

The David Sheldrick

WILDLIFE TRUST



Newsletter 2008



www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org

“Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.”
John Owen -Ex Director Tanzania National Parks.

NEWSLETTER – 2008

With the passing of yet another year, it is time again to reflect on the year's events, and to convey to all our friends and supporters, wherever they may be in the world, our best wishes and the hope that 2009 will be a happier year for all, and to thank all for the encouragement and help throughout what has been, for us, a very challenging year.

OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR'S EVENTS

The year began as one that was far from being happy for Kenyans and Kenya. The nature and extent of the violence that gripped the country following the disputed December 27th 2007 elections took most people by surprise. Longstanding ethnic tribal animosities again surfaced, even after 45 years of Independence from Britain and in just one month, well over 1,200 people had been killed.

The unrest was confined mainly to Western Kenya, parts of the Rift Valley and the slum areas of Mombasa and Nairobi, but for us and mainstream Kenya who were not involved, life went on more or less as normal, as long as one avoided mass rally hot-spots. None of the wildlife tourist destinations were affected, nor were any foreign tourists harmed, but even so biased reporting from the overseas media left the impression that the entire country was in chaos and resulted in the imposition of Travel Advisories that dealt a death blow to Kenya's once booming tourist industry – the mainstay of the economy. Hotels, Camps and Lodges throughout the country were either closed or forced into mass retrenchment of Staff, exacerbating an already desperate situation of unemployed and displaced people.

By extension it also impacted on our revenue base. Visitors to the orphans' mudbath whose donations help support the Orphans' Project were few and far between. Thankfully for us, our US Friends and the orphans' Foster Parents responded to an appeal and generously helped bridge the void ensuring that neither our orphaned elephants nor their dedicated Keepers or any of our other conservation projects suffered. For this we remain most deeply grateful.

Ironically, those few intrepid overseas travelers who ignored the Travel Advisories and came notwithstanding enjoyed a quality safari experience in Kenya's wild places which were blissfully empty for once. Nevertheless, tourists by and large have remained wary about a holiday in Kenya during the year, so tourist numbers were down 67% with a loss to the country of some K. Shs. 40 billion. The wildebeest migration in the Masai Mara generated a temporary surge in July and August but the year ended well short of what had been initially anticipated.

In the wake of the mayhem, several overseas Mediators came and left empty handed, until eventually Mr. Kofi Annan, the ex United Nations Secretary General, managed to orchestrate dialogue between the President, Mr. Mwai Kibaki, (from the ruling Kikuyu tribe) and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Raila Odinga (from the Opposition's Luo tribe), two of the largest tribes in Kenya who are pretty evenly matched in numbers. Welcomed by all was the Power Sharing arrangement that emerged on the 29th February, which hopefully would return the country to normality. Public relief was tangible. The post of Prime Minister was created to accommodate the Opposition Presidential candidate as were new Ministries. Significantly

for us, the wildlife docket was moved from the Ministry of Tourism to the Ministry of Forestry. This was viewed as a positive step in that it might help curtail the influence of those Tour Operators whose actions within Protected Areas ignored the specifications aimed at safeguarding the integrity of wild habitats as laid down in Management Plans. The contract of the Kenya Wildlife Service Director, Dr. Kipn'getich was renewed for a further term of three years and a new Board of Trustees was also appointed.

Sometimes things have to get worse before they get better. Generally, Kenyans emerged from the upheavals more hopeful that such a clear demonstration of public dissatisfaction would persuade the politicians to address the evils of corruption as well as injustices concerning the distribution of land and wealth.

Towards the end of the year came the controversial decision of CITES to sanction another sale of 108 tons of stockpiled legal ivory from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia, and furthermore to allow China to become a licensed bidder despite the fact that China is known to be the main repository of all illegal ivory and therefore responsible for fuelling poaching. Conservationists everywhere were flabbergasted for this flew in the face of sound field advice and the definite evidence of an upsurge in poaching throughout all elephant range States north of the Zambezi, particularly those where Chinese Nationals were undertaking contract work.

Perhaps it was no coincident that this so-called "controlled sale" was preceded by mounting pressure from South Africa to again resort to the brutal culling of their perceived over-population of elephants in Kruger National Park. Many people speculated that this again was simply financially driven – merely a means by which they could begin building up another *legal* stockpile for sale at a future date! Furthermore few people remain convinced that the proceeds actually do go towards conservation – certainly not in Zimbabwe!

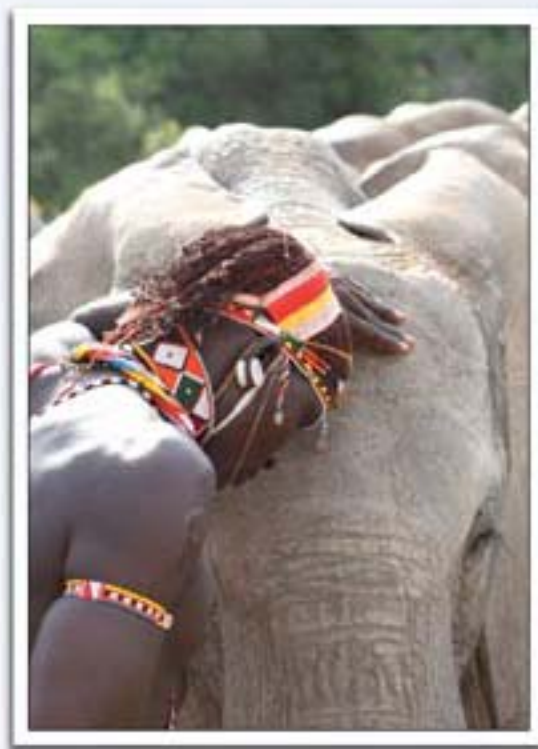
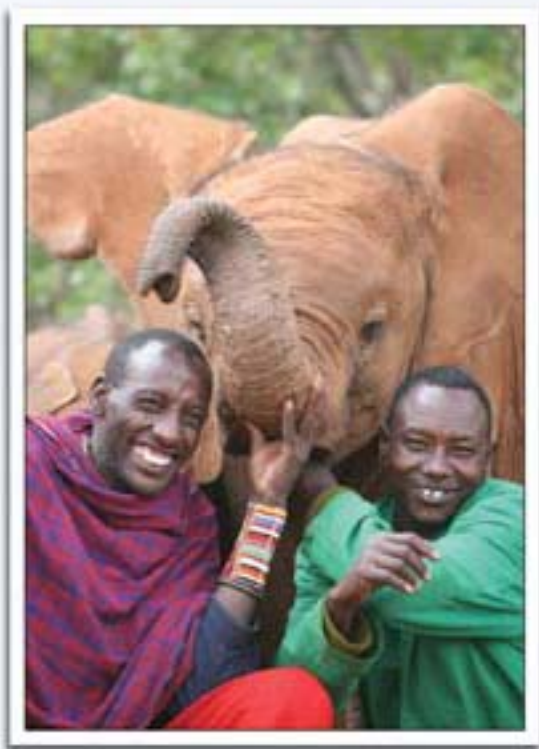
To counter the bad news that South Africa would be reconsidering culling as a management option from May 2008, there was at least some suggestion of a sweetener in that new regulations would henceforth prohibit the capture of wild elephants except for rehabilitation purposes and that the capture of elephants for elephant back riding would also be prohibited. Furthermore that orphans on private and communal land would have to be rehabilitated back into the wild and that there would be no more import or export of elephants, no intensive breeding in captivity and minimum standards of care laid down for those already in captivity.

On a happier note Elephant Diaries II was finally screened in England in five episodes between the 7th and 18th January, having previously been shown in Holland, Austria and several other European countries. It received audience appreciation figures in England of between 88% and 90%, testimony to the appeal of the orphaned elephants.

In March it was screened in America, but since we had not been informed in advance, sadly we were unable to alert our Foster-Parents of the date and time, so many supporters were disappointed at having missed it. Elephant Diaries II was nominated as one of the most popular TV Programmes of the



Communities involved in elephant orphan rescues visit the project



year so yet again Kenya's orphaned elephants played their part in publicizing Kenya as a tourist destination to millions of viewers world-wide. We are hopeful that Elephant Diaries III will be commissioned in the coming year.

Meanwhile Elephant Diaries 1 retained its popularity, screened again in Australia at the beginning of the year, as well as within European countries, reaching many more millions and generating the sort of publicity for Kenya that no amount of money could possibly buy, and at a time when most needed. The orphans again played a public relations role in boosting tourism when they, and the work of the Trust, featured in an update in December on the CBS 60 Minutes Programme which enjoys a substantial viewer-ship of 30 million people in the U.S.A alone.

THE ORPHANS' PROJECT

Our orphans originate from every elephant population in the country, and included among them are two "foreigners" - Mweya from Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda and Madiba from Botswana. They bring a good mix of new genes to the Tsavo population.

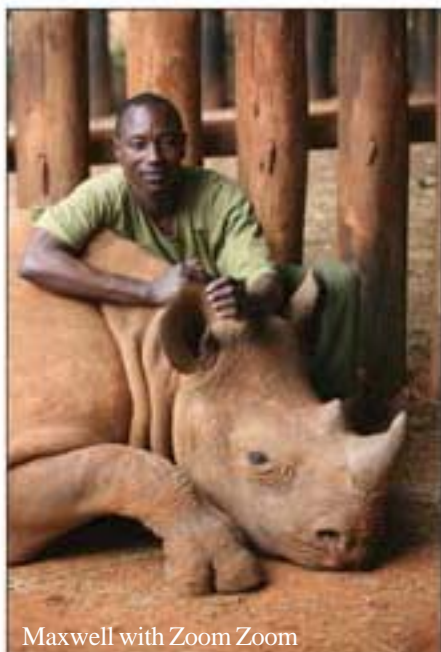
Elephants traditionally cover enormous distances. In fact, before human expansion on the African Continent they probably walked from the Cape to Cairo unhindered, mingling with many different populations en route, so a good mix of genes can only improve the genetic base of today's elephants who are isolated from one another by human activity.

This year, in order to enhance understanding, we have regularly arranged visits to the orphans for communities that have been involved in rescuing them. This has proved immensely popular, generating growing support of our efforts from all who have been exposed to our work and who pass the message on, understanding that what we do is not for personal gain, but for the wellbeing of the animal concerned and the country at large. Every orphan in our care is returned when grown back where it rightly belongs - within the wild system there to live as part of the wild elephant community in a Protected Area large enough to offer them a quality of life in terms of space.

Many people wonder why the orphans are not returned to their place of origin rather than always to the Tsavo National Park. The reasons for this are many. Firstly, Tsavo can offer an elephant the space it needs for a quality of life. Many other elephant communities in the country are constantly fleeing human harassment as they move from one pocket-sized safe haven to another, and are up for grabs whenever they feel the need to do so.

Secondly, the rehabilitation of an elephant is a very long process, since at any age an elephant duplicates its human counterpart in terms of age progression. An orphaned elephant is not ready to leave the human family that replaced its lost elephant one until at least 10 years of age. (This is dependant upon at what age the elephant was orphaned, and how well it can remember its elephant family. Those orphaned in early infancy will have no recollection of their elephant mother or family, while those orphaned older, will never forget them making the transition easier.) However, with the passing of the years by the time an orphan is aged 10, it will have grown up amongst another adopted elephant and human family, to which it will become equally as attached.

The reintegration of a young elephant back into a wild community takes time and patience, for only when the elephant feels sufficiently confident to leave the human family, upon whom it has relied for protection for so long, and has made elephant friends in amongst the wild community, will the transition begin, and for a time there will be some to-ing and fro-ing between the human family and the wild friends. Where elephants are constantly on the move, and harassed, as they invariably are when existing in areas occupied by agriculturally based humans, there is an element of stress that is not conducive to the rehabilitation process. Besides which, after all, it is not possible to dump a human child of 10 into an unknown and hostile environment and believe that it will cope without psychological or physical damage. The same applies to elephants who are by nature fearful animals that rely heavily on the protection of the herd, and are emotionally bonded to "family." Furthermore they make life-long friendships and like to stay in touch, and they also need the wisdom and discipline of their elders to grow up psychologically sound. Elephants are "human" animals in many respects, (with a few



Maxwell with Zoom Zoom



Rongai with Amos

attributes that humans lack besides), something that has taken humans a long time to accept.

Traditionally, it is pastoral communities who have coexisted more peacefully with wildlife than others who regard them only as a source of food, or else a nuisance, but even so, most Africans, irrespective of tribe, have wild animals interwoven somewhere into their ancestral cultural beliefs. Communities such as the Masai and Samburu people who traditionally have shunned eating wild meat and coexisted benevolently with herbivores have a better understanding of wildlife than others so it is in their tribal lands that wild animals still exist in viable numbers. Elsewhere, as in West Africa, wildlife has been eaten almost to extinction but through education and more exposure to the value of their wild heritage, the conservation message is gradually spreading amongst the youth of Kenya and the orphaned elephants have certainly played a major part in this process.

In January we arranged for a group of Samburu tribesmen from the Kipsing area in Laikipia to travel to Ithumba so that they could see and spend time with our orphaned elephants and their Keepers, the Samburu having rescued many of our orphans. Being pastoral people, and an off-shoot of the Masai, the Samburu have recently embraced non-consumptive tourism as a revenue earning strategy in their tribal lands, many of which are now successful Wildlife Conservancies. On the occasion of their visit to the Ithumba orphans, the warriors were dressed in their traditional tribal finery, and caused quite a stir amongst the neighbouring Wakamba community through which they traveled in order to reach their destination. There they thoroughly enjoyed walking with the elephants, and the elephants also enjoyed their company, especially Wendi, who has always held humans close to her heart having no recollection of the elephant mother who gave her life and who was killed as a crop raider in the process of giving birth. (Wendi is one of two such infants that we have managed to rear from the day of birth.)

Since then we have hosted communities from many places within Laikipia, and others from the Milgis Lugga area who rescued Lesanju (so named at their request after their late Chief). They were enlightened about the value to an elephant of its ears which act as huge radiators to cool the blood, and as great sounding boards to receive infrasound messages. They promised never to cut the ears of a rescued elephant again as a means of recognition, and were overjoyed to find "their" little elephant healthy, her ears having healed, growing up happily in amongst a mini herd of miniature others with intact ears! Communities from Loisaba and Kimana have visited the Nursery, as have others from distant places, while those involved in the rescue of Chyulu from the Chyulu Hills were also transported to Ithumba to see elephants "Chyulu" and "Kenze", both of whom came from their area. Soon those who saved the life of baby Suguta will be visiting us, and no doubt will be surprised to find her still alive! As people become more informed by being exposed to the orphaned elephants, hopefully more rural people will feel inclined to help, rather than hurt, a baby elephant unfortunate enough to have lost its elephant mother.

As at the beginning of 2008 the total number of infant elephants hand-reared through the Nairobi Nursery since 1986, when the first one (Olmeg) came in, was 75. The total number that were Keeper independent was 36. The total number of

elephant Orphans reared and rehabilitated over the years, however, which includes others who came in old enough to by-pass the Nursery stage and go straight to the Voi Rehabilitation Centre, was in excess of 85. This number includes the earlier orphans reared in Tsavo prior to the establishment of the Trust.

By the end of 2008 the number of orphans saved had risen to over 90 and in addition over and above that number over the years, we had lost 57, hence some 150 orphaned elephants have passed through our hands. Of the 57 that died, 33 came in too far gone to save, 3 had heart defects and could not have lived into adulthood and one died from a snake-bite. Pneumonia accounted for many well or mud victims who had obviously ingested water into the lungs before arrival, compounded by breathing in cow-dung dust around such places that places them at risk from Klebsiella bacteria. Diarrhoea is another life threatening condition, often brought on by teething stress, or stress caused by the trauma of capture plus grieving for the lost mother and family. Those that have been fed cows' milk prior to arrival are particularly at risk but a lot depends upon the personality of each individual calf, and its will to *want* to live.

At the start of 2008 seven infant elephants remained in the Nairobi Nursery, namely Makena, Chyulu, Lenana, Lesanju, Lempaute, Sinya, and Shimba.

All the Voi Unit orphans (numbering 36) were fully rehabilitated amongst the wild herds of Southern Tsavo East, having made the transition in batches led by orphaned Matriarchs raised from early infancy in the Nairobi Nursery – the first exit was under the leadership of Emily, the next age-group left under Natumi and the third batch were escorted out by Thoma whose group then immediately joined up with that of Natumi.

Thereafter all regularly spent time together as one large family in Emily's group, but at other times separated to travel independent of Emily with Natumi as the Matriarch. What is emerging is that the orphans look upon themselves as one large loosely affiliated family. Not always the same orphans accompany the same orphaned Matriarch but swap at will, yet remain in touch and come together periodically. Latterly there have been occasions when the older members of each group choose to join up with orphan Lissa and her three wild-born calves, Lissa now being 22 years, who, as a one year old calf, was handed directly over to Eleanor, the original Matriarch of Tsavo East's early orphans. At other times younger older members within both Emily's and Natumi's original grouping take on a Leadership role and travel independently with some of the younger members. One thing, however, is clear and that is that the orphans will always all be friends for life. Every reunion, irrespective of the length of time they have been separated, is highly charged, with trumpeting, urinating, and the intertwining of trunks, all signs of elephant excitement, joy and friendship.

During the long dry season between June and late November when the rains finally broke, all the Voi orphans remained with the wild herds in areas that had received higher rainfall earlier in the year and saw no reason to return to their erstwhile Stockades. However, after rain in November, Edie turned up alone and spent a brief period at the Stockades before joining Lissa's family.

A few days later Aitong and several others, including Mweya, were spotted amongst a wild herd near the Voi Safari Lodge when the Keepers noticed that Mweya was limping and had a very swollen left hind foot. Willingly she followed them back to the Stockades, where David Ndeereh (the Vet attached to our Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit) was able to assess the injury and treat the foot which had obviously been pierced by a stick. The fact that he and the Keepers were able to clean and dress the wound without having to sedate Mweya indicates the implicit faith and trust she has in the Keepers – her human family. Thereafter she browsed within easy reach of the Stockades and turned up on a daily basis for treatment until the swelling had subsided and the foot healed, when she felt able to rejoin her friends back out in the bush.

The birth of a baby to one of our orphans is always a joyous and rewarding event, and especially when we heard that orphan Mpenzi, (now 16 years old) had again given birth in November and that she and her week old newborn were with Lissa and her family, attended also by 12 year old Uaso (now classed as the smallest of our Big Boys) Mpenzi lost her firstborn to lions two years ago, having given birth alone below the Voi Safari Lodge without the protection of other elephants. Although she tried valiantly to defend the tiny baby from the pride, assisted later by the Keepers who were summonsed by Lodge personnel to come and save the calf, and who were horrified to find that the cow in question was, in fact, orphan Mpenzi, whom they had reared from the age of one, it proved hopeless. Eventually, as darkness closed in, both she and the Keepers had to leave the lions to their grizzly meal. An entry from our 2006 Newsletter came to mind – "...we hope that next time round Mpenzi will understand that she needs the protection of an older cow when the time comes to give birth..." Obviously, she did, and we are overjoyed that she is again a mother, having always acted as a very proficient "Nannie" to Lissa's three wild-born babies.

The 11th December was a very special milestone for the Trust which brought us the most precious Christmas gift we could ever hope for – the birth of Emily's first calf. Emily, who is now 15, was reared in the Nairobi Nursery from the tender age of just 1 month and grew up to become the Matriarch of the Voi Unit, and the star of Elephant Diaries and the CBS 60 Minutes Programme. She is the first ex Nursery orphan to have given birth to a wild-born calf after Malaika who tragically died in childbirth in 2000 when she was just 10 years old, and the calf she was carrying was lying breach.

In the Northern Area of Tsavo East at Ithumba where the Trust has its second Rehabilitation facility, another 30 young elephants are in the process of growing up and re-establishing themselves amongst the wild herds - namely Yatta, (the Matriarch now in her 10th year), Mulika, Nasalot, Kinna, Wendi, Tomboi, Selengai, Olmalo, Napasha, Taita, Ndomot, Sunyei, Madiba, Galana, Naserian, Buchuma, Rapsu, Challa, Sidai, Orok, Lualeni, Kora, Loijuk, Sian, Kenze, Kamboyo, Zurura, Lenana, Makena and Chyulu.

By the beginning of the year the oldest age-group led by Yatta were beginning to become Keeper independent in order to be able to make contact with the wild community unencumbered by the presence of their human Keepers which to date had proved a deterrent. (Having suffered three decades of rampant poaching in late 70's 80's and early 90's, the Tsavo elephants have long been extremely wary of human contact in the

Northern section of the Park). Yatta, Mulika, Nasalot and Kinna had all enjoyed a lot of wild contact when they were with Emily's group in the Southern Section of the Park before being moved to the North to oversee a new batch of ex Nursery youngsters. Initially, the fear of the wild elephants puzzled them, so Yatta had to make a plan. She took to leaving the younger orphans in the care of the Keepers and the Junior Matriarchs, (i.e. the oldest females within the Keeper dependent group) in order to travel independently of human company and so have a chance of making friends with the wild elephant community of the North.

For the past 6 years wild bulls have been paying nocturnal visits to the Ithumba orphans' Night Stockades, rumbling to them, fascinated by their unusual circumstances! Bull elephants act as the scouts of elephant society, free spirits that are not permanently bonded into the female herds but free to travel at will far and wide, their role to explore pastures further afield into which it is safe for the female units to move during the wet season get-togethers. (During dry periods the female elephant herds usually return to specific dry season Home Ranges for then the survival of their unit supercedes all other considerations).

THE NAIROBI ELEPHANT NURSERY

The success of our Orphans' Projects is due to the assistance of many organizations and individuals but particularly to the support of the Trust's Fostering Programme. We thank **all who have fostered one or more of the elephant orphans and particularly those who have donated more than the mandatory \$50 a year to do so at a time when extra funding was needed most.**

We thank **Care for the Wild International, Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas Ev., Vrienden van de Olifant, Terre et Faune, Aktionsgemeinschaft Artenschutz (AGA), The International Fund for Animal Welfare, The Eden Wildlife Trust and the Swedish Foreningen Forsvar Elefanterna** for their grants in support of our Orphans' Project.

We thank **Wyeth Laboratories and particularly Sarah Marsh** for continued donations of SMA milk formula in bulk for our elephants, and also for the deliveries made to British Airways crew members. We are deeply grateful to **Don Barrett and Jacqui McAleer**, the original Wyeth staff members responsible for initiating the long relationship we have enjoyed with Wyeth. We thank all the **British Airways crew members** along with those of **Virgin Atlantic Airlines** who never come empty handed to view the Nursery elephants but always bring with them either a donation of purchased milk or blankets.

We are most deeply indebted to **Dicky Evans, MK Airlines, James Bartington, Martin Hudson, Thomas Frankum, Andrew Jones and the Imports Department of Flamingo Holdings** for arranging to fly the milk to Kenya and especially to **Neil Wilshire and the Directors of Homegrown/Finlays Swire Group Kenya** for shouldering the clearance costs involved. We thank **Mary Muthara, Judy Kinadiali, Ben Omolo and all at Skytrain Imports Nairobi** for grappling with the paper work in order to extract the milk from the Customs shed with the minimum delay and for delivering it to our premises, thereby sparing us an enormous headache. Words are simply inadequate to express our gratitude to all involved in ensuring a supply of milk for Kenya's famous orphaned elephants.

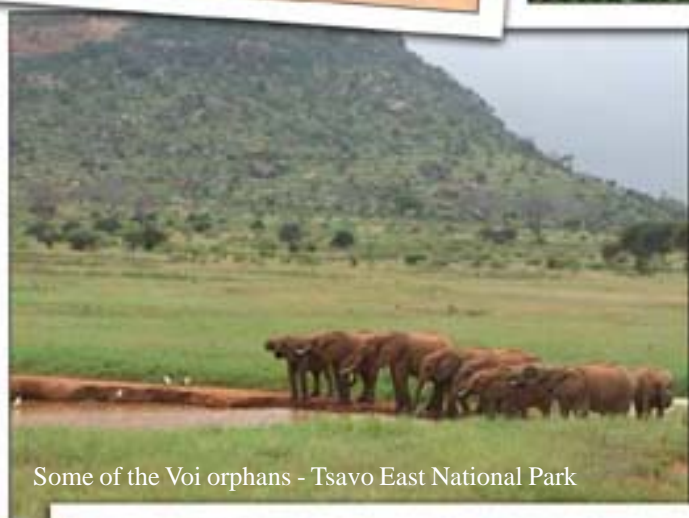
We are grateful to **Mr. Amicai Naveh** for ensuring that our stocks of Replacer Milk for the older orphans never run out and for always arranging prompt and preferential deliveries in this respect. We thank **Mr. George McKnight** who went the extra mile to procure tins of formula for us from all over East Africa to bridge a shortfall when his stocks ran out locally and we are deeply grateful to **Mr. Halvor Astrup** who has allowed us the use of his Helicopter at reduced rates to rescue some of our orphaned elephants.



Taru Carr-Hartley with Suguta



Julius with Laikipia



Some of the Voi orphans - Tsavo East National Park



Ithumba stockades



Ithumba Orphans - Tsavo East National Park



Amos with Dida

An interesting event took place at the beginning of the year as the Nursery orphans and their Keepers were wandering in the Park forest. Suddenly a warthog leg dropped from the tree above, drawing attention to a leopard high in the branches enjoying his warthog meal. This triggered a panicked exit of both Keepers and elephants, along with the leopard himself, who sprang into a neighbouring tree before dropping to the ground and sprinting off at speed! Encounters with wild rhinos, buffaloes as well as lions have provided regular excitement for the Nursery elephants and their Keepers throughout the year, each day bringing another adventure out in the Park forest, recorded monthly in the Keepers' Diaries.

The 16th June saw the departure of Makena, Lenana and Chyulu to Ithumba, all of whom were now over 2 years of age and therefore ready to embark on the next phase of life's journey back into the wild system. Five days of practice precede such departures when the Keepers attempt to entice with milk those due to leave into the large trucks parked against the loading ramp. Eventually Lenana and Chyulu obliged, but Makena flatly refused and was prepared to forfeit a milk feed rather than risk going in right up until the morning of departure was upon us. Then having had a stressnil jab to make her drowsy, she had to be physically manhandled into one of the two trucks, which was then rapidly towed clear of the ramp to prevent her from reversing back out again. On such occasions we rely heavily on the experience of the elders within the Carr-Hartley clan, who used to be proficient professional Game Trappers in the early days.

By 5.15 on a misty June morning, the trucks drew away taking advantage of traveling during the cool hours of the day as well as to try and avoid traffic congestion which has recently become a factor around Nairobi, and especially on the dusty corrugated diversions of the main Nairobi/Mombasa road.

As it so happened, the move had taken place a day earlier than originally planned because the borrowed trucks were suddenly needed elsewhere. Although the Ithumba Keepers were unaware of this eleventh hour change at the time, mysteriously somehow the Ithumba elephants knew and alerted the Keepers, for they refused to leave the compound, which was something the Keepers had noticed before whenever a move from the Nursery was in progress. How the elephants know such things is, indeed, beyond human comprehension, but we have always suspected that elephants can read one's thoughts. We put it down to "mysterious elephant perception" or perhaps the power of mental telepathy, on this occasion spanning distance.

By 1 p.m. the new arrivals were at Ithumba, and being treated to an enthusiastic welcome, especially from those elephants that had shared Nursery time with them back in Nairobi. Such reunions are always exceedingly touching. To find lost loved ones again has to be an unexpected and joyous surprise, but for those left behind in the Nursery who think they have suddenly lost loved ones, it is invariably a sad occasion that triggers searching and grieving. The departure of Lenana, Chyulu and Makena left us with just 4 babies in the Nairobi Nursery, namely Lusanju, mischievous little Lempaute, Sinya and baby Shimba, though not for long! However, on that day, all were very subdued, with Lusanju and Lempaute scouring the Park forest for the three older elephants who had been spirited away before sunrise.

NEW ARRIVALS DURING 2008

It is very telling that since CITES authorized the sale of the Southern African ivory stockpiles, the Nursery has received more orphans than ever before and also had more older orphan deaths than ever before, many of those rescued older calves having come in too emaciated for us to be able to retrieve, obviously having been without milk for many weeks due to the death of their mother. (While the rest of the elephant family will do their utmost to protect and nurture an orphan, there are few lactating elephant cows that will have sufficient milk to feed an orphan as well as their own milk dependent calf so an elephant mother would be reluctant to jeopardize the survival of her own baby in order to share the milk bar with another. That said, however, it has been known in older Matriarchs whose calf at foot is well advanced).

That there has been a marked increase in poaching since the sale of the Ivory Stockpiles cannot be refuted. The evidence is there in the number of orphans that have been rescued, (just the tip of the iceberg) and also in the number of poached elephants reported both in and outside of the Protected Areas, especially from the North where the Chinese are doing contract work for the Kenya Government.

Kenia (1st March): An 8 month old female calf came from the Mt. Kenya population. (The Keepers chose the name "**Kenia**" to celebrate the political accord negotiated by Mr. Koffi Annan on the 29th February, which took place just a day prior to her arrival.) She was discovered at first light alone in dense human settlement within an ancient migratory route used by the Mt. Kenya elephants who traditionally leave the fastness of their forested stronghold to meet up with other elephants further afield. Such things important to survival are imprinted in the elephants' genetic memory but nowadays most of those ancient elephant migratory corridors are densely populated by an expanding human population whose lifestyle is agriculturally based, and who are therefore not ele-friendly. Elephants and agriculture are incompatible, so the elephants are forced to *streak* through such danger zones under cover of darkness for fear of being killed as "problem animals". Orphan Kenya was in excellent health, so could not have been separated from her mother for long. Like humans, elephants have limited night vision, so she was therefore likely to have become separated from the herd during that nocturnal streak when the elephants were probably panicked by barking dogs and stirring dawn human inhabitants as they tried to negotiate fencelines and homesteads. Fortunately for little Kenya, however, she was spotted first thing in the morning by an ele-friendly inhabitant who immediately alerted the wildlife authorities and the Bill Woodley Mt. Kenya Trust with whom he had worked. With the assistance of the community, he spear-headed the capture of the calf who was then driven to Nanyuki airfield to await the arrival of the rescue plane, the Bill Woodley Mt. Kenya Trust having contacted us in Nairobi.

Once back in the Nairobi Nursery, Kenya settled in like a Veteran, and apart from the usual psychological trauma triggered by the loss of her mother and elephant family, which manifests itself by emotional restlessness, listlessness and sleeping difficulties, and which can last for months, she took milk from a bottle during the first night and was out and about with the junior Nursery members just two days later, immediately absorbed lovingly into the group of Lusanju, Lempaute, Sinya and Shimba. Whenever she strayed away from them, Lusanju, Lempaute and Sinya gently herded her back to the Keepers.

However, from the start she was intolerant of poor little Shimba, the only boy in the Nursery at the time, and a very mellow little fellow at that! We can only surmise that there must have been a pushy small elephant boy of his age in amongst her original family for whom she harboured a grudge! (Just like humans, elephants harbour grudges remembering a perceived injustice for a very long time, because "elephants never forget" which happens to be true!) It has been scientifically established that the memory part of the elephant brain is far superior to that of a human, and the convoluted "thinking" and reasoning part much the same.

Siria (3rd April): 18 month old **Siria** was airlifted into the Nursery from the Mara Conservancy. He was named after the Siria escarpment, the site of the famous burial scene in "Out of Africa" which overlooks the last resting place of his tragic elephant mother.

His mother had a spear wound through the joint of one front leg, as well as a trunk severed by a wire snare. In fact, she had been immobilized and treated on two occasions by our Mara mobile Veterinary Unit, initially in February and again in March. However, by the beginning of April her condition had deteriorated so much that she could barely move, the sepsis having poisoned her entire body so that she could no longer even feed her milk dependent calf, who was now losing condition fast.

It was obvious that this cow knew that she was doomed for she laboriously dragged herself close to the compound of Little Governor's Lodge, where her calf would not be quite so vulnerable to hyaena attack - a touching example of altruism and intelligence from an animal whose suffering and subsequent demise had been human inflicted. Earlier her older sub-adult calf had been persuaded to return to the safety of the main herd but her milk dependent baby remained with her throughout, a tragic witness to the extent of her agony, knowing full well that his own life was dependent upon her own, and that she was set to die. It was there that on the 3rd April, our Mara Veterinary Unit immobilized the cow for the third time, and having ascertained that there was no possible chance of recovery, the calf was removed before she was

humanely euthenazed, all with the full approval of the Mara Conservancy authorities as well as the Kenya Wildlife Service, both of whom were bystanders at the time.

Kimana (27th May): A lucky day for a tiny 3 week old bull who simply wandered in amongst a herd of cattle owned by one of the Scouts who worked at Amboseli National Reserve and who had a "manyatta", or house, quite close to Kimana Springs on Masai tribal land within the Amboseli ecosystem. Following a thorough aerial search by Richard Bonham who could find no wild elephant herds nearby, we were alerted that another orphan rescue was needed.

In the past, when the Masai were a purely pastoral community, all herbivores were tolerated and lived peacefully alongside them, since the tribal elders understood that wild animals feeding on different parts of the pasture improved it for their cattle, keeping everything in balance. Sadly, however, this no longer applies for the Masai landowners have now leased out their land to Kikuyu agriculturalists, who plant crops in the fertile soils surrounding the springs and this has inevitably led to human/ wildlife conflict. It was probably because of this that little "Kimana" lost his mother and elephant family.

From the start he demonstrated that he was no push-over, head-butting the other older Nursery inmates who, in his opinion, were outsiders that did not belong to the family he remembered. Nevertheless, this was tolerated by the members of his new family and he was welcomed with habitual elephant tenderness and love, and especially by the Mini Matriarch of the Junior group, Lesanju, who was delighted to have a baby within her orbit. However, soon teething subdued him leaving him listless for several months. Cutting the first molars often compromises the health of the infant elephants whose natural immune system is depressed by the trauma of being orphaned. The first molars erupt through the gum between one and four months of age, and are succeeded by the progression of 5 sets of others, the tooth of each set larger in size than its predecessor, and which move in from the back of the jaw to replace the out-going set, (a set being the four molars in use at any one time, one molar on both sides of the top and bottom jaws).



Because Kimana's origin was from a swampy region, pneumonia was invariably an ongoing concern, and towards the end of the year, he was again visibly unwell even though the eruption of his first molars was now a thing of the past. Pneumonia has accounted for the death of many of our infant elephants, and those who have a history of having fallen down wells, pipeline manholes or who have been stuck in mud, are particularly vulnerable. Once again Kimana was subjected to a long course of injectible antibiotic followed by the usual acidophilus to replace the stomach flora. Mercifully, after a few anxious days, he recovered. Then came a surprise! Two tiny pin-prick tusks appeared through the lip, despite his tender age of just 6 months! Normally we have found that the tusks first appear at the age of 2 years, something that has been constant in all the orphans we have reared. That said, however, we have noticed that those from the Amboseli region tend to grow tusks much earlier than elephants from elsewhere, Sian and Orok being cases in point.

Namalok (8th June): This day brought two elephant rescue alerts, both from the Laikipia area. However, sadly only one made it to the Nairobi Nursery that day, the other who was found standing by a dead mother, evaded capture by running off into the bush as Kenya Wildlife Service Rangers closed in. Sadly that milk dependent orphan was never found again and so was one that was lost forever. Namalok was female and about 9 months old. She was severely emaciated and died just a day later, surrounded by the Nursery orphans, who had embraced her lovingly and made her last day on earth a very happy one.

Wasessa (22nd June): The next arrival was a 2 year old female calf discovered during a routine surveillance patrol by our Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit who proved a particularly problematical customer. She was seen alone on the plain below Irima Hill behind the Voi Safari Lodge in Tsavo East National Park. The baby gravitated towards a lone bull who happened to be passing by but who was reluctant to be encumbered by an adoptee, and kept on gently pushing her away. Only some 50 yards away, a pride of lions were taking great interest in events, undoubtedly bent on making a meal of the calf once the bull had dislodged her.

The patrol monitored events for a long time, hoping that another herd might turn up and claim the calf, but when nightfall approached, a rescue had to be mounted to save the baby from the lions. Once the calf had been sedated, the bull became more protective, standing over the recumbent baby, so the rescue team had difficulty in persuading him to move away, repeatedly having to drive the vehicle at him. Eventually, he took the hint, and left.

She was transported to the Voi Elephant Stockades for the night, and Nairobi was alerted that a plane would be needed the following morning, since at 2 years of age, a calf is still milk dependent. She was also extremely aggressive so the Voi Keepers could get nowhere near her. Clearly she needed the company of other elephants in order to calm her down if she was to have any chance of survival. A two year old elephant is immensely powerful, and quite capable of crushing a man to death, which Wasessa was bent on doing from the start!

The Caraven aircraft dispatched from Nairobi to collect the new elephant, also transported another orphan to the Voi Stockades – this time a tiny zebra foal, named Rongai, rescued on the Kitengela plains. In Tsavo, he would be hand-reared in the company of "Serena" our older orphaned zebra mare, who instantly adopted and adored him. (Sadly, however, the zebra story that began so happily and held such promise suffered a tragic end four months later when Rongai unexpectedly died from bloat one night, and the very next day Serena, in a confused state of shock having lost him, fell prey to lions).

Past experience has taught us that sedating the older elephant orphans for a plane or car journey usually ends in the loss of the calf from bloat, since the body's normal digestive process is compromised. Overpowering an aggressive 2 year old elephant without the aid of sedation is always a daunting challenge for the Keepers, and never more so than in the case of Wasessa! They were tossed about in all directions like flotsam before a blanket could be thrown over her eyes and sufficient manpower could pile in to subdue her. Even so, she still managed to give them a real run around until her legs



Wasessa



Taveta



Taveta

were bound. Only then could she be laid down on the rescue tarpaulin to be driven to the airstrip and loaded into the waiting Caravan aircraft.

She arrived in Nairobi in the late evening and was carried recumbent into the Taming Stockade. Once the ropes that bound her legs were removed, she was up in a flash, and then it was up to each Keeper to take rapid evasive action as best he could in order to avoid being flattened! Wasessa was to prove the most difficult elephant we have ever had to calm. Even the presence of the other Nursery inmates didn't divert her attention from retribution, so much so that Keeper Mishak, who has been an elephant Keeper for the past 20 years, announced that this newcomer held the unenviable record of being the most feisty even he had ever had to handle! She charged everyone in sight battering the stout iron grid entrance to her Stockade repeatedly until it buckled outwards in a half-loop and threatened to collapse completely! She flatly refused to have anything whatsoever to do with a blanket, which obviously held sinister connotations of her capture and only blind Maxwell (the rhino), her next door neighbour, who had four legs instead of two, and was the same colour as her elephant mother, was spared her fury. In fact, she gravitated more towards him than even the other elephants, who, sensing her aggression, were reluctant to mix with her from day one.

It took 12 full days to calm "Wasessa", her name inspired by the hill on which the Voi Safari Lodge stands. Fortunately, however, she took milk from a bucket after the second day in captivity, (as long as the Keeper remained on the other side of the Stockade partition). However, it was deemed important to persuade her to take her milk from a hand-held bottle in order to associate humans with what she needed most, and eventually, over time, she reluctantly obliged, although at first the Keeper holding the bottle had to retreat rapidly once the contents were finished for she was still bent on revenge. Only after another 10 days could we risk allowing her out with the other elephants and the noon mudbath visitors.

Once freed and with the other orphans, she took her cue from them and accepted that the Keepers were friends rather than foes, but even so her suspicion of humans remains evident to this day; ears raised denoting suspicion and anxiety whenever a strange human approaches, nor has her antipathy to being covered by a blanket to protect her from the chill of June/July/August weather in Nairobi, wained. In fact, to begin she went so far as to try and pull the blankets off the other Nursery babies as well!

Rhino Maxwell was thrilled to have a near neighbour and spent a lot of time pressed up against his side of the separating stockade poles. Max loves the elephant orphans, for they come to greet him each morning with the tender touch of trunk tips all over his face. Rhinos are very sensuous animals, who adore being touched.

Wasessa's loathing of humans must surely be the product of having witnessed something terrible at the hands of humans that robbed her of her elephant mother and family. Unlike others who have been quick to forgive, this particular elephant, so far, has been reluctant to do so. The first time she allowed any of the Keepers to actually caress her trunk was towards the end of the year, and even this concession was permitted only very reluctantly!

Taveta (10th August): It was another quiet Sunday morning when a call from the Trust's Ziواني De-Snaring team, which patrols the Southern end of Tsavo West National Park, alerted us that an 8 month old bull elephant calf had been spotted by tourists from the nearby Taita Hills Sanctuary the day before. It had been already rescued by the Sanctuary Staff and was awaiting collection at their tourist lodge. It was fortuitous indeed that the Wildlife Officer at the Sanctuary happened to be an ex KWS employee conversant with the Trust's Orphans' Project who had already alerted our Voi Unit Keepers so Head Keeper Joseph Sauni and his merry men were already on their way. (The Ziواني De-Snaring team had come across an arrowed poached elephant about a week before, likely to be the mother of the calf.)

The calf was flown to the Nairobi Nursery that afternoon and we decided that he be named "Taveta", after the nearby town that marks the border between Kenya and Tanzania. Although very emaciated upon arrival due to milk deprivation, he was a strong calf who settled in rapidly and was determined to live, downing his milk as though he would never have the chance to do so again. From the beginning he thrived, although prone to spending time away from the main group to browse on his own, something that is not unusual during the process of grieving for lost loved ones. He also often leaves the group ahead of time to try and intercept his milk ration before it reaches the others out in the forest during the hours of daylight, which does not always go un-noticed by Lesanju. She alerts the Keepers by running towards them, doing an about-turn and running back pointing her trunk in the direction he has taken, demonstrating the responsible and caring side of even a baby elephant of just 2 years old.

Suguta (18th August): Just a week later, we received tiny 3 week old "Suguta" who arrived at the Nursery almost comatose, lying limp on a mattress, her face sunken and gaunt, with little life left in an emaciated skeletal body whose skin was hanging in loose folds from a tiny frame.

The calf had merely meandered into a Samburu manyatta close to the town of Maralal at 9 a.m. the previous day, desperate for protection, food and comfort, even kneeling down to try and suck up any fluid she could find, still too young to know how to use her trunk. Wondering what to do about their unusual visitor, one of the elders said he knew of a man named Daniel who worked for The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and who was on his annual leave in the neighbourhood. (Daniel works as a De-Snarer with our Chyulu De-Snaring Unit).

They managed to contact him to seek advice and he was able to tell them that under no circumstances must they feed the baby elephant anything other than water, for cows' milk was lethal for young elephant calves. He suggested that they should try and walk the baby to the Kenya Wildlife Service camp at Suguta Mar Mar where he would meet them and take it over until we in Nairobi could be contacted and a rescue arranged. The calf was very weak, and the progress to Suguta Mar Mar, some distance away, was time consuming and slow, but fortunately the baby managed to stumble along behind the men. At the time Daphne, Angela and Robert were in Tsavo, so by the time the news reached them, it was already too late that day to co-ordinate anything. Also having been alerted about the condition of the calf we doubted that she would even last the night. Amazingly, however, she did, so

Suguta a few days after arrival at the Nairobi Nursery



the next morning the rescue plans were put in motion entailing numerous mobile phone calls from distant Tsavo, where even getting a signal is problematical. An added complication was that the calf had to be driven from Suguta Mar Mar to the nearest airstrip on Mugi Ranch, a good distance away, and this could not be done without authority from the KWS Nairobi Headquarters, also time consuming! Knowing that time was not on our side, the plane was dispatched from Nairobi to Mugi airfield notwithstanding, and was already there with the Keepers when the calf arrived. By then the baby was too weak to take more than just a few mouthfuls of milk before slipping into a near comatose condition beyond even struggling. Again, it was doubtful that she would survive the flight to Nairobi.

Suguta undoubtedly owes her life to Edwin Lusichi, our Head Keeper in Nairobi, who managed to insert a Dextrose drip into an ear vein and keep her alive pending the arrival of the Vet who was then able to insert extra life supporting aids into the Dextrose drip. After having been on the drip for 24 hours, Suguta then slowly came back to life, and immediately began to take some milk. Since then, with each passing day, she has made progress, adoring of the Keepers, as though to thank them for her life. She remains glued to their side each and every day, and is even so possessive of them that she resents them paying attention to any of the other Nursery inmates! She is, indeed, the miracle baby we never expected to see alive when we returned from Tsavo several days later.

Kungu (7th September): This tiny new born calf was rescued from a well in the Namunyak Conservancy, but died on the 13th October due to severe gastroenteritis.



Suguta with Benson a few months later

Barseloi (14th September): Another tiny calf was rescued this time from a well near the Milgis Lugga in Northern Kenya. His was a very dramatic rescue involving a helicopter flight in order to get him from an area where all roads were impassable due to heavy rain and flooded luggas. He was an exuberant and very vocal little elephant, and his untimely death from pneumonia on October the 21st left us all devastated.

Mzima (16th September): We were left shell-shocked by the number of orphans we had been called upon to rescue recently! Yet another call from Tsavo West National Park alerted us that a young calf had been observed by visitors over the past few days coming alone to the Kilaguni Safari Lodge waterhole. By the third day there was no doubt that the calf was an orphan for it was losing condition rapidly and was seen desperately trying to attach itself to the visiting zebra herds.

The Trust's Mtito De-Snaring team, after a long search, managed to locate and capture the calf at noon near Mzima Springs. It was a young bull of about 16 months old, still sufficiently strong to inflict considerable damage to his captors but who, surprisingly put up little resistance as though resigned to whatever fate awaited him.

Upon arrival at the Nairobi Nursery, the new arrival, whom we named "Mzima", astonished us all, for he immediately accepted the Keepers, seemingly overjoyed to have company, albeit it human! At first he was unsure about taking milk from a hand-held bottle, but feasted on the greens that were placed in his Stockade, enjoyed being handled and even suckled on the Keepers' fingers – a stark contrast to orphan Wasessa!

Throughout the first night he enjoyed the calming influence of his two nearest Nursery neighbours, Shimba and Siria, and was able to observe them gulping down their milk at 3 hourly intervals, so by the next morning he was doing the same. In fact, he was so desperate for it that he almost swallowed the large plastic container in the process! Thereafter, having spent just one night in captivity, he was out and about the next day with the Nursery elephants, and even at the noon mudbath with the visitors, rolling around in the mud with all the others, watched by a large crowd of human spectators. Throughout all the years that we have been rearing the infant elephants, never have we had one quite like Mzima, or for that matter, quite like feisty Wasessa!

Despite settling in so smoothly, once Mzima was no longer tasked with survival in a lonely and hostile environment, depression set in as he began to contemplate the loss of his elephant mother and family. This was something that only time could heal. Like his friend "Taveta", he spent time apart from the other orphans, reflecting and remembering, the highlight of each day being his milk! By year end this gutsy, quiet and very gentle little elephant was well on the way to a full recovery having found a very special friend in Shimba.

Ndii (10th October): With the Nursery now heaving at the seams as we struggled to cope with more infants at any one time than ever before, our hearts sank when news came of the need for yet another rescue barely a week later, this time a calf of approximately 7 weeks old who was waiting to be airlifted from the Tsavo East National Park airstrip. At 7 a.m. that morning our Ziواني De-Snaring team who were camped in a remote corner of Tsavo West opposite the railway siding of Ndi, heard distressed trumpeting from elephants and went to investigate the cause. They came upon a heavily trampled area around a Breather Manhole on the Mzima-Mombasa water pipeline and saw that a small calf had fallen inside and was firmly wedged deep down. Knowing that the calf was likely to have been injured, and that the mother might return, they notified our Mobile Veterinary Unit based at the Voi Park Headquarters to come and assist, for should the mother turn up, she would have to be tranquillized so that they could extract her baby.

It took the Veterinary Unit some 3 hours to drive from Voi to the manhole, during which time there had been no sign of the mother elephant who had obviously given up all hope of retrieving her calf alive, and had moved off as far as possible with the herd. Extracting the calf from the cramped Breather Hole was no mean feat, for it entailed a great deal of force

using ropes. When it was eventually freed, she was battered and bruised from the ordeal.

The team hung around the area for sometime hoping that the baby's bellows might bring the mother back. They then drove up and down the rough track abutting the pipeline, scanning the dense Commiphora scrub for the herd, but to no avail, and with the sun beating down, and a bruised and hungry elephant baby in need of urgent attention, all hope of a happy ending to this orphan's story faded fast so they were left with no option but to accept the fact that the Nairobi Nursery would have to receive yet another elephant. We felt desperately sad for her poor elephant mother, whose grief and loss can only be imagined and we wished she could be told that her baby was in good hands, and that one day, in the fullness of time, they might well be reunited again in yet another unexpected and joyous elephant reunion.

While Ndii's bruises and abrasions would heal, we were not so optimistic about the sight in one of her eyes. However, with intensive treatment, vision returned.

Wanjalla (14th October): This tiny calf rescued from a mining camp bordering Tsavo West National Park died unexpectedly of bloat a few days later.

Lomolo (2nd December): A calf from Loisaba Ranch, aged about 16 months, had been without his poached mother for at least 2 weeks, and had also been mauled around the buttocks and tail by hyaenas. The trauma of capture, the pain of his injuries and severe emaciation from milk deprivation left him with little hope of recovery, and he died that night.

Edwin (6th December): Another bull calf was rescued from the Kimana area, and named after Edwin our Head Nairobi Keeper, who battled so valiently to save his life. By the time the rescue plane arrived to collect the calf he was almost comatose. Although a Dextrose drip was immediately inserted into an ear vein prior to being loaded onto the plane, the orphan never fully regained consciousness and died in the Nursery a few hours later.

The Rhino Maxwell: Dr. Antony Goodhead, an Animal Eye Specialist from the Johannesburg Animal Eye Hospital in South Africa, was flown to Kenya early in January for the planned surgery to try and restore some vision to rhino Maxwell's blind right eye, the original cataract operation on his left eye having proved unsuccessful. However, our hopes were soon dashed,



Mzima on the aeroplane to Nairobi having just been rescued



Ndii is rescued by our Ziواني desnaring team - Tsavo West

for just one look at Max's sunken blind eyes alerted Dr. Goodhead to the probability of a more serious condition, something that an ultrasound scan proved. Max's problem was, indeed, far more serious than just a cataract. He had been born with "congenital microphthalmia" with signs of many other intraocular problems, such as a detached retina and shriveled dysfunctional optic nerve, all of which ruled out any hope of ever being able to restore his sight.

For all of us this was devastating news, but at least Max was spared the affects of anesthesia. By simply rubbing his tummy, he obligingly collapsed in a state of sensuous bliss, and lay quietly during the ultrasound examination of both eyes. Meanwhile, Shida (now fully rehabilitated amongst the resident rhino community of Nairobi National Park) turned up threatening to disrupt events, so he was locked into his old stockade next door to Max. There, he, too, obligingly responded to a tummy rub and provided the ultrasound screen comparison for all to see between Max's dysfunctional eyes and those of a normal and healthy rhino.

At least now, we knew the worst, and began to prepare for Plan B, knowing that Max would now have to be permanently protected from wild rhinos (and Shida) all of whom would be bent on challenging his right to exist within their established territory. Whilst a blind female rhino can exist pretty well in a wild situation, all other senses being so highly sophisticated in these ancient animals, a rhino bull has to fight for rank and territory and needs to be able to size up his opponent in order to survive combat that sorts out "the men from the boys" of rhino society.

Our US Friends kindly provided the funding needed to extend Max's existing stockade in order to provide him with more space. In no time at all he had memorized the limits of his enclosure and was racing around confidently without colliding with any obstacle.

We then investigated the pros and cons of castration as a means of lowering his testosterone levels to spare sexual frustration which could trigger heightened aggression. We were mindful of a neutered rhino called "Morani" who was so gentle that even children could climb all over him up until he died of old age, having lived happily in a secured situation on Ol Pejeta Ranch. Were Max neutered he could still enjoy a peaceful life and at the same time play an important public relations role for his severely endangered species.

Apparently rhino testes, like those of their domestic cousins, the horses, are outside the body, but able to be withdrawn up beside the stomach wall at will. Therefore neutering Maxwell when the time comes should be a simple procedure that will be undertaken by a specialist from Onderstepoort University, South Africa, with the assistance of local Veterinarians eager to witness the gelding of a rhino, something none of them have ever done before! We estimate that Max will be 2 years old at the end of the year, so the neutering procedure will take place next year before he starts to show signs of becoming sexually active.

Since the arrival of Max, **Shida** has always been obsessed by his presence so throughout the year has been a daily visitor and sometimes a twice daily caller! The two huff and puff at each other and enjoy horn sparring through the stout partitioning poles of their respective stockades, bouts that gives Max an adrenalin rush! The daily visits of Shida are the highlights of Max's dark world, every arrival eagerly anticipated

even before we humans have any inkling of Shida's approach! Max's tail goes up denoting anticipation, and then he begins to race around his Stockade in a high state of excitement.

Shida's close proximity to home is good news for us at a time when rhino horn is fetching record prices in the Middle and Far East where the growing opulence of expanding human populations threatens to plunge these ancient animals into oblivion – animals that are deserving of respect, Nature having concluded that they are perfectly adapted for their role within the environment, for they have remained unchanged by evolution throughout millennia. However, Shida's regular appearances have a downside for us as well for he demolishes the flower pots around the Staff quarters, puts dents in cars to test his horn, and even tries to actually intrude inside our houses! The electric fence experts have to be regularly summoned to re-activate the hot wires around sensitive areas of the Trust compound to remind Shida about places that are out of bounds for even orphaned rhinos!

Aside from lack of vision, and the special circumstances under which Max has to live as a result, unlike our other rhino orphans, he has suffered periodic bouts of diarrhea, which surprised us, for rhinos usually have a cast-iron constitution given the correct milk formula. At one stage, we decided to place the dung of wild rhinos into Max's Stockade, thinking that this might provide him with necessary gut flora that perhaps he was lacking in a confined captive situation, for the dung middens of rhinos are an integral part of wild rhino daily life. We didn't, however, bank on Shida's instant reaction to the scent of rhinos other than that of Max on his home turf! It triggered instant aggression! He spent days stalking around the perimeter of Max's Stockade and threatening any passer-by, until the foreign dung was hurriedly removed to be replaced only by his own instead!

We cured one of Max's particularly persistent diarrhea bouts with a dose of green clay designed for oral use and sold in the chemist shops of France. This proved so effective that it bunged him up entirely, threatening a rectum prolapse from straining and this was an even greater cause for concern in the light of Shida's rectum prolapse last year and the surgical intervention needed to correct it! Fortunately, however, in Max's case, what was outside and should have been inside, returned to its rightful place, so all ended well!

Maalim (19th December): This day brought us another Christmas surprise – a tiny newborn rhino calf who had been rejected by his mother in Tsavo's Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary, and who weighed just 25 kilos and stood only some 8 inches tall! At the request of the Kenya Wildlife Service he was named "Maalim" for the Ranger that saved his life. Although weak on arrival, having been without a milk feed for some 3 days, he soon regained some strength, charming all who saw him, who found it difficult to believe that this tiny "critter" would be the size of Maxwell in just two short years!

THE VOI UNIT

Following the death of orphan Mweiga on 22nd December, 2007, witnessed by her elephant attendant of the day, who happened to be Burra, none of the Voi Unit orphans returned to the Stockades for a full 3 months, whereas when Mweiga was living, they came regularly, always detailing one of their number to keep her company on a daily basis and even sleep with her at night back in the Stockades. In order to be on



Barseloi's rescue



Kungu's rescue



Wanjalla's rescue



Maalim with Roan Carr-Hartley



Shida



Maalim rescue



Maalim

what became known as “Mweiga duty”, the Voi Unit Orphans who were now Keeper independent and out and about with the wild herds, faithfully took turn and turn about to fulfill this role. They never missed a day until the day Mweiga dropped dead on her way back to the Night Stockades in the evening having just enjoyed a wonderful mudbath in amongst the whole group. It took a few minutes for Burra and the Keepers to understand that Mweiga had not merely stumbled, but when the awful truth dawned, it came as a profound shock to all. Burra let out a loud cry of anguish and immediately ran to Natumi’s group, who were browsing at the foot of the nearby Mazinga Hill just behind the Stockades. They in turn sought out Emily’s group, who were feeding further afield. All then spent time together drawing comfort from one another as they mourned the loss of a family member. That Burra had managed to pass on the news to them was obvious, for from that very day three full months passed before any of them returned to the Stockades again. Then Emily came alone one night and carefully inspected the Stockades to satisfy herself that Mweiga had, indeed, gone. Natumi, however, needed no such reassurance and had again separated from Emily’s unit, taking with her Edie, Mukwaju, Mweya, Seraa, Thoma, Lolokwe, Nyiro and Burra.

We found this development strangely moving for it was proof again that elephants communicate sophisticated messages to one another. With Mweiga now dead, they no longer needed to dispatch an escort to keep her company. When they did eventually turn up again in mid March, having overcome the shock of her death, they all looked well fed and happy, and greeted their Keepers with loving rumbles, excited trumpeting and urinating, the way they greet one another after even just a day’s absence. Natumi’s group lingered for about 2 hours at the Stockades with their human family, and spent a long time in the Stockade once occupied by Mweiga. It was almost as though they were all bent on paying their respects to a lost loved one.

Having been in constant use since the early 50’s, we decided to rest the Voi Stockades pending the arrival of the next Nursery orphans in 2009, rains permitting. These will be Lesanju, Lempaute, Sinya, Siria, Shimba, Wasessa and maybe Taveta and Mzima assuming they are again in fine fettle. With the Voi Unit elephants all now with the wild herds, the only occupants remaining at the Voi Stockades were “Serena” who was joined later on in the year by little “Rongai” from Nairobi and later still by two orphaned kudu bull calves, named “Mkuki” (meaning spear) and Njia (meaning pathway). Mkuki was orphaned at a ranch of that name and Njia was found on a pathway near the Park staff lines, his mother having been killed by either a lion or leopard during the night.

Zebra Serena was orphaned in Amboseli National Park when her zebra mother was killed by lions. The Voi Elephant Keepers hand-reared her from newborn, along with another orphaned kudu named Rukinga, both of whom used to accompany Mweiga while she was still alive. Rukinga has since grown up and joined a wild group that lives behind the Stockades. Since the death of Mweiga, aside from looking after the two remaining young kudu orphans, the role of the Voi Keepers is to patrol the Park in order to try and monitor the whereabouts of the orphans, combining this with overseeing the working of the Trust’s three Windmills in the Southern section of Tsavo. When the Aruba dam dries, as it does now every year, having silted up over the years, our Windmills provide the only sources of permanent water within the tourist hub of the Park other

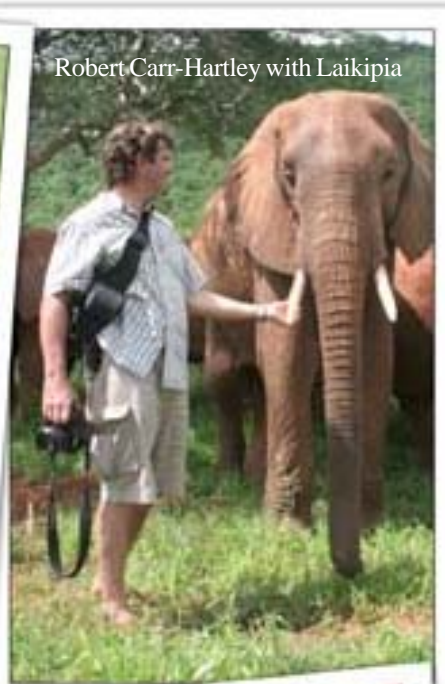
than the only two permanent rivers further afield in the Park, i.e. the Galana and the Tsavo. It is also important that the Keepers are at hand back at the Stockades should any of the orphans return in need of help, bearing in mind that Lissa brought her firstborn back so that a wire snare could be removed from its leg, and Dika also returned with a snare around a back leg which had to be cut out, while Ndume had an arrow wound and Mweya a swollen foot that needed attention.

One of our longstanding foster-parents was thrilled to come across Natumi’s unit whilst traveling the Park in May, escorted by a Staff member who immediately recognized them as our orphans, Burra with the torn ears being very distinctive in amongst a group of 10 other sub-adults many of whom were roughly the same size and age, something that would be very unusual in a natural wild herd. Moreover, they paid no attention whatsoever to the proximity of the vehicle.

An exciting event occurred on the 30th January – the reappearance of Big Boy Edo after an absence spanning more than two years. Edo, now in his twentieth year, was born in Amboseli National Park in March 1989, the calf of the then famous Matriarch named “Emily”, within whose family is another very famous modern day elephant named “Echo”, the star of many documentaries featuring the Amboseli elephants. Edo’s mother, Emily, died having ingested glass, bottle tops and batteries in amongst edible waste thrown in a Lodge garbage pit when Edo was just 6 months old. He shared Nursery time with other now Big Boys, namely Dika, Ndume and Uaso all of whom were seen during the course of 2007 whilst Edo was obviously engaged on a long walk-about further afield. Of all the Trust’s now Big Boys, it is 12 year old Uaso who is seen most frequently, often in amongst either Emily’s or Natumi’s units, sometimes with Lissa and her family and more recently when Mpenzi and her newborn were with Lissa’s family.

The main 2007 October/November rains fell far short of expectations, and many wild animals, as well as the wild elephants, spent time in the area around Irima Hill, which had received more rainfall than the interior of the Park, so the Keepers had no difficulty catching up with them. In February a pack of wild dogs took to ambushing one of the few remaining waterholes near the Irima Hill, but seepages from the ageing main water pipeline that runs through the Park from Mzima Springs in Tsavo West to Mombasa proved a blessing for the Park’s prey species, providing alternative drinking places. During a routine patrol the Keepers were excited to find a very big wild bull with one exceptionally large and perfectly straight tusk drinking at the waterhole, as well as 3 large tuskless cows with their 3 juvenile calves, only one of whom had sprouted tusks. Obviously the ivory trade is perpetuating the tuskless gene, probably fathered by the very old, and very ugly, but huge tuskless bull whom Daphne spotted at the Voi Safari Lodge waterhole. A flopped ear, no tail and an overly huge trunk did nothing to add to his looks, but he was obviously of high rank, because other bulls with long tusks deferred to him constantly.

The April/May rains relieved the situation briefly, filling inland waterholes once more, and promoting a green flush, but again they fell short of expectations, albeit releasing wildlife from their dry season range and dependence on permanent water sources for a time - places that are often ambushed by lions,



Emily's baby Eve

Robert Carr-Hartley with Laikipia



Emily with her baby Eve greeting Mischak



Mpenzi with her calf Asante and Lissa's calves Lara and Lugard

or, as mentioned earlier, the wild dogs who have reappeared in Southern Tsavo having not been seen for many years. Natumi's group returned to the Stockades on three occasions during May, twice with a wild teenaged bull in tow, and had fun indulging in all their usual Stockade games around the compound before leaving and meeting up with Emily's group who were feeding on the western side of Mazinga Hill at the time. All then were observed joining a large wild herd that headed towards the Voi River Circuit, the friendly wild boy still amongst our orphans. The orphans were all spotted again towards the end of May drinking at a drying waterhole and on that occasion when a large wild herd began to approach wanting a drink, it was intercepted by Laikipia (from Emily's unit), who did his best to divert them, obviously anxious to save what water was left for his own orphaned family!

During August, although Lissa and her family were spotted by our Keeper patrol, and had orphan Mpenzi with them, Emily and Natumi's groups, as well as most of the wild elephant community, had been forced to move further afield, bushfires having swept across the Irima and Ndara plains reducing what little fodder remained to ashes. They sourced a lush patch just outside the boundary of the Park on Ngutuni Ranch and it was there that a German TV unit managed to catch up with them to film them in September. They were still in amongst many other wild elephants but upon being called by the Keepers, left their wild friends to come and greet their human family with the same joy and enthusiasm they extend to each other after each separation.

Until the next rains broke in November, it was a very tough dry season that all the elephants, including the orphans, had to endure, but the fact that they saw no reason to return to the Stockades for a handout of Copra supplement during that time, showed that they were coping admirably. Following the first rains in November, Edie returned to the Stockades alone, and having spent a short time with the Keepers, again left to join up with Lissa's family.

It was later on in the month that Mpenzi and her week old calf were seen with Lissa, her three calves and Uaso and that Aitong, Tsavo and several others, including Mweya with the sore leg were spotted in amongst wild elephants in the vicinity of the Voi Safari Lodge. There was, however, no sign of Emily who had not been seen for 3 months. We were certain that her first calf was due soon, and Joseph Sauni, our Voi Head Keeper was doing daily patrols in an effort to locate her, having witnessed her being mated by a wild bull 2 years ago.

During the late evening of the 10th December the Keeper Patrol spotted her standing under a tree on a rocky outcrop not far from the Voi Stockades surrounded by some of her orphaned family and attended also by two very unfriendly wild cows who aggressively resisted any closer approach by the human Keepers. Early the next morning the Keepers returned to find Emily still there under the same tree, and beneath her, shuffling around on wobbly legs, was a minute little newborn enjoying the attention and protection of the entire group, including the two wild "midwives". Emily and her entourage then crossed the road in front of the Keepers' vehicle but again the wild Midwives sent the human bystanders packing! However, after another 4 days, the wild Midwives separated, and Emily brought her newborn baby back to the Voi Stockades to show her human family, who were then able to determine that the calf was a little female, whom we subsequently decided to name "Eve". Emily was totally relaxed throughout, confident that her baby was in good hands with a plethora of eager Nannies watching its every movement.

However, after the orphans had all taken a drink at the Stockade water trough, and drained it of water, (fortunately as it turned out) the baby inadvertently suddenly stumbled and fell in. The orphans reacted instantly, all crowding around reaching down with their trunks, desperate to try and extract the precious infant, but it soon became clear that they could do with a little help. Two Keepers then jumped into the trough and lifted the baby out, having up until then resisted the temptation to

handle it, thinking that this might not be popular with its mother. However, Emily didn't mind at all, and once the baby was back in the fold and lovingly embraced by all, the entire group decided to leave. The Keepers and Robert Carr-Hartley accompanied them, as of old, walking in amongst them, while the baby ran in and round their legs, just as though they, too, were part of the elephant family! What a special privilege to be accepted so trustingly by what are now, ostensibly, wild elephants, and to have been able to share in the joy of their latest arrival! It doesn't come much better than that, and is a wonderful reward for the many years of hard work that have brought that young mother to where she is today and offered her a second chance of a quality of life in wild terms!

Emily was just 1 month old when she arrived in the Nairobi Nursery in September 1993 having fallen down a disused pit latrine near the Manyani Prison Camp and subsequently rejected by her elephant mother who failed to recognize her because of the foul smelling human waste that covered her. It was only with a great deal of difficulty that we managed to get her through the fragile Nursery years for she suffered greatly from stomach problems as a result of such an unsavoury beginning in life.

Aitong is the next ex Nursery raised orphan likely to give birth so the Keeper Patrol will be on the lookout for her hoping for another pleasant surprise for the orphans' human family!

Others that were not so fortunate: In October four older orphans who had been taken directly to the Voi elephant Stockades sadly died, one rescued near Buchuma Gate in Tsavo East suffering from bullet wounds, whom we named **Askari**, another, also from Tsavo East, as a result of sepsis from a poisoned arrow wound, whom we named **Mshale**. Two more rescued orphans were already dead upon arrival at the Voi Stockades, one rescued at Satao Camp in Tsavo East, and the other a suspected poaching victim from the Ziواني area of Tsavo West National Park. These poaching victims are clear evidence that poaching is on the rise once more, the price paid to a poacher for illegal ivory having risen since the advent of the Chinese from K. Shs. 300/- per kilo to K. Shs. 5,000/- . Tribesmen are once again resorting to their bows and poisoned arrows now that the Middlemen Buyers are on hand.

ITHUMBA ORPHANS

January is usually a very hot, dry month, but this year intermittent rain showers in the North relieved temperatures and kept the country green a little longer following the disappointing main rains of October/November 2007. When temperatures rise to an uncomfortable level for the orphans to cope with during hot dry seasons, they take to inserting a trunk down their throat to draw up reserves of stomach water to spray over their bodies, a phenomenon first recorded by David Sheldrick in the 50's and one that was met with disbelief by the Scientific community at the time. It was, however, later recorded on camera during the rescue of Sobo way back in 1970 who was one of Tsavo East's earlier orphans. Since then it has been a common occurrence amongst the Ithumba orphans and an event featured often in the monthly Keepers' Diaries.

By the beginning of the year, it was already usual for the Ithumba orphans to separate into two distinct groups, the older members of the herd under the leadership of the overall

Matriarch, Yatta and incorporating Nasalot, Kinna, Mulika, Tomboi, Taita, Napasha, and sometimes Wendi, Selengai and Buchuma, who then travel further afield than the youngsters, and their Keepers. Yatta (a Tsavo orphan) will turn 10 years old towards the end of 2009, Mulika, (ex Meru Park) is a year younger than Yatta, although larger in stature), Nasalot was born in 2000 (from the Lake Turkana remnant population) and Kinna, (also a Meru National Park orphan) is a month or so younger than Yatta.)

All these older Matriarchs, save Kinna, have chosen favourites drawn from the younger set - Yatta has Olmalo, Nasalot has Orok, later also taking on Kenze, while Mulika has selected Selengai. Kinna, however, has instead carved out the special role of Chief Disciplinarian and as such keeps a close watch on the antics of any over exuberant boys who overstep the boundaries of good elephant conduct. Regular strength testing sparring amongst the young bulls is an integral part of every day life amongst the young bulls, but it can deteriorate into a more serious fight should one happen to lose his cool. Disruptive behaviour is not tolerated by the older females, and nor by un-involved bulls, so it always ends in intervention by a third party. Serious fighting is a definite "No, No" within the female units of elephant society.

Sometimes the older elephants, led by Yatta, separate from the youngsters as soon as their Stockade Gates are opened in the morning; at other times they escort the youngsters out to a selected feeding area and sometimes they return to the Stockades after dark long after the youngsters have been secured. Very occasionally they spend an entire night away but nevertheless, regularly keep in touch with the younger set, usually on a daily basis, meeting up with them either to, from, or at the noon mudbath, or else somewhere out in the bush at an obviously pre-determined location.

Normally an elephant Matriarch would be very reluctant to leave the younger members of her family so this pattern of behaviour amongst the orphans reinforces the touching and implicit trust they have of their Keepers and the sub-Matriarchs who instantly take over the leadership role. The incentive for the older elephants to separate and leave the youngsters is certainly a longing to be able to meet up with wild elephant friends unencumbered by a deterrent human presence. It is interesting that whenever the older orphans decide to go their own way and leave the youngsters behind, there is no sign of distress from the young, indicating that somehow they must understand what has been decided beforehand! If this were not so, they would certainly become exceedingly concerned.

Sub-Matriarchs relish supervision of the young, something every female elephant naturally loves to undertake, irrespective of age. The principal Sub-Matriarchs of the Ithumba Unit are those that were Mini Matriarchs during their Nursery period - Sunyei, Naserian, Sian, Galana, Sidai, Loijuk and more recently Makena. Of these Sunyei and Galana appear more senior than the others.

By the beginning of the year it was quite obvious that our older Ithumba orphans were fraternizing regularly with wild elephants, even though the wild herds remained illusive by steering well clear of the Keepers. However, the same pattern as that of the Voi Unit is unfolding in that as long as youngsters remain Keeper dependent, the older elephants will return regularly to keep in touch. Only when the entire Ithumba



Rafiki with the Ithumba Orphans at the mudwallow



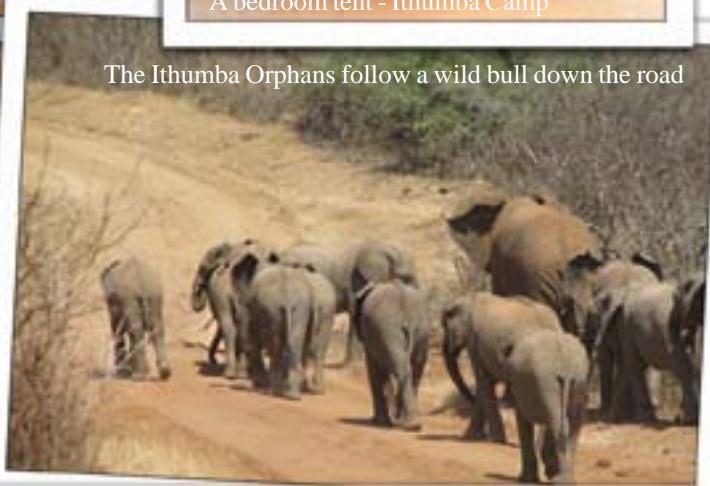
Rafiki follows the Ithumba Orphans



A bedroom tent - Ithumba Camp



Wendi enjoying an audience



The Ithumba Orphans follow a wild bull down the road



Rafiki with Buchuma



Ithumba Camp Sitting and Dining area



Wild bulls drink at the Ithumba stockades



Feeding time at Ithumba

herd is old enough and sufficiently confident enough to be independent of their human family will the final transition have been accomplished in the North.

The older elephants also regularly decide to treat the youngsters to their day-long company; leaving the stockades together with them, feeding in amongst them throughout the morning, going to the noon milk and mudbath venue with them, and joining in the fun at the mudwallow all together, browsing together in the afternoon and returning together to the Night Stockades in the evening. On such days, only when the youngsters are in their Stockades for the night does Yatta's group head back out for the night. Such occasions are always relished by the younger elephants. However, there are also times when some members of the older group, specifically Tomboi and Wendi opt for a quiet time with the Juniors, or sleep in the Stockades rather than join their elders on nocturnal adventures. At such times being older than the usual Junior Matriarchs, Wendi assumes the Leadership role. Tomboi spent a full week as a "Junior" later on in the year recuperating at the Stockades when he came back one evening limping, having sprained his leg. Kora opted to keep him company during his convalescence which we found touching.

Tomboi is now 6 years old and surprised us in January when he decided to try being an adventurous loner, often choosing to travel on his own away from the Group Matriarchs, and only meeting up with them again much later at a point out in the bush. One thing, however, is clear from all these comings and goings, and bush rendez-vous, and that is that there must be a good deal of very subtle communication hidden to human hearing going on between the elephants. Elephant perception is mysterious.

It has been fascinating to observe how elephant discipline is meted out. It takes the form of a guilty party being driven out of the main group, forced to spend time in isolation before being accepted back again. This is a very severe punishment for a youngster dependent on the protection of the herd for survival, and who by nature is timid and fearful, a fact that is frequently illustrated within the Keepers' Diaries when even just a dikdik or the croaking of a frog in the mudbath triggers a stampede! All then rush back to their Keepers seeking protection until the senior elephants regroup to form a united front to confront the threat. This is usually just a deterrent demonstration with charging, trumpeting and the knocking over of small shrubs until the culprit is firmly in full retreat when a full blown chase ensues!

It was a grueling journey through corrugated deviations on the Mombasa highway for Makena, Chyulu and Lenana when the convoy carrying them left the Nairobi Nursery on the 16th June. Once at Ithumba, Lenana and Chyulu were first to be unloaded having traveled together in the lead truck, followed by Makena in the second. Lenana and Chyulu, who were orphaned older than Makena, were far more relaxed and took their milk before investigating their new home, but Makena refused hers, and was obviously upset that her world had suddenly been turned upside down. As usual, it was not long before all the Ithumba orphans arrived in a rush, and this is always overwhelming for newcomers. Recognition by those that had shared Nursery time with the newcomers was instant. Sian, the last to share a stable with Chyulu, rushed to her side as did Loijuk who went on to welcome Lenana enthusiastically, while Naserian and Lualeni concentrated on comforting Makena who was clearly disoriented. All the others crowded around,

pushing and shoving in order to be able to lay a trunk lovingly over the backs of the newcomers, while yet others rolled on the ground in an expression of sheer joy.

Thirty young elephants were extremely happy that day and that afternoon the new arrivals were shepherded out into the bush for their first introduction to their new home. The excitement obviously stirred the curiosity of 4 wild bulls who turned up to investigate what was going on, but the orphans were so engrossed with the new arrivals that they paid no attention to this wild presence. However, at that point in time it was an unusual event but significant in that Lenana, Chyulu and Makena, on their first day in Northern Tsavo, were treated to what for the others had been so elusive for such a long time – members of the wild community sufficiently confident to approach the Orphans' Stockades during daylight hours instead of only under cover of darkness.

It was a red letter day in June when a very large wild bull with one long tusk took a mudbath in the orphans' wallow quite unperturbed by the presence of the Keepers who were sitting under a tree taking lunch as our elephants were dusting themselves nearby. In July wild elephants came to drink at the Stockades on at least 12 different nights, and Yatta's group returned one evening with a wild bull in tow. Come August the wild bulls were actually seeking the company of our older elephants on an almost daily basis, waiting for their return at the Stockade water trough and intercepting them out in the bush. It was then that instructions were then given to leave the doors to the older orphans' stockade open at night so that Yatta and her satellites would be free to mingle with wild elephants at will throughout the night as well as during the hours of daylight. Thereafter, this is what they have been doing ever since.

Aside from the prestige the Orphans' Programme has brought Kenya through worldwide television and press exposure, the presence of our elephants at Ithumba in Northern Tsavo has persuaded the wild herds to return en masse to an area they abandoned for so long due to the poaching of the 70's, 80's and early 90's. This follows 6 years of nocturnal surveillance by the wild bull scouts and has brought another 3,000 square miles of pristine wilderness back into production which will benefit faunally from their presence. The elephants will begin opening up the thickets, thereby promoting the growth of grass for the grazers, grass that has long been inhibited by dense overhead shade of Commiphora scrub that favours only bush dwelling browsers. For thirty years the Northern Area of Tsavo has lain dormant due to the absence of elephants who are the Wilderness Gardeners. By May, however, it was getting their attention again, for the Keepers were beginning to encounter wild elephants on an almost daily basis as they walked with the orphans out in the bush. Footprints left in the sands of the seasonal Tiva riverbed as well as holes tunneled by elephant trunks to expose sand-filtered fresher water testified to the fact that the elephants were back. This, in itself, was reason for celebration!

One wild bull, then attached himself to our orphaned herd and for a month or two became more or less a permanent fixture, so much so that he was given the name "Rafiki", meaning "friend". He towered over Yatta's group, proud and powerful, yet patient and gentle as he waited for them whenever they brought Olmalo and Orok back for their milk feeds. When Yatta's group returned to their stockade to enjoy their copra-cake handout in the evenings, he waited patiently at the water trough until they were ready to join him for the

night's outing and even on one occasion plucked up sufficient courage to actually walk into the stockades with them! During the entire month of August seldom a day passed when he was not with them. Foster-parents staying at the Ithumba Camp were treated to the extra thrill of seeing Rafiki joining in the fun at the noon mudbath, the younger elephants watching in awe from the sidelines until he lay down and then clambering all over him! He humoured the young bulls who hero-worshipped him by allowing them to investigate him all over, touching him with their trunks, while the young females, eager to draw his attention, became flirtatious and exuberant in his presence, especially Wendi and Selengai who romped around knocking down small bushes! When the Keepers were leading the herd back home in the evenings, he walked quietly some distance behind, and one night surprised the Keepers by sleeping just outside the youngsters' stockade with his head resting on the large rock at its entrance.

Because he was so tolerant of the Keepers, at first we wondered whether he might in fact be one of the early orphans of years gone by. However, the only likely candidate would be Chuma who is now 23 years old, but Rafiki appeared older than that. Perhaps he was an orphan from David Sheldrick's time, but again he seemed a bit too young for that! A more likely explanation is that he is, in fact, just one of the wild bulls who have been visiting our elephants under cover of darkness for the past 6 years and has accepted the presence of the Keepers having been "informed" by the orphans that he has nothing to fear from these particular people who, unlike others, save elephant lives instead of taking them!

As August moved into September, Rafiki spread the message so that more and more of his wild male friends turned up to drink at the Stockade water trough and mingle with our orphans, although at first they did not have the confidence to stick around quite as much as he. Nevertheless, the presence of all these handsome big elephants fired up our little orphan bulls, who also took to attention seeking by engaging one another more vigorously than usual in pushing tests of strength. Tomboi, Taita, Napasha, Rapsu, Kora, Madiba, Kamboyo, Zurura, Ndomot, Buchuma, Challa, and Kenze were all very much involved in this "boys stuff", shoving each other around on a daily basis, always with a side ways glance at Rafiki and his friends hoping to impress!

By October, Rafiki took time out, returning only every now and then, but always with more and more friends in tow to introduce to the fresh water at the orphans' drinking trough. They drained it regularly on a nightly basis, and were often still there in the morning, waiting patiently beside the empty trough until the Keepers opened the Gate Valve to re-fill it! Meanwhile the borehole pump worked relentlessly, as did the De-Salinator and we wondered how we were going to cope if the entire elephant community turned up every night until the onset of the rains!

Over the years, the Ithumba Keepers have become accustomed to surprises, but one that was unexpected and which left them anxious was when Yatta 's group returned to base early one morning minus Ol Malo. Because Ol Malo was virtually an appendage of Yatta, never having been separated from her before, everyone feared the worst especially as Yatta reappeared again in the evening, still without Ol Malo. However, at dawn the next morning, the greatest surprise of all took place for who should turn up at the stockades first

thing in the morning, but Ol Malo, escorted back, not by one of the orphans, but instead by a large wild bull, who calmly helped himself to some water as she rushed up to greet all her little friends and enjoy the milk ration she had missed the previous day! Having delivered her back safely, and had a drink of water himself, he then left without her.

That day, she joined the youngsters when they left for the bush, but was visibly restless, rumbling a great deal and revolving around with outspread ears. Suddenly, she sped off in a hurry and when Yatta's group returned to the Stockades that evening, Ol Malo was firmly back in the fold. Several days later, however, Ol Malo sprung another surprise on the Keepers by detaching herself from the main group as they were heading to the mudbath. Nor did she join them there but instead arrived long after they had all left. However, a Keeper had remained behind anticipating such an eventuality and escorted her out to meet up with the others who were browsing some way off. She would probably have done this anyway without a human escort, but humans tend to be creatures of little faith! Perhaps Ol Malo has a special age-mate within one of the wild herds in the area, whom she seeks out from time to time, as, indeed, do some of the Voi Unit orphans.

Other Elephant Orphans: The Trust's orphaned elephant expertise is often in demand elsewhere in the world where elephant orphans are taken in from time to time. This year our input has been needed mainly in Zambia where The David Shepherd Foundation is emulating our example, having successfully, and with our help, reared an elephant named Phoenix. Sadly, Phoenix subsequently succumbed to a tick borne disease whilst in the process of rehabilitation, but three other young Zambian orphans remain in their care. It has been for these, many of whom are still infants, that our advice has been sought.

Similarly, we have been called upon to help with two baby forest elephant orphans in Gabon, but sadly both died, the language barrier and official apathy proving insurmountable obstacles.

However, a little elephant orphan named Thembe in Shamwari Game Reserve, South Africa, has been more fortunate and benefited from our input. She is thriving and has a cuddly sheep as a constant companion.

Before extending advice, we are always careful to establish that the orphan in question is not simply being reared for commercial purposes, but with the aim of being returned to where it belongs when grown i.e. in the wild, to enjoy a quality of life in wild terms amongst its own kind.

Other Trust Orphans: We were devastated by the death of the Trust's two little orphaned zebra foals, Rongai, who died of sudden bloat in October, and Serena who was almost grown and doing so well, but was taken by lions just two days after Rongai's death. However the orphaned kudu named Rukinga, who was reared by our Voi Elephant Keepers along with Serena, has been a success story having joined a wild kudu group that lives around the Voi Elephant Stockades. The Keepers spot him frequently and whilst he is always tempted to renew his acquaintance with his human Keeper, his wild peers are, understandably, less keen, so rather than be separated from them, he follows their example, and after a



Mohammed with Mkuki and Njia

moment of hesitation, bounds off with them. The two other baby male kudus currently in the care of the Voi Keepers are doing well, one named Mkuki and the other Njia.

Meanwhile the orphaned duiker named "Shungi," has also been a huge success and is now fully rehabilitated. He was found by a Goat Herder in Malindi, and subsequently confiscated by the Wildlife authorities and sent to our Voi Elephant Stockades. Later he was brought up to Nairobi as a tiny fawn sitting quietly in the lap of one of the Voi Keepers! Shungi is now full grown, but turns up from time to time to enjoy a hand-out of either banana or carrot and a romp with the Carr-Hartley cat. He now sports sizeable needle-sharp horns, so the cat is careful to pounce on him from the back, avoiding contact with the front! However, now that he is adult and obviously aspiring to securing a wife, his visits are becoming more sporadic and milk and hand-outs no longer an inducement. Duikers are ancient in origin, said to be closer to the original forest ancestor than all others, and like the rhinos, fiercely territorial, so Shungi is obviously occupied establishing a territory for himself and involved in the ancient rituals that establish and reinforce ownership.

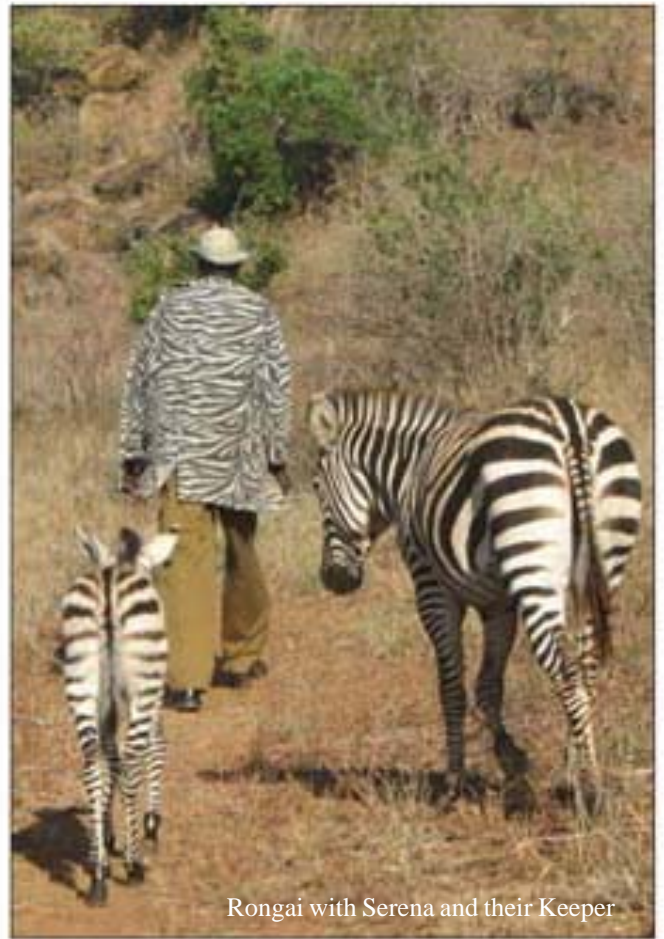
Up at Ithumba, our Elephant Keepers are also rearing an orphaned baby duiker which is doing well, having been rescued by the community. We feel it important to encourage our Keepers to extend care to all orphaned wild species other than the elephants or rhinos for in so doing they come to understand and appreciate the wondrous sophistication of all animals

Meanwhile "Mbii", the baby dikdik who was reared by the Head Gardener at the Trust's Field Headquarters is now the proud mother of a baby, (and no doubt pregnant with another), so she is another success story. Her presence in the vicinity of the compound has encouraged numerous other dikdiks to enjoy the enhanced safety from predators this area presents.

Several orphaned baby buffaloes came in during the year, but these are always handed over to one of the neighbouring Ranch owners to be reared amongst their cattle and be able to benefit from fresh cows' milk which is very similar to that of their own buffalo mother.

NEW TRUST INITIATIVES

Peregrine Land: Two rivers, the Athi and the seasonal Mito watercourse demarcate part of the boundary of the giant Tsavo National Park. Both are particularly sensitive boundaries, for



Rongai with Serena and their Keeper

the other side is home to mainly Wakamba people, notorious for both subsistence and commercial bushmeat poaching, with some old die-hards proficient poisoned arrow elephant and rhino poachers as well. The Trust has long been committed to purchasing as much land as possible to create a conservancy as a buffer to the Park along these two sensitive river boundaries, something that David Sheldrick felt was of paramount importance and almost succeeded in establishing before his death. On this land is the Trust's Field Headquarters from which all our Tsavo field projects are co-ordinated. There a new Central Workshop, Stores and Staff accommodation are all nearing completion while the "Saa Nane House", situated nearby on the banks of the Athi river boundary hosts Trust donors, as well as our US Board Members and ourselves whenever the need arises.

Thanks to our US Friends, and our U.K. donors as well, the Trust has purchased a new Supercub aircraft, which will assist the Kenya Wildlife Service with aerial surveillance over Tsavo, and which will be based at our Airfield opposite the Field Headquarters where a Hangar and fuel Store will shortly be constructed.

Now that the water pipeline has been laid from the Athi river Holding Tanks up to another large tank constructed beside the airfield, fresh water can be fed by gravity to the Field Headquarters where a vegetable garden is already productive with the local community turning up in growing numbers to purchase fresh vegetables at prices that just cover the cost of the seeds and the wages of the Gardeners. Fruit trees have also been planted, and when mature fruit will also be available to the community, something that currently is scarce in this area.



Views from Saa Nane House



Saa Nane House



Kaluku Tree Nurseries



Maveki, in charge of Kaluku's vegetable gardens



Peregrine land - abutting Tsavo East National Park



The Trust's new Supercub aircraft for aerial surveillance



Umani Springs



Umani Camp

Other plans afoot that will help benefit the community include fish farming bred in experimental ponds at the Field Headquarters to provide an alternative source of protein to the people in the hopes that they will then desist from subsisting on bushmeat.

Yet another community initiative currently in progress at our Field Manager's farm upstream from the Trust House, but which will eventually be moved to the Field H.Q. is the Zero Grazing Project whereby better milking goats are penned and fed, (but also allowed out to forage under supervision each day, since the Trust believes in a quality of life for all animals, whether wild or domesticated.) The Zero Grazing experiment under the supervision of Lionel Nutter (our Field Manager) has proved encouraging with the goats all regularly giving birth to twins! The aim is to try and persuade the local people to keep fewer but better quality goats under closer supervision to yield both more milk and meat and be less damaging to the environment. Whether or not this will appeal to the community remains open to question, since numbers still count being a man's wealth and the means by which he pays a bride price. However, we are hopeful that wisdom will prevail as time goes by and that the people will see the advantage of up-grading their goats in an arid and fragile environment.

Every year the *Acacia tortilis* trees yield extremely nutritious pods which fall like manna from Heaven at the height of the dry season, and which nourish all wild creatures. By collecting and storing these pods for their goats, besides growing what grass they can during the wet seasons, the community might well be able to manage their goats more proficiently. An added advantage would be the incentive to preserve the *Acacia tortilis* trees rather than turning them into charcoal!

The Purchase of the Umani Springs Camp Lease: The Chyulu Hills, abutting Tsavo West is a vital water catchment area for the arid surrounding lowlands. Encompassing some 600 volcanic cones, the hills are comprised of lava ash, where heavy morning dews and mists attracted by the emergent forest filter through the ash to the basement complex beneath and run as underground rivers to surface as crystal clear springs many miles away, one of being the famous Mzima of Tsavo West and another the Umani Springs some 14 kms. from Kibwezi town on the Main Nairobi-Mombasa road. Umani is also the only permanent source of groundwater for the Chyulu Hills National Park, upon which all wildlife in the forested hills are dependent and the only source of water for the human population of Kibwezi town.

Surrounding Umani Springs is a patch of emergent forest already home to endemic butterflies (and probably many other rare species as yet unclassified), but which is severely threatened through illegal logging. The area falls within the jurisdiction of the Forest Department who several years ago leased part of the area for a tented tourist camp. This came up for sale recently. The lease has some 15 years to run, with the option of renewal, and because the owners were anxious that both the Springs and forest be protected, they agreed to sell the lease to the Trust rather than to a commercial Tour Operator. Hence, the Trust is now the owner of the lease, having acquired it for the sole purpose of protecting both the springs and the forest for posterity.

We plan to style a Self-Help facility which will be staffed, maintained and managed by the Trust to generate revenue for the neighbouring community and Park, and hopefully

encourage the community to desist from poaching, logging, and the burning of charcoal. Our Chyulu De-Snaring team is already based there and has received positive support from the Forest Department, who authorized them to arrest any illegal loggers and poachers. They also enjoy the support of the Warden in charge of nearby Chyulu National Park as well as the Warden of Tsavo West. Ultimately, it is the Trust's intention to try and get the Umani Springs and surrounding forest incorporated into the Chyulu National Park boundary so that its future can be better assured.

THE DE-SNARING PROJECT & BUSHMEAT CRISIS

The bushmeat menace has reached critical proportions. Due to the increased unemployment, a down-turn in tourism and the political mayhem of the beginning of the year subsistence bushmeat poaching is at an unprecedented level. "Lamping" at night has also increased, whereby animals are blinded and confused by torchlight and bicycle bells before being hamstrung and incapacitated. The commercial bushmeat trade is now Big Business with wild animal meat of all species exported to the Middle East, the capitals of Europe where people of West African origin regard it as a delicacy (irrespective of the health hazards it presents, Ebola being just one) and even to West Africa itself, where wildlife has largely already been eliminated. It is also offered for sale commercially in Kenya, even found in some up-market butcheries where it is sold as domestic mutton or beef. Hence, wildlife in Kenya is in serious jeopardy and dwindling rapidly. Unless the Government begins to take note of endless warnings coming from all quarters, and takes decisive action to instill more deterrent sentencing of offenders, wildlife in this country is set on a course to extinction and with it the tourist industry. A more recent added threat is the presence of large numbers of Chinese who have been encouraged into the country to work on Government contracts, and who regard anything that moves as a delicacy!

That the Trust's six anti-poaching De-Snaring teams have been able to make a marked difference over the areas that they can cover is illustrated in the annual statistics reaching back to 2005, but that said, there is evidence that the poachers have simply changed their operational tactics and moved to other areas. Support for our De-Snaring teams comes from **The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), the Cullman Foundation, the Serengeti Foundation, and Safaricom.** We are deeply indebted for these crucial grants, without which matters would be very much worse.

Long snare lines laid in areas not patrolled by our men have taken an immense toll of animals. Bush barriers force animals to pass through trails where the snares are laid where they become trapped, anchored by a leg or neck until the owner of the snares turns up the next morning to dispatch them, carting the meat off in sack-loads to either the main road or the railway, both of which run through the heart of the Park separating Tsavo East from West. The road is used to transport container loads of goods from the Port of Mombasa to land-locked countries inland providing a handy outlet for the commercial bushmeat as well.

The presence of Chinese in the country has triggered yet another threat – that of the body parts and the claws and teeth of the Big Cats. Some carcasses found in the snare-



Snared bushbuck

A wire snare cuts deep into an elephant's foot



Snared Zebra



Snared kongoni



Snared dikdiks



Snared buffalo



A dikdik is rescued from a snare



Bush meat dries in poacher's hideout



Snared dikdiks



Snares collected on patrol by the Burra team



Snared giraffe



Arrowed dikdik



Mtito team with a snared Buffalo



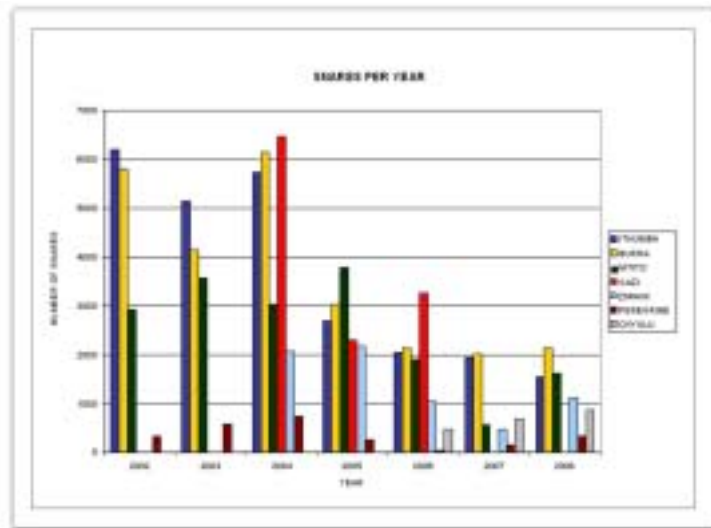
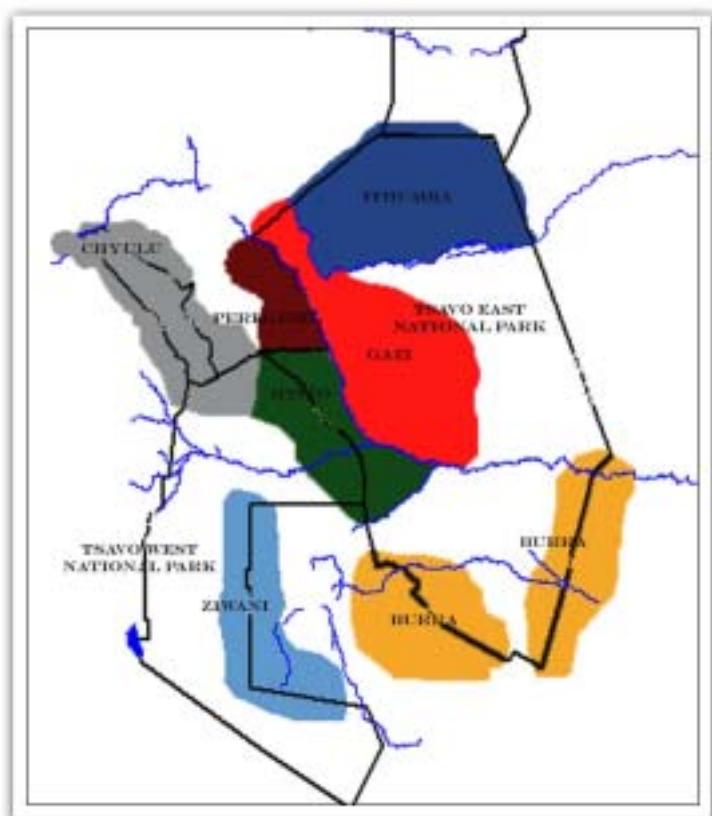
Snared Kudu

lines have been discovered poisoned using toxic agricultural products (banned in Europe but readily available in the Third World), so that when the predators come to feed on the meat, they too perish. Many lions, hyaenas and even vultures have been found dead along such snare lines. Hence, lions and other predators have joined the list of endangered species in this country.

Only severely deterrent sentencing of bushmeat offenders will slow down this sinister threat to the country's remaining wildlife and we hope that the Kenyan authorities will come to realize this before it is too late and do something about it. Already numbers of the endangered Roan antelope, only found in Ruma National Park in Western Kenya, have been depleted to critically low levels. Just a handful remain, so this species will soon be lost. Charcoal and the illegal logging of forests is another threat to which the current Government chooses to turn a blind eye, overseeing the export of the country's forests and instead importing the desert! The fact that Africa is set to become more arid due to climate change bodes ill with the charcoal business (which is huge) merely hastening the process!

THE MOBILE VETERINARY PROJECT

The Trust runs two fully equipped Mobile Veterinary Units both of which have been extremely active this year, and have been responsible for relieving suffering on an enormous scale. Funded by **Rex Dobie's Minara Foundation**, **The Trust's Central Rift Veterinary Unit** covers the Masai Mara, Naivasha, Nakuru and neighbouring ranchlands operating as far West as Ruma National Park near Lake Victoria. The Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit, funded by the **Austrian based Vier Pfoten**, covers both Tsavo East and West, Amboseli and the Shimba Hills National Reserves, neighbouring ranches and community areas. We reiterate our deep gratitude to **Mrs.**



Dobie and to Vier Pfoten for enabling us to field these two crucial and much needed units.

Each unit has a vehicle especially adapted for the purpose, with darting hatches, drop-down sides that duplicate as a dissecting table, refrigeration facilities and all the drugs a Vet could possibly need. **Laboratories** for both units have been established in both the Mara and Tsavo thanks to a Grant from our **US Friends** while the Vets themselves are seconded from the **KWS Veterinary pool** to the two Projects. The following statistics speak for themselves.

For additional Veterinary help we are deeply grateful to **Luke Gamble of the Worldwide Veterinary Service** in Dorset and **Dr. P.J.G. Kuhne and his peers from Intervet International BV in the Netherlands** for their donations of much needed Veterinary drugs for our infant elephants. We are also grateful to **Pet Vaccination Clinics in U.K.** for promoting the fostering scheme in their 5 Veterinary Practices and for raising funds through the selling of Trust badges and the installation of Donation Boxes in support of the orphans. And we thank Veterinarians **Sanjay and Deiter Rottcher** for responding promptly whenever called for an emergency.

ASSISTANCE TO KWS

Because of circumstances prevailing this year, and a shortage of revenue for the field, the Trust has had to actively source additional funding for its assistance to the Kenya Wildlife Service. This has been vital to try and keep the wheels turning at the field level where funds have been insufficient to sustain the protection of an area the size of Tsavo. This assistance to KWS is, of course, over and above the Trust's core projects, i.e. The Orphans' Project, De-Snaring initiatives, our two Mobile Veterinary Units, the cost of running and maintaining the Ithumba Camp and the Community Outreach Programmes all of which also assist the Wildlife Service to protect and conserve all wildlife in the country of which they are the official custodians. Over and above our core Projects, this year the Trust has managed to assist KWS directly to the tune of over K. Shs. 15 million to cover the following:-

- ◆ Regular donations of diesel fuel for the Northern Area and this year also for the Southern Section of Tsavo East as well as Tsavo West.



<i>Summary of Treatment and Rescue Cases from the Tsavo Veterinary Unit</i>						
Reasons for intervention						
Species	Snares	Arrows / Spear injuries	Rescue	Bullet injuries	Others	Totals
Elephant	28	56	21	11	26	143
Giraffe	15	-	-	-	-	15
Buffalo	8	-	4	-	3	15
Lion	3	-	2	-	8	13
Impala	7	-	-	-	2	9
Zebra	5	-	2	-	8	15
Leopard	-	-	-	-	1	1
Grant Gazelle	-	-	-	-	4	4
Cheetah	-	-	-	-	2	2
Baboon	-	-	-	-	1	1
Waterbuck	8	-	1	-	2	11
Hyena	-	-	-	-	1	1
Caracal	-	-	-	-	1	1
Hippo	-	-	-	-	1	1
Vervet Monkey	-	-	-	-	1	1
African Wild Dog	2	-	-	-	-	2
Common Duiker	1	-	-	-	-	1
Eland	1	-	-	-	-	1
Totals	78	56	31	11	61	237

<i>Summary of Treatment and Rescue Cases from the Mara Veterinary Unit</i>					
Reasons for intervention					
Species	Snares	Arrows / Spear injuries	Rescue	Others diseases / postmortm	Totals
Elephant	-	9	2	8	19
Giraffe	11	4	-	2	17
Buffalo	2	1	1	1	5
Lion	1	5	3	6	15
Impala	-	-	1	1	2
Zebra	22	13	1	1	37
Cheetah	-	1	-	4 (Mange disease)	2
Waterbuck	4	-	-	1	5
Hyena	-	-	-	1	1
Hippo	-	-	-	1	1
Black rhino	-	2	-	1	3
White rhinos	-	5	-	1	6
Jackals	-	-	-	1	1
Colobus monkey	-	-	-	1	1
Wildebeest	-	-	-	5 (Mange infestation and orchitis cases)	5
Topi	-	1	-	-	1
Hartebeest	-	-	-	2	2
Eland	-	1	-	1	2
Totals	40	42	8	38	128

- ◆ Aviation fuel to both Tsavo East and West in order to help ensure aerial surveillance is regularly undertaken.
- ◆ The Northern boundary fence has been extended at both the Gazi and Umboi ends with funds kindly provided by our US Friends to prevent elephants from walking round where it ends only to find themselves in trouble within the community areas beyond the Park boundary. In addition, the Trust shoulders responsibility for the maintenance of the fence, which provides employment for the community and is undertaken under the supervision of the Contractor. This alone entails an annual outlay of K. Shs. 2 million per year, and the Trust is deeply indebted to the German based **Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas** for assistance towards this commitment. Currently the fence is 64 kms long and has proved extremely effective, as well as being greatly appreciated by the community.

- ◆ Support that is ongoing includes the rehabilitation, and maintenance of the Trust's three Windmills within the Southern section of Tsavo East, as well as the Windmill at Ndiandaza in the Northern Area of Tsavo. The Trust also provides the De-Salinated water for use by the Staff at the KWS Ithumba Northern Area Headquarters.
- ◆ The Orma act as a buffer between the Park and Somali bandit/poachers by providing information about the movement of Somali poaching gangs so the Trust helps them with their water problems as well as supporting their school with desks and sporting equipment.
- ◆ We have always covered the cost of ensuring a steady water supply for the Nairobi Park Staff quarters, Officer Houses and, of course, the elephants and our own establishment. This entails the cost of a Service Contract with the Water Specialists, the cost of a new submersible pump from time to time, regular servicing of the pump, repairs to the electrical wiring at the borehole which constantly burns out due to power outages and surges, plus the installation of a Generator to stand in during periods when electrical power is not available. This year the casing down the borehole has had to be replaced too.
- ◆ We continue to carry the cost of repairs to the Wildlife Service's heavy plant and machinery based at Ithumba as well as the de-salinating equipment at that borehole which caters for the needs of both ourselves and the Wildlife Service staff at the Northern Area Headquarters. The Radio Repeater at the summit of Ithumba Hill which provides radio access to all stations within the Service's security network has also been funded and installed at our expense.
- ◆ The Trust has funded both the construction and equipping of a working Laboratory in the Masai Mara for our Mara Mobile Veterinary Unit's use as well as the rehabilitation of the existing Staff Quarters, originally funded by the World Bank, which had fallen into a state of neglect and disrepair. The funds needed for this were provided by our **US Friends** to whom we are deeply grateful.
- ◆ The Ithumba Camp, built and managed by the Trust, has proved extremely popular this year, providing an ongoing source of revenue for the Kenya Wildlife Service, and hopefully the Northern Area, as was always our intention.
- ◆ The Trust has been able to help KWS with maintenance of the road networks in the Northern Area of Tsavo as well as in Chyulu National Park.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Every year, each of the Trust's De-Snaring Team Leaders identify 4 different schools abutting the boundaries of Tsavo and Chyulu National Parks with another 4 designated within the Kitengela dispersal area of Nairobi National Park. This means that 28 different schools each year enjoy the Trust's community outreach support thanks to an exceedingly generous

Grant from an overseas Foundation that wishes to remain anonymous and also to our US Friends who provided the funds to equip the various Team Leaders with Mobile Cinema Units.

Our support takes the form of donations of text books, stationery and teaching aids, sporting equipment and sturdy eco-friendly desks, tables and chairs, built at the community level and made to last, with metal legs that cannot be devoured by termites. Each school is visited regularly by our Team Leaders who debate wildlife issues with the children, treat them to environmental film shows and issue them with hardwood tree seedlings to plant around their premises. (Repeat visits by the Team Leaders monitor the progress of the seedlings to ensure that they are being properly nurtured.) Water catchment tanks and the necessary guttering to trap rainwater are also provided where not already in place.

Notably, each school enjoys several field trips into the National Parks during the year which exposes them to their natural wildlife heritage and which have proved exceedingly popular. By November 50 such school field trips had been undertaken using the Bus kindly donated by the **Dulverton Trust**. This equates to exposing some 2,000 children per year to wildlife in Tsavo East, Tsavo West and Nairobi National Park, children that would otherwise never have a chance to probably even see a wild animal.

Cooperation and respect from the communities bordering Tsavo has been greatly enhanced by the involvement of our De-Snaring teams in the Trust's community outreach programmes. Information about poaching is now forthcoming, whereas before this subject was a closed book, school children are beginning to understand and appreciate the value and importance of wildlife to their country.

The Trust continues to host the public at the Nairobi Nursery on a daily basis between 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., something that has proved enormously popular with the local school children. Literally hundreds of school children turn up (along with tourists and other local people) on a daily basis (Saturdays and Sundays included) to watch the infant elephants take their noon milk feed and a mudbath, weather permitting. On occasions children have to be relayed in, 50 at a time, and there have also been days when so many have turned up that even this was not possible due to the time restriction, so we now have to insist on prior bookings for school visits to the Nursery.

Children from the Northern Area's neighbouring Wakamba community have more recently been brought in to visit the older orphans at the Ithumba Stockades, and this has taken that community by storm, proving such a hit that adults have pleaded to be included in such excursions. The children are able to mingle amongst elephants that tower over them, and even feed those that are still milk dependent their bottles of milk. Daily adventures surrounding the elephants out in the bush are related; how the Keepers are protected by their charges when danger looms, the elephants chasing buffaloes out of thickets and shielding the men from less friendly wild elephants. They learn how elephants care for their young and about their strong family bonds which duplicate those of humans; the elephants' sense of death, how they mourn their lost loved ones and even bury their dead, visiting the bodies of lost loved ones for years afterwards. They learn about their suffering at the hands of poachers and actually witness how gentle and loving they are of their Keepers. For the first time this community which has always been non ele-friendly is



A field trip to Mzima Springs



A mobile cinema show



A school trip to the Ithumba Orphans



Desk donations



A school field trip visits the Voi Orphans



Donations of seedlings schools



A school trip visits Mudanda rock



Sports equipment donations to schools



Desk donation



Sports equipment donation to Kone school



School children visit the Voi orphans

learning another side to a species they have always regarded as there for the taking and a dangerous menace to their crops. For the first time the Warden is being given lists of known poachers by members of the community who are being much more cooperative in this respect. One woman, whose husband had been a poacher in the past, said that she would divorce him if he ever harmed an elephant again!

CITES AND ELEPHANTS

It is disturbing that the international body charged with overseeing the protection of endangered species chooses to disregard the pleas of third world countries for whom elephants are the bastion of tourism and their economy as well as being so vital to the ecology of their wild places, but instead chooses to pander to the wealthy southern african states, (zimbabwe, of course, excluded in terms of "rich"!). the decision to allow China to become a licensed bidder for the Southern African stockpiles of legal ivory did little to enhance the credibility of Cites, especially as all foreign observers were expelled when the sale took place behind closed doors early in November. however, for us and many conservationists, it came as no surprise for we have long understood that Cites is all about trade and that the endangered species it purports to protect are merely pawns in the game. It seems unjust that countries that don't have an elephant, or a rhino within their borders, and have only trade as an agenda should even vote on such issues

It was especially disappointing for us that even Britain under Gordon Brown voted against the elephants at last year's CITES Meeting contrary to popular opinion. Many of the Trust's supporters wrote in to protest and were treated to the naïve platitude that by allowing China access to legal ivory stockpiles, it might be persuaded to desist from driving the illegal trade!

All trading in ivory was halted in 1989 when elephant numbers Africa-wide had plummeted from 3 million to some 250,000. The Ban was very effective in stemming the slaughter but not for long. Since CITES authorized two one-off sales of Southern African stockpiles, poaching has escalated and illegal ivory has been laundered into the legal system. The first sale took place in 1999 when Japan was the only authorized importer and the second very recently in 2008 when China was included as a licenced bidder, despite the fact that China is known to be the main importer of illegal ivory. Statistics gathered this year by the E.I.A. (Environmental Investigation Agency) show that Chinese Nationals have been implicated in illegal ivory trading in 23 African Nations and that this is just the tip of the iceberg for Customs authorities estimate that only about 10% of contraband is intercepted in transit. Furthermore, the EIA managed to obtain a confidential, unpublished Chinese Government document revealing that 110 tons of ivory (equivalent to the tusks of 11,000 elephants) disappeared into the illegal market from the Chinese Government's so called "controlled" stockpiles! This merely confirms the extent of the demand for ivory by China's increasingly affluent and burgeoning population.

Decisions taken on Africa's elephant population reach far beyond those in over-populated small Sanctuaries in wealthy Southern Africa. "Ivory Poaching at critical levels – Elephants on the Path to Extinction by 2020?" Such was the headline in the Science Daily of July 31st 2008. Statistics show that the estimated annual elephant death rate from poaching throughout Africa today has reached the record level of 8%,

and could be even higher, a figure that far exceeds the annual death rate that triggered the 1989 ivory trade ban 20 years ago! Eminent Scientists have warned that if the trend continues, elephants in the wild could be extinct by 2020, existing only in small fenced Sanctuaries under extremely tight security – a salutary warning indeed and one that ought to make CITES and the Southern African Governments wake up, for when the elephants North of the Zambezi have gone, will those in Southern Africa be spared? Of course not!

Alarming, despite poaching having risen sharply throughout all the range States North of the Zambezi since the CITES decision, the public seem complacent and remain silent, confused by conflicting signals. One day press reports scream about "too many"; another day that elephants are "threatened by extinction" and all the while that elephants are on the rampage, destroying crops and aggressively trampling people to death! The words of a U.S. President come to mind – "To sin by silence when you should protest makes cowards of men."

In order to get things in perspective, when debating the elephant issue it is important to bear in mind two truths:-

(a) That elephants cross territorial boundaries and "too many" in Botswana, for instance, might mean that the Zimbabwean elephants, like the human population, are refugees fleeing persecution and seeking a safer environment.

(b) That elephants are by nature extremely peaceful and also extremely fearful animals who coexist peacefully with all other species that share their environment and do not deliberately trample anything to death without good reason. However, they have long memories, and when persecuted, just like humans, they seek retribution. It is at such times that they can muster enough courage to become aggressive, and who can blame them when humans have persecuted them down the ages! Humans reap what they sow! Mankind is a pariah within the entire wild kingdom, and every time an elephant "strays" back into a migratory corridor its species has trodden for thousands of years and which is imprinted in an ancient genetic memory, it is ruthlessly persecuted and killed as a "Problem Animal". Instead of condemning the elephants, Governments should set about helping people to secure their homesteads and crops and allow the elephants safe passage through corridors established to allow them to communicate and socialize with others holed up further afield. Elephants are used to covering vast distances in order to do this, but nowadays whenever they step outside of their few safe havens, they are either persecuted as problem animals, harassed, or poached in the process. Small wonder they are aggressive towards humans.

Today DNA technology exists to source the origin of contraband ivory, but by that time the animal is, of course, already dead. It has, however, revealed that the ivory trade, like the drugs trade, is driven by large and sophisticated crime syndicates that move poached tusks from one country to another in order to dodge law enforcement (which in poor countries is either lax or non-existent, anyway). Whilst it is widely known that China and Japan are the main ivory markets, few people are aware that more recently, America was ranked second only to China as a repository for illegal stocks where the demand for ivory knife handles and gun grips has risen sharply. This was established in a recent study funded by Care for the Wild International.



Here in Kenya it is known that by November at least 60 elephants had been poached in Northern Kenya where the Chinese are working on resurfacing roads. Now that the Middle Men buyers are here in numbers, poisoned arrow poaching has also re-surfaced again. An Africa wide operation involving Interpol netted 36 illegal dealers in Kenya, 3 of them Chinese Nationals, among whom was the Manager of a Chinese Company based in Nairobi who was arrested attempting to smuggle ivory out of Kenya to China via Dohar. 113 pieces of ivory were recovered in Kenya alone, weighing 358 kgs in that Africa-wide operation.

And so, elephants will continue to die throughout the range States, most of whom lack the resources to protect them. Ethiopia has lost 90% of its elephant population since the 1980's; elephants are being systematically wiped out in Central Africa where ethnic conflict rages and some say will be extinct there within months.

Uganda's population which used to number 30,000 in the 1960's, now stands at just 4,000, all but annihilated through both legal culling and illegal practices during the regime of Idi Amin. 3,000 of these are within the Queen Elizabeth National Park which is dangerously close to the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo, so there is no room for complacency there. Southern Africa would do well to consider the words of Confucius "If you would determine the future, study the past!" The lessons of Uganda, a country that once had "so many" that it resorted to culling, now is struggling to preserve the few that are left.

Kenya's elephant population stood at around 135,000 in 1973. By the time the International Ban on the trade in ivory came into force 1989, it had dropped to 15,000. Currently the population stands at some 27,000 but now the nightmare of the past is rearing its ugly head again, with poaching quietly on the rise. Early in the year the Kenya Wildlife Service undertook an elephant count that covered the entire Tsavo ecosystem, an area of some 16,000 square miles incorporating both Tsavo East and West, the Mkomazi National Park in Tanzania which abuts Tsavo West, the Chyulu Hills and the South Kitui National Reserve as well as ranches in Taita and Kwale districts, and those of Galana, Kulalu and Dokata in Coastal Province beyond the Eastern Tsavo boundary. A total of 11,696 elephants were counted in all, up some 1,299 from the 10,397 recorded in the last census three years ago, representing a 4.1% increase, yet still a far cry from the 45,000 that inhabited the same ecosystem in the sixties!

Not publicized, but of equal public concern was the fact that the numbers of all other species had considerably decreased. Also not mentioned was the extent of other illegal activities within the borders of Tsavo such as the presence of literally thousands of cattle, rampant charcoal burning, and the illegal cutting of hardwoods, all of which are serious threats to elephant survival, and indeed to the survival of all wildlife within the most important wildlife refuge within the country.

Amboseli National Park has remained a controversial issue ever since the 2005 elections when President Kibaki issued a decree transferring ownership of the Park to the local Masai County Council, something that has been challenged in Court as being unlawful. No less than 14 elephants were apparently speared in and around the Park by the end of March, killings that indicate resentment amongst the Masai. There has also

been a marked escalation in the spearing of lions, 162 reported to have been killed around Amboseli in recent years. In many cases the teeth, claws and body parts have been removed reinforcing concerns about the commercial trend of these products, with China again the guilty party. Tigers in Asia have been severely depleted due to this belief, and the fear that lions will follow is very real. Whereas Kenya's lion population was estimated at 10,000 in the 1970's, now it is believed to stand at less than 3,000 and indeed, at the last CITES Conference, Kenya urged that lions be included on the endangered list.

The Black Rhino population of Kenya stood at 20,000 in 1973, but after three decades of rampant poaching during the late seventies, eighties and early nineties barely 100 rhinos were left by the time the slaughter in the country's Parks and Reserves was brought under control. The few that remained were placed under protective custody in special Sanctuaries with round the clock security. During the year several rhinos were reported poached within private Sanctuaries in Laikipia and there are rumours that others have been poached in Meru and Nakuru National Parks, with horns mysteriously disappearing from Park Armouries. There is usually no smoke without a fire, remembering that Tsavo's one time 8,000 rhinos of the sixties, were all quietly eliminated. Tragically, the critically endangered Northern Whites of Garamba National Park in the Congo have already all been annihilated by rebels, their horns sold in exchange for guns.

A lot of African rhino horn ends up in Yemen, where a rhino horn Jambiya, or dagger handle is greatly prized by a population growing by 3% annually. By the beginning of 2008, the price craftsmen pay for rhino horn had increased by 40%, averaging US\$1,700 per kg so that an average rhino horn of 1.5 kg could yield three jambiyas retailing at around \$1,000 each! Nor does it end there, for further profit is made through selling the chippings and shavings illegally to China.

OBITUARIES - R.I.P.

It was with profound sorrow that we learnt of the death on October 20th of Noel Simon, founder of the Kenya Wildlife Society (later to become the East African Wildlife Society), and one time Deputy Director of what was then The Royal National Parks of Kenya. Noel was both a great champion of Tsavo and a staunch ally and personal friend of David during his time in Tsavo. Lake Nakuru National Park owes its very existence to him, as does the wildebeest migration of the Masai Mara that has brought such economic benefit to the country through tourism for it was he who pressurized the Tanganyika National Park authorities into setting aside 2,000 square miles of land north of the Serengeti to link up with Kenya's Masai Mara, in order to embrace the full migratory range of the nomadic wildebeest. Moreover he was also responsible for getting the Colonial Government to set aside 105,000 acres of the Mau forest as a National Reserve in an attempt to protect that vital water tower which is a vital and essential source of water for all the lower regions. (Sadly, he would have ended his life thoroughly dismayed at how the Mau forest has been systematically plundered to near total annihilation since Independence in 1963 and how impotent the Kenya Government has been in ensuring its protection).

Likewise, we mourned the death in May of Professor Yehezkel Shoshani, who was killed when a bomb blew up the van in which he was travelling in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where he

was working at the time. "Hezi", as he was known, was a great champion of the elephant cause, whose life was devoted to an in-depth study of the species and who worked tirelessly to try and ensure its protection and survival. He will be sadly missed within the scientific and conservation world.

THANKS

The Trust is deeply grateful for the support extended to us by our many hundreds of worldwide supporters who donate both modestly and generously to assist us with our various conservation projects. Irrespective of whether large or small, each and every donation is always most deeply appreciated and we thank everyone for such help. Those that support our digital on-line Fostering Programme for the orphaned elephants are the orphans' very lifeline and we thank them enormously for helping save the lives of over 90 orphaned elephants to date, none of whom would otherwise be still living today. They deserve to share our pride in this achievement.

US Friends of the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust:- We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the **US Friends of DSWT** for sourcing the funds that have empowered us to achieve so many projects which otherwise would not have been possible to accomplish this year and especially for the Supercub aircraft. We value the moral support that is always there for us in full measure and which encourages and inspires us. Their Board Members serve the cause of wildlife conservation entirely voluntarily without remuneration, and for this we applaud them, donating their time and considerable effort to assist the Trust. They source grants for us, deal with all the bureaucracy and paper work required by the Inland Revenue Service, handle any legal issues that surround legacies and also personally contribute generously to serve on the Board. They are "our strength and our stay", as the saying goes, and none more so than our US Friends President, **Stephen Smith, and his wife Jan**, both of whom devote endless hours and take time from an already busy schedule to handle mountains of Trust work. Likewise we are enormously grateful to **Kathryn Fenley**, Stephen Smith's Secretary who also works tirelessly for the Trust. We thank a new Board Member, **Wendy Wendt** for organizing a fundraiser in support of the Trust and for providing the digital cameras and other equipment needed for our De-Snaring teams. Above all, we thank all the Board Members, not forgetting **Brian Miller** who pressed to bring the aircraft item on our Wish List to the fore, thereby making the new Supercub aircraft a reality rather than leaving it pending as just a wishful dream. The Supercub will revolutionize our anti-poaching initiatives.

We are deeply indebted to Stephen Smith's Law firm, **Kreig deVault LLP** who kindly continue to allow their premises to be used as the US Friends office space and do so graciously and uncomplainingly.

U.K. Charity:- We thank **Rob Brandford** and **Gemma Holt** for all their input at the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust U.K. Charity which supports our conservation initiatives in Kenya and we thank **James Clark** who handles the paperwork demanded by the U.K. Charities Commission, and whose advice is greatly valued by Rob Brandford.

Generous support for our UK Charity has come from the following organizations and individuals and is likewise most deeply appreciated:- **Cartridge SAVE** through their used cartridge recycling scheme and for a generous donation of 4,800 sterling pounds over and above this in 2008. **Setfire Media** kindly host and update the U.K. Charity's elephantdiaries.org website and Ethical Comms, formerly Koan PR, continue to create media exposure for the Trust. **Magic Beans** has supported the cost of our Community Outreach School Field Trips as has the **Waves Charitable Trust** whose sponsorship of one Keeper's salary per year and for community initiatives also continues. **Survey Sampling International** has covered the cost of two new sets of uniforms for all our Keepers generated through their online surveys while handsome donations have come from the **Donald Forester Trust, Tsiknakis Charitable Trust, Scott (Eredine) Charitable Trust and the Ruth Smart Foundation, while ODB Group and its CEO, Mark Read** helped source furniture for the U.K. Charity's new office and also gave a handsome donation to mark the Company's 15th birthday which happened to coincide with his own 60th. **Finally we would like to thank all the U.K. Charity's supporters whose contributions have helped support our Field Projects and whose donations also helped meet the cost of the Trust's Supercub aircraft.**

We are extremely grateful to **British Airways and Virgin Airlines** who allow us complimentary flights, (space permitting), which enable us to fly our U.K. representative Robert Brandford out when needed, as well as **Sandy Griffith** who kindly came to instruct us and the Keepers on the use of the Bach Flower Remedies. We also thank **Caroline Ingraham** who has continued to give us good advice by Email on the use of essential oils. We thank **Green Hope Farm in America, Judy Aizuss and Susan King** for donations of the Flower Remedies and also **Alan Howell of Shechina** for donations of essential oils. **Lesley Cooksley** continues to offer her expertise and supply us with all the Homeopathic remedies we need and for this we are most deeply grateful.

The Orphans' Project:- There are specific individuals who have supported our Orphans' Project who are most deserving of special and particular thanks, namely **Pete Fullerton**, and **Felix and Claudia Somm** for their immense and ongoing generosity in support of the elephants. **Pete Fullerton** has again constantly provided additional funds to cover elephant rescues, and unforeseen contingencies over and above his extremely generous fostering of many of the orphaned elephants who benefit from extra donations to mark special occasions such as Thanks Giving and Christmas. We thank **Rex Dobie** for introducing the work of the Trust to the **Oak Foundation in Geneva** who have donated generously and we thank **Brian Cushing** who continues his longstanding donation of Post Cards and photographs to sell at our Shop Visiting Table and which bring in a steady stream of funds, not forgetting **Mrs. Gladys Merchant**, an elderly Pensioner who laboriously hand knitted beautiful soft woollen blankets for the orphans. **Liz Jones** has turned up on several occasions laden with torches, fleeces and Stationery for our Community Outreach Programmes and **Heather Webb** has crafted unique hand-made Jewellery which was auctioned so successfully recently on eBay to raise funding for the

orphans. We thank **Mike Foster** for directing funds totaling £9,000 given in memory of his wife, Sue to support the orphaned elephants. During her lifetime **Sue Foster** was a longtime supporter of the Trust who adored the orphaned elephants. We are, as ever, also deeply grateful to **Natasha Weld Dixon** for invaluable and ongoing donations of hay which provides the bedding for the infant elephant stables. **John Lambert** has carried on the legacy of **Louis Spencer** by bringing clothing donated by friends and students at his Aramco school in Saudi Arabia for the Keepers Lucky Dip Christmas Draw. **Many people have contributed funds towards the Staff canteen and brought sweets for the Keepers, all of which have been greatly appreciated and we thank them for being so thoughtful.**

Assistance for De-Snaring:- Grants in support of our vital De-Snaring Projects this year have come from **WSPA (The World Society for the Protection of Animals)**, **Safaricom**, **the Cullman Foundation** and **The Serengeti Foundation** for which we remain extremely grateful. However, of concern is the advance warning that WSPA and Safaricom may withdraw their grants next year due to the economic down-turn something that will impact very negatively on the areas we are able to cover and inhibit this much needed and absolutely vital conservation initiative. The Trust believes the De-Snaring Project to be a crucial holding action to save as many animals as possible until better protection can be afforded to the wildlife of this country.

Assistance for the Mobile Veterinary Units:- **The Austrian NGO Vier Pfoten (Four Paws)** provides the necessary finance that empowers us to manage and run the Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Project which has been so crucial in alleviating suffering on an enormous scale, and this year alone has been responsible for saving the lives of literally hundreds of animals. Similarly, **Mrs. Rex Dobie's Minara Foundation**, has empowered the Trust to field the Mara Veterinary Unit, which has also been responsible for making a huge conservation contribution. The success of both units has been equally as impressive and we are most deeply appreciative of what **Vier Pfoten and the Minara Foundation** have enabled us to achieve.





WWW.SHELDRIKWILDLIFETRUST.ORG

On line donations can be made directly through the website and all details regarding donations to The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust can be found on the website under HOW TO DONATE

IN THE U.S.A.

We now have a "supporting charity" in the United States, the United States Friends of The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust ("U.S. Friends"). The organization has been recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt "public charity" to which contributions, gifts and bequests are deductible for U.S. income, gift and estate taxes. Because U.S. Friends is staffed with unpaid volunteers, all amounts it receives are contributed to The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust.

Checks can be made out to **U.S. Friends of The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust** and sent to:

U.S. Friends of The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust
One Indiana Square
Suite 2800
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2079
U.S.A
Telephone: (317) 238-6218
Fax: (317) 636-1507
Email: ssmith@kdlegal.com

IN THE U.K. AND THE REST OF THE WORLD (EXCEPT U.S.A)

The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust has recently become a charity registered in the U.K.
Charity No 1103836

Cheque donations made out to **The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust U.K.** by U.K. Citizens should be accompanied by the Gift Aid Declaration, which can be printed off the Trust Website www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org The Gift Aid Declaration Form can be located on the HOW TO DONATE PAGE under U.K.

Donations can be sent to:

The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust
Unit 19
Brook Willow Farm
Woodlands Road
Leatherhead
Surrey KT22 0AN
United Kingdom
Telephone: +44 (0)1372 844608
Email: infouk@sheldrickwildlifetrust.org

IN KENYA

The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust
P.O. Box 15555,
Mbagathi 00503,
Nairobi, Kenya.
Telephone: +25 420 891996
Fax: + 25 420 890053
Email: rc-h@africaonline.co.ke



THE DAVID SHELDRIK WILDLIFE TRUST

P.O. Box 15555 - 00503 Mbagathi, Nairobi, Kenya.

Tel:- 254(0)20 891996: Fax:-254(0)20890053

Email:rc-h@africaonline.co.ke

Website:www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org