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LEWA NEWS

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Lewa serves as one of the last safe refuges for rhino and elephant in Kenya. What makes Lewa extraordinary is our deeply entrenched approach to partnering with our neighbours to care for the delicate ecosystem on which we all depend.

For local communities, Lewa represents much more than the wildlife it protects. To the pastoral tribes who neighbour the Conservancy, Lewa provides the chance to maintain their traditional way of life in a modern and sustainable context through progressive grazing and forestry initiatives. To families adjoining its boundaries, Lewa offers improved livelihoods with our comprehensive education and women's microcredit programmes, community-managed water projects, and access to health care at its four health clinics.

To thousands of children in local schools, Lewa opens doors to a future with more choices than the generations before them.

The Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, a UNESCO World Heritage site, serves as a model and catalyst for community conservation. We established The Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) in 2004. Its mission is to develop resilient community conservancies, which transform people's lives, secure peace and conserve natural resources. Together with Lewa, the partnership now oversees thirty-three community conservancies encompassing over 10.8 million acres, and there's a waiting list of 38 more communities who want to replicate this model.



A Larger Place for Wildlife to Call Home

by Mike Watson | CEO, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and Michael Dyer | Managing Director, Borana Conservancy



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The Lewa and Borana conservancies have been working together for more than three decades to protect wildlife in danger of disappearing forever. We have jointly forged partnerships between communities, the private sector, and national and local government agencies, to create an opportunity for people, while expanding habitat wildlife desperately need to survive.

Our first major project was to work with the neighbouring Maasai to establish the Il'Ngwesi Eco Lodge in the 1990s. The community's acceptance of conservation as a way of life, and the tourist development on their land was the embryo of the community conservancy movement. This movement has massively expanded under the Northern Rangelands Trust across northern and coastal Kenya, changing the future of the landscape.

Over the last few years, we've begun collaborating more closely across all aspects of wildlife management, including:

- Removal of a fence that had divided these two parcels of land for decades, creating 50% more habitat for endangered black rhino. This is now the largest, intensively protected rhino sanctuary in East Africa (93,000 acres).
- Besides rhinos, we are also seeing elephants, lions, hyenas, giraffes, and leopards moving back and forth between the two areas, accessing crucial resources that

they need to survive.

- Lewa and Borana were also key partners involved, alongside the Mount Kenya Trust, in the development of the elephant corridor, linking in perpetuity the Mount Kenya ecosystem with the Ewaso river ecosystem. The two conservancies are now monitoring wildlife jointly to generate harmonised wildlife data, which informs timely management decisions. Fixing GPS trackers on carnivores such as lions and hyenas, and their prey has enhanced monitoring, to better understand population dynamics, movement patterns and interactions.
- Borana and Lewa's Anti-Poaching and Wildlife Monitoring Teams are operating as a singular entity, coordinating deployments, receiving complementary training and sharing intelligence.
- The new Joint Operations Centre, based at Lewa, is now the central point of coordination for all security-related activity and is also shared with the Northern Rangelands Trust and other conservation agencies.

This joint management approach, both between conservancies and in collaboration with communities, is creating opportunities for people through commerce, employment, healthcare, education, communications and conflict resolution. It is enabling wildlife to prosper, and for people to enjoy secure and enhanced livelihoods.

Vulcan Inc. and Google Bring State of the Art Technology to Lewa

Lewa's anti-poaching teams are world-renowned. We haven't lost a rhino to poaching in three years, and our contribution to elephant protection in northern Kenya has seen elephant poaching levels drop. But to maintain successful protection our teams need to constantly adapt and collaborate with many partners across a vast landscape. Having the best and most up to date information are vital.

The launch of our new Joint Operations Centre has revolutionised our ability to know exactly what's happening across the vast Lewa/NRT and adjacent Borana landscape. Vulcan, the high-tech and philanthropy-focused company founded by Paul G. Allen, created the new system specifically to help halt poaching and enhance wildlife management across a large scale.

that alerts teams to threats instantaneously and supports real-time tactical decision-making.

The project was the combined brainchild of the Vulcan team, Save The Elephants and Lewa Board member Katherine Chou, a product lead at Google, who specialises in the development of stealth products that apply machine learning. Katherine knew that in the past, it took precious time for Lewa and our partners, including the Northern Rangeland Trust and 51 Degrees, to make sense of intelligence coming from dozens of teams and 33 community conservation groups.

This new technology and command centre allows for unprecedented collaboration and is creating a model for conservation that can be scaled and replicated across Africa.

Called the Domain Awareness System (DAS), the system integrates data and technology to provide a singular picture



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The new Joint Operations Centre, based at Lewa, is now the central point of coordination for all security-related activity and is also shared with Save The Elephants, the Northern Rangelands Trust and other conservation agencies in northern Kenya and coastal areas. Field rangers across Lewa, Borana and NRT call into the Centre to report rhino and other animal sightings, injured and sick wildlife, as well as road banditry, stock theft, raiding and elephant poaching. Lewa's neighbouring communities also call if they sense potential danger to wildlife from suspicious individuals or during cases of human-wildlife conflict.



Enhancing Livelihoods and Awareness through Education

Children living in rural Kenya sometimes do not have access to schools. Kids stay home to tend cattle and other livestock, and few parents can afford to pay for uniforms or basic supplies. Schools are often understaffed and lack crucial amenities like books and electricity.

At Lewa, we believe that making sure kids have a chance to learn is one of the best ways to give them choices in life. Kenya's incredible wildlife is part of the children's national heritage, and enhancing livelihoods through education is critical to earning long-term community support for conservation.

The Lewa Education Programme currently:

- Supports 22 government primary and secondary schools serving approximately 7000 children.

- Provides more than 420 scholarships to individual students.
- In 2015 alone, Lewa's Conservation Education Programme hosted over 3500 students from 99 schools across the country, taking them on guided tours where many saw rhinos for the first time. They learn how conservation is helping to ensure endangered species will still be around for the next generations.

Here, we spotlight an initiative that has helped propel our education program to success. It shows how Lewa's successes are magnified when supporters, both locally and from all over the world, become inspired by what Lewa's community conservation partners are accomplishing.

Save a Mind: Give a Choice



Peter Linneman, (standing tall behind), his sponsored students, Lewa's CEO Mike Watson (far left) alongside other Lewa staff during Peter's most recent visit to Lewa.

Peter Linneman came from the US to visit Lewa Wilderness for the first time in 2003 when our education programme was just getting underway. While on a tour, our senior guide Karmushu shared with Peter about his own childhood tending livestock in the bush, and his deep concern over the lack of opportunities for many Kenyan children.

Inspired by these conversations, Peter and his wife Kathy created the *Save a Mind, Give a Choice* initiative, which has funded 54 children through college and currently supports 120 more at various stages in their education.

"The deal I made with the children was simple," Peter says. "They would take care of learning, and I would take care of the cost of their education. If you can save children's minds, and education is often the best way, then they can have choices in life."

The programme has had a huge impact, said Faith Riunga, Lewa's Education Program manager. "The scholarship program helps us make the benefits of conservation tangible to our communities," Faith said. "Peter and Kathy have been key partners in giving us the success that we've had in our education programme."



Baragoi Student Visitors Have Big Plans For The Future

"Everything I learned here at Lewa, I will go back home and teach others: How to conserve the environment where we live." Jacinta Ayen, 14



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Students from Baragoi Primary School in northern Kenya recently visited Lewa on a conservation education trip. For many of the students, this was their first time away from home. Since the trip, many have made a commitment to help protect their wildlife and environment.

The Conservation Education Programme introduces students to the possibility that learning about wildlife and environmental management, and teaching others could enhance their future livelihoods.

Since the programme's inception in 2010, over 10,000 students have visited Lewa to learn about conservation, and we've helped establish wildlife clubs in more than ten

schools. Students who live too far to return home on the same day as a visit can now stay overnight in the dorm.

Recently, we hosted a wildlife club from the village of Baragoi. A dozen students and two teachers travelled an entire day to visit Lewa, where they learned about water and resource management, waste disposal, environmental and soil degradation and wildlife conservation.



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Nengishon Letipila, 14, says the trip helped him realise the value of trees, and that people and wild animals depend on forests and other habitats to survive.



© JONATHAN ODONGO

Ann Lokope, 10, wrote in an essay that she would love to protect wild animals and to grow plants and 'big forests' like those at Lewa.

Jacinta Ayen was delighted to finally see a rhino, and learn the differences between black and white rhinos. The major difference is the shape of their mouths. Black rhinos develop a pointed lip, which they use to select leaves from twigs; white rhinos have a flat, wide lip to graze on grasses. She was also surprised to see 'flowing water' from a spring. "Everything I learned here at Lewa, I will go back home and teach others: how to conserve the environment where we live." Ayen says she is inspired by Kenyan Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai and wants to become a doctor of animals "so that I can preserve the environment."





Connecting Schools Across Continents: from Surrey to Lewa

In 2007, a group of teachers from All Hallows School in Surrey travelled to Kenya for an adventure. Despite the fact that they teach full-time in the UK, this group was excited to learn more about education in Kenya, so came to volunteer at one of the Lewa Schools: Sang'a in Laikipia County.

The All Hallows team spent several weeks at Sang'a. At first, they filled their time teaching and playing with the children, and adjusting to simpler living conditions.



Lewa-sponsored Sang'a Primary School and All Hallows School from Surrey have formed a trans-continental bond that has survived the test of time.

However, it wasn't long before they decided to do more for these students and make a long-term impact on their educational environment. The visiting Brits rolled up their sleeves and started making improvements around the school, painting classrooms with maps, alphabets and animals, fixing water pipes and much more.

Sang'a and All Hallows School have formed a trans-continental bond that has survived the test of time. The students and teachers at All Hallows hold regular fundraisers

like bake sales and have raised enough funds to buy a brand new energy-saving cooker for the school kitchen.



An energy-saving stove funded by All Hallows at Sang'a School. The efficient stove has made it easier and much more efficient to prepare meals to feed the pupils.

They also help pay a teacher's salary, have provided school uniforms for the children and solar power to charge laptops and electronics in the school. They have plans to continue their support and hopefully raise funds to build basic dormitories for the children.

We hope to soon establish a pen-pal connection between the two schools, giving students on both continents the chance to learn more about their long-distance peers and their very different lives. There is no doubt that there is a special connection between these two schools that will continue for years to come!



Real Women, Real Stories: Meet Some of the Women of our Micro-Credit Programme

It has been more than ten years since the inception of the Women's Micro-Credit Programme. It has already impacted the lives of over 1,800 women and their families.

The programme focuses on:

- Promoting the development of women's micro-enterprises.
- Training women on entrepreneurship.
- Fundraising in support of women enterprises.
- Marketing women's businesses and products.
- Facilitating gender equity and access to resources by women.
- Supporting development efforts of women living around wildlife conservation areas.
- Fostering linkages and liaisons with other women development groups.

"We are very proud of these women and what they have been able to achieve. As the programme expands, our aim is to increase the number of women supported by the scheme as well as the amount of money available for them to borrow", John Kinoti, Lewa's Community Development Manager.



After her husband, who was the family's breadwinner, passed away, Sabina Kaaria faced a very difficult time caring for her family.

Since she joined our programme, she has become an active farmer, keeping and selling livestock such as goats and dairy cows, enabling her to earn an income and provide for her children.



Tabitha Munoru has been in the programme for four years now. With her loan, she has been able to purchase this tank that enables her to store water for both commercial farming and domestic use.

Tabitha also attends Lewa's adult literacy classes and she says her life has improved tremendously through both programmes.



Jenifer Kinanu and her friends harvest beans at her farm. The loan from our programme has helped 50-year-old Jennifer become a robust farmer. She uses earnings from the sale of maize and beans, milk from a dairy cow and sale of other livestock to pay school fees for her youngest daughter.



Healthcare Intervention Helps Restore a Child's Eyesight

The Lewa Healthcare Programme runs three clinics in Lewa's neighbouring areas and also offers support to the Ntirimiti clinic. These clinics are the nearest health centres to thousands of people who otherwise would have no access to healthcare. In 2015, close to 40,000 people received healthcare attention from our facilities, crucial services that would have otherwise not been accessible. All of Lewa's sponsored schools benefit from medical outreach carried out by the Healthcare Programme.

Two years ago, Ridhwan Abdi Osman woke up with an unusual medical condition – her left eye was swollen, impairing her vision while causing excruciating pain. This condition baffled the area's medical practitioners, the girl's mother Sophia Abdi said. Without a diagnosis her daughter's condition went untreated, she was crying a lot and missing school.

During a Lewa-sponsored school health check-up at Kilimani Primary School, medical staff was able to diagnose her problem as a traumatic corneal ulcer. "Without help, she would have gone completely blind," said Ezekiel Karino, Lewa Healthcare Administrator. Lewa donors from Switzerland provided funds that enabled our Healthcare

Team to secure an appointment for her to receive cornea transplant at one of East Africa most advanced ophthalmic centres. The surgery restored her sight.



Ridwan at the Lewa clinic before treatment. "We felt helpless and frustrated as we could not afford to take her to a bigger hospital in the city," her mother Sophia said.



"My daughter is no longer crying all the time and is able to see well again," said Sophia. "She is laughing and playing. I'm so grateful, and now I know that Lewa truly cares about people."

Lewa Wilderness – Entertaining Guests in Luxury for More than 30 Years



Lewa Wilderness is one of Lewa's five lodges, established in 1972 as an effort to try and find economic value in wildlife. As one of the country's first safari ventures, the luxury lodge offers an authentic, truly unique and personal safari experience.

The lodge sits on a scenic hilltop overlooking vast, stunning landscapes of the Conservancy. Will Craig, (son of Lewa's founders David and Delia Craig) and his wife Emma, took over the running of the lodge in 1990 where they proudly continue to entertain guests, offering an unparalleled experience in Lewa's history, culture and journey in conservation.

Will Craig says, "Our focus is to provide a high-end and individual experience. When people visit us, it is about the quality of this experience that sets their safari apart, and that is what we aim to continue to do."

The unique tourism practices on Lewa, such as the absolute respect for nature and wildlife, the desire to offer a refined safari, a strict code of conduct and more, were initiated at Wilderness, and have continued to shape Lewa's tourism to date. Perhaps the lodge's most famous offering is its extraordinary biplane ride in the Wacko, one of only two in Africa!



Perhaps the lodge's most famous offering is its extraordinary biplane ride in the 'Wacko', one of only two in Africa!

"The Wacko creates special moments; you can see the valleys, forests, how the communities live and so much more. The topography is just beautiful, and the opportunity to see the landscape in that fashion is very intimate," says Will.

Many people who visit Lewa Wilderness end up becoming lifetime friends, and Lewa becomes a part of their lives and their stories. Find out how you can stay here by emailing sachacraig@handpickedafrica.co.uk.

ABOUT THE LEWA WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

A brief history

The Craig/Douglas family first came to Lewa Downs in 1922 and whilst the land was managed as a cattle ranch for more than half a century, the family also recognised the great importance of the wildlife living on Lewa and engaged in wildlife tourism. In the 1980s, when the plight of the black rhino became desperate in Africa, part of the cattle ranch was converted into the Ngare Sergoi Rhino Sanctuary, with the enthusiastic support and funding of co-founder and rhino conservationist, Anna Merz.

Who we are today

In 1995 the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy was established as a not-for-profit organisation. Lewa evolved, over time, to become an internationally recognised catalyst and model for conservation that protected endangered species, empowered communities through development programmes and worked with government. Today, we aim to replicate this successful working model to a broader landscape beyond our borders and steer the establishment of conservation as a viable way of life for communities that share their land with wildlife.

Awards and recognition

- A UNESCO World Heritage Site inscribed in 2013 as an extension of the Mount Kenya World Heritage Site.
- One of two organisations in Africa to feature on the

International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Green List for excellence in protected area management.

- Silver Award in Poverty Reduction by the World Responsible Tourism Awards, 2014.
- Runner Up, Best in Wildlife Conservation by the Safari Awards, 2014.
- Tusk Wildlife Ranger Award for Lewa's Head of Anti-Poaching, Edward Ndiritu, in 2015.

A catalyst and model

Lewa's mission is to act as a catalyst and model for conservation, and its successful model combines the protection of wildlife, community development, and sustainable tourism. Acting as that model, we have helped to stimulate community-owned conservation throughout northern Kenya and beyond.

The Conservancy has been instrumental as the foundation for the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), headquartered on Lewa. NRT is an innovative partnership which works to facilitate community-led conservation initiatives in northern Kenya, promoting the collective management of ecosystems for improved human livelihoods, biodiversity conservation and enhanced rangeland management. This dynamic partnership has increased the amount of land under integrated conservation management to around 10 million acres, allowing wildlife to begin to migrate throughout their historical natural ranges once more.

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