Stoke Mandeville-hospital in England, and his presence has been sorely missed. Another of the trustees was shot and killed during the course of a cattle raid, and there was a slight increase in poaching - with three elephants being shot in the area to the north of Namunyak. This was nothing compared to the levels of the 1970s and 1980s, but was a cause of concern to the Trustees and the Kenya Wildlife Service.

### Lewa and neighbouring conservation areas



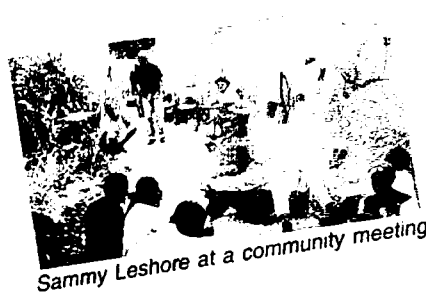
Il Ngwesi children dancing



women's group visiting Il Ngwesi



LWC rangers become police reservists



Sammy Leshore at a community meeting

Action had to be taken, and the Field Co-ordinator was asked to step down. This caused tension within the community, particularly because of the strong clan feelings amongst the Samburu. A new field co-ordinator, **Tom Letiwa**, has been appointed and has proved very successful, arresting an elephant poacher and the local ivory trader within a few weeks of taking over his new job. The Trustees have thrown their weight behind the new management and there is a strong feeling that the Trust must succeed. There is pride in Namunyak and in the Sarara Camp. **Piers Bastard** has generously donated his 50% share, so that the camp is now wholly owned by the community. As with all new ventures, business has been a little slow, but as word is getting out to the tourist operators about the fabulous site and high quality of service, bookings are building up.

care for the Ngare Ndare Forest as part of his personal commitment and remembrance of Carole. Sean has returned to agricultural college in Zimbabwe and Martin is finalising his A-levels in preparation for going to University. Charlie, Sean and Martin be strong, Lewa can never express adequate gratitude for what Carole stood for and her help to the Conservancy. But from us all, THANK YOU.

---

## Fuzz

In October 2000, Fuzz and Bimbi Dyer will be leaving Lewa and moving across to Borana, the next door ranch owned by Fuzz's family, to run the lodge. Although we are very sad to lose Fuzz from the day to day operations, this move is an enormous step forward in bringing Lewa, Il Ngwesi and Borana together as one conservation unit. This surely must be our overall aim: to make as much land as possible available for conservation and to make a significant contribution both to the national economy and biodiversity.

Fuzz, together with Anna Merz, can take credit for the development of the Ngare Sergoi Rhino Sanctuary started in 1983. No one would ever have believed that the investment of time and money into this idea could have matured into what today is the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. The international support given to Anna to protect the Rhino and establish an effective security system was carefully nurtured and managed by Fuzz. He pioneered fencing techniques that are now standard practice throughout East Africa. He established a rhino monitoring system that is recognised as a model throughout Africa. He now takes all this expertise



Bimbi & Fuzz Dyer

with him to Borana where we can expect to see new levels of dynamic and forward thinking in their wildlife management.

Fuzz will remain a member of LWC Board and so, although outside of the daily operations, he remains a crucial part of the overall planning.

---

## Acknowledgements

LWC and the Trustees of Tusk Trust would like to thank the following for their generous support and assistance with the Marathon:

Abercrombie & Kent, Air Kenya, Halvor & Kjersti Astrup; AMRÉF; BATLSK (British Army); Borana Ranch; British Airways (UK); Cadbury Schweppes; Camel Trek; Campbell-Clause family; Cinnebar Green; Coca Cola; Will Craig; Daily Telegraph (UK); DHL; Julia Doig; Farmer's Choice; Roberta Fonville & Food 4 Thought; Gina Din Corporate Communications; Healthy U; Highland Spring Water; Homegrown; Kisima Farm; Leisure Pursuits Group (UK); Mañania; Marketpower International; Kim McKenzie; Metro; Ray Meynink; Ngare Ndare; Daymon Nicholson; Edward Paice; Alpana Patel & Sophy Grattan; Premier Milk; Runners World (UK & USA); Safaricom; Swift Global; William Tanui; Trade a Grain; Bruce Tulloch; Tulloh Nicholson Sports Consultancy (UK); Uncharted Outposts Int (USA); John Velzian; Vitacress; Yellow Pages.

We continue to be dependent on our network of supporters around the world. In order to ensure that we continue to keep them fully informed of our activities, we have taken on the part-time services of Meg Gammage-Tucker and Anne Majewski from the Rhino Trust, who will co-ordinate our fund-raising activities in the USA.

We would like to particularly thank the following supporters:

Evi Bernhard's friends in Switzerland; Lydia Bernhard; Sarah Blomeley; Gil Boese; Evelyn Boren; Marcel Burgauer; Richard & Jan Buthe; Louise Charlton; Mark Coreth; Judy & Amanda Derse; Debo Gage; E Hayward; Tim Jackson; John and Margaret Knowles; Tim Lapage; Andy Lodge; Paul McIntosh; Charlie Mayhew; Anna Merz; Phil Osborne; Martha Parrish; Patty & Herbie Pearthree; Lady Potter; Ronda Planck-Preston; Rusty Restuccia; Charlotte Rhodes; Susannah Rouse; James Stewart; Delulu Upson; Nick van Cutsem; Jim Wainwright; Kathy & Roli Waldvogel; Charlie Wheeler.

American Association of Zoo Keepers Inc/Bowling for Rhinos; Centre for British Teachers in Kenya; Cincinnati schools; Cincinnati Zoo; CMC Motor Group; Eden Trust; Foundation for Wildlife Conservation; Global Environmental Facility/World Bank; HSBC; Marcel Bergauer Foundation; Marwell Zoo; North Carolina Zoo; Sutasoma Foundation; Tusk Trust; US Fish & Wildlife Service; Youssef-Warren Foundation.

---

Find us on the internet at [www.lewa.org](http://www.lewa.org)

---

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (USA)  
U.S. 501(c)(3) I.R.S. N°: 87-0572187  
10 Claimjumper Court Tel : 435-649-4655  
Park City, Utah 84060, USA Fax : 435-649-4655  
Email: [safari@sisna.com](mailto:safari@sisna.com)

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (UK)  
UK Registered Charity N°: 1069800  
28 Walpole Street Tel : 0171-730-4044  
London SW3 4QS, England Fax : 0171-730-3433  
Email: [noble.house@virgin.net](mailto:noble.house@virgin.net)

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (Asia/Pacific)  
Email: [rhino@asiaonline.net](mailto:rhino@asiaonline.net)

---

## Schools

---

The LWC schools support programme is moving ahead well. New desks and school books have been bought. Reconstruction of the staff room at the Lewa school was finished by the **British Army**. A donation from the **Foundation for Wildlife Conservation** has allowed **Ntugi School** to build a new water tank, which is almost completed. We have established a relationship with the Centre for British Teachers in Nairobi, an NGO responsible for co-ordinating primary school planning in Kenya. One of their senior planners, **Mary Gichuru**, has visited all the Lewa-sponsored schools and has put together a report on their strengths and weaknesses, which we hope to develop into full development plans for each school.

---

## Tourism

---

One of the big changes for Lewa in the last few months is that circumstances have forced us to become tourist operators. Up to now all the tourist operations on Lewa have been run by independent operators. Although the revenue raised has been essential to maintain the activities of the Conservancy, we have never been directly involved in the tourist industry.

In March, **Savannah Camps and Hotels**, which ran the **Lerai Camp**, decided not to renew its contract which was due to expire at the end of June. Because there was too little time to get another operator involved, this gave us the choice of either trying to take over the camp operations ourselves or to face a \$100,000 shortfall in our finances. We chose the former option, and fortunately **Caroline Thouless's** brother **John Clark** and his wife **Lulu**, who run **Diani House** at the coast, agreed to come and manage the camp for us. They were faced with the difficult task of employing new staff, completely refurbishing the main building and getting the camp operational under the new name of **Lewa Tented Camp** in six weeks. This they managed with little sleep and much help from all branches of the Conservancy, and the Lewa Tented Camp is fast building a good reputation for itself.

Bookings can be made through East African Ornithological Safaris: email: [eaos@africaonline.co.ke](mailto:eaos@africaonline.co.ke)

---

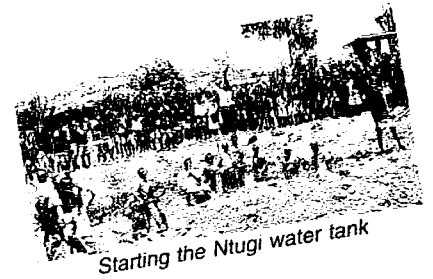
## Safaricom Marathon

---

One of our biggest jobs this year has been the organisation of the Safari Marathon - now called the **Safaricom Marathon** in recognition of our main corporate sponsor. As far as we know, this is the first time that such an event has been staged in an African game park.

A team of volunteers under the leadership of **Caroline Thouless**, with the support of **Tusk Trust** in the UK, has been working on the thousand tasks that are needed to run an international marathon in a wildlife reserve. The technical aspects of the event were arranged by **Bruce Tulloh**, the former European long-distance champion, and **Julia Doig** and **Gina Din Associates** co-ordinated the Nairobi side of the operations.

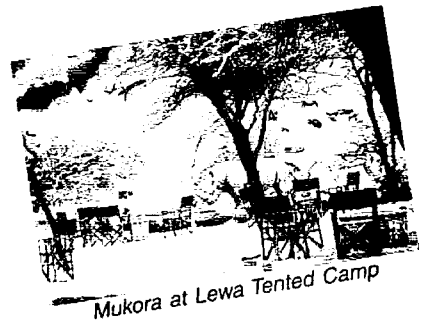
The last days before the race saw frantic activity, with camp sites being prepared by **Batian Craig** and the **British Army**; **Alpana Patel** and **Sophy Grattan** from Nanyuki preparing to feed the hordes; the works department finishing off the new office buildings and watering the track to keep down the dust. Luckily their work was aided by a brief rainstorm two days before the meeting - the first rain we had seen for a very long time. Finally the athletes started arriving and everything was ready just after dawn on Sunday 27th August. Halvor Astrup's helicopter and the Conservancy Supercub went round the course to ensure that there were no large beasts waiting to ambush the runners. A black rhino and a herd of elephants were moved gently away from the course, and the 240 runners were ready to start. They were a mixed bunch. By far the biggest contingent was from the local communities, but there were many from Nairobi, and others from



Starting the Ntugi water tank



The rare sitatunga



Mukora at Lewa Tented Camp



Dawn & the athletes gather



Hassan Sachedina wears the famous rhino outfit



Kip Keino meets Sarah Wilson



Britain, the USA and even the United Arab Emirates.

The race was started by **Kip Keino** – Kenya's most famous long distance runner – and a blast from a waterbuck horn. The runners started off at a spanking pace, with some local unknowns, including one barefooted runner, taking the lead. The steep hill sections soon spread out the field, and by the 30 km mark the competition was between three local runners, Dave Buzza from the UK and Jim Hage from the USA. In the last few kilometres **Dave Buzza** came from behind and sped away from the leaders, winning in 2 hours 39 minutes, followed after three minutes by **Joseph Mwai** and **Jim Hage**. Dave Buzza's time was almost half an hour slower than his best, and he said that the Safaricom Marathon course was the toughest he had ever run. Joseph Mwai produced an amazing run for an unknown entry, beating several international runners. He is a mechanic from Nanyuki. Other runners took rather longer to arrive, and the last of all, after six hours of marching, were a detachment of the Scots Guards, with kilts flapping and bagpipes playing.

The awards ceremony was well attended, with about 700 spectators, and a distinguished cast of guests including the Hon. **Joseph Nyagah**, the Minister for Lands and Settlements, Mr **Nehemiah Rotich**, the Director of the Kenya Wildlife Service, and the Director, Mr **Ken Cheregony**, and Marketing Director, **Hugh Herschel**, of Safaricom. Media coverage was extremely good, with many local and international journalists and a film crew from TransWorld Sports. This means that the event will receive television coverage in 120 countries.

The Safaricom Marathon was greatly enjoyed at the time by the majority of participants and spectators, and no doubt will be enjoyed in retrospect by the other runners. We are now waiting to see how well the runners have done in raising sponsorship - the proceeds of which will go towards Il Ngwesi, Namunyak, Meru National Park, LWC and Lewa-supported schools. The race was voted a huge success and Safaricom have agreed to sponsor next year's marathon as well so it looks as if we are going to turn it into an annual event. We are provisionally planning to hold the next one in June 2001.

---

## Pauline Bellamy

---

'Jack and Pauline Bellamy were introduced to me by my god-daughter, and after much planning came to film the birth of Samia's calf in late 1994. During the six months they spent camped above my house I learned what a truly wonderful couple these film makers extraordinaire were. Unfailingly patient and sensitive to Samia's highly pregnant condition, they were able to produce the wonderful film "*The Last Rhino*".

In the meantime I learnt what a lovely person Pauline was, combining huge efficiency in her job with a marvellous sense of fun. She and Jack both became firm friends and I was lucky to see them both in London just a few weeks before her death on 6th May 2000. Despite being obviously very ill with cancer her whole being then was concentrated on producing an animation film on Samia as a baby and other baby animals I have hand reared. If this film ever comes off it could be the most fitting tribute to a very special lady and a much loved rhino.'

*Anna Merz*




---

## Carole Wheeler

---

On the 2nd of June we lost one of our most buoyant and energetic members of the Lewa team. **Carole** was diagnosed with cancer in November 1999. She took on the battle with this evil in a manner in which we would have expected and with the same commitment and determination with which she had lived her short life. Throughout this time Charlie, Sean and Martin never left her side and were surely her strength and support throughout those five dreadful months. Carole's bounce and laughter are irreplaceable; her leaving has left the most enormous hollow in the entire Lewa community that can never be filled. Carole's ashes are here on Lewa; our daily work is seen and watched by her, it's a warm feeling for us all to know that Carole will be part of Lewa forever. Charlie has pledged to put his efforts to protect and