

Animal Keepers' Forum



November 1987

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ANIMAL KEEPERS' FORUM, 635 Gage Blvd., Topeka, KS 66606

Executive Editor: Alice Miser
Managing Editor: Susan Chan
Associate Editor: Ron Ringer

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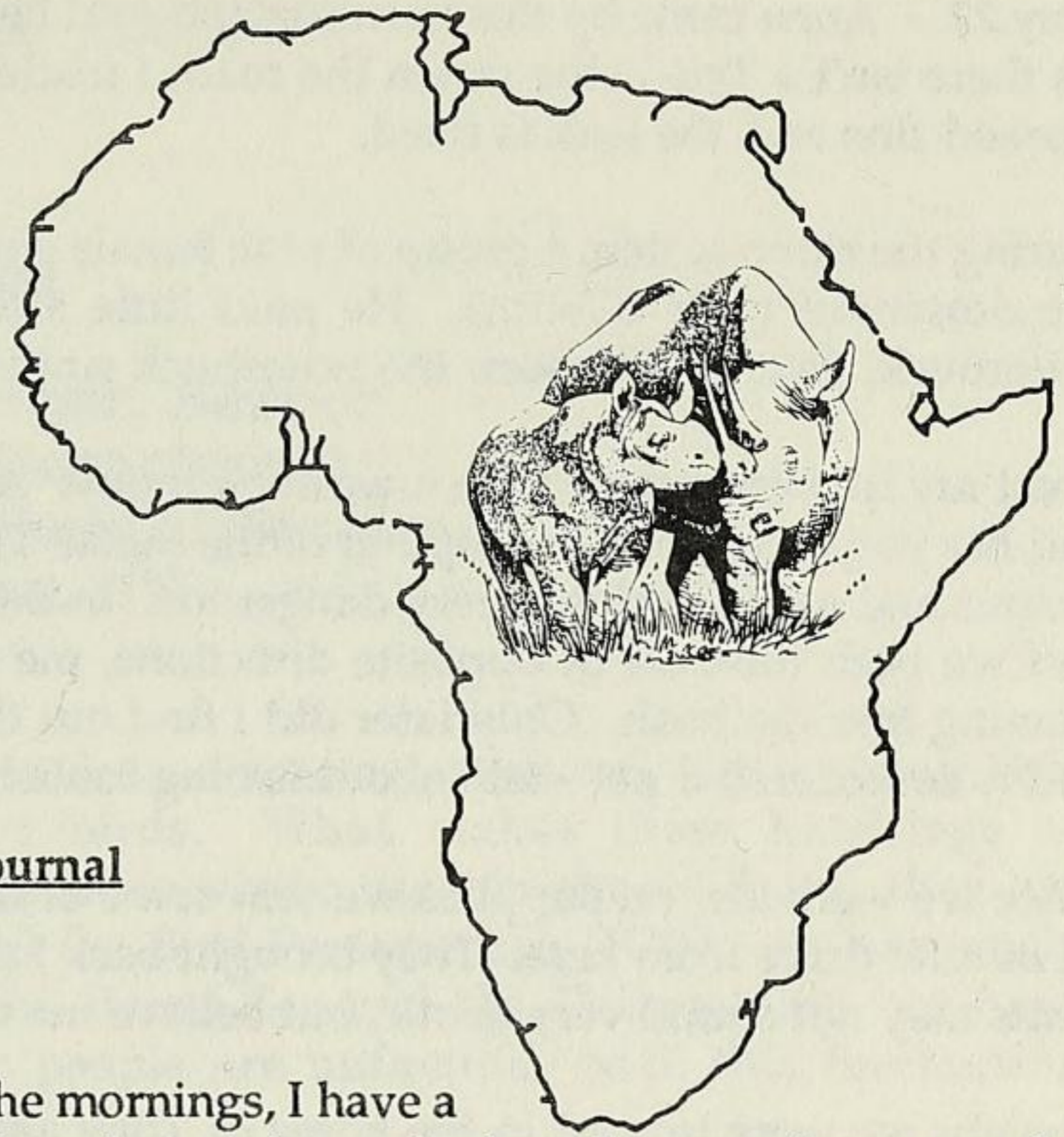
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Kenya Diary

Part 2

By
Andy Lodge
Keeper, Columbus Zoo
Columbus, OH



On the Brink of Extinction: A Ngare Sergoi Journal

May 20, 1986 - From my bedroom, early in the mornings, I have a beautiful view of Mt. Kenya. It snowed up there last night, and when the sun glistens on the snow-capped peaks it has to be one of the most fantastic sights any human being has ever been privileged to witness. Unfortunately, the mountains are only visible in the early morning because from mid-morning on they are enveloped in clouds.

I went out this morning to pick the rhinos I want to include in my study. I observed a female named Stumpy and her year-old calf, whose name was Bahati. I'll watch them for a few mornings and late afternoons as that's when they are most active. Most of the rhino on the reserve sleep the better part of the afternoon.

After lunch I took my first solo drive in the Land Rover. I'm slowly getting the hang of it, but I'm glad no one was with me. I observed Stumpy and Bahati until sunset.

Anna and Karl invited me to join them on a picnic. We drove to a remote corner of the reserve and climbed up into a thatched roof watch tower where we enjoyed a meal of cheese, soup and corned beef - all very delicious. I related to them stories of my life in the United States and they told me of their life in various parts of Africa. There's no question their life has been much more exciting than mine. What fine people they are!

May 21 - Anna came and got me early this morning and asked me if I wanted to go see the elephants. Sometime during the night they had moved onto the ranch. Anyone who knows me, knows she didn't have to ask twice. We took our breakfast and drove about seven miles over some very bad roads to a lookout point high in the mountains. What a view from up here! I've never had breakfast with the panorama of endless mountains and lush green valleys spread before me as they were this morning. I shall never forget the thrill of seeing those elephants through my field glasses. There were only three, but after years of training elephants at the zoo, it's always a special treat to see them roaming free in their native habitat. They are truly lords of their domain.

The return trip provided an opportunity to observe numerous giraffe, hartebeest, waterbuck, impala, Grant and Grevy zebra, rhino and ostrich.

For the rest of the day I concentrated on studying the rhinos. I paid particular attention to the large dominant male Godot. He is a magnificent animal, but he can be extremely aggressive. He has a habit of charging people and vehicles. He is so dangerous no one can use the road until he leaves.

I took the Rover this afternoon, and with a map Jilly drew for me, I began to learn my way around the reserve.

We had a special treat tonight. One of the ranchhands gave me a chicken he had killed and cleaned and Anna prepared it for dinner.

Kenya Diary, Continued

May 22 - Anna came by this morning and said her sink was leaking and asked if I could fix it. As there isn't a Tru-Value down the road, I made gaskets out of a piece of old inner tube. It worked fine and the leak is fixed.

During the rhino watch, a group of nine female greater kudu, and a male waterbuck walked by the dominant male (Godot). He paid little attention to the kudu, but charged the male waterbuck. We haven't seen the waterbuck since he disappeared over the hill.

I had my first encounter with a warthog today. As I was walking around the Rover, a female and her youngsters popped up out of the bush. These animals, though small in stature, can be vicious and are considered very dangerous. In this case, however, she was as startled as I was and we both took off in opposite directions, me jumping up on my truck and the warthogs running into the bush. Only later did I find out this particular warthog had been hand-raised and is considered a pet - talk about feeling foolish!

Since we were low on supplies we sent some of the help to Nanyhki, a small town which is a 45 minute drive from here. They brought back ham, potatoes, cookies, eggs and bread. These items may not sound very exotic, but believe me they were received enthusiastically.

Tonight we were invited to the home of Tony and Ross Dyer. They are related to the Craigs and are extremely interesting people. They are the last of a breed of colonial Europeans living in a rapidly changing Africa. I could never grow tired of Tony's stories of the old Africa, the way it was when he was a young man. Both Tony and his wife are unmistakably British and through their eyes I developed an understanding for the ending of a bygone era. We had a fine dinner, and I found them to be warm and friendly people.

May 23 - I've been going with Anna every morning now. Each morning we check all twelve of the rhinos to make sure there are no problems with them. I saw my first gerenuk today. With their extremely long necks and habit of standing on their hind legs to reach up into Acacia trees for feeding, these small antelope are unquestionably some of the most unique animals in Africa.

This afternoon a friend of mine from the Columbus Zoo, Rick Preberg, arrived for a short visit. Rick is the zoo's media specialist and a real genius at putting together slide and video productions. He'll be in Kenya and Tanzania for a month shooting slides for his work back at the zoo. Jilly and I gave him a short tour of the rhino reserve, and he photographed every bit of wildlife and landscape he could train his camera on. The visit was all too brief as Rick had to be at Samburu by 6:00 p.m.

Dinner tonight was a special occasion as two friends of Anna's friends from England, Bob Brett and Colin Francombe, were visiting. Colin is a world authority on the black rhino and I had the pleasure of sitting in on their interesting and informative conversation. Bob works for Ian-Douglas Hamilton, in my opinion the world's greatest authority on African elephants, and a man I've greatly admired for many years.

May 24 - Karl and I left at sunup this morning and drove to the far end of Lewa Downs to a large flat hilltop. We walked to the top and had breakfast while enjoying the exhilarating view of the valley below.

On the way back we stopped at the home of Ian and Jane Craig. The elephants had come back last night and from their porch overlooking a huge valley I counted forty-three. What an incredible sight! I also counted the youngsters in the herd, there were eighteen of varying ages.

We encountered a lone baby ostrich wandering by itself along the road as we drove home. My first impulse was to get out of the Rover and rescue it. But then I remembered the first rule of wildlife management that baby animals' mothers are usually not far off. I would rather chance an encounter with a rhino than an angry ostrich mother, so I allowed nature to take its course. Come to think of it, I'm not particularly fond of ostriches anyhow.

To Be Continued.....



December 1987

Special Edition

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13TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
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MILWAUKEE 1987

Dedicated to Professional Animal Care

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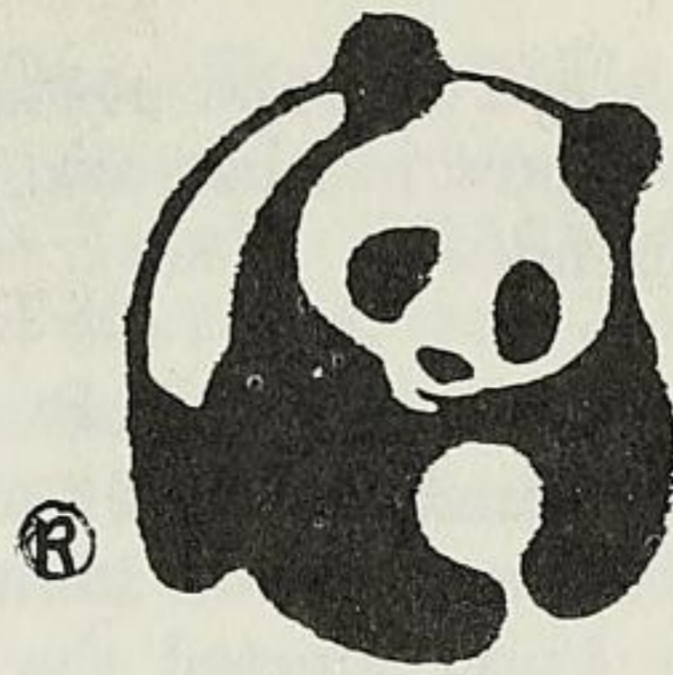
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Illegal Wildlife Trade: Keep Informed

By
Richard Block
Director of Public Programs
World Wildlife Fund
Washington, DC



The role of keepers has changed over the past decade. The AAZK has promoted professional development. Demands of the job have increased, raising education levels along with responsibilities. Today keepers actively participate in the management of species, contribute to research on captive populations, and participate in the design process of improving zoo exhibits. Some of you may say "Enough is enough!", but I'm going to add one more area to the long list of job requirements!

All of you participate in educating the public whether you plan to or not. Everytime you are observed in your daily routine, everytime you interact with a visitor you are shaping peoples' view of the zoo and animals. The visitors' experience at the zoo shapes what they understand about animals or wildlife and the environment. The more you know about the collection and the issues facing wild populations of your captive specimens, the better the message you can leave with your visitor and the greater the impact you can have in promoting conservation.

Your visitors look upon you as authorities on the animals you care for and work with. There's no reason why you shouldn't want to keep up with what's happening outside the collection. Whether through your AAZK chapter or on your own, there are ways of keeping up with the issues. If for no other reason, you will learn to appreciate just how significant your role is in caring for some of the more critically endangered species.

Certainly when a visitor pops the question about why so many species are endangered and threatened with extinction, the loss of habitat is the critical issues that comes to mind. But there is another issue that should be of special concern to citizens of this country: illegal wildlife trade. The U.S. is the world's largest importer of live animals and wildlife products (over \$600 million annually), so we have the greatest responsibility in making sure that our "consumption" reflects intelligent patterns of conservation and resource management and not the blatant depletion of species to satisfy human vanity or frivolous whims.

The world trade in wildlife and wildlife products amounts to several billion dollars annually, and as much as one-third of this may be illegal. With U.S. law enforcement inspectors able to check only 25 percent of the 50,000-60,000 shipments that enter the U.S. each year, it is not surprising that thousands of illegally imported wildlife items are sold in American stores and pet shops everyday. The U.S. Endangered Species Act and the Lacey Act provide the strong legal framework for enforcing wildlife trade laws. In addition, the U.S., along with almost 100 other nations, is party to an international convention to control wildlife trade, CITES. But despite the threat of jail sentences, large fines and confiscations, much illegal wildlife makes its way to the marketplace. A South American scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*) costs only a few dollars to capture, but can command \$1,500 in a pet shop. Such a profit creates a strong incentive to risk breaking the law.

How does this illegal wildlife enter the country? While blatant smuggling, concealing wildlife from government authorities, is one method used, more often, shipping documents are counterfeited to disguise the origin or identity of the species. This method is known as "laundering" and here's how it works. Every year, the U.S. imports some 800,000 birds, about one-third of them parrots. Cockatoos fetch a high retail price, averaging \$800 for relatively common species to tens of thousands for the rarer or more

Illegal Wildlife Trade: Keep Informed, Continued

spectacular ones. The palm cockatoo (*Probosciger atterimus*), worth up to \$25,000, is protected from export in Australia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea, the only countries in which it is found.

A few years ago, 100 palm cockatoos were imported from Singapore by a U.S. dealer. Singapore has virtually no wildlife of its own, yet the documents shipped with the birds claimed they had come from Malaysia. As palm cockatoos do not occur in Malaysia, World Wildlife Fund alerted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the birds had probably come from Indonesia, and the shipment was seized.

High mortality also plagues the live bird trade. Smugglers often use crude capture and transport techniques, and depending upon the species, only one out of every three birds captured may reach the marketplace alive. With such high profits for these birds, however, importers can afford heavy losses.

Reptiles are also heavily hunted for their fine patterned hides. You can find products made from reptiles in nearly any department store or specialty catalog. Chances are they are made from spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*), a species of alligator protected throughout most of its Latin American range. As estimated one million caimans are taken illegally from the Pantanal, or swamp region, of Brazil each year. When caiman skins make it out of Brazil, they usually go to a major tanning center in Europe or Japan for processing. The skins, once tanned, are made into shoes, handbags, and other leather products. Such products, with their Brazilian origin obscured, arrive in major consumer countries. With more than one million skins entering international trade each year, caiman populations face almost certain declines.

Millions of snakes and lizards are harvested every year to supply leather for belts, shoes, watch straps, and other leather goods, even cowboy boots. Only five or six species make up this trade and none are captive bred in commercial numbers. Mammals too are persecuted for their skins. The near-extinction of the tiger (*Panthera tigris*), cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), and snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*) prompted worldwide efforts to control trade in their fur. Strict regulations have kept most spotted cat furs out of the U.S. in recent years, although an occasional coat is seized by Fish and Wildlife Service inspectors.

Elephants (*Loxodonta africana* and *Elephas maximus*) are other mammals that have been hard hit by international trade. Traditionally carved elephant ivory has been used as currency, for jewelry and figurines, and for piano keys. Unfortunately, the demand for ivory has not waned over the centuries. An estimated 30,000-40,000 African elephants are killed each year to satisfy this international craving. Although much of this ivory is taken and traded legally, poaching is a persistent problem. Tons of ivory tusks are laundered out of Africa each year. Most of it travels first to India or Japan, or to ivory dealers in Hong Kong. There it is carved and then distributed for sale throughout the world.

If someone were to ask you which animal was in the most desperate situation as a result of trade, I'm sure most of you would identify the rhinoceros. All five species of rhino are endangered largely as a result of trade in their horn. Tablets, which claim to contain rhino horn, are among the traditional Oriental medicines manufactures in Asia and distributed throughout the world. Despite laws against the practice, such tablets were on sale in New York's Chinatown. By far the greatest threat to the rhino populations, especially the black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) is the popularity in the nation of North Yemen of daggers with carved rhino horn handles. Although it banned the import of rhino horn in 1982, North Yemen remains the greatest consumer of rhino horn.

Less well known than elephants and rhinos, but hunted as relentlessly, are the sea turtles. Japan, the largest consumer, imports 30 tons of tortoiseshell each year. Tortoiseshell jewelry and other sea turtle products are popular tourist souvenirs, and such items are among those most often seized from U.S. tourists returning home from vacation.

Illegal Wildlife Trade: Keep Informed, Continued

Is anything being done to control wildlife trade? One effort is World Wildlife Fund's TRAFFIC program, established in 1979 to monitor trade and to help ensure that wildlife imported into and exported from this country is legal. TRAFFIC is part of an international network that now has ten offices around the world, from Japan to Australia, to Uruguay, to Belgium. Of course, monitoring trade alone will not solve the problem. In your role as educators, you can help inform your visitors about these important issues. As consumers, we can all make better choices that will lessen our negative impact on wildlife around the world.

There are a number of resources available to you that can keep you informed on this issue and make you a good spokesperson for wildlife conservation. TRAFFIC produces a quarterly newsletter that provides detailed information on specific species, international laws, and major trouble spots. In addition, TRAFFIC has produced "Buyer Beware", an informative brochure to increase consumer awareness. The brochure was sponsored by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the American Society of Travel Agents. The brochure is available in large quantities in the event you or your AAZK chapter is interested in distributing it. TRAFFIC has also produced a "Wildlife Trade Education Kit" that contains slides, a script, and background information.

This month's issue of *Focus*, World Wildlife Fund's newsletter, is entirely dedicated to the wildlife trade issue. A monthly publication that provides more general information on endangered species, including trade issues, is the *Endangered Species Update*. This publication is made available through the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources. The *Update* contains the monthly Fish and Wildlife Service *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*.

Later this year TRAFFIC will release three new publications: Whose Business Is It? - A Guide to International Trade in Wildlife, The International Trade in Birds of Prey, and Traveling Tropicals - A Study of the U.S. International Ornamental Fish Trade. You can obtain information on these and other special TRAFFIC reports through our offices in Washington.

I view zoos as the most important resource for teaching our citizens about the threats facing our natural environment. In your expanding role in the zoos and aquariums, you are an important part of the picture that makes wildlife conservation work. Your dedication to the care and maintenance of the collection is essential, but do not overlook your role as educators and leaders. You can stay informed about wildlife trade issues and enhance your ability to reach the public about this critical wildlife issue.

Once you are informed yourself, it is important to do something with that valuable collection of ideas! Sharing your concern with visitors on a one-to-one basis during the course of your day is one way, but there are some other options as well. Information can be integrated into the narratives of your live animal demonstrations (i.e. elephants, sea lions, etc.) Your AAZK Chapter could set up a display for special zoo events like a "Keeper Day" or "Conservation Day". Your chapter might even go as far as setting up a permanent display using articles confiscated by the Fish and Wildlife Service. TRAFFIC has a traveling display, "Cargo to Extinction", that has been making three-month visits to zoos across the U.S. In all, there are many options and unlimited opportunities to play a part in these conservation activities. Your local state Fish and Game Department representative might also be a good source of ideas or display materials. And by all means, give us a call in Washington if we can help you in getting one of these activities going in your zoo.

Resources:

"Buyer Beware" (free in large quantities)

TRAFFIC newsletter (\$10 annually)

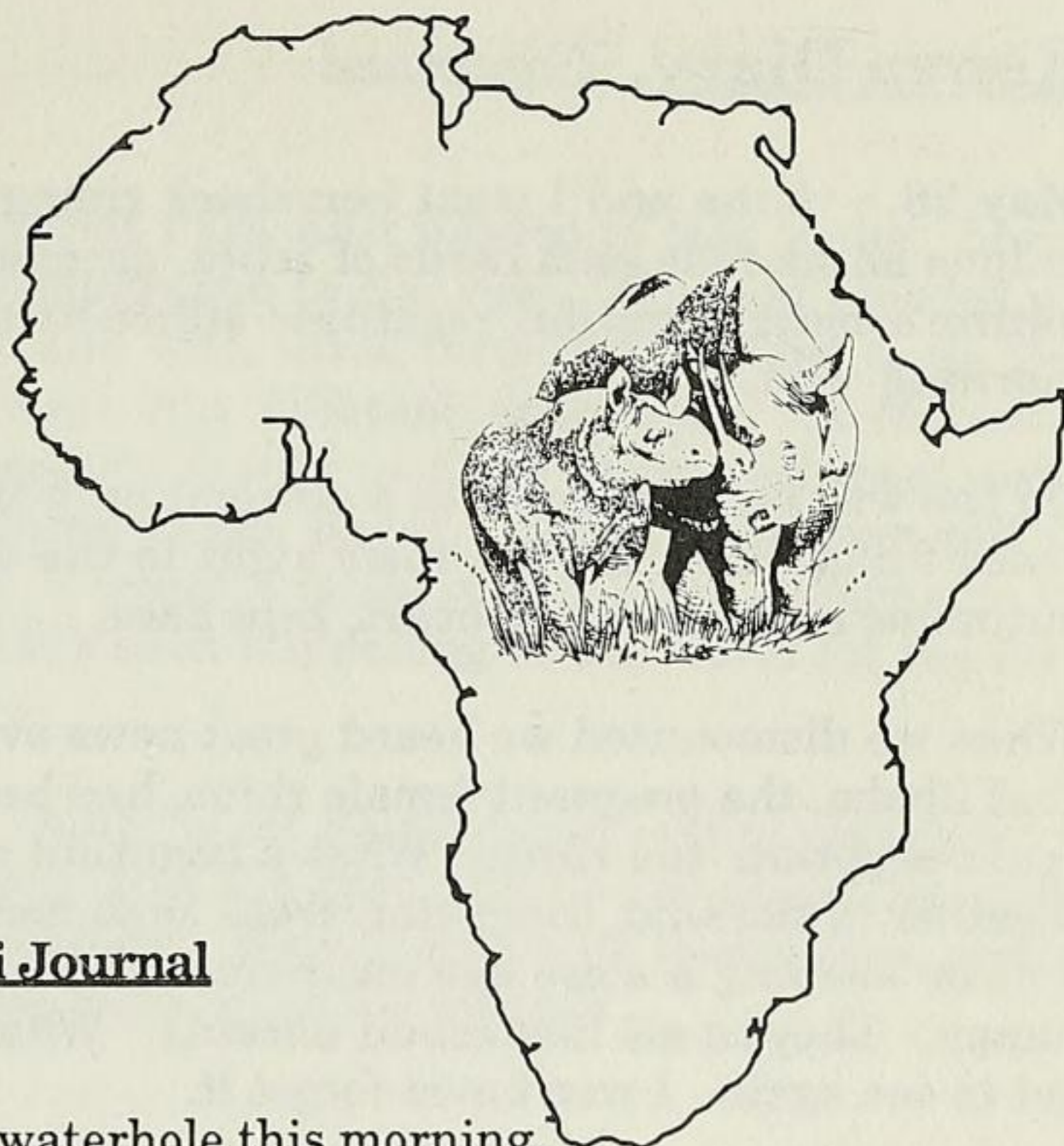
Available from: TRAFFIC, World Wildlife Fund, 1250 24th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037 (202) 293-4800



Kenya Diary

Part 3

By
Andy Lodge
Keeper, Columbus Zoo
Columbus, OH



On the Brink of Extinction: A Ngare Sergoi Journal

May 25, 1986 - I had breakfast at the large waterhole this morning, not as much wildlife as usual, only a few spoonbills and a Grant's zebra. The David Craigs invited me to lunch today. I talked to David about our zoo's efforts on behalf of Anna and the rhino reserve. I told him I planned to try to raise money for her and he thought that was a great idea. The Craigs are truly interested in the work Anna is doing to save the black rhinos.

This is Sunday so everyone is relaxing. In that spirit the Craigs took me on a leisurely tour of the 26,000-acre expanse of Lewa Downs.

When we returned, the Craigs gave me a ham. I was very appreciative, but to be truthful it didn't look like any ham I'd ever seen before. It was hairy and a strange color. I asked Jilly if she could do something with it for me. I am awaiting the results with a mixture of anxiety and curiosity.

There will be no bath tonight as the water is a dark brown color.

May 26 - Karl is going back to Switzerland Wednesday, so he and Anna are spending the day together. Anna's Meru tracker and I did the morning rhino check. The rhinos were well hidden today, so we did a lot of walking to find them. Solia, the most aggressive of the females, gave us a minor scare. She suddenly bounded up from the tall grass and started for us. Needless to say, we made a hasty retreat.

The ranch foreman is going on leave next week, so he gave me a quick course on how to run the electric generators. I feel good that I've been entrusted with the important task of keeping the electricity working for the four hours a day we have it until he gets back.

There's a photo contest in London next month on endangered species. Anna asked me to take photos of Samia, the baby rhino she is hand-raising, and enter them in the contest. We went to the top of a hill and I took photographs of Samia against the red sunset. I suppose I've got as good a chance as anyone. Maybe I'll win a trip to England -- maybe I'll win the Ohio Lottery too.

May 27 - This morning is off to a great start. I broke my glasses chasing a bat out of my bedroom. I'm glad I brought my old spare pair.

Karl began his trip to Switzerland this morning. Anna asked me to ride into Nanyuki with them, where Karl has to catch his plane to Nairobi. She wanted me along because she was picking up the payroll for the employees on the reserve. She said she would feel better if I were along because she would have a good deal of money.

Going to Nanyuki gave me some time to go to the bank and do some shopping for food for the next couple of weeks. We got back late, so I fixed dinner, read and went to bed early.

Kenya Diary, Continued

May 28 - Anna and I went horseback riding this morning at dawn. Riding here is very unique as we rode past herds of zebra, gazelles and giraffe. What a sight to see! Some of nature's most beautiful creatures silhouetted against the landscape by the rays of the morning sun.

On the way back we came to a straight path that allowed us to let the animals beneath us reach full gallop. We ran them right to the stables. Anna's horse is younger and faster, but mine, being strong of heart, kept pace.

When we dismounted we heard great news over the radio. They called Anna and told her that Shaba, the pregnant female rhino, had her calf. We took off in the Rover as fast as we could negotiate the roads. What a beautiful sight, seeing a newborn calf and her mother together in the wild, completely free. Both mother and baby appear to be very healthy. We will be keeping a close eye on them for several days. Everyone on the reserve is really happy. They're all like proud parents. What great timing. It's something I may never get to see again. I won't ever forget it.

May 29 - Anna and I moved the horses to the other side of the reserve this morning as it is better grazing for them over there. There hasn't been any rain for a while, and the fields and trees have turned brown since I've been here. We are badly in need of rain.

Someone stole some goats last night. Everyone is out looking for the goat rustlers.

I checked on the baby this morning. It seems to be doing fine. There are trackers watching it all the time through these first few critical days. I think its going to make it.

May 30 - More problems hit the ranch today. Lions came in last night and killed two of the cattle. All the hands are out looking for them. Everyone has been warned to be careful.

Mother and baby rhino still look good. I think they're going to be fine.

May 31 - The lion problem is bigger than we first thought. An entire pride, nine to ten, were here and killed nine cattle and injured five. They are going to try to run them off with planes tonight.

I spent most of the day with Shaba and her calf who has been named Jupiter. For the rest of my time here I'll concentrate primarily on these two.

June 1 - Today marks the halfway point in my study. I've got a routine that I follow each day. First thing in the morning I go out and observe Shaba and Jupiter. In the afternoon, if they're sleeping, I watch the social behavior of the three that are usually together - Godot, Kelele and Rogani. The rest of the rhinos are, as is the norm with black rhinos, loners.

Today I saw the first male greater kudu I've seen since I came here. They are seldom seen on the reserve as there are very few of them at this time of year. For some reason the males do not usually survive the dry season.

June 2 - I observed Jupiter all morning. He's a feisty little guy and very active. I can see a great deal of his father, Godot, in him. Godot has killed two other males, and lets no other male of breeding age around the females. I hope his offspring are not as aggressive or Anna could have some real problems down the line.

I introduced Anna to Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson and Ricky Scaggs tonight. I brought some of my cassette tapes with me, and played them for her. She had never heard of any of them. She sat and listened patiently, but really never said whether or not she liked them.

Kenya Diary, Continued

June 3 - I received a message from Nairobi that Park East needed to talk to me. Since there's no phone, I had to wait for the weekly supply run to Nanyuki. Jilly and I loaded up the old Rover truck with returnable bottles and with three farm hands went to do the shopping. Shopping in a small African village is a different experience. It certainly isn't like going to your neighborhood super market. It took us three hours and about eight different kinds of stores. We loaded everything in the Rover, I made my phone call to Nairobi, and then we returned to the ranch. I found a fairly recent *Time* magazine in town, so tonight I'm going to catch up on what's been happening in the world for the last three weeks.

Anna came over and said Samia, her baby rhino, is off its feed and acting sluggish. I asked if she had changed its diet in any way and she said she had changed its milk formula. I told her that could be part of the problem. We will watch its food intake, and if there is no improvement by tomorrow, we may have cause for concern.

To Be Continued.....

(Note: Andy is available to give talks and a slide presentation on the Ngare Sergoi Rhino Project. If you are interested in having Andy speak to your Chapter or group you may contact him at (614) 766-3413).



The International Center for the Preservation of Wild Animals

By

John Becker

*International Center for the Preservation of Wild Animals, Inc.
and*

*Carl Gyarmaty, Herbivore/Carnivore Keeper
Columbus Zoo, Columbus, OH*

In recent years, many zoos, aquariums, wildlife parks, and private facilities have achieved fantastic successes in such conservation activities as rare species propagation, research, and public education. As keepers, we have been fortunate to be active participants in these endeavors. However, many of us have also become aware of one very disturbing fact: many potentially successful breeding programs are stifled or repressed due to a lack of sufficient space.

This is in no way intended to belittle our institutions or their conservation efforts. Most places have done an outstanding job with the land they have available. However, when you consider that you can fit all the land currently available to U.S. zoos in the suburb of Brooklyn, the need for more land becomes immediately apparent.

In addition to putting a stranglehold on many breeding programs, land shortage is causing other complications, such as research restrictions and the problem of surplus animals. As many of us are acutely aware, some endangered and threatened animals (most of the big cat species are classic examples) are deliberately not being bred because there is no place to house the offspring, either in this country or abroad.

Recognizing these problems, about eight years ago the directors of several Ohio zoos expressed a keen interest in establishing a large animal breeding facility somewhere. Soon some prominent Ohio businessmen, university officials, and natural resources