

A photograph of a man in a bright green long-sleeved shirt and a light-colored hat, smiling and leaning towards a young elephant. The elephant has its mouth open, and the man's hand is near its face. In the background, the large head and trunk of an adult elephant are visible. The scene is set outdoors in a natural, grassy environment.

The David Sheldrick WILDLIFE TRUST

Newsletter 2012



www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org

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Overview of 2012

This year, despite endless trials and tribulations, which have inevitably dampened spirits, the DSWT can be proud to announce that seventy-one of our hand-reared Nairobi Nursery orphans are now successfully living wild amongst the wild elephant populations of Tsavo East National Park, having over the years presented us with a total of 10 recent wild-born babies of their own, most of whom reappear every now and then at either the Voi or Ithumba relocation stockades in Tsavo to greet their erstwhile human family who are still there rehabilitating and guiding another batch of ex-Nursery youngsters back into the wild where they rightly belong.

This success amongst many other great achievements this year is thanks to the unstinting encouragement of the global public. Support of the Orphans' Project through our digital Fostering Program has continued to grow, but then so have the number of orphans in our care due to the terrifying consequences of the illegal ivory trade. With more vulnerable orphans to hand-raise comes even greater responsibility. Increased quantities of the all-important powdered milk is constantly

in demand, as is more feed and supplies, extra elephant stockades, staff, keepers and veterinary support, all of which comes at a significant expense over and above the costs of the rescues and the on-going funding needed in order to rehabilitate all of the orphans back into the wilds of Tsavo.

We are proud to have been able to save the lives of over 140 orphaned elephant calves to date, despite having sorrowfully lost a number of others who came into our care too far gone to be able to retrieve, and who have been tearfully laid to rest in the nearby forest within Nairobi National Park. The elephants themselves, who so stoically weather tragedy on an almost daily basis, yet find the fortitude to turn the page and focus on the living, are the role models from whom we draw the strength to never give up.

From funds generated during the one hour public visit held every day at our Nairobi Nursery, where guests donate K.shs. 500/- per person to enjoy seeing the elephants take their noon milk feed and, weather permitting, a mudbath, we have managed to find the K.Shs. 700,000/- per month payment to the Kenya Wildlife Service, whilst affording to raise the orphans with the very best care and attention we can give. In addition to this contribution to the KWS our field commitments in Tsavo have also been substantial. Again, this would not have been possible without the extensive support of our own many donors and organisations which have made our work possible.

While turmoil in North Africa and the Arab world generally dominated the world press along with on-going global economic concerns, volcanic eruptions, devastating earthquakes and extreme weather patterns induced by Global Climate Change, in Kenya the weather has also been unusual and has been a daily talking point. Severe and persistent droughts continue to bedevil large swathes of north-eastern Kenya, as well as the expansive Tsavo National Park, whilst isolated torrential downpours and flash flooding have wreaked havoc elsewhere. At least the Rift Valley Lakes were again topped up, having previously threatened to dry out completely, but the fires that raged out of control on Mt. Kenya early on in the year, destroying huge areas of indigenous forest within a vital catchment area will have long-lasting repercussions, as will the illegal logging in other forests of the country exacerbated by the charcoal trade that is stripping Kenya of its hardwood trees.

With the support of so many caring people worldwide, we, too, have found the staying power to weather many storms and to be able to make a significant difference in terms of wildlife conservation, mindful that this would not have been possible without such support. We give heartfelt and grateful thanks to all our donors, however modest their contribution may be. Everything helps. We are proud to be viewed as a no-nonsense organization which works "where the rubber meets the road" at the field level of conservation, lean on bureaucracy, and sufficiently flexible to respond rapidly to field needs whenever they arise, dispersing donations for specific projects wisely and with full accountability and transparency. Flexibility and the wherewithal to be able to meet unseen emergencies has always been the hallmark by which the late David Sheldrick rated an NGO, and which is still upheld to this day by the Trust, having been established in his memory to remain faithful to this ideal.



On a Mission to Save Habitats A New Phase for the KWS

The main focus of the Trust has always been within the Tsavo East National Park, Kenya's largest and most important Protected Area, since it is home to the country's largest single population of elephants, and was established from virgin bush by the late David Sheldrick. The DSWT has remained steadfast to David's vision, which is incorporated in our Mission Statement:

"Embracing all measures that compliment the conservation, preservation and protection of wildlife which include anti-poaching, safeguarding the natural environment, enhancing community awareness, addressing animal welfare issues, and providing veterinary assistance to animals in need, rescuing and hand-rearing elephant and rhino orphans along with other species that can ultimately enjoy a quality of life in wild terms."

Within this undertaking the Trust is proud to enhance its focus on protecting the natural environment and include 'Saving Habitats' to our overall mission. Under this mandate the Trust's Kibwezi Forest Project has left us extremely proud, having acquired the full support of the Kenya Forest Service who awarded the DSWT a 30-year concession over this very special habitat in a pilot Private/Public partnership role. The Kibwezi Forest is a very ancient groundwater forest encompassing the Umani springs, the only source of groundwater available to all wildlife of the area, fed by ash-filtered water from the Chyulu Hills. Among the clouds of beautiful butterflies that characterize the forest during the wet seasons, is an endemic species of frog and no doubt other species yet to be identified. A beautiful but most importantly sustainable self-catering lodge is proving ever more popular, generating on-going revenue towards the protection of the Forest.

Similarly, Project Amu has been another milestone for the DSWT under our Saving Habitats mandate. We are especially honoured to have been instrumental in saving 63,000 acres of pristine wilderness and the rare wild treasures it encompasses through our financial support of Amu Ranch, within the Lamu district. The DSWT has enjoyed exceptional support at the local level, so much so that we are often mentioned by name in Friday prayers at the local mosques. Amu is home to the last huge herds to be found in the country of reticulated giraffe and Cape buffalo, as well as sizeable numbers of the rare Coastal Topi and species such as the critically endangered Aders' Duiker. Amu Ranch also harbours rare huge bodied and pale-coloured "Somali lions" with bluish eyes, whilst an endemic Kili fish new to science has also been discovered. No doubt there will be other species yet to be found.

The reality of the threats to Kenya's Protected Areas at the field level is a challenge now being faced by Mr. Kibet Kiprono, who in October 2012 replaced Julius Kipn'getich as the Director of the Kenya Wildlife Service. Although hitherto unknown in conservation circles, Mr Kiprono is familiar with the security issues of the country as a whole having served as a District Commissioner in many different locations. Among the many challenges that the new Director will face is a push for stiffer penalties for poaching offences to try and stem the current slaughter of elephants and rhinos. We all hoped that this would be addressed through passage into law of the new Wildlife Bill, drafted way back in 2007, but which has yet to be passed due to continual amendments of the original agreed document to suit certain agendas. We look forward to the unfolding of a new conservation chapter in the country, a chapter that will have to first and foremost address the poaching crisis throughout the country.



Amu Ranch



KWS Ivory stockpiles

An Appetite for Ivory & Horn

For those of us who care about the natural world, the most alarming event during 2012 has been the escalation in the poaching of both elephants and rhinos, driven by the growing appetite for ivory and rhino horn in countries within the Far East, especially China, and the decline of smaller mammals due to the now commercial bush-meat trade. Chinese nationals are present in all Elephant Range States throughout Africa working on aid related projects and have been welcomed in Kenya by President Kibaki, who was reported by the Press on the 20th May as saying "Many Chinese have come to Kenya and we have seen the good work they have done in our country. We urge more of them to come and pursue their interests here". Unfortunately, one of those interests is their liking for ivory which has driven up the price paid to poachers dramatically, making poaching a lucrative living for many poor and unemployed Kenyans.

Whereas ivory has long been a status symbol of the rich elite in China, the demand has expanded in response to the growing wealth of the massive population as a whole, all of whom can now afford it and who aspire to own a piece of the largest land mammal on earth for both symbolic and status reasons. Apparently many people in China also believe that the tusks of an elephant fall out and are simply there to be picked up, unaware that the animal has to die to yield its teeth. A census undertaken in three major wildlife regions in Kenya in November 2012, namely the ecosystems of Samburu, Laikipia and Marsabit, reveals that the elephant population in that region is down by over 1,000 animals, and the endangered Grevy's Zebra population has fallen to just 1870 individuals from the previous 2,400 counted within the same areas in 2008. Regretfully a census done today of the Tsavo ecosystem would reveal equally depressing results, which means that Kenya is rapidly losing its precious wildlife heritage, which is the driving force of tourism for the country.

Kenya's stand to have the sale of all ivory banned when CITES meets again in 2013 in Thailand is something else that will need full backing but the urgency of more stringent law enforcement measures cannot be over emphasized and must be enacted sooner rather than later if elephants and rhinos are to be saved. After all, it takes 2 years to create an elephant, as opposed to just 9 months to make a human, so to kill such a noble and majestic animal, who should live for three score years and ten is a crime worthy of severe punishment.

Say No to Ivory

If the global public doesn't all come together to stand up for elephants and add their voice to those fighting against the ivory trade, the African elephant species could be lost forever. As long as there is a market for ivory, elephants will be cruelly killed for their tusks. The DSWT iWorry campaign aims to raise awareness of the urgent need to stop all trade in ivory internationally in order to protect the future of elephants. The first thing anyone can do is sign our petition to add your name to the list of people worldwide who cannot imagine a world without elephants. By signing our online petition you will help us to show politicians attending the meeting of CITES in March 2013 how adamant we all are that they should vote against any movement to legalise the sales of ivory in any form. We are aiming to secure 36,000 signatures before March 2013. You can help us by spreading the word to your friends and family. Engage with our social media campaigning and share the message to everyone you know to raise awareness that the ivory trade is a bigger problem now than ever. Time is running out. Visit www.iworry.org now to add your voice and Say No to Ivory.

The Rhino Truth

The poaching of rhinos, fuelled by the demand for their horns in the Far East, mistakenly viewed as a traditional cure-all, despite the fact that it is exactly the same substance as a fingernail, has reached crisis proportions and threatens the extinction of this ancient species. WWF declared the Javan rhino extinct in Vietnam in September, the Western Black Rhino extinct in the wild in November 2011 the Sumatran rhino almost certainly now extinct in Thailand, whilst between the months of January and October 2012 South Africa lost some 450 rhinos to sophisticated rhino poaching gangs, which involve white game ranchers, sports hunters, wild-life veterinarians and hospitality businessmen utilizing helicopters and immobilizing drugs. Worth more than the price of gold per ounce rhino horn has even been stolen from Museum exhibits in the U.K. and throughout Europe and all because of a mistaken myth. Here in Kenya rhinos have been disappearing quietly but rapidly with less than 500 individuals remaining country wide.

Going Global

The DSWT hosted several international celebrities during 2012. The Chinese NBA basketball star, Yao Ming visited the orphaned elephants at our Nairobi Nursery in August whilst championing the cause of elephants and other endangered species such as sharks in China. Yao Ming is much revered in China and hopefully his voice will be instrumental in changing attitudes. The well-known American rap-artist, Akon, also came to see the orphans, as did Chelsea Clinton who was filmed with the elephants for an American NBC Program, as well as a host of other celebrities and prominent figures who have all helped spread awareness about the Orphans' Project. The DSWT's fundraising "Harambee" Gala Dinner and Auction held in London on the



28th September, hosted by Rula Lenska and organized by our U.K. Charity, was a huge success. Many people travelled from far-off corners of the world in order to support this event, not least our U.S. Friends' Patron, Kristin Davis (star of Sex and the City) and many others who came from America, South America, Mexico and many European countries. An array of impressive auction pieces, most of which had been donated, raised over £100,000 for our conservation work on the night, a sum which will ensure that all of our vital projects continue.

By Dame Daphne Shelldrck



Love, Life & Elephants

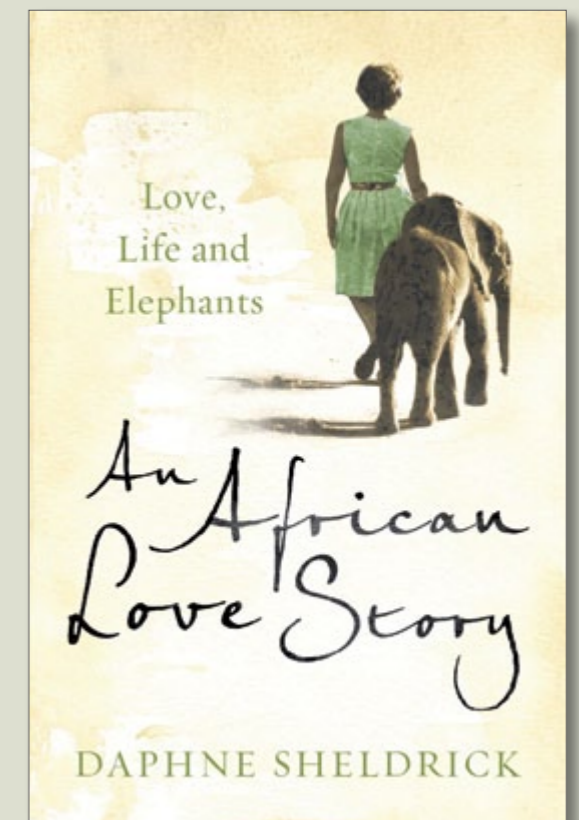
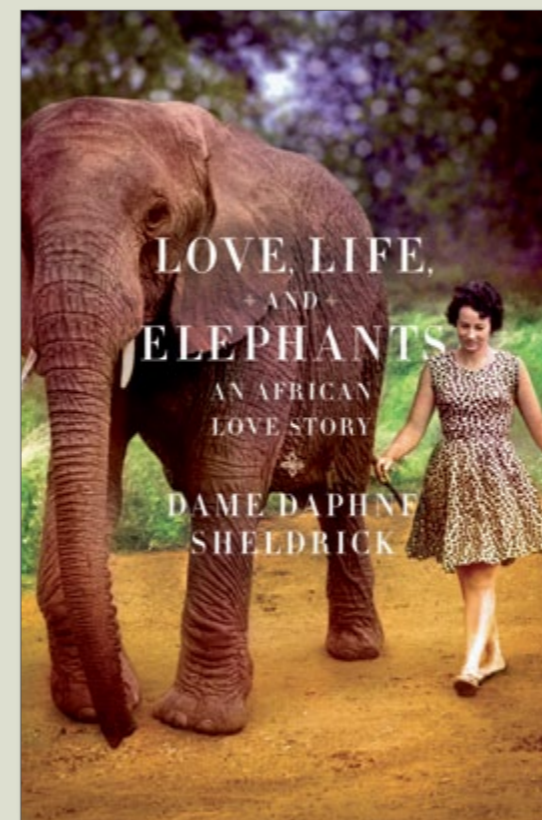
Daphne's long awaited autobiography "An African Love Story – Love, Life & Elephants" having been edited down from the original 1,500 pages was published by Viking Penguin and launched in London in March 2012. This exciting event, which spread much needed awareness, entailed another daunting lecture for Daphne at the Royal Geographical Society, as well as TV and Press Interviews. The American launch under the reversed title "Love, Life & Elephants – An African Love Story" published by Farrar Strauss took place in May along with more interviews and a lecture at the New York Museum for Natural History. Daphne's book is to be translated into Mandarin and Cantonese for China and has been embraced by some 32 other countries to date, among them including unlikely places such as Korea, Slovakia and Russia so we hope that this will help spread the word and bring the natural world

into the hearts of many people far removed. No one was more surprised than Daphne when the first English Edition of her book sold out within a week, and that it made it to the Best Seller list on Amazon and the New York Times. Supporters of the Trust were able to purchase a copy directly from the DSWT's UK Charity, the publishers having very generously agreed that the Trust purchase it at cost, so that the retail price could include all proceeds in support of the orphaned elephants. A further 3,500 copies were kindly flown to Kenya free of charge by British Airways for sale at the Nursery during the one hour a day that the Trust is open to the public between 11 a.m. and 12 noon, with all proceeds again benefiting the Orphans' Project.

Available in bookstores around the world Daphne's book can also be purchased through the DSWT's website:

www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org

with proceeds going towards the Orphan's Project.





The Ithumba Unit

The still milk and keeper-dependent orphans based at the Ithumba Stockades in the Northern Area of Tsavo East at the beginning of 2012 were Sabachi, Kibo, Kilaguni, Chaimu, Suguta, Tumaren, Kandecha, Murka, Kitirua, Naisula, Chemi Chemi, Melia, Kalana, Ololoo and Olare. Kasigau, Makireti and Ishanga were moved to Ithumba from the Nairobi Nursery on the 17th August 2012.



Wild born babies Mwende and Yetu

Abundant rain towards the end of 2011 revitalized the aridity of another long dry season in the Northern Area of Tsavo, transforming the countryside into a veritable Garden of Eden, resplendent with flowers, butterflies, creepers and every shade of green in Nature's palette. The Orphans' artificial mudbath was also transformed into a mini lake in which even the wild ex-orphans and their wild elephant friends could submerge entirely. Younger elephants for whom it was suddenly too deep, enjoyed practicing their swimming prowess, and all elephants in the area were happy to get together to meet family members and friends. The wet seasons in Tsavo are party-time for the elephants and the marked contrast between the wet and dry seasons is a mind-blowing miracle testament to the powers of recovery.

It was a wonderful celebration for us on New Year's Day, welcoming the onset of 2012 as spectators at the noon mudbath when all the ex-orphans of Yatta's now "wild" unit, including Mulika and her wild-born baby "Mwende", turned up along with their wild friends to join the Keeper-dependent junior group at their noon milk and mudbath venue. It was an eye-opener for us when tiny Mwende, (Mulika's baby born on the 6th November 2011) swam proficiently around a sea of adult elephant bodies, closely guarded by her mother and ex-orphan nannies, Kinna, Wendi and Selengai. The events of New Year's day were an auspicious start to 2012 which would unfold as a very challenging year as the green bounty of the wet season turned to autumn colours sooner than usual and the trees and shrubs began to shed their leaves reverting to dormancy in order to survive until rains again revived them.

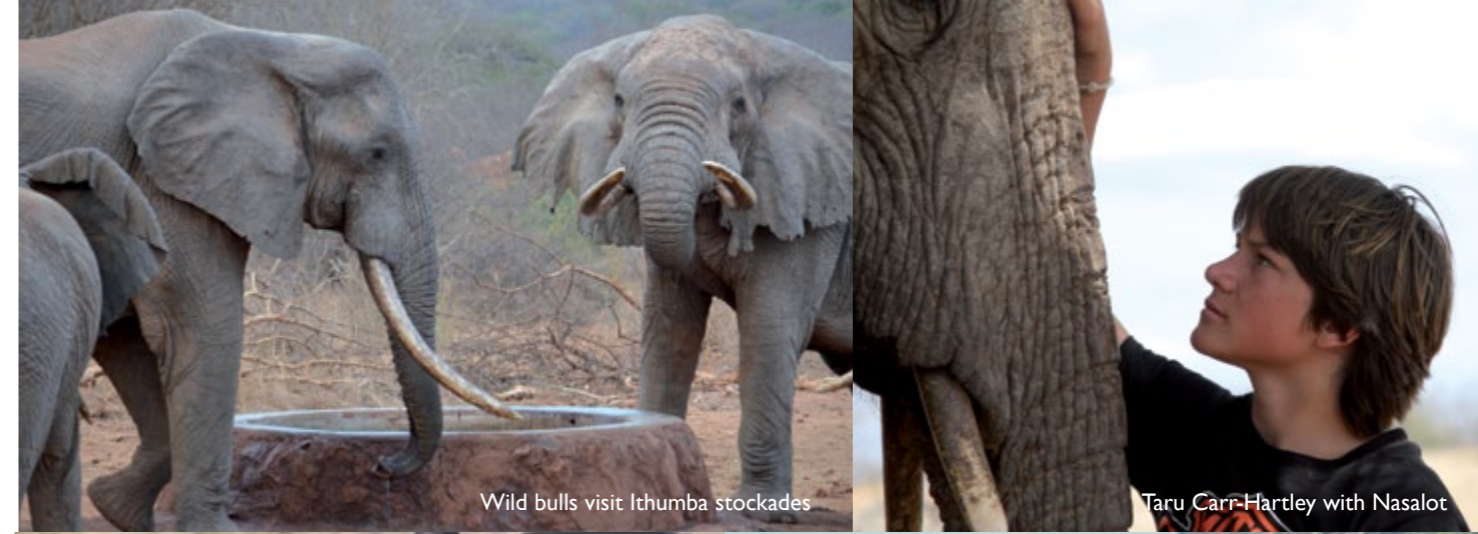
On the 19th of January the keepers noted that Yatta, along with Kinna, Mulika and her calf, plus Selengai (Yatta's favourite) and Makena were missing from the ex-orphan splinter group that returned, noting also that those that did turn up that day appeared unusually detached from the junior keeper-dependent group, despite spending some 2 hours pottering around the stockade compound. It was almost as though they were awaiting the arrival of others. The next morning – the 20th - all the ex-orphans

came to the Stockade compound early at 5.30am, and as daybreak lit the sky the keepers were enthralled to see a tiny new-born calf in amongst a sea of elephant legs. Yatta's new baby had arrived at last, probably born the day before when she and some nannies were absent. Like Mulika, she had brought the new-born back to the stockade compound to show her human family of keepers. The new baby was surrounded on that day by some 60 other elephants, all the excited ex-orphans, all the Keeper-dependent youngsters who also homed in to see the latest arrival, plus many wild friends who kept their distance, taking advantage of a chance to take a drink at the stockade water trough, where several bulls had also gathered. The baby was another little girl whom we named "Yetu" (meaning "Ours" in Swahili), born after a 23 month gestation, as opposed to Mulika's 21 months.

It was interesting that later on in the year a totally wild mother brought her newborn baby to the stockades, ex-orphans Wendi and Sidai attending the baby as nannies. Those of us who know elephants intimately know full well that this wild mother must have been reassured by the ex-orphans that the stockade water trough was a safe place to drink and that the Keepers, unlike other humans this wild elephant had so far known, could be trusted. This is touching evidence yet again that elephants can communicate sophisticated messages to one another.

By mid-February all natural waterholes in the Northern Area had dried-up and the Ithumba ex-orphans, plus growing numbers of wild elephants, were returning daily to the stockades to drink from the stockade water trough. Included now amongst these were several female cow units with their young. Even though the borehole that serves the KWS compound and orphan stockades had been re-drilled after partially collapsing, the demand on the trough soon began to out-strip the capacity of the borehole, so the Trust's large water-bowser had to swing into action. This ferried water from a newly constructed concrete tank on the slopes of Ithumba Hill established to serve the Ithumba Camp. The wild elephants soon fully understood the role of the Trust's water bowser, regarding it as a valued "friend" since it refilled the stockade water trough so regularly, which was usually drained during the night.

The anticipated rain during the so-called "long rains" of April/May (which are only ever "long" at higher altitudes and always short over Tsavo) failed almost completely but for one two-inch storm that fell over the entire Park, with no follow-up. When May turned into June, we knew that we were facing yet another drought in Tsavo, since the next rains were not expected until November and the poaching of elephants for ivory was already a serious threat which would undoubtedly escalate, since the lack of rainfall affected the food source of humans.



Wild bulls visit Ithumba stockades

Taru Carr-Hartley with Nasalot



Yetu swimming



Ithumba orphans



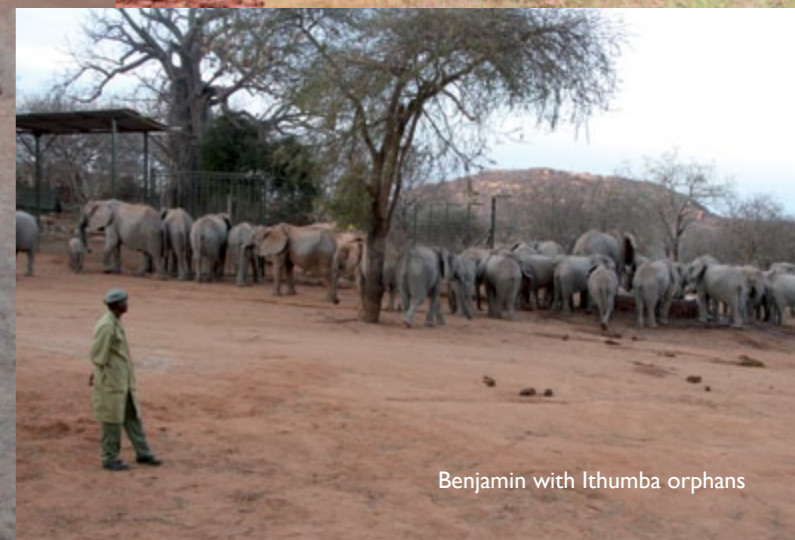
The bowser delivers precious water to Ithumba orphans



Mulika with Mwende



Ithumba orphans



Benjamin with Ithumba orphans



Some of milk-dependant Ithumba orphans taking their mid-day feed



*Mulika and Mwende
Return for Help*

In May Mulika and her baby were amongst all the ex-orphans who came with some wild friends to join the Juniors at their mudbath and it was then that the Keepers noticed that little "Mwende" looked dull and had lost body condition and also that Mulika's breasts appeared to have shrivelled. Concluding that her milk might be failing they reported the matter to us in Nairobi and it was organized that supplements be flown to Ithumba in an attempt to stimulate Mulika's lactation. The next day she brought her ailing baby back to the stockades and went in to feast on the dairy cubes and Lucerne supplements, which had been flown in the previous day. Taking her cue from the mother, even little Mwende began hoovering up the cubes. It was touching that Yatta, her baby and the entire ex-orphan herd turned up that afternoon and were particularly attentive to Mulika and the baby, taking the two off with them when they departed. However, Mulika and Mwende were back in the evening, going straight into the stockade to enjoy the supplements, which became a daily routine. Little Mwende soon recovered her strength and in the process became accustomed to the Keepers, enjoying chasing the wheelbarrow as it was propelled around the yard and playing touch and run with Benjamin for whom she developed a special fondness.

An Elephant Move

When the specially designed elephant-moving truck carrying Makireti, Ishanga and Kasigau drew into the Ithumba compound soon after 10am on the 17th August, sixty seven highly charged elephants were counted milling around the stockade compound. There were wild elephants drinking at the stockade water trough, others awaiting their turn, all the ex-orphans plus their wild attachments, all of them having mysteriously anticipated this event as they habitually do, plus all the junior keeper-dependent orphans who had returned especially so that the new arrivals could be absorbed into their group. It was an Elephant Welcome that overwhelmed poor Makireti the moment she stepped out. She ran around bellowing fearfully, trailed closely by Wendi, Lualeni, Kinna and a host of other ex-orphan females bent only on comforting her, but whose attentions she and the other two newcomers found daunting, as did the Nairobi Keepers, who made themselves scarce. Ishanga and Kasigau had been orphaned older than Makireti, and obviously remembered their previous wild life more clearly, because they soon settled, and were even sufficiently confident to push in amongst wild bulls drinking at the stockade trough. Once things had calmed down, Lualeni and Rapsu joined the Keepers in escorting the new arrivals out to browse nearby with the Junior group and remained with them until it was time for them to return to the stockades for the night. There the three newcomers faced several more hurdles – initially to familiarize themselves with the live hot wires protecting the night stockades and secondly to become accustomed to the heat of Tsavo, having come from cooler climates.



Makireti and Ishanga

By month end Makireti knew the ropes so well that she often led the way to the noon milk and mudbath venue and all three were very relaxed amongst the wild elephant herds that shared their days. According to the Keepers, they even seemed to prefer the company of the ex-orphans and the wild herds above that of their keeper-dependent peers and it was only the milk that anchored them to the keeper-dependent group. On the 29th of August they left the mudbath in amongst a wild herd, amongst whom was big bull Mshale and his satellite askaris. The keepers did their best to try and induce them to return, but they refused, and ended up spending the entire night out – their first initiation in this respect. The three were found the following morning in amongst the wild herd, which had been joined by Lualeni, Rapsu and a few of the other ex-orphans, and they couldn't be happier in their new home and newfound family.

The poaching of ex-orphan "Selengai" in October left us totally bereft. She died an agonizing death from a poisoned spear wound deep into her back, obviously launched from one of the infamous poaching platform traps. She had been last seen at the Ithumba stockades along with the other ex-orphan unit on the 2nd October. Her body was found not far from the stockades on the 4th, already in a state of decay, rotting from within from the effects of the poison, which is sometimes dipped into sulphuric acid to render it more potent. She was obviously attempting to return to her erstwhile human family for help. The keepers believe that Selengai was accompanied by ex-orphans Sidai, Rapsu and Meibai when she died, since these three orphans turned up at the mudbath the day her body was found, emerging from that direction, and were visibly distressed. It is probable that they were trying to assist her to return for help, but it was not to be. Sidai was her best friend and the bulls are usually detailed for escort duty whenever needed.



Selengai's Sad Story

Selengai was an integral part of Yatta's ex-orphan herd, one of the nannies for Yatta's baby "Yetu" and also Mulika's little "Mwende". She was a caring, gentle and loving 9 year old, rescued as an infant orphan from Laikipia at the tender age of just 1 week and having passed through early infancy in the Nairobi Nursery, was transferred to the Ithumba Rehabilitation Station where she grew up and eventually lived as a wild elephant within Yatta's ex-orphan unit.

The Trust does not take the loss of this precious orphaned elephant lightly. We will do our utmost to provide more effective security over the northern area of Tsavo, to undertake more aerial surveillance by making a second Supercub available to the authorities, and increasing the capacity of our anti-poaching teams, striving for the permission to arm them so that they do not have to rely on the presence of a KWS Ranger before they can patrol, as is the case at the moment. We will do whatever it takes to keep our other orphans and their wild friends safe.

The Orphaned Rhinos

Still resident at the Nursery in January 2012 was blind Maxwell, a Nairobi Park black rhino bull, born in December 2006 with no retina or optic nerve in both eyes, having been rescued at the age of 3 months old when he was abandoned by his rhino mother in the Park Forest not far from the Trust Headquarters. Max is now 6 years old and a magnificent specimen despite his blindness, which, sadly cannot be rectified. Bull black rhinos have to fight for territory and rank, and for that they need their eyes to be able to size up an opponent; hence Max can never be set free for he would be killed instantly by others. Having missed Orphan Shida enormously after he was moved to the Tsavo West Rhino Sanctuary in 2011 (and was subsequently killed by a resident bull), by January 2012 Max was again contented and happy, displaying enormous joy whenever Solio, a female Black Rhino from Solio Ranch born in April 2010, and orphaned at the age of 6 months, returned to her night stockade. They relish shared sparring matches through the separating poles of their adjoining Stockades and just the fact that each knows the other is there, is sufficient to bring both immense happiness.

Heavy downpours of rain in March turned Max's Stockade into one huge mudbath (except for his sleeping shelter in which clean hay forms a dry bed). Just one small stump left in the middle of his Enclosure acted as his special scratching post, and dry earth brought in regularly provided a drier dustbath rather than the interminable mud of the rainy season. Max made the most of the mud, rolling it to plaster his body in a thick coating, hooking it up and throwing it around using his sizeable horn. In May we enlarged Maxwell's enclosure to give him more space. As soon as the new extension was opened, he carefully smelt the old boundary limit before hesitantly venturing into the new

area. Thereafter he inspected every inch of it carefully to engrave the new dimensions in his mind, before racing around with amazing confidence and appreciation.

At the beginning of 2012 Solio was just two years old and still being accompanied during daylight hours by two Keepers as she did the rounds of the dung-piles and urinals of the resident Nairobi Park wild rhinos, contributing her own dung to them and kicking it onto her back feet to leave her specific scent trail to advertise her presence. Urine sprayed up against the nearest bush urinal would advertise other of her gender and hormone levels so that she becomes known and accepted as rightfully belonging within the community. The reintroduction of a newcomer rhino to a resident wild rhino community is a complicated and lengthy process that can take up to 3 years before the newcomer can live safely as a member of the resident wild rhino community.

Solio is a mischievous character who enjoys leading her Keepers on a dance, rushing off at speed as soon as she emerges from her stockade each morning and then hiding in a thicket to gloat over the fact that her Keepers are so inept at locating her. It must be puzzling to an animal whose life is governed so efficiently by scent and chemistry, that humans are so deprived in that respect. Giving her human attendants the slip is a favourite trick of hers and is indicative of the fact that she is now comfortable going solo to search for the middens of wild rhinos further afield in order to leave her mark. In the later afternoons she is happy to bring herself back home to her comfortable stockade and a handout of Lucerne, often trailed by two exhausted Keepers whom she has deliberately "lost" all day.

Despite having been alerted by the KWS authorities that a baby orphaned white rhino calf, who had been mauled by hyaenas, would be coming to us from Meru National Park, its arrival at the Nursery shortly after dark on Saturday the 15th of April still brought a nasty surprise. No more than a week old, the tiny calf had a shattered back leg and a suspicious looking hole in the chest, which pointed to a bullet wound, revealing that of course its white rhino mother had obviously been poached. All we could do that night was to splinter the broken leg, give the baby a feed, keep it warm and hurriedly make arrangements for two competent vet/surgeons to give up their Sunday in order to operate on the leg the next morning. Sadly, however, the baby rhino died as it was being carried onto the operating table the following day. It's wounds had become seriously infected during its horrific ordeal; septicaemia obviously the cause of death.

September saw Solio's first apparent confrontation with a wild rhino, the Keepers being at hand to witness the incident. Her opponent was a large cow rhino with a yearling calf at foot who met up with Solio on the rocks near the mudbath venue at 6.30am in the morning. Solio stood her ground, ready for battle, snorting with her head down but focusing on the baby, who was more her size, but whom the mother was anxious to protect. Solio and the mother clashed horns several times, Solio at a distinct disadvantage being much younger with a much shorter horn. However, the yelling of the Keepers to break up the fight deterred the wild cow and her calf, who ran off down the hill hotly pursued by Solio who viewed herself as the victor. Expecting the worst, we anxiously awaited her return, fearing being confronted with another patch-up job, but mercifully she came back unscathed and obviously very pleased with herself.



Solio playing



Solio with Maxwell in the background

The Death of Pushmi (aka Hoshim)

On the 4th June 2012 - Daphne's 78th birthday – a sad phone message relayed the tragic news that Pushmi had died - the sad victim of spear wounds, which had penetrated his body causing peritonitis. What was left of his horn, most of which had been removed by KWS for his own safety, was still intact - at least the thug who killed him was denied that prize. Pushmi was 38 years old and as such one of the oldest living rhinos on the African Continent, and he was killed for the myth held by Far Eastern communities that rhino horn is a magical substance. Pushmi was born near a main tourist circuit in Tsavo East National Park way back on 9th October 1973, and was abandoned immediately after birth when his rhino mother was disturbed by a passing tourist van. Instantly the mother fled, leaving a wet bundle lying on the ground. Unsure that the mother would return to reclaim her calf and fearful that hyaenas and vultures would seal his demise, the tourists insisted that he be retrieved and delivered to Tsavo East Headquarters where Warden David Sheldrick and his wife, Daphne, were already known for rearing orphaned wildlife, including rhinos. The new-born rhino baby was called "Pushmi" because shoving and pushing was his favourite pastime as an infant, in between galloping around and executing little pig jumps.

During this time David and Daphne were fearful for the survival of their rhino orphans including a female called Stroppie, who was yet another hand-raised rhino in Tsavo, so David arranged to move both Stroppie and Pushmi to Solio Ranch near Nanyuki in Northern Kenya, where the owner, a millionaire by the name of Court Parfet, had fenced off 25 square miles of his cattle ranch as a birthday gift for his French conservation-minded wife, Claudie. Parfet had stocked it with indigenous wild animals, amongst which were about half a dozen Black Rhinos, one of which was another earlier ex-orphan named "Reudi" – the one who had taught us the complexities of rhino reintegration. Stroppie and Pushmi occupied a 50 acre fenced paddock abutting the main Sanctuary, and it was hoped that proximity would enable them to eventually become integrated into the main rhino community next door. However, this was not to be, as three attempts ended in Pushmi being almost annihilated by the dominant male, which, ironically happened to be ex-Tsavo orphan "Reudi". Mrs Parfet said "No More" and both rhinos were returned to their original enclosure. By then Pushmi was a magnificent bull sporting a 3ft tapered horn on the end of his nose while Reudi went on to father most of the rhinos that have repopulated areas from whence they had been annihilated by poaching for their lucrative horns.

So, Pushmi and Stroppie lived out their lives in Solio within their private enclosure, one established at one end of the paddock, and the other at the



Hoshim a year before he died

other end. They became iconic symbols whom Mr Parfet enjoyed sharing with important guests. One would have been forgiven for not knowing that these two had been brought up together for whenever they met up, they huffed, puffed, snorted and indulged in a charging ritual as though combatants. Whenever Stroppie came into season they mated, but sadly no baby resulted, since rhino males must be dominant in order to be fertile, and Pushmi remained subservient to his dominant neighbours whom he had not been able to conquer.

Stroppie, three years older than Pushmi, lived to the ripe old rhino age of 40, dying in 2010 peacefully in her sleep. She had enjoyed a sheltered and happy life at Solio in her huge paddock with Pushmi as company, permeated by the scent of many others next door. By then the rhino neighbours in the main Sanctuary had multiplied to over 70 Blacks and even more Whites from original stock imported from South Africa. White Rhinos are not indigenous in Kenya within living memory, although fossil remains have been found here, whilst occurring in neighbouring Uganda, Congo and the Sudan. Pushmi lived on in Solio until that fateful day when he was speared to death on Daphne Sheldrick's 78th birthday in 2012. Rest in Peace dear 'Hoshy'.

A number of discreet camera traps have also been deployed throughout Amu this year revealing a host of shy and rarely seen species, including the critically endangered Aders' Duiker, which is relatively prevalent within Amu, a healthy leopard population and most excitingly, herds of elephant, which were decimated within the area in years gone by when the Lamu area was once one of the largest elephant habitats in Kenya.

The Project Amu field teams have also had the extra task of caring for wild orphans. The hand-rearing of orphaned creatures is no easy feat yet the team at the Amu HQ, 'Farouks Camp', have successfully raised a female bushbuck this year, which has fed on goats milk from an early age, and is now spending the nights in the wild and the days sleeping safely under the rangers' beds.

Yet despite all the protection measures put in place, Amu Ranch endured a vicious drought during 2012. Such droughts have occurred many a time in years past, but each year it always seems as if it only worsens. By the first week of October Amu Ranch was deathly parched with little water left in the waterholes and lakes. Vast numbers of buffalo were struggling to survive in the harsh conditions, whilst Amu's hippo populations could do nothing to escape the hot sun having to lay in the mud absorbing the remaining moisture for their sensitive skins. Fortunately the heavens opened in mid- October turning the baked parched land to paradise, just when it seemed many wild animals would die.

Within Project Amu's short history, having been established in February 2011, many exciting developments have taken place with a concentrated effort being placed on opening up Amu Ranch for tourism in 2013. Guest visiting buildings and facilities have been constructed, whilst a scenic tourism road circuit has been opened-up for game drives. Plans for the future include creating an over-night experience within Amu, which will enable guests to enjoy the late evening and early morning paradise that Amu offers so close to the Indian Ocean.

Executing all of these objectives has allowed Project Amu to employ a significant number of local community members, including over 40 full-time staff members and many additional casual labourers, which has benefitted the surrounding communities and tribes substantially, creating much needed awareness about the importance of the project and the protection of their natural heritage.

The DSWT has invested a great deal of time, resources and funds into the newly formed, community-led Lamu Conservation Trust, in which Project Amu sits, which has been instigated and developed solely by the DSWT. On top of donating technical, administrative, logistical

and field support the DSWT is also in the process of launching a new website for the LCT and is proud to be a part of this incredibly important community conservation organisation. *The LCT website will go live in early 2013.*

www.lamuconservationtrust.org



22/10/2012 09
Cutting roads after the rains



Project Amu's headquarters



Amu rangers



Amu's shy elephants caught on camera trap



Dr. Poghon treating an injured bull elephant

Mobile Veterinary Units

This year has proved to be one of the most challenging years so far for our Mobile Veterinary Units within the vast Tsavo Conservation Area and the Mara Triangle, as our KWS seconded vets have fought to treat the casualties of drought, human-wildlife conflict, and the victims of the escalating illegal ivory and bushmeat trades. Saving the wounded, rescuing the abandoned and protecting the vulnerable, these rapid-response units, working in collaboration with the Kenyan Wildlife Service, have literally saved hundreds of lives.



Vet Unit treating injured white rhino

Yet it is not only within the wild habitats of Tsavo and the Maasai Mara where Kenya's wildlife is in desperate need of help. Poaching, snaring and the effects of human-wildlife conflict is also taking its toll on the wild species of the northern territories, which is why the DSWT is establishing a third permanent and full-time mobile veterinary unit focused on providing veterinary support within the Meru ecosystem and the larger eastern and northern conservation areas. This new unit, which will commence operations in January 2013 based at the KWS headquarters in Meru National Park, will be directed by Dr Bernard Rono, a KWS seconded vet with many years of experience in the field. It is hoped that this third unit will lend support to the already overburdened veterinary units in place whilst offering a greater reach into additional ecosystems which currently have no veterinary coverage.

The Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit headed competently by Dr Jeremiah Poghorn Kaitopok has over the last twelve months treated nearly one hundred wild animals, including over sixty-five injured elephants, many of which were victims of poaching, as well as a number of lions injured through human-wildlife conflict, and an array of other species. The unit has also participated in concentrated Disease Surveillance research projects, including the sampling of thirty buffalos in collaborative surveillance for Foot and Mouth disease with the Kenya Wildlife Service's veterinarian laboratory. An eland translocation also took place supported by the Tsavo Veterinary Unit during 2012, releasing a number of the species into the Shimba Hills National Reserve having been rescued from the Nguuni/Bamburi area in Mombasa.

Dr Dominic Mijeje, assisted by DSWT's Felix Micheni, heads our second veterinary unit within the Maasai Mara Triangle. During the last twelve months the Mara unit has accomplished lifesaving results with a treatment success rate of over 83%, ensuring as many animal cases as possible receive rapid response treatment and the very best of veterinary care and expertise. In addition to emergency cases, the unit has also assisted in the translocation of 46 elephants from the Siyapei area of Narok to the Masai Mara NR in an effort to reduce incidents of human-elephant conflict, coordinated a Tsetse fly baseline survey in collaboration with PATTEC-Kenya, investigated Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF) in wildebeests where blood samples from 51 wildebeests were collected for analysis, as well as taking on-going measures against the spread of Foot and Mouth and Bovine Tuberculosis Disease.

New Veterinary Equipment

Over the past three decades the Nairobi Nursery has rescued hundreds of orphaned elephant calves. When a calf is not improving in condition and is showing

any weakness, ill health or lack of appetite, immediate attention must be given to assess what the symptoms mean and what steps need to be taken. In most cases any symptoms must be quickly followed up with a blood test and immediate treatment. In past years a significant amount of blood had to be taken from a calf and delivered to various laboratories in Kenya for analysis, which have proved unreliable and more often than not, inconclusive. Yet with modern veterinary knowledge and processes, alongside holistic healing techniques, the Trust is striving to improve and develop its veterinary care to ensure the chances of survival for each and every orphan are as high as possible.

With an extremely generous donation in October 2012, the DSWT has now strengthened its veterinary care beyond measure. This donation has equipped the Trust with two new blood testing machines providing extensive blood diagnostics, as well as a powerful and portable new x-ray machine alongside a range of diagnostic tools and tests. These portable units were very kindly purchased for us in the USA by a Vet born and trained in South Africa but now living in the USA, with plenty of experience in the National Parks of Southern Africa. He then travelled to Kenya and committed to training our teams, so this equipment is now available around the clock at the Nairobi Nursery and the Trust's remote field bases, producing results within minutes, allowing for rapid treatment, and has already been instrumental in saving orphaned elephant's lives.

Summary of total cases treated by both DSWT Veterinary Units

Species	Snarers	Rescues	Others	Totals
Elephant	71	49	309	429
Giraffe	40	-	12	52
Buffalo	15	4	12	31
Lion	8	12	54	74
Impala	14	-	5	19
White/Black Rhino	1	-	18	19
Zebra	51	4	35	90
Leopard	1	-	6	7
Grant Gazelle	-	-	4	4
Cheetah	-	5	10	15
Baboon	-	-	1	1
Waterbuck	20	2	4	26
Spotted Hyena	-	-	4	4
Wild Dog	-	-	1	1
Caracal	-	-	1	1
Hippo	-	1	4	5
Crocodile	-	-	1	1
Vervet Monkey	-	-	1	1
Colobus Monkey	-	-	1	1
African Wild Dog	2	-	1	3
Jackal	-	-	1	1
Common Duiker	2	-	1	3
Hartebeest	-	-	2	2
Wildebeest	-	-	2	2
Roan Antelope	-	-	1	1
Vultures	-	-	5	5
Topi	-	-	1	1
Eland	2	-	8	10
Oryx	-	-	2	2
Stripped hyena	-	3	-	3
Ostrich	1	-	1	2
Totals	228	80	508	816



Notes from the Field

Having graduated as a veterinary officer over ten years ago, today I am challenged more than ever, professionally and personally, in providing the best veterinary support possible to the vast areas of Tsavo National Park and its bordering environments. Tsavo always creates complex scenarios, which need carefully planned strategies, whether you are facing wildlife cases related to drought, human-wildlife conflict, livestock intrusion or of course poaching and bushmeat snaring. It is an unpredictable and extreme environment presenting daily challenges.

During 2012 this mission has proved to be ever more demanding with the increased threat to Kenya's wildlife, particularly its elephants and rhinos. In the past most cases have been commonly a cause of arrow wounds and snares, but now we were seeing more bullet wound cases. When treating wildlife we treat every case as unique, whatever the circumstances. Some lives we can save and some we lose, whether we do everything right or not. My skills are constantly tested whilst my experiences grow, enhanced with support and shared experiences from other veterinary officers in the field within Kenya and internationally.

We have been on the frontline this last year, witnessing the dangerous rise in poaching, especially targeted at the bigger bull elephants, which are more valuable to the ivory trade. One of my most testing cases this year was of a large bull elephant, with sizable tusks, within Ithumba, in the northern area of Tsavo East. We were called in by road from Voi, which is a long drive through tough terrain, and were immediately deployed on foot with our veterinary equipment through thick bush in pursuit of the elephant. After tracking the elephant, with the support of the Trust's plane flown by the DSWT's experienced bush pilot Nick Trent, we finally managed to get close enough to dart it. He was clearly in severe pain and highly traumatised. Already exhausted by the pursuit we weren't prepared for the elephant to rear up and come charging directly for us. Immediately the veterinary team and all the rangers ran in opposite directions, whilst frantic shots were fired into the air; I only just managed to escape the frantic bull unscathed, before he finally gave into the tranquiliser. We treated the elephant swiftly and successfully, having discovered four serious arrow wounds, and tracked his progress during the following weeks. It is successful cases like this which give me and my team so much pride in what we do, being able to save a life, especially in such dangerous circumstances.

2013 will be a daunting year for the wildlife and elephant populations of Tsavo, but with generous funding from Vier Pfofen, the DSWT Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit will strive to save as many wild lives as possible in close collaboration with the Kenya Wildlife Service.

By Dr Jeremiah Poghorn