

DAVID SHELDRIK WILDLIFE TRUST



2003 *newsletter*

Overview of 2003

2003 is drawing to a close, and it's time again to wish all our Supporters good health, good luck, and everything of the very best for 2004 and, with the benefit of hindsight, to look back on the events of 2003. For the Trust, but for the tearful departure to France of Daphne's daughter, Jill, and the two little grand-daughters, the year has been a productive and satisfying one for the Trust in terms of conservation assistance. As for the departure of Jill and family, comfort is drawn from knowing that a person can be taken from Africa, but Africa can never be taken from a person that is African born.

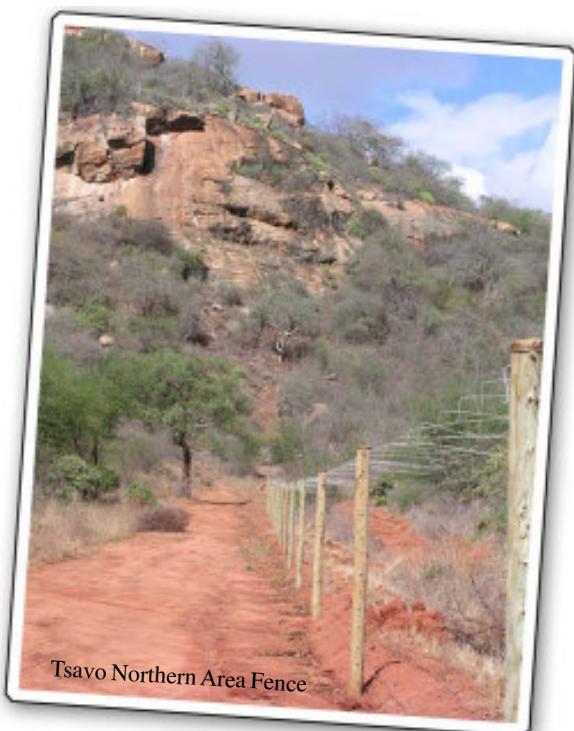
Generally, for all people in Kenya, the year has been a roller-coaster - a mixed bag of positives and minuses that began on a high note of euphoria but which fell short of expectations as the year progressed. Probably those expectations were unrealistic anyway, for after peaceful December 2002 elections and the advent of the new NARC (National Rainbow Coalition) Government, with a new President to replace 40 years of authoritarian rule under the previous incumbent, everyone expected a U-turn in the country's fortunes overnight. Roads would be repaired, education and medical offered free, corruption eradicated, the logging of forests halted, illegally grabbed land returned to rightful owners, water consumption regulated, international aid resumed, and the deteriorating security situation within the country immediately addressed and

reversed. However, disillusionment over the security issue came early for us, and, indeed, for most ordinary people. Having already weathered two armed robberies on our premises, (the last one persuading Daphne's French son-in-law to take her daughter and grand-daughters back to the safety of France), the Trust suffered a third in March, when, the intruders narrowly missed bumping into our 6 year old rhino, Magnum. Then we suffered another in October when even our feisty 4 year old rhino "Makosa", who has caught up with Magnum in size, lost his nerve and took to his heels instead of giving the robbers a good run for their money! Yet again, we missed the presence of the old warrior buffaloes who sent the first set of robbers packing in the year 2000!

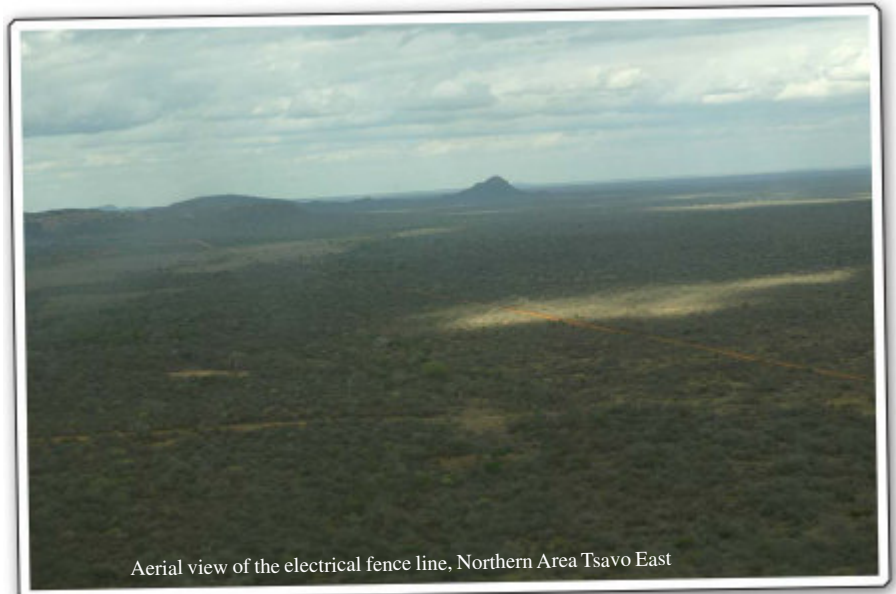
Security aside, initially there were positive indications reported in the Press to fuel hope within the wildlife sector, but as the year progressed dismay began to take hold. Travel Advisories and flight restrictions to Kenya were imposed by the British and American Governments in the wake of last year's terrorist bombing of a Mombasa hotel, which torpedoed many small tour operators and tourist facilities. An instant downturn in Gate revenues in all the National Parks hamstrung an already cash strapped Wildlife Service and impacted negatively on field morale. The field side of the Kenya Wildlife Service needed its friends as never before, and being sufficiently flexible to be able to make a difference by stepping in to meet unforeseen contingencies without endless bureaucratic procrastination, the Trust has again proved its worth. This has always been our strength, but unfortunately we are too small to be able to spread our wings further than the Tsavo National Park, and, to a lesser degree, Nairobi National Park.

In Tsavo East we built water catchment tanks in the North, drilled another borehole and installed a Windmill in the South, repaired existing others in both the North and the South, provided Container Outposts to serve as mobile basis for field Rangers, sorted out the salinity of the existing Ithumba borehole, upgraded all our own De-Snaring team vehicles and repaired ageing others from Tsavo's official pool, some having done over 600,000 kms! But, probably The Trust's most significant and costly contribution to Tsavo East has been the regular supply of security fuel, some 48,000 litres donated in 6,000 litre batches, a donation that has enabled the anti-poaching units to remain mobile and ensure insofar as possible the safety of the Park's wild inmates. Help to Nairobi National Park has included a new set of tyres for their Water Bowser, the repair and maintenance of the Borehole pump, and the provision of a Stand-By Generator to keep the water flowing when the Power is low, which, unhappily, is all too often. With security an issue, at considerable expense, we have also upgraded the Park's perimeter electric fenceline from the Banda Gate to Ongata Rongai, a stretch that was constantly being breached by intruders. Thereafter we installed an alarm system to alert the Rangers to any interference of the line, and established a radio link between them and us to provide early warning of any breach.

Over and above all this we have operated four very active De-Snaring teams along what boundaries of Tsavo we can cover, in an attempt to stem the slaughter of animals for the "bushmeat trade". With hi-tech tracking devices in all our De-Snaring vehicles we are able to closely



Tsavo Northern Area Fence



Aerial view of the electrical fence line, Northern Area Tsavo East



One of two Gate Houses built along the fence line, Northern Area Tsavo East

monitor every movement of our teams from our Nairobi Computers. But, by far the most challenging project undertaken by the Trust this year has been the installation of a 130 km electric fence along Tsavo's very sensitive Northern Area boundary to protect the Northern elephants from the people and the people and their crops from the elephants. We were very glad of some financial support for this project from Care for the Wild International.

All this has been in addition to supporting 33 orphaned elephants in the process of rehabilitation down in Tsavo, as well as housing (and feeding) their 58 human Keepers. We retrieved 12 other needy orphaned elephants, one of whom was able to be returned to his mother and elephant herd having been pulled clear of the mud of Lake Jipe in Tsavo West but we lost another three that were too far gone to be able to save. One was a tiny female orphan from Marsabit who had been seriously mauled by hyaenas and died on the plane prior to arrival, and two more that succumbed to advanced pneumonia soon after arrival, one rescued at Satao Camp in Tsavo East and another from Sosian Ranch in Laikipia. Currently we are left with 8 infant elephants in the Nairobi Nursery, all of whom are thriving, as well as a 2 month old orphaned rhino calf whose ageing mother died of malnutrition in Nairobi Park, her teeth too worn to keep her nourished during the long dry spell. Sadly, we lost another little 6 month old orphaned rhino from the Aberdares, who succumbed to fatal internal injuries probably inflicted by attempting to attach himself to another adult rhino following the death of his mother.

Establishing the infrastructure for a second Elephant Rehabilitation Centre in the Northern Area of Tsavo has been another challenge that involved plugging the lower very saline aquifer of an existing borehole and providing a submersible pump to bring it into production, erecting rainwater holding tanks to trap run-off from Ithumba hill, electrically ring-fencing the Northern Area Headquarters and establishing Night Holding Stockades to house the elephants that will be established there in due course. In addition we have had to purchase a Water Bowser and Tractor for the Northern Orphans' Project, and repair the Fordson Towing Tractor

which the Trust handed over to the Senior Warden in order to undertake essential road work.

The Trust's direct assistance to K.W.S. this year, excluding expenditure realised on the Orphans', Desnaring and Veterinary Projects, has outstripped that of all other years, KSH 15,360,000/-. Thus, the Trust ends the year on a note of quiet satisfaction, knowing that we *have* made a difference by being able to respond promptly in order to bridge the shortfall in essential funding in Tsavo East National Park, at least. However, we are always mindful of the fact that none of this would have been possible without the support of many people and organisations worldwide to whom we owe a huge debt of deep gratitude.

Particularly, we would like to thank our **Webmaster and very hard-working Guardian Angel, Paul McKenzie of Elehost, Canada**, who devotes endless hours to our website every month as his donation to the cause, and to all the elephant foster-parents who have signed up on line through the Trust's website or done so at the daily elephant mudbath, to help us raise the orphans. We are indebted also to **Stephen Smith**, our friendly Lawyer in the United States, who, likewise, has handled at no cost many small legacies kindly left to the Trust by deceased supporters which we would probably never have been able to retrieve without his help. In addition, he is handling the legal issues involved in order to enable the Trust to offer tax relief on sizeable donations. Similarly we are very indebted to **Mr. James Clark** who is helping us secure similar UK tax benefits for donors and to **Arnie Mitchell of Veritas** who is always there for us to give sound financial advice. The input to the Trust of all these kind people has, and will, greatly enhance the Trust's fundraising capacity which, in turn, will enable us to be even more effective in meeting further conservation goals. As always, we continue to be extremely indebted to **Sharon John and Wyeth Laboratories of Maidenhead, Taplow in England** who always respond so willingly and positively to repeated pleas for the special reworked milk formula for our milk dependent orphans, not forgetting **Mr. Mike Seton of East African Air Charters** who airlifts at cost the orphaned elephants from all corners

of the country so efficiently. Most of the 52 elephant orphans we have been able to save to date owe their life to the efficiency of Mike Seton, and the generosity and help of Wyeth Laboratories in England.

The following organisations have regularly given us substantial help in the form of Grants in support of The Orphans' Project, without which we could not have been able to cope and we are very grateful to them as well. These are:-

The Moore Foundation, USA.
Care for the Wild International,
and Care for the Wild, Germany
Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas e.V.,
Germany
Vrienden van de Olifant in the
Netherlands
The International Fund for Animal
Welfare
Vier Pfoten of Austria
The Eden Wildlife Trust, Nairobi
Elefriends, Australia.
The Amara Foundation, U.S.A.
Wildize Foundation, U.S.A.
Kerrigan Waves Trust, UK.
Globio, U.S.A.

Special assistance needs special recognition, and most sincere and grateful thanks are due to our hard-working Scottish Volunteer in the form of **Cath Mills** who fields our posted donations, writes endless thank you letters, and ensures that cheques are regularly couriered directly to us rather than being subjected to fraud through the post. Thanks are also extended also to **Gerry Ellis** who highlighted the Orphans Project so beautifully in the book "Wild Orphans". We owe thanks to **Mr. Dickie Evans, Mrs. Jackie Ayton and MK Airlines** for their help in transporting a consignment of elephant milk from England to Kenya, and no thanks to the new NARC Government's Treasury officials who refuse to waive the duty and tax on consignments of milk for Kenya's elephant orphans, the excuse being that they are not refugees! We think they are! We thank **Flt. Lt. Philip Arnold** for his assistance and crew members of **British Airways** who purchase and carry in their luggage tins of SMA Goldcap as a donation for the infant elephants, as well as donating used blankets and umbrellas. The Mustang group of **The Giants Organisation in Kenya**, have also given us blankets, as well as buckets and umbrellas and a young elephant enthusiast, **Nisha Joshi** organized a fashion event at the Tin Tin Restaurant in downtown Nairobi, proceeds of which were shared between the Trust and the KSPCA. This was, indeed, a very stout effort that

was greatly appreciated. We have enjoyed donations from Courier Firms such as **DHL Kenya** and from **UPS** who very kindly assisted us in the posting of last year's Newsletters to the various overseas destinations, thereby saving us both money and a headache!

We are exceptionally grateful, yet again, to **Jackie and Ray Vet and the Children of Bury Church of England High School, in Lancashire** who again have worked so hard and so tirelessly to raise the funding to make yet another Borehole and Windmill at Dida Harea in Tsavo East possible; to **Nick Clabburn and the pupils of St. Thomas' School, U.K.** for their innovative fundraising efforts in support of the orphaned elephants, likewise **Mr. Louis Spencer of Dhahrain, Saudi Arabia** and his friends and pupils for their ongoing fundraisers and to many other overseas pupils of several other schools who, through their own initiative, have raised money in support of the elephant orphans. It is simply not possible to mention all who have helped us achieve our conservation goals this year, but to each and every one, even if not mentioned by name, we say a heartfelt and grateful **thanks**. Particularly, however, we must mention **Sinyati Ltd.**, who have upgraded the Nairobi National Park fence for us at cost and undertaken the work on the Northern Area boundary fence so professionally and so well. **Mr. Ito and Nairobi Toyota** and **Mr. Marcio Kravos of Ndovu Holdings** have allowed the Trust substantial discounts for the resurrection of our hard working De-Snaring vehicles as well as those we have repaired for K.W.S. **Mr. and Mrs. Marti Moore of the Moore Foundation** have always given us assistance freely for both the Northern Area of Tsavo, and also our Community and De-Snaring initiatives, as well as the Orphans' Project, and we thank them also for the introduction to our friendly Lawyer, Stephen Smith. We also thank **Mr. Simon Everett** who very kindly gave the Trust a substantial discount on the hire of his Helicopter to drive 300 elephants who were at risk in lands occupied by a hostile community back into the safety of the Park. This particular community near the town of Mackinnon Road were reported in the Press to have "feasted" on flesh cut from a living elephant stuck in a trench near a school. Such reports, gleefully alluding to unfortunate elephant victims of the community as "beasts" that were feasted upon, is, to say

the least, unfortunate and not helpful, hopefully a misrepresentation of the new Government's leanings towards wildlife.

An extremely vital, and sometimes extremely sad and demoralizing aspect of the Trust's work, is the **De-Snaring Project**, undertaken by our four very dedicated Post Graduate De-Snaring Team Leaders. Their work has alleviated suffering on a massive scale through releasing numerous helpless animals trapped in wire nooses. By continually lifting the snares and freeing what animals are found still alive, their contribution has been immense. The escalating bush-meat crisis is a growing scourge which threatens the very existence of Kenya's wildlife heritage. It is indiscriminate and indescribably cruel and is something that the new Government must address through the Courts, for sentences meted out to offenders are usually hopelessly inadequate and no deterrent whatsoever.

We are deeply grateful to the following organisations and people who have helped us undertake this important aspect of our conservation work, especially:—

Vier Pfoten of Austria who have provided the funding for the Trust to operate a fulltime mobile Veterinary presence in Tsavo, complete with a custom adapted new Landcruiser equipped with a darting hatch, GPS, mobile phone, radio communication, dart-guns, drugs, refrigeration and camping facilities and computers to enable him to be fully functional at a field level, his brief is to work in conjunction with our four De-Snaring teams, and also be on call for emergencies in the Shimba Hills, Amboseli, the neighbouring ranches and community areas. This unit is headed by an experienced Veterinarian seconded by KWS from their serving Veterinary pool.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Cullman III every year provide a substantial donation which supports the work of one team and, this year, **The Giraffe Centre in Nairobi** has done the same. **The Amara Foundation**



Alioness has a snare around her neck removed

popular. It must be remembered that most Kenyans lack the means to visit the National Parks and have never even seen the indigenous animals that share their country, fortunate should they own even a bicycle other than their



Dr. Ndeereh checks the breathing of a bull elephant sedated to remove a snare from his leg



helped towards the purchase of a vehicle for the Voi team and **another extremely generous donor**, (who wishes to remain anonymous) and who turned up incognito at the daily mudbath hour, has donated a substantial chunk of an inherited legacy towards the cost of another De-snaring vehicle. **Mr. Michael Joseph and Safaricom** have likewise given us valuable support.

Our De-Snaring Project goes hand in hand with a Community component, each team Leader equipped with a Video Projector and environmental Videos, some sourced from the National Geographic website and others donated by local film makers such as Simon Trevor and Alan Root. We have been able to support 9 schools (and over 4,000 pupils) along Tsavo's Northern boundary through the efforts of our Northern Area De-Snaring Unit, and cover another 5 schools along the Mtito – Voi boundary through the team based on the Trust land near the Athi boundary. All the schools we support are encouraged to form Wildlife Clubs and are given the text-books they need for the local school curriculum. They also enjoy lectures and film shows on environmental issues and are encouraged to replant and care for indigenous seedling hardwoods to replace those felled in the past for charcoal and carving. Neam seedlings, (the tree known in Kiswahili as “40 Cures”) are also distributed for medicinal purposes, all seedlings grown in the Trust's Tree Nursery on the Trust Land.

The identification of living birds, snakes and reptiles is an important element to the fostering of awareness and an appreciation of the natural world around pupils, who are encouraged to feed the birds rather than kill them. In conjunction with KWS, sponsored field excursions are organised into Tsavo which have proved extremely

own two feet. Similarly, at the Trust Headquarters in Nairobi National Park, we have opened our doors to the public on a daily basis for the past 18 years, so that people can enjoy the orphans taking their noon mudbath between 11 a.m. and 12 noon. This, too, has had a tremendous impact on local awareness. Hordes of school children relish this visit, and it is not uncommon for us to host over 300 people during this one hour every day. The value of the Trust's Orphans' Project in terms of local public relations is incalculable and far reaching as well through the Internet. The Keepers' Diary which is posted on our website monthly, chronicles on a daily basis the progress of all the orphans and is widely read throughout the world, highlighting the more compassionate approach to wild animals, for which Kenya is now known. We like to think that our orphaned elephants have played a great part in promoting this important conservation ethic.

Our community work has also brought visibly encouraging results – cheetah cubs found deep within the community lands handed into the care of KWS, the nurturing and care of baby duikers as opposed to slaughtering them for a meal, the report and surveillance of a Rhino mother and calf who turned up deep in community land abutting the Trust's holding on the Athi Park boundary, and who were closely monitored until they returned voluntarily to the safety of the Park. Caterpaults, bows and arrows and traps have been ceremoniously burnt, and snares retrieved by members of the community have been handed over to our Team Leaders, as have some of the culprits – all encouraging signals of progress. We were proud when one of the schools we support excelled academically within the Coast Province.

The following organisations and people have contributed towards this community component, and we are deeply grateful for their input:-





**Simon Trevor, for his films
Globio
Safaricom and Mr. Michael Joseph
Sue Gilbert and the Jumbo Project of her
small American school
The Braeburn School in Nairobi for a
generous donation of stationery.
The Moore Foundation
The Gregory family, who donated to the
Trust the collection of National
Geographic Magazines and slides,
formerly the property of the late Roy
Gregory.
Cinnie Falconer Taylor – memorial
money to honour the memory of her son**

The absence of “bums in beds” in tourist lodges and hotels throughout the country, resulting from Western Travel restrictions, led to mass staff lay-offs within the tourism sector. Tented camps had to close down, Mobile Safari Operators lost business, many of whom also had to downscale in order to weather mass cancellations. There was a growing feeling of fury amongst Kenyans who perceived the targeting of their country as totally unjustified and unfair especially as they had already suffered from the bombing of the American Embassy through no fault of their own. Why, Kenya, everyone wondered, when other East African States had also suffered bombings? Why not countries like Israel where suicide bombings were an almost daily occurrence? Ironically Kenyans felt far more at risk in London and New York than anywhere in Africa, and rumour concluded that Kenya was perhaps being punished for political non-compliance to a request from the Bush Administration for a military base on Kenyan soil. Within the wildlife sector fury escalated when there was a move by the Bush Administration to

sanction the importation of endangered species for Circuses, Zoos and the Pet Trade, arguing that the money gained from the suffering of some would contribute towards the conservation of others - a naïve concept to say the least!

Despite the Travel Warnings, however, there were some brave Westerners who had the courage to ignore their Government's Advisories and who were rewarded with what was perhaps the most spectacular wildebeest migration ever to have taken place in the Masai Mara, free to enjoy this unique natural wonder in the peace of an uncrowded setting, and the more beautiful for it. Many local people also benefited from reduced airfares and tariffs, bringing destinations normally unaffordable within reach of their pockets.

Within the first 3 months of the year, the new Minister of Environment and Wildlife, Dr. Newton Kulundu, stamped his authority by dismissing the serving Kenya Wildlife Service Board of Trustees and appointing a team of new players. A Businessman, Mr. Colin Church, found himself catapulted into the hot seat without warning. This development was met with measured relief by what was rapidly becoming a very jittery wildlife sector.

Then in May, the recently appointed Kenya Wildlife Service Director, Michael Wamithi, who also began his assignment on a note of optimism, having risen through the ranks of KWS, suddenly found himself at odds with the new Minister, and was packed off on indefinite leave terminating in his resignation. Meanwhile a civil servant from the Ministry was detailed to keep the Director's seat warm in an Acting capacity pending the identification of a more

acceptable candidate – something that kept everyone guessing for the next 5 months, and which did nothing to retrieve the flagging morale of the Wildlife Service. Faced with a Government probe into past corruption, many high ranking officers left the service or, like the Director, were sent on indefinite leave; field budgets were slashed and operations within many Parks ground to a standstill - not, however, in Tsavo East National Park, thanks largely to the indomitable spirit of Tsavo East's field staff who rose to the challenge, in spite of an onslaught by Somali poachers who specifically targeted the Park's precious rhinos, killing 1. During the ensuing follow up of the gang, one member was captured. We like to think that the financial input of the Trust also had a hand in boosting the morale of this particular Park and enabled them to respond the way they did.

Plans for this poaching incursion had been carefully laid beyond Kenya's borders in neighbouring Somalia, with caches of food, ammunition and water buried along the route. Following the killing of the rhino, these were ambushed by the Rangers and resulted in the Gang Leader's capture and the recovery of several guns and a large amount of ammunition.

There has been an escalation of poaching incidents since CITES sanctioned the sale of the Southern African stockpiles, due to take place next year. Confirmed reports relate a mass slaughter of elephants taking place in the Democratic Republic of Congo by MPLA rebels bent on stockpiling as much ivory as they can prior to this sale with the intention of being able to launder it into the legal system. This killing spree threatens not only Central Africa's beleaguered and dwindling elephant population, but also the handful of Northern White Rhinos struggling to survive in Garamba National Park. Few people have been present to

even monitor and record this poaching onslaught other than the few brave souls struggling to get some action from the Congolese authorities, who, sadly, seem uninterested. No doubt when CITES meets again next year, they will doubt the authenticity of these reports as being “not scientific” because MIKE (their Monitoring System) was not there to see!

Nearer home, 361 kilos of Ivory (33 tusks) were intercepted in Kenya in February near the Somali border. 22 elephants were confirmed as having been poached in Kenya in the 8 months since the 2002 CITES Conference, with a further three found poached by Tanzanians in Tsavo West and 3 others killed by gun-wielding bandits on the Galana Ranch bordering Tsavo’s Eastern boundary. Yet others died of arrow wounds within the Park itself, one near the Park Headquarters in Voi and another, which was found by one of our De-Snaring teams, with tusks intact, in the Triangle abutting the Trust land. These are the few we know about, so what goes on further afield that is not recorded is anyone’s guess. However, this surely must be a pointer to a trend, and one which we hope the Parties to the CITES Convention will acknowledge by re-imposing the ban on the sale of all ivory for all time. As long as there is any legal trade in ivory, the illegal killing of elephants will continue, Africa-wide. However, since trade dominates this forum, with the endangered species manipulated as mere pawns in a game of selfish greed and corruption, most conservationists have lost faith in the ability of CITES to help any endangered species.

It was not until early October that a new KWS Director was finally named and this came as yet another surprise, for his was a name unknown within wildlife circles. Mr. Evans Arthur Mukolwe, a Climatologist by profession, who had been based in Geneva, Switzerland, and at one time attached to UNEP, was appointed the new Director of the Kenya Wildlife Service. Everyone waited with baited breath to meet this man, but having done so, a feeling of cautious optimism crept back for he was a good listener with a reputation of being an administrator of note, (much needed). Above all he comes with a clean slate untarnished by biased preconceived leanings. No-one under estimates the enormity of the task that lies ahead in order to turn around the ailing Wildlife Service and trim its bloated bureaucracy which drains resources from the needs of the field.

Prior to his appointment, there was an uncomfortable feeling that wildlife issues ranked very low on the list of priorities of

the new Government, not helped by Press reports of human/wildlife conflict. The prolonged hiatus within Wildlife Service provided fertile ground for a period of intense lobbying when a veritable highway was worn to the Offices of the Ministry of Environment and Wildlife in Maji House and the Kenya Wildlife Service Headquarters in Langata. Different factions with opposing conservation philosophies battled to promote their views on the best way forward on wildlife policy issues. There was, however, one issue about which no convincing was needed and that was that the wildlife and tourism sectors were in deep trouble. Wildlife numbers countrywide were in an alarming downward spiral, (58%) and bush-meat, which previously had been contained at mere subsistence level, suddenly became commercial big business threatening the very survival of Kenya’s smaller animals as well as the Big Five, and the tourism sector having been dealt a body blow by the Travel Advisories.

A Pilot Cropping Scheme sanctioning the legal killing of wildlife quotas on private land for commercial utilisation, which was introduced in the early nineties, and which had been envisaged to last only five years before reassessment, had been ongoing now for over a decade. The findings of a Commission set up two years ago to investigate the sustainability or otherwise of consumptive utilisation countrywide allegedly found evidence of cheating and the fudging of quotas to suit demand, and had recommended the imposition of a moratorium on this cropping practice.. There was no doubt that since the introduction of the Pilot Scheme, and the appearance of so-called exotic wild game meat on the menus of up-market Nairobi restaurants, illegal poaching for “bush-meat” had escalated like wild fire. Road-side butcheries countrywide offered game meat at a much cheaper price than that of domestic livestock and wild game meat was even finding its way to markets in the Middle East, in Central and West Africa where it was becoming an ever scarcer commodity, as well as to Western capitals such as Brussels, London and Paris. Whereas previously many tribes shunned the eating of most wild species, things changed rapidly when visiting tourists were seen tucking into giraffe, zebra, ostrich and even crocodile at up-market Restaurants, mostly taken from free ranging wild populations that were already subjected to nature’s controls such as diseases, droughts and natural predation. Few could argue that the introduction of another voracious predator

Snared Zebra in Tsavo West, Ziواني



Poachers caught with their haul



such as a burgeoning global human population was nothing less than a one way ticket to extinction and the statistics confirmed this trend. And, so, much to the dismay of the legal culling fraternity, the suggested moratorium was imposed, and all legal cropping went on hold.

This measure was welcomed by most practical conservationists who felt that legal cropping had fuelled the escalation of the illegal trade. Nevertheless, it sparked aggressive lobbying by pro-consumptive protagonists who campaigned furiously for the moratorium to be lifted and also for the re-introduction of sport hunting which had been banned in 1974, both viewed by them as the panacea for the dwindling wildlife resource. Others had difficulty in seeing the logic of this argument, since every dead animal was one less, added to the fact that sport hunting was viewed by local people as an out-dated Colonial relic and as such was widely unpopular. Furthermore, the stress factor would undoubtedly impact negatively on breeding and natural selection, which keeps the gene pool pure.

It was felt by many that this lobby must be very insular in their thinking, failing to understand the extent of the insidious illegal bush-meat business that was eroding the wildlife resource. We in the Trust had no illusions about this, for the monthly reports submitted by our four De-Snaring Teams told a chilling story.

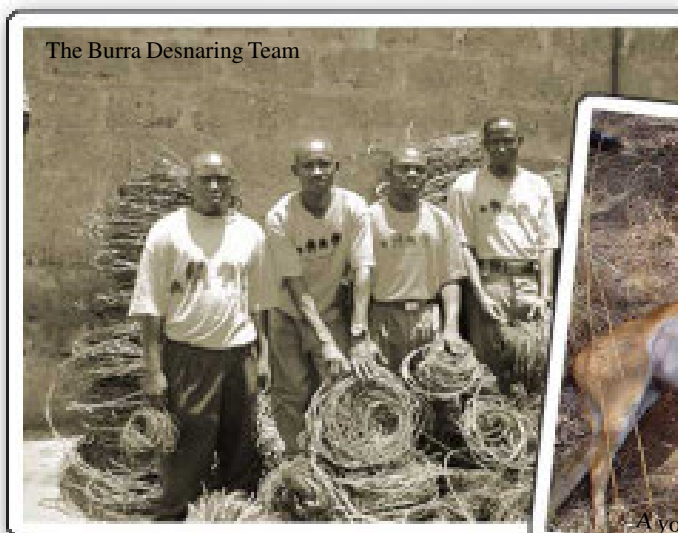
1,272 snares retrieved by one team in just 4 days within the Gazi area along the Athi river boundary of Tsavo East; 900 lifted in just a day behind the Voi Safari Lodge, huge bushmeat camps with hundreds of kilos of drying game meat deep inside the Northern Area on the Tiva Sandriver and at Kiasa, 5 giraffe found hanging in trees plus numerous zebra, buffalo and large



antelopes found in a day's patrol along Tsavo West's Ziواني boundary and hundreds of thousands of retrieved wire nooses, sufficient in quantity to fill several huge warehouses all illustrate in graphic detail slaughter on a horrendously unsustainable scale, not to mention the immeasurable suffering inflicted on the trapped victims.. Horrific images captured on film accompany the four teams' monthly reports, endorsing the gravity of this crisis, especially when, by their own confession, the poachers expect a 5% daily success rate. Snares were fashioned from the wire of discarded tyres found along the length of the main Nairobi Mombasa highway targeted the small antelope species such as dikdik (who mate for life); abandoned telephone lines hanging loose for the taking along the same main highway were used to trap larger antelope species such as lesser kudus and impala as well as zebras with thick hardened steel tow-rope cables used to snare the Big Time such as buffalo, rhinos, giraffe and elephants. Elephants with severed trunks on their knees trying to

feed; others hobbling around in excruciating agony with steel cables cutting deep into suppurating flesh and some even minus an entire foot, limping slowly and painfully on bare bone. These were common sights in the Masai Mara and at the waterholes of the Mountain Lodges. The fact that animals within the Aberdare National Park were also being targeted was illustrated by the orphaned baby rhino who succumbed to internal injury and followed a tourist van. Even the birds were not immune, but died in droves by being trapped by sticky wild burrs wrapped around branches above seeds thrown down as a lure.

It took the Trust over two years to obtain the necessary permission from the Kenya Railway and Telephone authorities to dismantle and collect the miles of abandoned telephone wire parallel to the Mombasa – Nairobi highway. Our teams had found that snaring was particularly persistent and serious along the 160 Km length of this line, attributed to the wire being there for the taking. Eventually, however, this year, permission came, and work began to dismantle the wires on the 6th October. To date our Burra De-Snaring Team led by Isaac Maina has managed to remove some 150 kms of telephone line - a commendable and no mean feat, involving



clambering up a rustic ladder to unloop the wire from the top of tall standing posts using hacksaws and pliers, pulling it down and coiling it into 100 meter lengths for manageable removal. This very enterprising team also undertook a massive clean up along the Mombasa road, collecting up all the discarded bits and pieces of burst tyres, from which poachers extract the thin wires used to snare dikdiks and other small fry, along with all other debris, which amounted to a veritable mountain which was burnt. They also recycled some of the thicker snares into Trash Retrieval Rods for distribution to the community of Voi Town where “a people-power clean up” of litter was organised prior to the onset of the rains to avoid pollution of the seasonal Voi river, and ending up a hazardous eyesore within the Park itself.

Awareness had gradually been growing amongst concerned members of the public as to the seriousness of the bushmeat threat, reinforced further by events close to home in Nairobi National Park, which is fenced on just three sides, one side left open for the migratory species such as wildebeest, zebra, kongoni and the smaller gazelles to move in and out of the Park as they have since time immemorial to traditional seasonal dispersal grazing grounds on the Kitengela and Athi plains. Whereas once the dispersal area was open country sparsely inhabited by pastoral Masai and their livestock, who had long coexisted with wildlife, this, too, had changed. The human population of Nairobi city, (now numbering almost 2 million people), has been spilling out and now encircles the Park. The Masai landowners have also changed, and many have sub-divided chunks of their land selling it off to this urban spill-off. Dwellings and fences have sprung up, domestic dogs have proliferated, many of which hunt in packs at night, even within the Park itself. Now, the wild migratory species of Nairobi National Park run a dangerous gauntlet every time they move out, threading their way through human habitation, snared for the bush-meat trade, chased and killed by packs of dogs and clubbed at night when blinded by torchlight. It is, after all, tempting for a man to be able to snare a wild animal free rather than sacrifice a prized goat, sheep or cow which could contribute towards the dowry for another wife!

With every passing year, we have been witnessing fewer and fewer migratory species returning to the Park, with the result that the Park’s grasses have become rank and unpalatable due to under-utilisation by the grazing hordes, as numbers become eroded beyond the Park boundary. A count undertaken in August within the Park revealed just 56 buffalo, 37 eland, 12 Grants gazelles no Thomson’s gazelles, 114 kongonis, 12 Waterbuck, No Wildebeest whatsoever, 103 Impalas, 82 ostriches and just 15 zebra, just a mere shadow of what the Park used to harbour. The only species that had proliferated were the Black Rhinos, and this, at least, was a spot of good news.

Short of prey within the Park, the hungry lions went out where they took to killing about all they could find – livestock. This immediately brought them into conflict with the human population of the dispersal area, who had been enjoying “easement” payouts to encourage coexistence with the Park’s big cats, but the money ran out, and a lion-killing frenzy took hold, reducing the Park’s lion population to a mere handful no less than 7 speared over just one weekend.

A huge public debate ensued – the community complaining about the loss of their livestock, demanding compensation, and wildlife enthusiasts mourning the loss of the Park’s famous lions, particularly as lions, everywhere, are now becoming a threatened species.

To fence or not to fence! Opinion on this issue was sharply divided something that obviously confused the new Government even

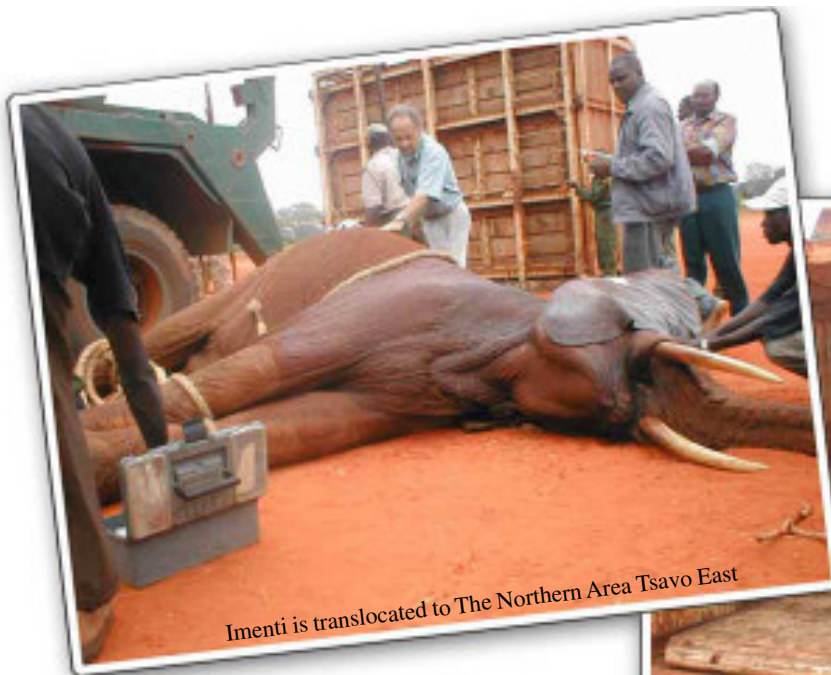
further. Initially, the Minister decreed that the Park must be fenced, but later the Press reported that he had changed his mind following a visit from the dispersal area community, who were against fencing, because, they said, they wanted to bring their livestock into the Park for grazing, irrespective of the law. Would not a fence at least demarcate the Park boundary, stem the tide of human encroachment, and protect the people from the lions and the lions from the people? It was difficult to follow the logic of those who vehemently opposed this, and instead advocated the artificial feeding of the Nairobi Park lions to keep them within the Park, purchasing wildebeest and zebra shot for the purpose from the diminishing populations beyond the Park boundary! It should be remembered that a wildebeest or zebra has just one calf every 9 – 10 months, whereas the gestation period for a *litter* of lion cubs is just 3 months, and also that animals that rely on numbers, such as the migratory species, need numbers in order to survive – example, the American Buffalo which was very nearly wiped out 300 years ago, the Passenger Pigeon which was wiped out, along with the South African Quagga.

Most Park personnel and practical conservationists were of the opinion that the time had come to fence the Park, otherwise it would be lost altogether, probably ending up as another sprawling slum in the future. Already tour operators were avoiding Nairobi Park, which, at one time, was the jewel in the Crown and brought in more revenue than all the other Parks put together. Instead they were heading straight for the ring-fenced Lake Nakuru National Park, currently the most popular Park in the country, holding a bewildering array of wild species in sizeable numbers. If Nakuru Park, which is smaller in size than that of Nairobi, can harbour such numbers, why not Nairobi, if it were re-stocked and ring-fenced?

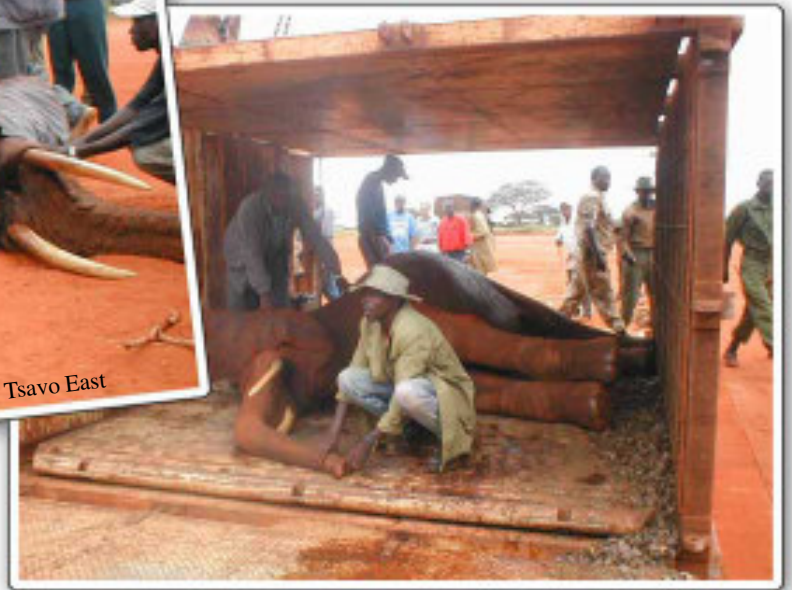
Some Scientists argued that migratory species could not exist within a confined space, but what about the Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania, a cauldron just 12 miles across, where wildebeest and zebra undertake a mini migration around its base! Of course, the Park could not be expected to sustain the numbers of the original migration of years past, but it would at least harbour a representation of those species. What could live within a fenced Sanctuary in a wild situation would, and what couldn’t would not; no more competent authority than Nature itself to determine what could and couldn’t for Nature alone has at its disposal the secret weapons of evolution geared towards survival in changing circumstances and natural selection to ensure that the gene pool remains pure.

The Trust was amongst those who felt the Park should be fenced, a fact that was endorsed further when in October we suffered the fourth armed robbery in two years on our premises, this time at the hands of 20 thugs who walked the length of the Park from its unfenced Southern boundary to our premises at midnight armed with 10 guns! Happily we were away in Tsavo at the time, but the thugs held up all our Staff at gun-point, likewise the Security Van when it arrived, broke into Daphne’s house and escaped with just the small amount of money that was in her cupboard, and lastly, but by no means least, terrifying the seven Nursery elephants in the process, all of whom developed diarrhoea! Since all our employees are now paid on-line and what cash comes in during the mudbath hour is rapidly recycled to keep the show on the road, or hurriedly transferred to the Strong Rooms of a down-town Security Firm, the robbers must have been somewhat disappointed with their spoils on this occasion, bearing in mind that the penalty for armed robbery is death. Nevertheless, it has meant that we have had to spend money that we would rather utilize more constructively enhancing our security even further.

been behaving as he did within a National Park, but nevertheless, at the insistence of the authorities, the KWS Capture Team was hurriedly scrambled, and Imenti was sedated, loaded into a crate, and driven 90



Imenti is translocated to The Northern Area Tsavo East



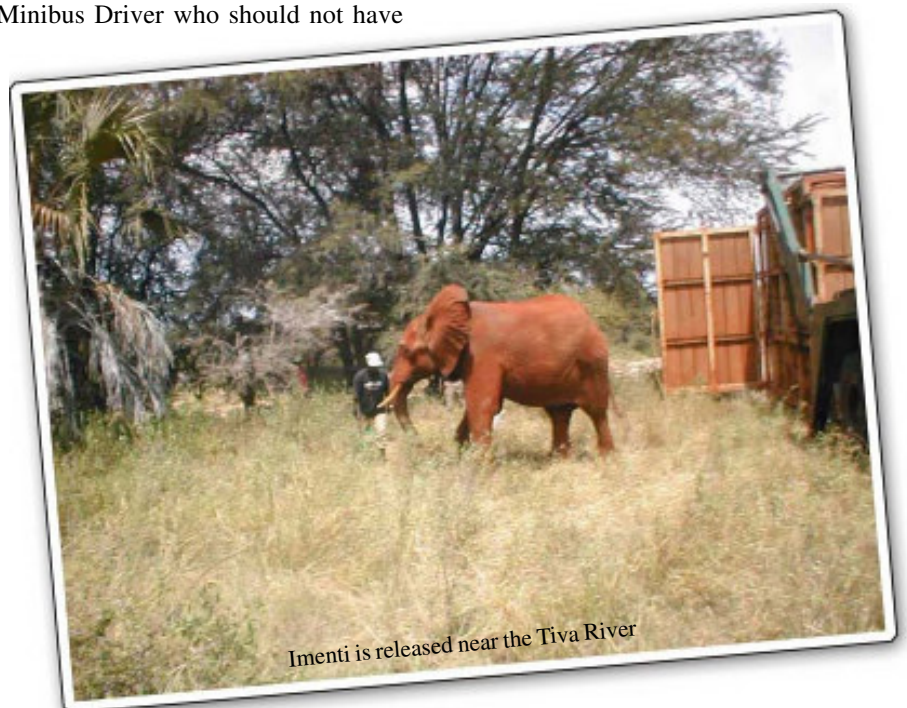
On the 3rd day of the New Year, there was another crisis of a different nature, this time in Tsavo East National Park involving our 10 year old orphan, “Imenti”, who came into the Nursery as a tiny brand newborn on the 19th January 1994, his mother having been killed in cropland as she gave birth to him. As such he is the first newborn elephant ever to have been successfully hand-reared from the day of birth, saved only by a last minute infusion of plasma taken from the blood of an older elephant in order to activate an immune system dormant from not having had his mother’s first Colostrum milk.

We struggled long and hard to rear this elephant, who hovered between life and death for many weeks, so he is special and very precious to us and to his many foster-parents world-wide. At over 10 years old, he is a fine young bull and was poised to leave the still dependent group of growing orphans in Tsavo, and take his place amongst wild bull friends, as is natural in the case of young bulls, and as have many of our older bulls ahead of him. However, having been reared in the Nairobi Nursery with “Emily”, the young cow of the same age who is the current Matriarch of our Tsavo herd, (numbering 33 growing elephants in the process of rehabilitation back into the wild community), “Imenti” has long been particularly close to Emily, viewing himself as “The Protector” of the orphan “family”. We have learnt that it is “the family and friends” that are the two most important elements in the life of an elephant, a fact that was soon to be demonstrated all over again.

orphans with hooter blaring as they were crossing the road along with some wild elephant friends. Most of the elephants fled in all directions, but both Emily and Imenti retaliated, charging the offending vehicle. Emily stopped short, but Imenti pierced the windscreen of the vehicle with his tusks, terrifying the screaming inmates, and then manifesting his dislike of white Minivans by standing guard at the Park Entrance Gate, blocking the entry and exit of all such vehicles!

It so happened that the new Minister, the Hon. Newton Kulundu, was expected to pay his first visit to the Park within a few days, and Imenti’s behaviour had branded him as “a rogue”. Of course, the real “rogue” was the Minibus Driver who should not have

miles to the Tiva River in the remote Northern Area of the Park. There he was deposited in what would appear an idyllic spot for any elephant - permanent water at hand, lush vegetation brought on by recent rain, and many wild elephant herds nearby. However, Imenti did not think so. He wanted his orphan family and his friends, so he immediately did a U-turn and covered 60 miles in 18 hours, pausing only when he reached the Galana river, 30 miles from home, having scattered a pride of lions that were following him en route, and vented his fury on the shell of an old broken down abandoned Air France van that has lain by the roadside near Kiasa for the past 40 years. Never having seen a sizeable river before, he was afraid to ford the Galana, and having



Imenti is released near the Tiva River

On the 3rd January, 2003 a Minibus filled with Asian tourists, barrelled into the

slaked his thirst, did another U-turn and walked 100 miles back the way he had come, crossing the Park's far Northern Boundary and ending up in a Wakamba village searching for at least a human friend who might help him. He must have been very surprised when the human inhabitants of this village, who come from a notorious poaching fraternity, fled in disarray, taking to trees, their houses and their bicycles, never having encountered a "friendly" elephant before. One of the fleeing bicycles pedalled to the Northern Area Headquarters at Ithumba, to report the presence of this "rogue elephant" to the Senior Warden, who sent our De-Snaring Team Leader, Wambua Kikwatha off to investigate. He was instantly recognised by Imenti as someone he knew, and all the curious spectators were treated to a very warm elephant/human greeting as the elephant rushed up to Wambua, wrapped a prickly trunk round his neck, and rumbled his joy at having found a friend at last. Thereafter, he was happy to follow the car back to the Ithumba Headquarters, where some of his Elephant Keeper friends had arrived to anchor him and keep him company, until such time as we could bring some of his orphaned Elephant friends up to join him.

We had been pressing KWS Headquarters in Nairobi for permission to establish a second Rehabilitation Centre in the North for over a year, since 33 growing elephants were proving quite a handful for our Keepers to forage around the Voi Headquarters during Tsavo's long dry seasons. Since young bulls leave the natal female family at puberty, and attach themselves to other high ranking males, there to learn the disciplines that bull elephants need to know in order to limit conflict, we felt it better that our young bulls grow up further from sensitive neighbouring urban settlements such as Voi town, but rather in wild places where they run less of a risk of being corrupted by being offered handouts by tourists or lured out of the Park by their wild friends. At the time of the Imenti saga, we were still awaiting this permission, but Imenti forced the issue, and the second unit is currently in the process of being established.

Securing the Northern boundary of Tsavo has long been an urgent priority, again to protect the elephants from the people and the people from the elephants, a project to which the community has been sensitized and which has their backing, their input and their consent. Previously, the Northern Area of Tsavo suffered three decades of rampant and uncontrolled poaching following the takeover of the National Parks in 1976 by the then Government. The slaughter of elephants during these dark days reduced the Park population from some 25,000 to less than 6,000, and the living elephants abandoned the Northern Area entirely, seeking shelter in the Southern portion of the Park, huddled around lodges and human settlements where the Somali bandits could not easily get them.

The departure of the elephants from the Northern Area impacted negatively on all other water dependent creatures in the North, who relied on the elephants to excavate holes in the Tiva sand-river by tunnelling through the sand with their trunks, and exposing sub-surface sources. Elephants have long memories that span the same lifetime as a human, and it is only in recent years that they have cautiously begun to return to this former stronghold, which at one time harboured the biggest tuskers on earth, majestic bulls carrying well over a hundred pounds of ivory each side. Now, their footprints are again beginning to open up the trails they left all those years ago, and once again, the Tiva sand-river which used to be a focal point for all life during the dry seasons, is coming back to life. In the meantime, however, human settlement beyond the Northern boundary occupied by the Wakamba tribe, has proliferated right up to the Park boundary, making the establishment

of the fence so essential to avoid the elephants being driven out again due to human/wildlife conflict.

As usual, orphan tragedies are part of the price one has to pay when involved in animal welfare and the death of our 2 year old female, "Maungu", early in the year, plus the loss of several newcomers who were too far gone to be able to salvage, took an emotional toll on all our staff. One was a calf from Mount Kenya who had to be euthenazed when it was discovered that a wire snare had cut deep into the bone of a foot, another was from Marsabit in the far North, who was so seriously mauled by hyaenas that it succumbed to the wounds on the rescue plane soon after take-off and the third was a Laikipia elephant from Sosian Ranch, who arrived with advanced pneumonia and died within hours of reaching us.

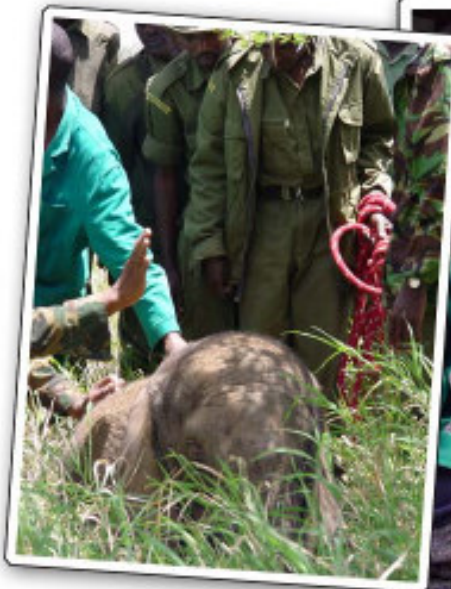
The decision to end the life of "Maungu" was not an easy one, for we had known this elephant for almost two years. She was orphaned when she fell into a manhole on the Mombasa Pipeline in 2001, and because she was 8 months old at the time, and still in good condition, she was taken directly to the Tsavo Relocation Centre to complete her milk dependent period within another loving elephant family and the older orphans. She instantly settled in, and became a popular member of the group, but although she thrived initially, with the passing of time she began to show signs of creeping weakness and shifting oedema in her legs and under-belly, labouring up the hills and lagging behind all the others. Always caring of one another, the other orphans understood, and took it in turns to stay with her to keep her company, and to help her as best they could, but her condition deteriorated, and finally we were forced to return her to the Nairobi Nursery for further Veterinary prognosis.

Several Veterinary opinions were sought, none of which were encouraging, pointing to either renal failure or a heart condition. In the weeks that followed, despite antibiotics, she became steadily weaker and more feeble by the day, and when she could no longer walk more than a few paces at a time, and had to be lifted up having lain down, we knew we had no option but end her suffering humanely.

Maungu was euthanased at 4 p.m. on 7th February, surrounded by a loving and grieving human family, following which a Post Mortem was immediately undertaken to establish the cause of her condition. Hers turned out to be a hopeless case. A huge meaty obstruction the size of a thumb was found in the heart's right ventricle, which had inhibited the flow of blood, resulting in poor circulation and oedema. Further tests on the growth itself pointed to the likelihood of the growth having begun as a blood clot, possibly as a result of having been confined in the Pipeline manhole, and over time this clot had developed into living tissue. Eventually the heart could barely function, and "Maungu's" fate was sealed.

At such times one can only reflect that at least this little elephant was cherished and loved throughout her short life, initially by her elephant family until the age of 8 months, and thereafter by another equally loving adopted orphaned family of older orphans as well as an equally caring human family, all of whom grieved her passing acutely. However, at least she had a peaceful and comfortable death, which would not have been the case had Nature taken its course in a wild environment hostile to abandoned elephant babies.

March saw the arrival of another tiny elephant aged 2 – 3 weeks old to our Nairobi Nursery, who had been found wandering alone on Sosian Ranch in Laikipia district. There can be no denying that the Laikipia population of elephants have, and do, suffer intense

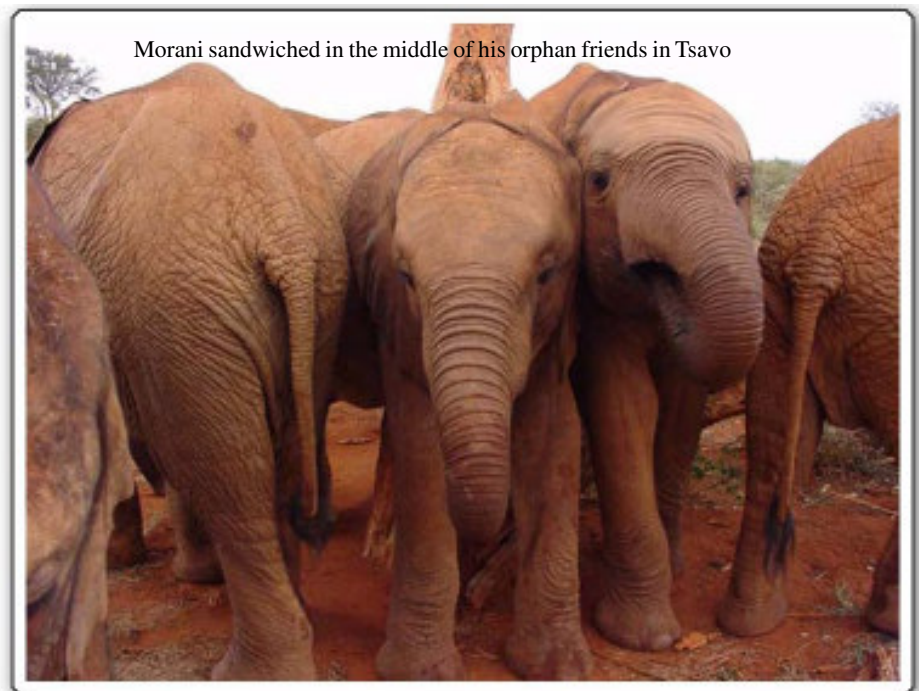


Morani is rescued on Lewa

harassment as a result of poaching for ivory beyond the ranches that protect them, or as a result of human/elephant conflict. A burgeoning human population has cut ancient migration routes and isolated small pockets of elephants from one another. Every time they try to meet up, they find themselves stepping on someone's maize plant, and are likely to be shot. Furthermore, many elephant mothers of today are young and inexperienced, giving birth to a first calf when still little more than children themselves. This, too, is a result of disruption of the natural family structure and elephant society generally, and the absence of older female relatives who would normally protect their daughters from over exuberant young males, who are also often badly behaved, lacking the role model of older bulls. Strangely, the umbilicus of this calf, whom we named "Selengai" (meaning "beautiful girl" in the Samburu dialect), had been artificially tied with sacking, pointing to human intervention at some stage immediately after birth, but we were never able to unravel this mystery.

April brought another drama, the arrival of 18 month old "Morani" (whose name aptly means "the Warrior") from Lewa Downs in the North, suffering from suppurating bullet wounds, one having narrowly missed his spine, and another having passed clean through a foreleg. What was presumed to have been his mother was later found shot in the neighbouring Ilingwezi Conservancy, her tusks missing. An 18 month old calf is quite capable of killing a person, and when Morani recovered from having been sedated for the air journey, when he found himself surrounded by what he dreaded most and what had killed his mother, this is what he was bent on doing. Time and again he thundered against the metal doors of the rhino stockade in which he had been taken,

until one of the posts gave way, and he was out, running for life into the fastness of the Nairobi Park forest as all the human spectators hurriedly scattered!



Morani sandwiched in the middle of his orphan friends in Tsavo

It was now late evening, and we were faced with an unenviable dilemma, but luckily he happened to encounter the other Nursery elephants and their Keepers on his travels – tiny newborn newcomer "Selengai", 3 month old "Tomboi", 4 month old "Wendi", "Mpala" and the mini Nursery Matriarch, "Seraa" who were his age. All the elephants and their Keepers encircled him, desperately trying to comfort him, and since the mini herd he had found were obviously comfortable with their human attendants, he took a cue from them, and visibly calmed down.

By this time, the Vet had been hurriedly recalled, and after another small sedation administered with a Blow Gun, everyone, pushing from behind, were able to steer the little "Warrior" back to his quarters. Whilst still groggy from the drug, we were able to syringe out the horrendous bullet wounds in his mutilated body. Within just 3 days, this little elephant had been transformed into one of the most adorable, friendly, and trusting calves we have ever had, an elephant with a loving, gentle temperament and a huge favourite of all the other elephants, their Keepers and of all the visitors he met as well. His wounds healed miraculously and with all the Nursery inmates thriving, and rains falling in Tsavo, the next few weeks were quietly happy – until the evening of the 25th April, when, having just recovered from the trauma of "Morani", another phone call from Laikipia heralded yet another baby elephant in need of rescue, this time from the vicinity of Ol Malo Lodge bordering Loisaba Ranch.

She was another that was just found wandering alone and having been held overnight at the Lodge, the rescue plane left the next morning to bring this 4 month old orphan to the Nairobi Nursery.

So many orphaned elephants coming from Laikipia district within the last few months must be either an indication that the Samburu people and the Ranch Owners of the area are more ele-friendly than most other communities, taking the trouble to rescue more orphans, or that things are not quite as they should be for elephants in that part of the world due to human expansion

and an escalation of poaching. As yet, history does not relate what happened to the mothers of Tomboi, Wendi, Selengai, Ol Malo, Napasha and the pneumonia casualty who followed a herdsman to Sosian Ranch Headquarters for help as she was dying. We do know that the mother of Morani was a victim of ivory poaching and that he, himself, narrowly missed the same fate.

Olmalu turned out to be one of the easiest orphans we have ever had, because she was in good condition on arrival. However, an interesting trait manifests itself amongst the orphans from Laikipia. They have great difficulty sleeping at night, and would rather turn day into night! We suspect that this is because the Northern elephants feed mainly at night, “streaking” through dangerous terrain now settled by humans, in order to reach ancestral feeding grounds where they feel safer, and also to meet up with friends and family. Calves born under such conditions learn to sleep during the day when the elephants hide in remnant patches of forest and thickets, survival superseding the need for food. Olmalu spent the night in the stable next door to Seraa, and the very next morning, she was out and about with the others, a hot favourite with Seraa, who was happy to concede the care of “Selengai” to Wendi.

One early morning, when all the Nursery Keepers were sitting chatting to one another, they became puzzled by the behaviour of Seraa, who kept running forward a few paces with ears out and a squeaky trumpet, then returning to them to kick them with a hind leg before repeating the performance again and again. Eventually the Keepers understood that she was trying to tell them something important. They went forward to see what was troubling Seraa, and sure enough, there was a lioness (one of the few left alive in Nairobi National Park) crouched low in the grass, watching the little elephants with a lean and hungry look.

Seraa came into the Nursery as a 3 month old, the equivalent in age of a 3 month old human baby. If she had ever seen a lion at all, it must have been in her Shaba homeland, yet she instinctively knew that she had to alert her human family to danger. She did this in the way a mother elephant would wake up her sleeping baby, by kicking it gently with a hind leg.

Respite for us in the Nursery was brief, for on the 9th June, another somewhat garbled radio message filtered through the official

where Ol Donyo Nyiro Police Post was, if there was an airstrip nearby, and more importantly, if the calf was still alive, having been fed cows’ milk. Eventually, we ascertained that the nearest airfield was an hour’s drive distant from the Police Post, at Loisaba Ranch, and Mr. Tom Silvester, the Manager of Loisaba, very kindly came to our rescue by volunteering to drive to the Police Post, and signal us if, in fact, the calf was still there and still alive. Meanwhile, the rescue plane was on stand-by, awaiting news, as we hoped that there would be sufficient daylight left to get the orphan back to Nairobi. Happily, there was, and tiny “Sunyei” (whose name means “Sand-river” in Samburu), joined the fold.

On 26th November, Tom Silvester again came to the rescue of another little Ol Donyo Nyiro elephant, who, like “Sunyei” had also fallen into a sand-river drinking hole. He was named “Ndonot” by the tribesmen who saved his life, which, in the Samburu dialect means, “where two rivers meet”.

It is always a big day in the Nairobi Nursery when the time comes to transfer some of the older Nursery inmates to Tsavo, there to begin the long gradual re-integration back into the wild community. By mid June Seraa was a plump and healthy 19 month old, well over the life threatening pneumonia that almost took her from us on New Year’s Eve a year ago, and it was time that Mpala and Morani joined the older set as well. New arrivals in Tsavo can always be assured of a very exuberant and warm welcome from all the elephants, and particularly those known to them having shared time at the Nairobi Nursery. Trunks envelop the newcomers, or are laid gently across their back in a gesture of friendship and love, so new arrivals immediately feel a part of this larger family of larger elephants, led by “Emily” and “Aitong”. Seraa was the only one of the three new arrivals who came in too young to be able to recollect her natural elephant family, but recognition of Solango and Thoma amongst the older group was instant, both of whom were with her in the Nursery. Solango, in fact, was rescued a few days before Seraa, and from the same rock crevice in far-away Shaba National Reserve, whilst Thoma was the Nursery Matriarch before leaving. When Thoma was moved to Tsavo, Seraa felt her absence keenly, so this reunion was particularly poignant. Morani and Mpala were overjoyed to be again amongst a veritable “herd” of older elephants, and slotted in like veterans.

July saw the arrival of 6 month old “Napasha” from Mpala Ranch, another calf found alone, who had lost the will to even try to live, and lay down prepared to die when he was found by a herdsman, who, in fact, thought he was already dead. Once back in the Nairobi Nursery amongst the others,

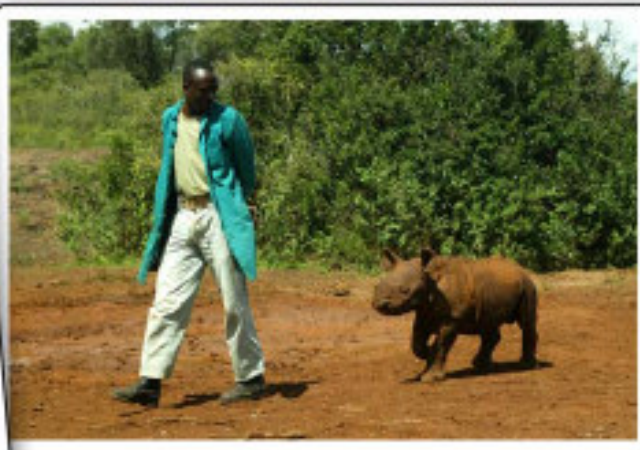
Sunyei at play



channels, and eventually reached us. There was a newborn orphaned elephant in the Ol Donyo Nyiro Police Post, which had been found by herdsman in a deep hole dug down to reach sub-surface water in a remote dry lugga. The report was already 2 days old by the time it reached us, so the first priority was to try and find out exactly



Shida



the presence of quiet and gentle little Ol Malo to calm him during nights on his own. Until she was brought in to share his quarters, he simply could not settle.

this elephant immediately took on a new lease of life, and is currently a dominant member of the group.

The next rescue was of 9 month old "Taita" from Hilton Hotel's Salt Lick Lodge sceptic tank and this, was, indeed, a miraculous event, since the calf was unable to touch bottom of the large sceptic tank, and for the next 6 hours had to literally "tread water", until the rescuers arrived, and a hole could be cut in the side of the concrete tank. He had fallen through the rusted manhole cover during the night, and by the time he was able to be pulled free, was completely exhausted and close to drowning. He, too, is now doing well in the Nursery, but having suffered such a terrible experience, it took

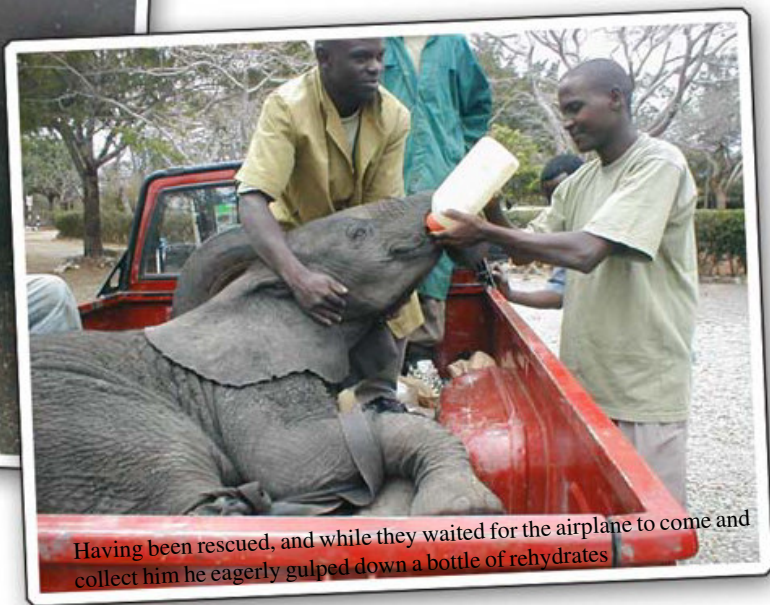
On the 30th October, another 2 month old rhino orphan was handed into our care by KWS, his mother having died near the Ivory Burn Site in Nairobi Park, her teeth completely worn, meaning that she probably succumbed to malnourishment during the long dry season. This latest little rhino addition to our other two orphans is named "Shida" (which means "problem" in Swahili) and is a very gentle little chap, who, unlike most rhino babies that baton onto one mother-figure during childhood, is happy to follow any green coat during the rounds of the dungpiles and urinals which are part and parcel of the introductory process within rhino society. "Magnum", the 6 year old son of orphan "Scud", who mourned the death last year of his best friend and Nursery

companion, "Magnet" so grievously, is now himself again, fully integrated into the wild rhino community of Nairobi National Park, and sometimes seen consorting with another grown female and her calf. He still returns to the Home Base of his Nursery Stockade on an almost daily basis, when his filarial sores are anointed with

Negasunct and Oil of Neem, and when a wheel barrow of kitchen peelings and coconut is wheeled out for him and is followed by a long tail of warthog opportunistic hangers-on, whom he allows to share the spoils. "Makosa" celebrated his fourth birthday on 1st August, and is a feisty fellow more or less now the size of Magnum. He, too, is no longer accompanied, but out and about with the wild rhino community, returning most evenings for his hand-out of food supplement. Being too exuberant for Magnum's liking, Magnum is careful to avoid him choosing to come back home in the mornings, rather than risk bumping into Makosa, when he immediately finds himself embroiled in a sparring match he would rather not have!

Rearing the orphans is an enlightening task and brings many surprises, even when one has worked intimately with both elephants and rhinos for 50 years, as has Daphne. One never ceases to be astonished by their intelligence, and mysterious means of communication, and, in the case of the elephants, their compassion and the caring they so readily

Taita, trod water for seven hours until help finally came, only his spine and truck were visible above the water



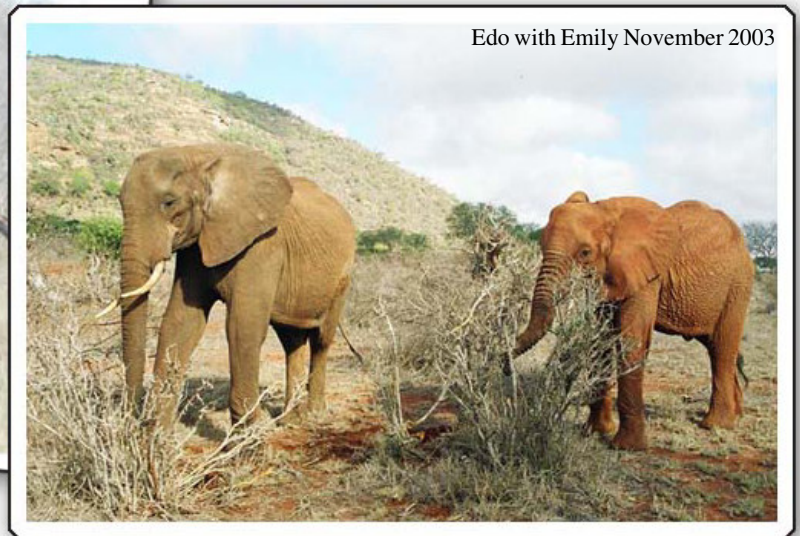
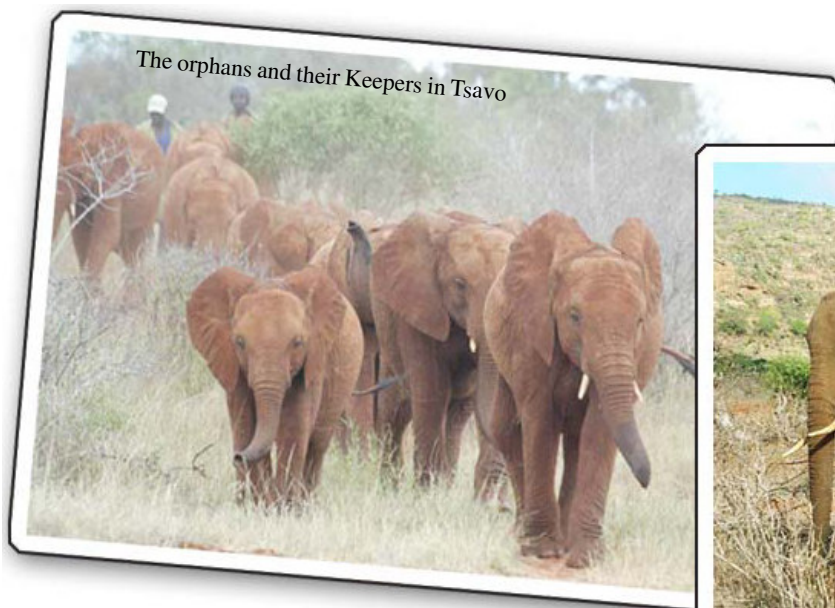
Having been rescued, and while they waited for the airplane to come and collect him he eagerly gulped down a bottle of rehydrates

extend to one another, and which extends to other species as well. An example of this was when the original Matriarch, “Eleanor”, broke through the electric fence surrounding the Voi Headquarters, to guard an old bull buffalo who was being attacked by lions, and having driven off the lions, stood by the side of the wounded buffalo until dawn when KWS Rangers came to end its suffering. Another example is the way the orphans protect their human family from buffalo threats during their wanderings in the bush, and how sympathetic they are to the unhappiness and physical disabilities of other members of the group. There was the occasion when a herd of wild elephants came to release captive antelopes in Southern Africa and another involving one of our newly rescued orphans named “Irima”. This calf was abducted from the orphaned elephant group by two wild Matriarchs, who took him off and refused to allow Emily and Aitong to retrieve him. Irima was almost two years old, but as the rains were due, and the green season imminent, we hoped that he would be able to survive without milk, and that perhaps he had been reunited with family members. Irima was away with the wild elephants for several days, when suddenly, and most unexpectedly, who should appear, but two of our ex orphan Big Boys, “Edo” and “Ndume”, escorting little “Irima” back to Emily and Aitong!

**“the more one knows about
animals, the more one
realises how much more we
have to learn”**

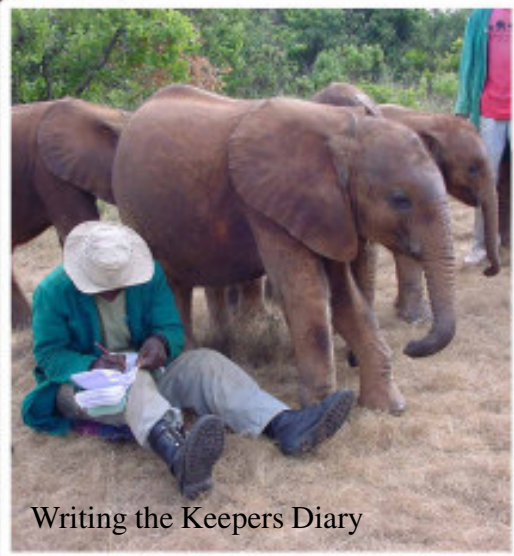
come across Edo out in the bush (whom he had met just once) and tell him that he needed milk and wanted to be taken back? We will never know which of these scenarios applies, but we do know that Edo and Ndume, whom we had not seen for many moons, suddenly appeared with little “Irima” and having delivered him safely back into the care of Emily and the Keepers, disappeared again on their bull elephant travels!

David always said – “the more one knows about animals, the more one realises how much more we have to learn”. This is particularly true of elephants. The above incident involving “Irima” and two of our “Big Boys” is a touching tale that illustrates so graphically the intelligence and understanding of these magnificent creatures. In truth, they possess in abundance all the noble characteristics of their human counterparts and few of the bad! There is comfort in knowing that if there is such a thing as a Heavenly Paradise, it will surely be filled with more Elephants than Humans!

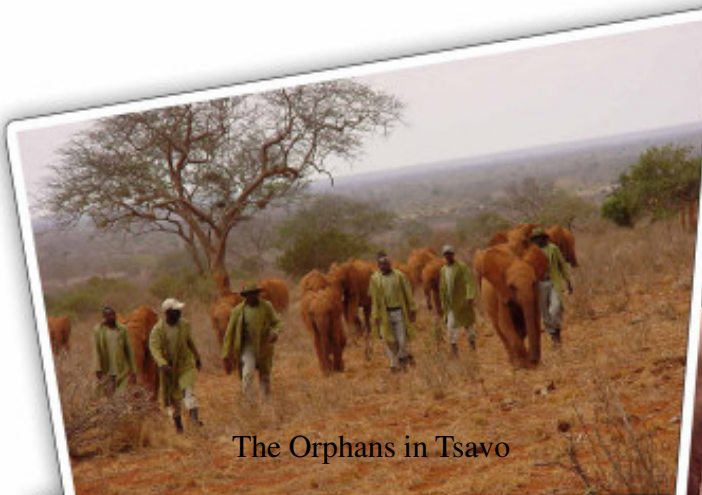


Edo, an ex Amboseli orphan, now almost 15 years old, had not been for most of the year until he reappeared briefly in mid November to a rapturous welcome from the other orphans, and especially Emily, spending several hours in their company before disappearing again. Ndume, an ex Imenti Forest orphan, also aged 15, has been absent much longer, both elephants now classed as our “Big Boys” and as such amongst others now fully integrated into Tsavo’s wild elephant community. However, since an elephant never forgets, our Big Boys appear spasmodically to visit the other orphans and the Keepers who are also viewed as part of their extended “family”.

Did Emily send an “Ele Call” to Edo to ask him to retrieve Irima for her? Did Edo then send an E message to his friend “Ndume” in case he needed some help in taking Irima from the wild Matriarchs, and did they then, together, set about searching for “Irima” in amongst the wild community in order to be able to return him to the care of Emily and the Keepers? Or did Irima just happen to



Writing the Keepers Diary



The Orphans in Tsavo





Donor information

Everyone and Anyone can help save an Elephant by fostering an orphan directly through our website or by donating on line, and in so doing becoming part of that elephant's extended financial family. Anyone and Everyone can alleviate the suffering of an animal by supporting our de-snaring and community projects by donating on line or by any of the other ways listed below

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Nairobi
00503
Kenya

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Fax: + 254 020 890053
Email: rc-h@africaonline.co.ke

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