

**THE DAVID SHELDRIK WILDLIFE TRUST**

**P.O. Box 15555,**  
**Nairobi, Kenya.**

**Tel:- (254) 02 891 996**

**Fax:- (254) 02 890 053**

**Website [www http://sheldrickwildlifetrust.org](http://sheldrickwildlifetrust.org)**

**NEWSLETTER FOR 2000**

Can it really be time again to wish all our friends and supporters another **very happy, prosperous, healthy and above all, peaceful New Year!** Astonishingly it is, and this we do, wholeheartedly, but where has the year gone! It seems just yesterday that we embarked on the new millennium with renewed hope for better times ahead. But, it was not to be, for the year 2000 has been a strange and particularly difficult year with a dearth of good news. Here in Kenya it was apparently the driest since 1911 accompanied by a great deal of human and animal suffering, daily extended power outages, acute water shortages, and incursions of hordes of emaciated and starving livestock into peoples' back yards, onto private land, across the borders of most National Parks and even right into the city centre in search of a blade of grass. The wild animals fared even worse. There was wholesale poaching of the "meat species" by snaring on a massive scale along all Park boundaries, and even in the heart of some; in fact everywhere where there is still something wild left on four legs. Although, like the cattle, they too were dying from drought related causes, yet the so-called "sustainable" legal culling went on unabated, seemingly unable to be halted irrespective of the natural toll. Now it is the survival of meat species that is also cause for concern, perhaps even more so than elephants and rhino. Thomsons gazelle are becoming scarce, and the zebra set to follow its Southern cousin the quagga for zebra meat is widely sold as dog food! Zebra, like others that congregate in large herds, need numbers to proliferate, and when a population falls below a certain level, they simply slowly die out.

There was massive destruction of the country's forests, the crucial catchment areas for Kenya's water resources with hardwoods turned into charcoal and leaving Mombasa harbour by ton loads on a daily basis to destinations such as Dubai and Saudi Arabia, importing the desert and exporting the forests! There was also in-house poaching in some of the National Parks, notably Lake Nakuru and Nairobi, but the good news is that *some* of the culprits were brought to book as were some of the corrupt Wildlife Service Veterinarians responsible for the rhino debacle that yielded our orphan, "Makosa". And meanwhile the political soap- opera took on even more bizarre and unpredictable dimensions, but was never dull, keeping the long suffering populace incredulous and guessing, yet ever hopeful for better times ahead.

Dr. Leakey and his team of technocrats, charged with the well nigh impossible task of sorting out the country's corruption and economic woes, commonly referred to as "The Dream Team" in the local Press, became labelled "The Dream on Team", repeatedly thwarted in their endeavours by mainly opposition politicians. However, when all is said and done, there can be no harm in dreaming, even if it does go on and on! And there **have** been some positive changes as anyone coming through the Airport can't help but notice. Some roads are better than before, some civil servants more polite and some trimming of the crippling bureaucracy of the Civil Service has been enacted, though not without a great deal of rhetoric, for welfare is absent in Kenya, and everyone simply has to subsist as best they can, by fair means or foul. Hence, crime has inevitably escalated, although at least not on such a violent scale as further South where robbers are merciless and usually add rape and death to their repertoire. At least here, there is little racial hatred, only desperados in need of a crumb, and it is not uncommon for a carjacker to offer his victim a taxi fare back home!

Insofar as the Wildlife Service is concerned, there is cause for some encouragement. The Smart Card ticketing system, though irritatingly frustrating due to lengthy delays at Entrance Gates, has apparently resulted in an increase in revenue and curbed corruption at the Park Entrance Gates, although it has also acted as a deterrent to many would-be visitors. Yet, I suppose more revenue from fewer visitors in our National Parks can only be a good thing from the animals' perspective. We now have a Director with no agenda other than wildlife conservation at heart, who apportions priority to those last bastions of wildlife - the National Parks, and who is not so naïve as to think that allowing the starving masses to share what has been set aside for wildlife will encourage them to coexist and conserve - rather the reverse. He is prepared to listen, and act where and if he can and although the Headquarters still harbours more bureaucrats than the country's entire population of Black Rhino, we are assured that this too will gradually change so that more revenue can be directed to the field. And so, we embark on another year - the **first** of the third Millennium also "Ever Hopeful" like the descendants of the friendly warthog of that name who habitually case the yard for the orphaned rhinos' left-overs. Others that have followed the lead of the warthogs during the past very dry year were the "friendly" buffalo, mainly some old retired bulls, who became so accustomed to all the usual activity that they spent days and nights almost at the back door, happy to accept those that "belonged" but fortunately less accommodating to those that didn't. We even gave them names - there was Helmut and Hellier, Hardnut and Horatio plus a few others known collectively as The Hangers- On and we were happy that they were able to benefit from the hay from the elephants' Night Stables which is laid out on our approach road each morning to settle the dust. (Daphne has a special interest in the Nairobi Park buffalo, since some of her orphans were the founders of the resident herd way back in the sixties.)

It was our old buffalo friends who put some would-be robbers to flight, who approached the premises under cover of darkness just before Christmas, armed with four pistols. Thanks to the buffalo, half the gang never made it, but the four that did lost their nerve and only managed to tie up our Watchmen and Clerk and frog-march them to the road, first suggesting that they don a jacket because it was cold! En route the howl of a hyaena quickened their pace releasing our employees at the main road

and meanwhile, we were blissfully unaware that anything was remiss until our merry men returned home with some armed K.W.S. Rangers in the early hours of the morning. We did, however, hear the buffalo stampede and wondered why, but as a result of this interlude, we have had to tighten security by installing panic buttons and an alarm on the roof.

So, for us, there have been some notable **firsts** to usher in this **first** millennium year - the **first** attempted armed robbery we have ever experienced and undoubtedly the **first** ever to be thwarted by wild buffalo. Then just after Christmas we received the **first** orphaned Elephant ever to have had the dubious privilege of being transported to safety by Matatu (the country's notorious private means of public transport whose driving antics defy road rules, leaving the most hardened motorists aghast and agape!). This little elephant, named Charles Sagana in honour of both his rescuer and his origin, is the **first** to be saved by a small-scale Kikuyu farmer, (understandably a breed not usually ele-friendly) who even paid a substantial hire charge to get the elephant transported to safety. Then, of his own volition, he travelled to Nairobi the next day to ensure that *his* little elephant was in good hands, thereby making the **first** page of the local Press!

And, amazingly, another surprising **first** was Daphne being awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery by Glasgow University, the **first** in the family ever to be so honoured. She and Jill travelled to Glasgow in June for the graduation ceremony and were not only in awe of all the pomp but also touched by the warmth of Scottish hospitality. It gave Daphne a nice feeling knowing that somewhere beyond in the great somewhere David and her parents, would also be incredibly proud.

As usual, before launching into news of our Orphans, we would like to express our most sincere thanks to all our donors, both large and small whose support has enabled us to make a difference, and particularly those who have had the *staying power* it takes in terms of money to help raise the long lived species such as elephants and rhinos. Without their ongoing dedication and commitment over 30 orphaned elephants that would otherwise have perished would not be alive and well today and this, after all, adds up to a *herd*. As usual very special thanks go to Care for the Wild who, through the Fostering Scheme, remain our lifeline and co-partners in the Orphans' Project, and who are always there for us when needed, to the Eden Wildlife Trust for their continued help and to Paul MacKenzie of Elehost, Canada, who organises our website brilliantly as a donation to the Trust. We are also deeply grateful to Barbara and Hans Rohring and all the Rettet die Elefanten German supporters and to Rob Faber and the Frieden van de Olifant Dutch Supporters; to the International Fund for Animal Welfare for another generous grant, and to the Kerrigan Waves Charitable Trust for their assistance. Similarly we are deeply grateful to Martin Forster of Cooper Motor Corporation for a demonstration tractor free of charge and to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Weld Dixon for their donation of hay that has not only kept our elephants comfortable and warm in their Night Stables, but has saved the lives of many other herbivores when times were tough, including Helmut and his ilk. Henk Beumer of BOA has revolutionised our First Aid cupboard by providing some wonder dispensers for antibiotics as well as a host of other veterinary drugs and equipment and Neo-Life Golden Products have kept our orphans supplied with Calcium and Magnesium supplements as well as excellent laundry and cleaning

agents for the Keepers' clothes and the elephants' bottles. The children of Bury Church of England High School have again been extremely innovative and active, this time raising funding for another borehole and Windmill at Aruba in Tsavo East National Park. This will ensure an alternative permanent source of water to the dam that becomes a silt-trap during the dry seasons. Their support of the Trust in financial terms over the years has been an example to all that *anyone and everyone* can make a difference and their resourcefulness has been incredible, as has the energy of Jackie Vet, their inspirational teacher. These children, encouraged by Mrs. Vet, entirely through their own initiative, have raised close on £70,000 for the Trust over the years, and will shortly be rewarded with a sponsored trip out to see the results of all their efforts. I have no doubt that they will be extremely proud to see the difference their input has made to the lives of so many wild creatures in a thirsty land.

No thanks at all, however, to the Environment Correspondent of the Sunday Telegraph, who in a fit of pique dealt us negative publicity, insinuating that Daphne was cruel to her elephants, lumping her in with Circus "Trainers" who brutally dominate their captives through the use of "Electric Goads". Those familiar with Daphne and her elephants found this suggestion more amusing than malicious, knowing full well that Daphne would be the last person on earth to contemplate ever being even vaguely cruel to any animal, let alone an elephant! So, for her, this was a less welcome **first**, and it was hurtful, though her late husband, David, had weathered his fair share of press malice in his time for making a stand against the culling of elephants in Tsavo way back in the sixties. Had he capitulated it would have created a very dangerous precedent and could have driven Kenya down the same sordid money-driven trail that has so tarnished Southern Africa's conservation ethics.

We were quite taken aback by such an unwarranted attack by someone who should have done his homework better. Daphne responded by posting an explanation on the Trust's website detailing exactly how, and why, it was necessary to discipline the orphaned elephants when small, for baby elephants, and particularly the little bulls, like human children, are naturally mischievous, and like to "show off" before their peers, sometimes challenging the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Failure to reprimand them when young if they playfully persist in knocking people down is ultimately to seal the death of that animal when it is grown for it will be labelled "dangerous" around humans, and as such, shot. More importantly, it is in the best interests of the elephants themselves that they are taught at least some of the norms of acceptable behaviour around things smaller and weaker prior to interacting with the wild herds, because if they bully calves smaller than themselves, they are not only reprimanded sharply by the wild Matriarchs in a manner much more severe but risk outright rejection. Since, our aim is to ultimately return all our orphans back where they rightfully belong, we **do** occasionally find it necessary to give a particularly naughty youngster a little "zing" with a small electric prod powered by two torch cells, but no-one other than Daphne or Jill ever metes out discipline to the elephants. Punishing an elephant must be done with care, understanding and sensitivity and be followed by a real show of reconciliation so that the elephant understands that it was punished for doing something wrong, and not because it is not loved. Elephants have long memories, and they harbour grudges, settling the score later often with fatal results. There is no more humane way of teaching a young elephant what it can and can't do around humans than the use of a small electric prod since it is not overtly aggressive or even painful, just an unpleasant sensation. We know exactly what it

feels like, because we tested the prod on ourselves long before using it on the elephants.

Those that follow The Keepers' Diary on our website, which chronicles on a daily basis the re-integration of our elephants back into the wild community, will have noticed that the orphans may only "**play with a calf of their size**" within the wild herds, otherwise they are soundly punished by the Matriarchs, and this is something that is emphasised time and time again.

The past year has been dominated by several major Projects, firstly, of course, the Orphans' Project, but also by a continuous de-snaring project along some of Tsavo's boundary, the provision of ongoing support for the Wildlife Service in terms of Security fuel to keep both the anti-poaching patrols moving and for de-silting natural waterholes, and a hydro-geological survey of the Park.

Fourteen Nursery infant elephants, plus two young zebra foals, Makosa the rhino and the two 3 year old rhino orphans, Magnum and Magonette add up to being **busy**, not to mention all the administration and another 7 older elephants growing up in Tsavo, but still dependent on their human family. The Trust has also supported some orphaned buffalo in Meru National Park by funding and provisioning them with milk.

Repeatedly de-snaring the Park boundaries has kept our modest team fully occupied, made possible by a very generous donation from Joe Cullman III to whom we are eternally grateful, and whose contribution has spared thousands of wild creatures immense suffering. Care for the Wild have shared with us the cost of school books and stationery for community schools bordering the boundaries covered, as a further incentive to persuade people to desist from indulging in this cruel practice. The team now has a mobile TV/Video for the showing of environmental films (translated into Kiswahili) in local schools.

The de-snaring team, always accompanied by two K.W.S. Rangers, covered the boundaries along the Mtito River, around waterholes just within what is known as the Park Triangle, along the railway line and around the Stations from Mtito Andei to Irima, from the Mtito Athi river junction to Gazi, along the Maktau Tsavo West boundary, the Ndi Tsavo boundary and the Mangelete area from Mtito Andei town. In total 4,070 snares were found during the past 16 months in what is just a fraction of Tsavo's long boundary, and this is an alarming figure that illustrates the magnitude of this problem. Many snares held dead and dying animals, from buffaloes and large antelopes to dikdiks, porcupines and ground hornbills. Those still alive were released, but for most it was too late. Their remains were removed and placed deep in the Park to deny the perpetrators their booty and rather benefit the wild predators. Encouraging, however, is the fact that each subsequent operation has uncovered fewer snares, proving that our presence is having an impact. More importantly, our humble team served to highlight the extent of the problem, so that de-snaring patrols by the Kenya Wildlife Service have become routine as and when possible. We also provided the wherewithal to enable the KWS Vets to fly to the Aberdares to remove a wire snare from the leg of a tiny elephant calf, so crippled that it was being carried cradled in the mother's trunk. Hopefully, this little calf was able to recover once the snare was off. Amazingly the wild cow seemed to understand the need for help,

because she waited calmly nearby until the snare was off, her sedated baby woken up, and she was able to collect it.

In tandem with the Tsavo boundary de-snaring we embarked on environmental awareness strategies, targeting the schools in the affected areas. These benefited from the provision of text books worth hundreds of thousands of shillings, as well as stationery and pencils, water tanks and a hand-cart, and sponsorship in secondary schools for promising students. The de-snaring team is headed by Wambua Kikwatha, a graduate from Moi University now employed by the Trust who is tribally suited to work in that particular region. He has been able to establish Wildlife Clubs aimed at spreading conservation awareness in five schools, and they in turn have planted trees, fed the birds, cleared litter from around their homes and schools and become more appreciative of the natural beauty of their heritage. Plans are underway to enable pupils to benefit from conducted field trips in the future.

Meanwhile, back at home, our two three quarter grown rhinos, Magnum and Magnette had to be turfed out of their Night Stockades in order to make room for the influx of orphaned elephants, something they did not at first appreciate. But, at three years old, and having done the rounds of the wild rhinos' dung-piles and urinals, we were confident that they had been "introduced" correctly through scent and as such would be accepted as rightfully "belonging" within the resident community of Nairobi National Park. However, each day they had to be escorted from the premises by their Keepers plus a wheelbarrow of food, invariably trailed by the Ever Hopeful warthogs bent on partaking of the pickings, something the rhinos graciously allow them to do. Then, once everyone was busy tucking in, the Keepers would quietly slip away.

To begin with this ritual took place several times a day, but gradually Magnum and Magnette gained in confidence, and were happy to spend longer periods of time out on their own, sometimes joining another sub-adult wild rhino with whom they are apparently already friendly. However, the beneficiaries from the wheelbarrow's contents were not only the pigs, for Helmut and the Hangers-on buffalo soon followed the example and whilst they were well behaved at first, they became a little pushy later on, one day tossing and wounding a warthog and beginning to threaten our two rhinos. After Magnum suffered a scratch on his cheek from a horn, we decided to feed the rhinos closer to home, but Helmet and his henchmen turned up there too, and this was a bit too close for comfort! The sixth birthday party of Daphne's little granddaughter, Zoe, was memorable - surely the **first** time wild buffalo have watched the antics of small revellers on a Jumping Castle from just a few paces away! Finally, by putting out sufficient piles to provide some choice, the takers could be dispersed, and this circumvented the risk of injury to both our rhinos and the pigs until the onset of the rains in November, when the buffalo moved off.

Other than at mealtimes, however, Helmut was very accommodating towards our rhinos, and one day we watched in amazement as he held his head low and allowed Magnum to sharpen his horn by rubbing it against his boss, surely another unusual **first!**

Makosa, meanwhile, born August 1999, has been growing apace, as only rhinos can, and by the end of the year was a hefty, precocious 14 month old, with one quaint

idiosyncrasy! He *has* to be put to bed each night by his favourite Keepers, one of whom has to sit outside the stockade next to his bed of hay within until he has settled down. Not before this ritual has been enacted will he condescend to go to bed, instead wailing interminably as a reminder! During the hours of daylight he is accompanied on his dung-pile and urinal rounds by the two zebra orphans, who share both the same Keepers and the same milk formula, since both rhinos and zebras are horse family. Once they are of age, the two zebra fillies are destined for Meru National Park, a beautiful little Park currently coming back to life, which suffered extensive poaching and neglect during years of mismanagement.

Whilst Magnum (Scud's son) was never openly aggressive towards Makosa, Magnette was otherwise for the first few months of the year so Makosa had to be kept well away from the two large rhinos for his own safety. But, as time went on, by doing the rounds of the dungpiles, they gradually became used to him, and were soon actually playing with him, seeking him out in the bush (where they also met up with their erstwhile Keepers). In play Magnum is always gentle and tolerant with Makosa, (and his horn is blunt), allowing the little rhino to butt him repeatedly under the chin, but Magnette has a shorter fuse (and a sharper horn) and is treated with respect. "Makosa" is another **first** by being officially adopted as the mascot of the British Army Training Team currently in Kenya, since a Black rhino was the emblem of the 11<sup>th</sup> Division of the Kings African Rifles during the Second World War.

Heartache always stalks success when rearing the orphaned elephants, for they are essentially fragile in infancy. However, the millennium year dealt us some particularly cruel blows. In March we lost three of our Nursery babies - initially "Serara", an orphan from Namunyek Group Ranch in Laikipia who had been in the Nursery for almost 8 months, and who, like Maluti who died the previous year, had always been one of the most robust of our orphans. One afternoon she suddenly showed signs of weakness and had difficulty walking back to the Night Stables. Just a few hours later, she was dead.

We were stunned, because this death had been so unexpected and so sudden. Serara had even been playing with the others in the mudbath at noon that same day. The autopsy revealed Klebsiella pneumonia which had destroyed the liver, spleen, and part of the lungs. Like Maluti, this calf had been sharing watering places with large numbers of domestic stock prior to being orphaned, and we can only speculate that this disease might be as a result of this. Very little is known about diseases that afflict elephants, other than that they are vulnerable to Tuberculosis and, like humans, stress related cardiac ailments, as well as a curious foot disease that ends in massive septicaemia and death.

Two more Nursery elephants also died during the month of March, tiny "Duse" from Meru National Park, who lacked the will to live, grieving so deeply for his elephant family that there was nothing we, or the other elephants, could do to comfort him. His death was followed by that of another Meru baby, who came in with Salmonella and pneumonia and lacked the reserves to rally. Eleven now remained in the Nursery, and in mid May we moved eight of the bigger calves down to Tsavo, leaving just three - Yatta, Kinna and Mukwaju, though not for long for another three were to soon replace them, namely Nasalot, a poaching victim from Turkanaland, Mulika

from Meru and in December Charles Sagana from Mount Kenya, and this made six in all.

The good news is, however, that we discovered the beneficial affects of Colloidal Silver, and using this combined with homeopathy were able to save Yatta, who developed a mysterious ailment that affected her joints, then her glands, and ended up as a huge abscess on the side of her face. We believe massive doses of silver concentrated the toxins into the mass that burst disgorging huge quantities of thick pus, but then immediately healed swiftly and cleanly. Colloidal Silver has since helped the latest Nursery intake of three, enabling both Nasalot and Mulika to be amongst the few that have escaped the need for a Vet, although little Charles Sagana has not been so fortunate having arrived with a dose of pneumonia.

Earlier, in January, a tragic poaching victim was rescued from Loisaba Ranch in the North who had 4 inches missing from the tip of her trunk, obviously severed by the poachers that killed her mother and found her presence a hindrance as they hacked out the tusks. Since this calf was about two years old, she was sedated and flown directly to Voi, to be woken up in the Elephant Stockades and await the arrival of the older orphans. It is essential to have the input of older elephants in order to tame a calf of this age, and not surprisingly, Loisaba was an extremely aggressive candidate on arrival, bent on killing every human in sight, something she would have been quite capable of doing at that age.

Emily, Aitong and Mweiga were the first to appear, immediately surrounding the newcomer. In no time she quietened down, careful to keep another elephant between herself and the Keepers at all times, but unfortunately, she incurred Emily's displeasure by shoving Mweiga around on arrival. Since Mweiga is Emily's "special" baby, this was not popular, so it has been Aitong who befriended Loisaba until she decided to attach herself to Malaika, whom she grew to love as she would her own mother. Until then, however, Loisaba was a loner, immersed in grief for her lost elephant family, choosing to be alone for long periods of time and prone to wandering off. She refused milk, probably because her trunk was so tender, so she has been the most difficult candidate we have ever had to tame. The injury to her trunk has also left her somewhat handicapped so she has had to be persuaded to go into the Stockades ahead of the others in the evening, so that she can feed quietly and in her own time, without competition from the others who are better equipped.

Moving the eight Nursery elephants in May, was an undertaking that involved a good deal of prior planning, not least the building of another large Night Stockade at the Voi end, partitioned midway to make two. Most opportunely, we were able to utilise the foundations that had been laid by David way back in the early seventies, for even then he had recognised the need to expand due to the upsurge in poaching. Funding for the new Stockade came as a final gift from Esther Wolf's Swiss Elefanten und Artenschutz Verein, which sadly is having to be closed down due to Esther's other commitments. Nevertheless, we are indeed sincerely grateful for this contribution and also for the many years of support we have enjoyed from her and her husband and their small band of Volunteers. The actual building was undertaken by our own Staff, at a fraction of the cost a Contractor would have charged, supervised by our Works' Foreman, Jill's other half, Jean Francois (commonly known as J.F.) and Isaac Maina, our young post graduate Overseer of the Orphans' Project down in Tsavo.

Natumi, Ilingwezi, Edie, Icholta (all females) and Laikipia, Salama, Lolokwe and Nyiro (bulls), were those to be moved, leaving us with Yatta, Kinna and Mukwaju. For four days prior to departure, the orphans were brought back early to practice going into three large trucks parked at the loading ramp behind Daphne's house, loaned for the move by Royal African Safaris, Sungelai Safaris and Ker & Downey Safaris with a fourth Canter from Kimbla to carry the milk, all the Keepers paraphernalia, and what was needed to establish another Canteen down in Voi.

Most of the elephants had no problem walking into the trucks with their Keepers after day one, but Natumi and Edie were extremely chary about venturing in. Eventually, taking her queue from the others, Natumi hesitatingly capitulated the evening before, but Edie was adamant that she was not going to repeat what was obviously still a bad memory from having travelled by vehicle to the nearest Airfield when orphaned in far away Namunyek. Nevertheless, at 6 a.m. on the morning of the move, five burly men positioned at her rear gave her the shove she needed to propel her in, and the back door of the truck was hurriedly closed! The cavalcade then left, the elephants and their Keepers travelling three to a truck with two in the third and just one brief stop en route to feed them and cool them down. As usual Roy Carr-Hartley supervised the actual loading and headed the convoy, driving the lead truck to set the pace, with a trail of hangers on in six other vehicles behind, all folk bent on either filming or monitoring this important event at the other end. After all, it is not often that eight baby elephants hand-reared from early infancy have arrived in a group to be greeted by the older established orphans already in Tsavo! By 12.30 p.m., they were at the Elephant Stockades in Voi in what would be their final home.

Sending the infant elephants to Tsavo is like parting with one's children to a Boarding School and inevitably a few tears are always shed accompanied by a down-turn in the spirits of those that remain. It is a mystery as to how the established Tsavo orphans seem to be able to predict the arrival of newcomers, something we had noticed when Eleanor was the orphans' Matriarch. This time it was Malaika who had been hanging around the Stockades for several days prior to the arrival of the Nairobi contingent, encouraging her two charges, Uaso and Lewa to go out into the bush with Uncle Edo, her best friend. This was out of character, and we couldn't help wondering how, and if, she knew ahead of time what was about to happen. Could it be telepathy? We can think of no other explanation. However, it was actually Emily and her group who were first on the scene, because Malaika had taken herself off up the hill behind the Stockades to feed for a while.

Initial introductions are always highly charged with a great deal of confusion and chaos. Almost all the youngsters, except Laikipia and Edie, were orphaned too young to remember their elephant families clearly, and were understandably daunted by the attentions of the larger strangers and even a bit scared. Aitong, who looks upon herself as Emily's "Nannie", was beside herself with excitement, immediately homing in on the smallest calf, little "Nyiro", so eager to have him all to herself that she became a little "pushy". He, on the other hand was bent on just one thing and that was escape and in the ensuing melee he found himself tangled in the electric wire that segregates the smaller orphans from the larger Big Boys and their wild friends at meal times. Loud bellows of distress added to the confusion until the Keepers were able to banish Aitong and allow Emily a chance to take charge. Very calmly she

greeted and comforted all the new arrivals and within just a short time order was restored. Imenti surprised us all by being exceedingly tolerant, lying down and allowing the newcomers to clamber all over him, so that they could inspect him closely. What caused most interest seemed to be his ivory and face!

A little later Malaika came down from the hill, and gently introduced herself to the group, thereafter standing vigil all night just outside their Stockade, there in the morning waiting to accompany them and their Keepers on their first sortie out into the bush. There she also lay down for them, to make herself more approachable, encouraging them to climb all over her and in this way become more familiar. By the end of the day, the new arrivals could not be happier.

In the meantime, who should turn up but the Big Boys, 12 year old Dika, his friend, 11 year old Ndume and Malaika's best friend, Edo, Dika and Ndume having been absent with the wild herds for many moons. Wrapped around Dika's one back leg was a wire snare, and he also had a suppurating abscess on the side of his face. Whilst the snare was being removed by the Keepers, (no small task being high tensile wire) he stood stock still, without flinching or even moving his tail lest it hinder the Keeper working on his leg. He then allowed them to syringe out the wound on his face, though they could have done with a step-ladder to reach it!

Can anyone still doubt the intelligence of an elephant? This Bull who had been living as a wild elephant, had such implicit trust in his former human family, that he returned for help, and allowed them to remove a snare which was beginning to dig into his flesh, irrespective of the pain, and with a host of strange onlookers just a pace or two away! Another example followed when Lissa brought back her wild-born calf which was trailing a long wire from a back leg. Fortunately, the noose had not yet penetrated the flesh, but restraining this calf posed a problem for the Keepers, because "Lara" is virtually wild, never having been handled by humans. The Keepers Diary often records the fact that "Lissa's kid" gives the Keepers a hard time whenever they happen to meet up either at the Stockades or out in the bush!

Mpenzi, who is Lissa's Nannie and who is very protective of the baby, first had to be confined, so she and Lissa were enticed into the Stockade with a hand-out of Copra, whereupon the door was hastily closed to isolate the calf. Bellowing loudly, it rushed in amongst the other orphans for protection. The Big Boys were included in the group, and, amazingly, the orphans all seemed to understand exactly what was needed. By pinioning the calf in their midst, they prevented it from escaping, and this enabled the Keepers to remove the snare by crawling underneath the larger elephants' bellies. The "kid", much chastened, was then reunited with her mother and nannie, and has a renewed respect for the Keepers when they now meet up out in the bush!

The Nursery eight, usually accompanied by Malaika, settled in like veterans, although Emily and Aitong joined them on a regular basis, diligent always about bringing Mweiga along to join them for her share of the 10 a.m. milk feed out in the bush and meeting up again with them at the noon mudbath, often joined by the Big Boys. Aitong's love of Nyiro remains undiminished to this day. She seeks him out at every opportunity, walking with her trunk laid gently over his back, rushing to his rescue whenever he has difficulty getting up in the mudbath, and watching carefully over

him when he interacts with the wild herds, which he does often, waltzing up to the wild Matriarchs and standing beside them with a dreamy look on his face, no doubt yearning for a mother larger than Aitong! Gradually little Loisaba began to come to life again, and she and Malaika became inseparable. We were very glad of this attachment, envisaging that Loisaba would make the perfect Nannie for Malaika's baby when it arrived. But, it was not to be, for the cruellest blow of all was to come - the death of "Malaika" and her calf on the 4<sup>th</sup> October, after 9 gruelling days of labour.

Malaika was 11 years old, and the birth of her first calf was an event anticipated by us all with mounting excitement and joy, for she was the **first** of our hand-reared Nursery elephants to become pregnant by a wild bull - (a friend of Dika). Whereas orphans Lissa and Mary have both had calves, they were never Nursery inmates, having been orphaned old enough to be given directly into Eleanor's care in Tsavo. Malaika was raised from the tender age of just three months when she and Ndume came in from the same Imenti herd of elephants, battered and beaten by irate tribesmen who killed a third calf before their very eyes when the herd found itself in croplands abutting the Imenti Forest near Meru.

Her death and that of her unborn calf stands as perhaps the most devastating tragedy that has ever befallen our Orphans' Project, and it left us all totally undone. Strangely enough, long before Malaika came to term, Daphne had an uncomfortable premonition that things would go awry, and for no apparent reason - just a "hunch". Malaika went into labour on the 27<sup>th</sup> September and her suffering for the next 9 days was heartrending to have to witness. The Vets were reluctant to intervene, having found out that a stillborn calf can take 10 days to expel, and in any case, dubious as to whether there would be anything at all they could possibly do to extract it under field conditions, bearing in mind that an elephant baby can weigh 230 lbs, and no human arm can even reach far enough in. (We had been advised by Veterinarians in Rotterdam Zoo, who had experience of birthing difficulties in elephants, that a Caesarean section was not an option, and that no elephant had ever survived this procedure). On the 4<sup>th</sup> October, after nine days had past, and Malaika's agony was such that she stopped feeding and appeared to have given up the ghost, our team of Vets went down to see what could be done. They did their best, but the calf was obviously wedged tightly in the pelvic girdle, lying in a breached position horizontal to the birth canal, with its head twisted back on its body, the neck obviously broken. In the end, there was nothing left to do, but end Malaika's suffering, and at 4.30 p.m. on the 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2000, her life was ended.

Malaika was mated when she was only 9 years old, and although some elephants do give birth aged ten, the average age for a first calf is 14. She was also small for her age, and certainly in no position to deliver what turned out to be an unusually large bull calf that weighed 293 lbs. (133 kilos) as opposed to the normal 210 - 230 lbs. and also measured 38 inches from shoulder to foot as opposed to the usual 30 - 36 inches. Even the tow rope of a Landcruiser broke twice in the attempt to extract it after death, which simply illustrates that there was nothing that could have been done to help in this case.

All who knew and loved Malaika, including all her foster parents, shared our grief, but the Keepers were especially affected for they had been her "family" since she was

just 3 months old and were with her throughout her ordeal. It can be taken as an accolade that when her time came to give birth, she chose to return to be with them rather than her wild friends, testimony to the fact that she loved and trusted them as she would an elephant family had she had one. Normally elephants are secretive when they give birth and choose a secluded spot away from the herd surrounded only by their closest blood relatives. In Malaika's case, her closest relatives were her human friends, although the other orphans kept in touch, rumbling a daily greeting as they passed each morning beyond the perimeter fence. (Malaika had been taken inside the fence where she would not be disturbed by the Big Boys or other strange elephants.) Now, we can only give thanks that she was granted 11 happy years that would otherwise never have been, and that we were able to help end her suffering when the time came. Had she been a wild elephant, the end would have been the same, but far more protracted.

Because the orphaned elephants are with us so long, and the care given them has to be so intense, and also because they are so very human in terms of emotion, tragedies that befall them tend to take on elephantine proportions. But, over the years we have learnt that one must have the strength and resolve to be able to turn a page and focus on the living, because the dead live on in their own special way enriching our lives as treasured memories that never die. Also each set-back brings with it a lesson and the rearing and rehabilitation of the orphaned elephants has been a very long learning curve that has never been a bed of roses. Now we must try and ensure that our other young females do not conceive until they are a little older and we will therefore be investigating a safe method of birth control for them that will delay pregnancy for a year or two. Because they do not have a natural family hierarchy, they become Leaders ahead of their time, and we feel this could be the unnatural event that makes them cycle earlier than perhaps they should.

We buried Malaika and her baby in an unmarked grave within the Compound fence and as a memorial to her, we are building a small office and room near the Elephant Stockades for the Orphans' Overseer, Isaac Maina, which will be known as the Malaika Memorial House. We will also invest in a Television and Video as a reward for her Keepers.

It remains to thank all her foster parents who transferred their fostering support to her "favourite" calf, Lewa, and it is fitting that he now travels with her best friend, Edo, who has taken both him and Uaso under his wing, just as Malaika would have wanted. Little Loisaba, however, was the orphan for whom we felt most sadness, for in her short life she had lost a second "mother". That night she slipped quietly away from the rest, unnoticed by the Keepers, and went in search of Malaika. Everyone was frantic, fearing that she might become a meal for a lion, and were immensely relieved when she returned to join the other orphans the next day, obviously having satisfied herself that her second mother had gone the way of her first. Aitong provided the comfort she needed as she plunged yet again into a period of grieving, but the newcomers provided a healthy distraction. In the fullness of time, Loisaba will grow up to become another surrogate Matriarch following in Malaika's footsteps and because she has been through so much herself in her short life, I have no doubt that in this task she will prove exemplary.

Thus, down in Tsavo, life goes on, with our orphans now falling into three separate categories. Emily, as the next oldest cow, is the acknowledged new Matriarch, with Mweiga as her special favourite and Aitong as an active Nannie. Loisaba tags along, but is beginning to become attached to Natumi who heads the Nursery eight when the older elephants are absent. Since these eight calves are still in their milk dependent weaning year, they cannot travel as far afield as the others. The Big Boys are free spirits, independent of the Keepers, but they keep in touch, especially when times are tough - that is, all except independent Ajok, who is obviously so comfortable with his wild friends that he has not felt the need to return. Taru put in a brief appearance in March, but has not been seen since, and more recently Chuma has reappeared after a long absence. Imenti remains reluctant to become a Big Boy due to his very strong attachment to Emily who was his Nursery companion and with whom he spends time playing almost every day. No longer does he sleep with the others in the Stockade, usually attaching himself to Edo, Lewa and Uaso during the night, but meeting up again with the others at the noon mudbath and remaining to accompany them back to the Stockades again in the evening. He enjoys the role of "protector", chasing away intruders such as dikdik, warthog, waterbuck and even the buffalo they come across during the course of their travels, usually reinforced by Edie and Natumi, with Salama and Lolokwe putting on a brave display but ensuring that they are well behind the front-runners!

We are pleased with the progress of our Nursery Eight who often meet up with the wild elephants and even interact with them, learning how to always play "with a calf of their size". Salama and Lolokwe are very competitive, spending hours sparring together. Second to Natumi in terms of the hierarchy are Ilingwezi and Edie, who jointly seem to share that privileged position.

A very important aspect of rearing orphaned elephants is to ensure that they are never corrupted by being offered "junk food" by hand, something about which we have been extremely diligent at all times. Our orphaned elephants are **never** fed tidbits by hand - only natural vegetation and copra supplement during the dry seasons. This now brings us to Olmeg - our first Nursery elephant and now a teenage bull of 14 who is not only the **first** elephant ever to be hand-reared from just weeks old and subsequently reintegrated back into the wild community, but also the **first** of our hand-reared orphans to become a problem, or, more accurately, the problem rests with the self seeking irresponsible Operators of a tented camp just outside the boundary of the Park near Sala Gate. It is they who have corrupted him, encouraging him to hang around the Camp as a tourist attraction by feeding him junk food when it suits them, and catapulting him in the face with stones when it doesn't. This camp is owned by someone said to be "politically privileged" and as such untouchable, so he cares not a whit about threats of retribution.

We are therefore at a loss to know what to do about Olmeg. Do we move him, which would merely relocate "the problem" elsewhere and inflict it on others undeserving: do we destroy him for fear that he will corrupt others, or worse still, lose patience and kill someone; or do we try and punish those responsible for flouting the rules of good conservation, either withdrawing their operating licences or else insisting that they and their garbage are confined behind an electrically fenced barrier to restrict further damage. We and the Wildlife authorities favour the last two options, but time will tell whether they can ever come about despite being taken to a very high level. And so,

we very much fear that Olmeg could be the next looming catastrophe unless he can be persuaded to move off and forego the junk food for which he has now acquired such a liking.

It was in April 1997, amidst a great deal of political manoeuvring, that the Ivory Ban on the sale of all ivory, which had held for the past 8 years and brought the poaching of elephants under control, was overturned, thereby allowing Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana a one-off sale of their ivory stockpiles to Japan. This acrimonious decision was as a result of a shameful display of strong-arm tactics, and deviousness, in which the Animal Welfare organisations there to provide some semblance of "conscience" among politically driven delegates were denied even a voice. The 1997 CITES Conference must be classified as a mega conservation blunder that cost the elephants dearly and set the stage for the escalation of poaching witnessed during the next two years. However, the South African population of elephants remained on the fully protected Appendix I listing and that, at least, was something.

In April 2000 the Parties to the CITES Convention met again, this time in Nairobi, amidst a great deal of razzmatazz and costly receptions, but immersed in conflicting notions and a great deal of confusion as to whether, in fact, the new toll of elephants was as a result of poaching for ivory or some other mysterious cause - even, in fact, whether there was a poaching problem at all! Of course, the much flaunted MIKE Monitoring System aimed at determining whether the easing of the ban in 1997 would have an adverse impact, never even got off the ground!

In Nairobi, from the start, the CITES Secretariat were brazenly biased in favour of the Southern African pro-trade lobby and Kenya and India found themselves alone in admitting a poaching problem and in pressing for the Appendix I listing to be reinstated. Other range States, **known** to have suffered poaching pressure, chose to conceal the truth, driven by vested interests in the illegal trade, and yet others were easily "bought" by the wealthy Southern Africans or so intimidated that they kept silent. It was suggested that Kenya and India's problems must be as a result of flawed management!

In the end, after days of deadlock, a compromise emerged - **a two year moratorium on the sale of all ivory in exchange for the down-listing to Appendix II of the South African population, thereby sanctioning the commercial trade in all elephant by-products other than ivory, and that included living elephants!**

This was very much the thin end of the wedge for the elephants, especially as yet again, the thorny question of what is, and what is not, a suitable destination was conveniently overlooked. Since countries totally lacking in Animal Welfare ethics, such as China and the Far East, are the main recipients of live babies, (illustrated by the Tuli debacle), this sickened us, and we were sickened even further when within just a month or two **Zimbabwe** deliberately flouted the Convention's ruling and irrespective went ahead with the sale of a large quantity of ivory to China!

Once again, ivory was on the move, with over a ton intercepted in Egypt and other illegal hauls uncovered in Japan. Nor is there any doubt that in two years' time, the pressure to open the Ivory trade will be even greater, so the Millennium CITES resulted in a hopeless no-win situation for the elephants plus being an extravagant

waste of resources that could have been better used, and, in a nutshell, a complete waste of time! It would appear that only when the Southern African elephants are faced with extinction will the International community respond by placing all elephant products off limits forever, since wealthy Southern Africa has more to offer the West in terms of trade than the impoverished other African range States. That day may not be far off, however, because whereas previously ivory was traded for guns, now ivory as a bartering commodity has been replaced by diamonds to arm Africa's conflicts, no doubt because elephants in Central Africa are becoming a rare commodity. They are definitely heading that way in Zimbabwe as well where so-called "war veterans" have embarked on a killing spree that has denuded the Save Valley Conservancy, among other places, of all forms of wildlife and especially, the elephants.

We and the orphans did what we could to sensitise the conscience of the CITES delegates. The little elephants were on parade all day and every day during the Conference, as was Makosa the rhino and his zebra friends (who became bored with the whole proceedings and showed displeasure by treating the delegates to an unscheduled dose of adrenalin); Jill walked a storm escorting the delegates out into the bush to see the orphans and Daphne fielded them back at the house to fill their ears and hand out literature, lobbying hard during the entire two weeks of the Conference. (Of course, those that came were mainly the converted anyway, the pro-trade faction being conspicuous by their absence - not surprisingly, because to them elephants are just a commodity anyway). The Youth for Conservation post graduate Wildlife Club and the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya supported by the masses also did what they could in terms of parades and demonstrations, but it was to no avail, and in the end it was clear that most of the delegates had made up their minds long before they even came to Nairobi.

Nor is it surprising that the Tuli saga has yet to be resolved and the culprits brought to justice for the cruelty inflicted on the abducted Tuli calves, despite the fact that Riccardo Ghiazza also failed to declare a drugs conviction in Italy when applying for South African citizenship. The dates for the cruelty charges against him and his henchmen are constantly shifted forward and now so much time has past that some key people on the prosecution side have retired! The captives in Dresden and Erfurt Zoos suffer a living hell and those in Basle look frustrated, bored and far from happy. Meanwhile five of the Sandhurst nine which had been spirited away far from the public gaze, were brought back by another Tuli culprit, Craig Saunders, to replace the five he claims to have purchased before the Court case. These were set free (allegedly in exchange for a large sum of money) and the replacements are undergoing training for elephant back riding, albeit a little less brutal. The "If it Pays, it Stays" doctrine has been taken a step further in South Africa's Kruger National Park, where a hunter can now shoot a prize bull elephant once it steps across a certain line, against a payment of £20,000. An elderly rhino known as "Tom", residing in a small preserve in the Eastern Cape, who in his time has brought pleasure to millions of viewers, almost went the same way, were it not for a reprieve due to public outcry. At least it is some consolation that the conscience of the South African public is disturbed by such blatant abuse driven by money, but it would seem that many Animal Welfare organisations in South Africa can find nothing wrong in all this, which, to us, is inconceivable!

No newsletter would be complete before again expressing the enormous debt of gratitude due to Wyeth who have provided all the milk for our elephants over the past 14 years, and especially Don Barrett and Sharon John who have had the "staying power" it takes to rear a *herd*. We are also eternally grateful to Dave Jarvis of the Royal Airforce and his henchmen at Bryes Norton and Lyneham for their ongoing assistance, not forgetting British Airways who have helped out when the R.A.F. were committed elsewhere. We are deeply grateful too to the personnel of Batlisk who bring the milk to our front door for us, thereby sparing us the ordeal of trying to access their stronghold at Kahawa. To all these kind folk, our most heartfelt and grateful thanks.

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL OUR DONORS**

**Another very worrying first during the year 2000 was the fraudulent interception of several cheques sent to us through the Post, which were thereafter altered to reflect an inflated amount, and ended up either in Kampala, Dubai, Hong Kong or Japan. Sometimes the signature on the original cheque was so perfectly forged that written instructions followed to the donor's Bank to transfer further amounts. We are told that this scam is on an International level and that it is being investigated, but we would like to take this opportunity to caution our donors about sending donations through the Post and if they do, the cheque should be sent via a Courier such as Federal Express, UPS or TNT. Alternatively, small amounts can be sent to us via Care for The Wild, 1 Ashfolds, Horsham Road, Ruspur, West Sussex RH12 4QX, specifying that the donation is for The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust orphans.**

**Larger amounts should be sent by telegraphic transfer to The Commercial Bank of Africa Ltd., SWIFT BIC CBAFKENX for The David Sheldrick Donation Account No. 0151 270 506 using MT 100. Each currency apparently has a different corresponding transit Bank (which makes it sound somewhat complex) but US\$ should be directed through The American Express Bank, Account No. 731141 SWIFT AEIBUS33. Sterling pounds should be directed through The HSBC Bank Plc. Account No. 38142142 SWIFT MIDLGB22.**

**Please be sure to remind the transit Banks that the transfer is for the credit of The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, Account No. 0151 270 506 with The Commercial Bank of Africa Ltd., Mama Ngina Street, Nairobi, Kenya.**

**A banker's cheque is less expensive, and although it, too, can go astray, at least the donor's Bank Account cannot be tapped. We are in the process of organising Internet Secure via the Internet for those wishing to use their Credit Cards safely through this medium, details of which will appear on our website (see above).**

**Finally, some good news to end this Newsletter leaving us even more "Ever Hopeful" of better times ahead - it is *raining*, and *raining hard!***

-----