

# Sheldrick WILDLIFE TRUST

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# Overview for 2022

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Where to begin? 2022 marked our 45th anniversary — and it was a year that will go down in history. What started as an extended dry season soon devolved into a large-scale drought that gripped much of Kenya. Rivers ran dry, vegetation withered away, as great landscapes dried up across the country.

Left to its own devices, nature is a finely tuned system that has sustained our planet for millions of years. Some years, abundance prevails; others, the environment goes without. And yet, human actions have disrupted the natural order of things. We are living on the frontlines of climate change here in Kenya, ushering in a new and uncertain era for humans and wildlife alike.

But, as is so often the case, from hardship emerged hope. While 2022 brought about conservation hurdles on a new scale — near-daily orphan rescues and field emergencies, a surge in illegal activities, local communities in need of help — it also showed us how far we have come. Because of donors like you, we were able to answer the call, no

matter how great the challenge, providing life-saving support across the country.

The size of our orphan herd is always a telling indicator of conditions in the field. In the past two years, we rescued more orphaned elephants than the previous five years combined. To contend with the influx of new arrivals, we had to expand our capacity at all five of our orphan units. Each new arrival will remain in our care for upwards of a decade, until they are ready to reclaim their place in the wild. And even then, our lifetime commitment to them will continue, as we work behind the scenes to protect them, support them, and secure the places they call home.

As Daphne always said, it is futile to raise orphaned elephants if they do not have a wilderness to ultimately call home. Your generosity allows us to rescue the orphans of today while simultaneously forging a sustainable future for them and their descendants — one in which they can live wild and nurture their own families. With 54 known

calves born to orphans we rescued, raised, and reintegrated back into the wild, these futures are already playing out before our very eyes. This year alone, we were introduced to nine of these little miracles — each one a living, breathing testament of how saving one life can blossom into so many more.

Over the years, we have been building up our capabilities to protect and manage vast tracts of land across Kenya. We focus on securing buffer zones, wildlife corridors, and dispersal areas — areas that are absolutely vital for elephants and other creatures, but also the most vulnerable to development. These spaces link habitats across the country, expanding rangelands and ensuring that migratory species can travel freely between cradles of life. They also remove pressure from park borders, forming soft transition buffer zones that create a cushion between wildlife and human settlements. Good conservation benefits everyone; by working closely with local communities, we are able to implement conservation solutions that serve both wild animals and the people who live alongside them.

In just a few years, KARI Ranch — once a hotbed of human-wildlife conflict, bushmeat poaching, and all manner of illegal activities — has transformed into a safe haven for animals traversing the Amboseli and Chyulu ecosystems. Amboseli was one of the areas worst affected by the drought, which brought the importance of viable buffer zones like KARI Ranch into stark relief.

We are experiencing a similar transformation on the eastern frontier of Tsavo. Galana and Kulalu Ranches stretch along nearly the entire boundary of Tsavo East National Park, collectively covering two million acres that continue towards the coast. Importantly, they share an unfenced border with the park, forming a massive habitat extension that benefits all manner of creatures. However, over the past decades, illegal activities had taken hold across the landscape, degrading the land and creating a hostile environment for wildlife. Recognising that their future was in peril, we were approached to manage the conservation mandate of Galana and Kulalu Ranches and the Galana Wildlife Conservancy.

Although we are less than two years into our work in Galana and Kulalu, we have already seen a dramatic improvement on the ground. Land that was once plagued by livestock incursions and charcoal burning is flourishing once more. While bushmeat poaching remains a persistent threat, our teams have contributed to several significant arrests and driven a marked decline in illegal activities. Hippos who would have died in the drought will live to see another day thanks to supplementary feedings, while our water projects have unlocked previously inhospitable parts of the ranches. Bordering communities have benefited from our daily lunch program, which provides filling, nutritious meals to local schoolchildren. As always, wildlife are the greatest judge of our success: Not long ago, it was rare to see a single elephant in the deeper reaches of the ranches; now, they are congregating by the hundreds.

2022 was a year like no other. And yet, for all its tragedy and tribulations, it was ultimately a year of hope. This is because of the unwavering talent, passion, and dedication of our team. Sheldrick Wildlife Trust is made up of everyday heroes, extraordinary men and women who make conservation their calling. Faced with an unending marathon of field emergencies, they rose to the challenge, again and again. Every single person plays a pivotal role in our success, heroes seen and unseen, those flying the skies, patrolling the ground, rescuing orphaned elephants, cleaning water troughs, conducting field treatments, organising community food donations, cutting greens, keeping vehicles in motion — the list goes on and on. Conservation is the work of many, working in concert towards a better world. You play an integral role in our conservation story, taking it from a mission to a reality. As we embark on our next chapter, I would like to thank you for being there every step of the way. Every landscape secured, every elephant saved, every success in the field — those are your donations at work. We cannot predict what the future will bring, but nature is powerful; when it is nurtured, it can heal and adapt. Our job is to be the guardian of nature and its denizens, shepherding in a new era for our planet. Supported by an incredible team, near and far, I feel sure we are up to the task.

Most gratefully,  
Angela Sheldrick





# The Orphans' Project

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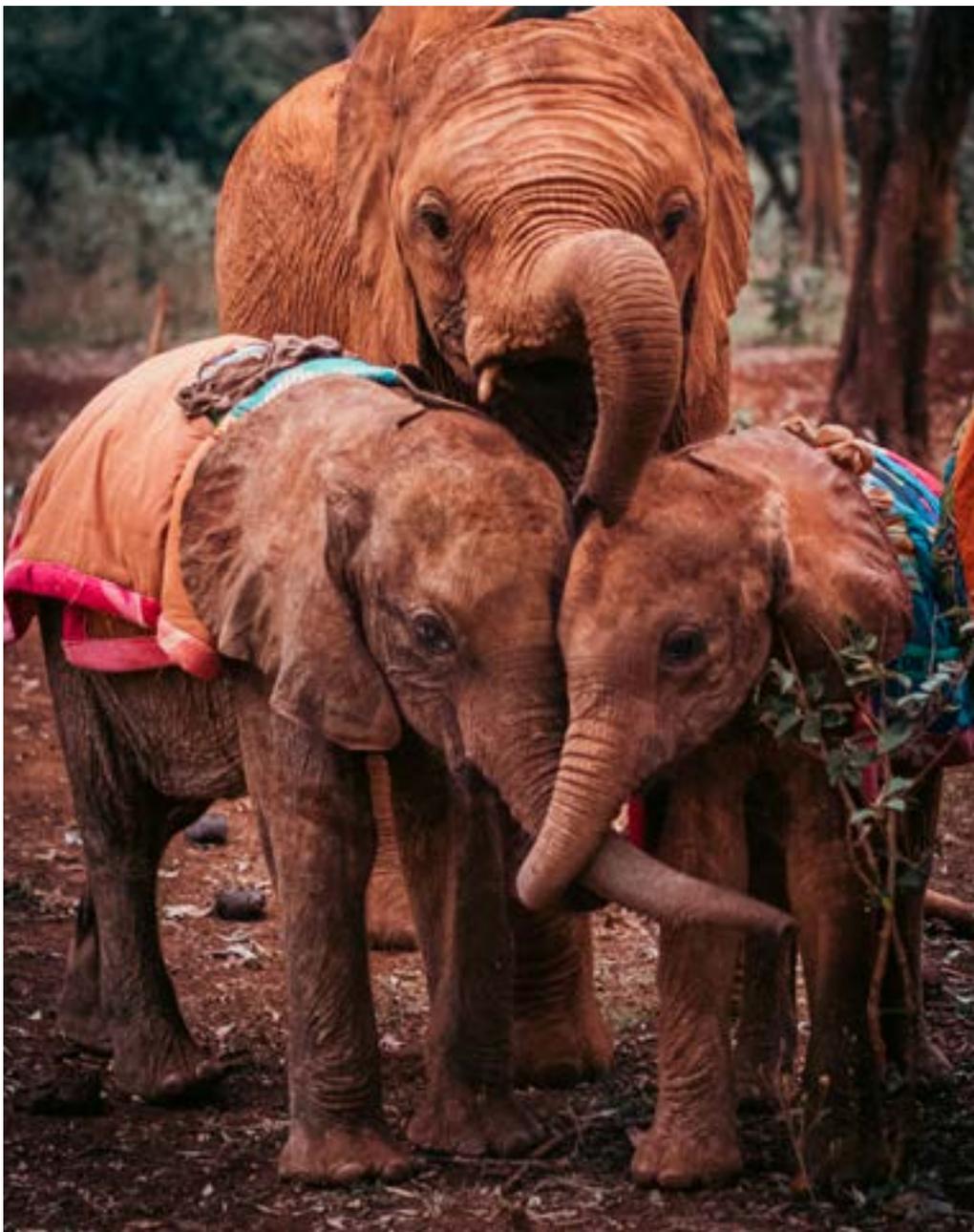
315 orphaned elephants successfully raised

17 orphaned rhinos successfully raised

127 currently dependent orphaned elephants

54 babies born to wild-living orphaned elephants

35 orphaned elephants and rhinos rescued in 2022



# Nairobi Nursery - Established 1977

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## 30 milk-dependent orphaned elephants 2 orphaned rhinos

When it comes to raising orphaned elephants, uncertainty is the only certainty. Every lull in rescues is inevitably followed by a swell, driven by human malice or natural misfortune — or, as this year showed us, both.

As 2021 came to a close, much of Kenya was in the grips of a devastating dry season. If the country wasn't to descend into a full-blown drought, the April-May rains would need to be generous. We hoped, we prayed, we looked to the skies, but nature didn't deliver. Periodic droughts are a fact of life on the African continent, but climate change has completely disrupted the natural state of things. Increasingly erratic weather has become the norm, including more frequent and dramatic droughts.

Because there were so many rescues over the course of 2022, we have collated them all at the end of the Orphans' Project section. Each of these orphans has a unique story of survival — a story that is just beginning. Over the coming years and decades, they will grow up and reclaim their places in the wild, where they will raise their own families. Despite all its tribulations, 2022 began on a happy note. Our extended family grew by one, when Solio, a black rhino ex-orphan, debuted her second wild-born calf. We rescued Solio in 2010, after her mother was killed by poachers. She grew up at the Nursery and reclaimed her place among the wild rhinos of Nairobi National Park — which was a success in and of itself, given how territorial the species is. The fact that she has produced not one, but two wild-born offspring is a real triumph.

Black rhinos are critically endangered, pushed to the brink of extinction by poaching. Kenya has become a stronghold for the species, boasting a healthy population of more than 900 black rhinos. Solio is just 12 years old herself, but already she has brought two additions into this growing population. In time, Sultan and Savannah will go on to bear their own offspring, who will go on to have their own, and so it will continue — all thanks to one life saved, many years ago. January also marked

new beginnings for three Nursery orphans. In the early hours of 8th January, Larro, Mukkoka, and Naboishu said farewell to the Nairobi Nursery and graduated to our Ithumba Reintegration Unit in Tsavo East National Park. All three settled beautifully into their new home.

Larro's departure brought with it an opening for the role of mini matriarch and Naleku ably stepped up to the plate. While she proved to be a very capable leader, she unabashedly favoured little Kerrio. Should the younger girl disappear from her sight for even a moment, Naleku would cause the most tremendous uproar, charging around and trumpeting until she had been located.

Before January ended, our Nursery herd had welcomed the first new rescue of the year. Lodo hailed from Laikipia, a part of Kenya that was already deeply affected by the drought. As competition over resources intensified, human-wildlife conflict was on the rise, and a number of lactating females had been shot. We suspect Lodo's mother was among the victims. On 9th February 2022, the smallest member of our Nursery herd arrived on the scene. After a long day in the field, our Tsavo Works Manager spotted a tiny elephant up near Msinga Hill. She was all alone, dwarfed by the vast wilderness surrounding her. After a fruitless search for elephants in the area, it became clear that she was an orphan.

Mzinga, as we named her, arrived at the Nursery in a very precarious state. She was in the throes of the dreaded teething stage, which puts enormous stress on any infant orphaned elephant. However, we quickly learned that Mzinga is a fighter. Even as her cheeks hollowed out and her condition dipped, her spirit never wavered. When the Keepers led her on short walks around the compound, she resolutely strode alongside them, her trunk swinging and ears alert. On days when she was visibly struggling, her bright eyes showed that she was determined to survive. With her arrival, the new 'blanket brigade' of infant orphans was established.

March began with some big changes for our 'Kalukutrio'. Kindani, Kinyei, and Bondeni grew up sleeping in enclosed stables, but the time had come for them to move into open-air stockades. This marked an important step in their reintegration journeys, as they will be sleeping in similar bedrooms when they eventually graduate to a Reintegration Unit. While Bondeni and Kinyei were excited about their upgraded spaces, Kindani remained on edge during the night, protesting her new accommodations. We quickly realised that Kindani wished for her room to be in between her best friends, so we did yet another round of rearrangements. The effect was instantaneous: Now in a stockade sandwiched between Bondeni and Kinyei, she finally started sleeping soundly. We were glad that she made her objections known!

On 28th March, a desperately tragic rescue unfolded. Sileita was found guarding the body of her mother, who had been shot dead. Like Lodo, she came from Laikipia, an area rife with human-wildlife conflict due to the extremely challenging drought. Although Sileita arrived at the Nursery deeply traumatised, she proved to be a girls' girl and soon bonded with Latika, Kindani, Kinyei, and Olorien.

April ended on a very sad note, as we lost our dear friend Barnoti. He never fully thrived after his rescue, but in the week prior to his death, he lost his appetite and started collapsing. Despite the Keepers' tireless efforts and many visits from the vets, his condition continued to worsen. The other elephants knew that he was not well and always checked on him, which must have been a great comfort.

In May, we celebrated how two of recent rescues continued to go from strength to strength. Tingai and Lodo were both victims of human-wildlife conflict, and as such, they were quite shy and withdrawn. The Keepers had grown used to them pulling disappearing acts, but one morning, the boys challenged their assumptions. Upon searching for the pair, they were pleasantly surprised to find them leading a group of orphans over to the feeding point. Not only had Lodo and Tingai realised it was milk time, but they also took the initiative to escort everyone back!

On 9th May, the second member of the 'blanket brigade' arrived. Nyambeni was rescued because of the bravery and determination of one man who found her stuck in a ditch. Like Mzinga, she came to the Nursery just as her first molars were popping through. We braced ourselves

for a fraught fight for survival, but Nyambeni surprised us and barely gave us a day of worry. She really helped herself in this respect, determinedly munching on greens, despite her painful gums, to fortify herself with extra nutrients while readily accepting her milk bottle at each feeding.

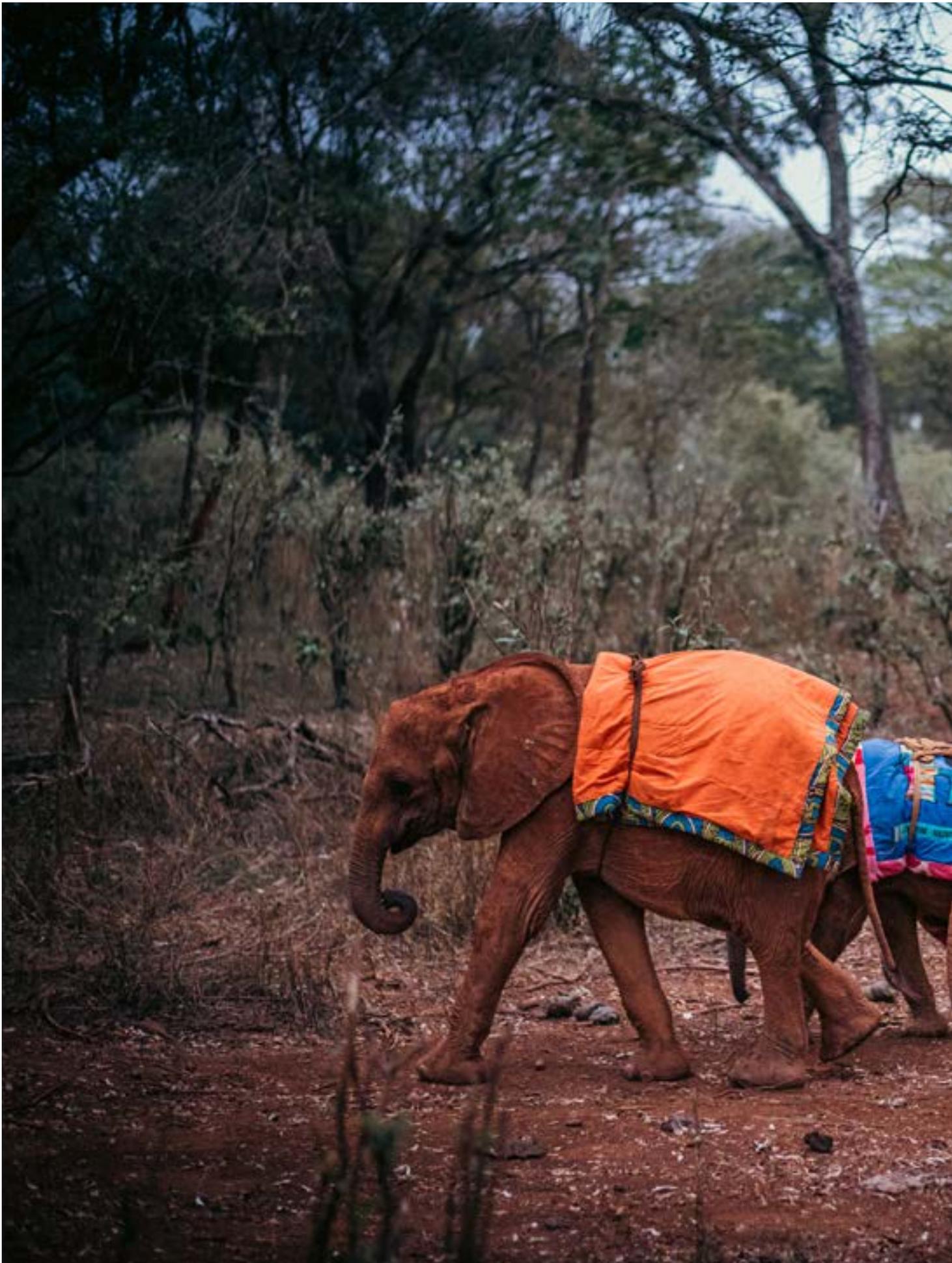
13th May was a milestone for our special Ziwadi, who finally graduated to a 'big girl' stockade. She has been in the same stable since her rescue, so this was a big moment. The Keepers put Ziwadi between Sileita and Lorigon. She walked inside without hesitation and promptly made herself at home by stealing her neighbours' greens — which, for this gourmand girl, was the greatest indication of a successful move!

As Daphne always said, raising orphaned elephants is a "cocktail of joy, tempered with a good dose of tears". On 21st June, we said goodbye to dear Rama. He was rescued with severely bowed legs, which inhibited his mobility. While we were initially heartened by his improvement, he started rapidly deteriorating over the course of 2022, causing him unmitigable pain and discomfort. The orphans seemed to know it was his time. The morning he passed, they all gathered around him, as if saying their goodbyes. We wish more than anything that Rama's story had ended differently, but we can take comfort in the fact that his final chapter with us was a happy one.

The sadness continued one week later, when we lost our little Lorigon. His blood works were alarming, and with plummeting red blood cells and platelet counts, it was clear he was fighting a blood parasite. We tried everything, but he didn't respond to treatment. He passed peacefully, surrounded by his Keepers. The 'blanket brigade' got a big brother when Mageno entered the fold. Another drought victim, he was rescued on 15th June in a fragile state. Because he was too weak to join the bigger orphan herd, he recuperated among the infants. Although Mageno is several months older than Nyambeni and Mzinga, he seamlessly slotted into their little gang.

The 'blanket brigade' also got a rather surprising big sister. Given that she was used to being the centre of attention, we wondered if Kerrio would be threatened by Mzinga and Nyambeni, who dethroned her as the smallest girls in the Nursery herd. Surprisingly, however, she was nothing but welcoming towards them. Some mornings, as Naleku and the older girls escorted Mzinga and Nyambeni out into the forest, Kerrio would eagerly rush over to lead the group.









The drought brought about all sorts of remarkable rescue stories. On the morning of 4th July, a group of tourists in Samburu emerged from their tent to find a lone baby elephant standing before them. Several hours passed, and the calf continued to stand vigil outside the camp, plaintively staring at anyone who passed by. It was later confirmed that his mother had been killed, yet another victim of human-wildlife conflict. Her orphaned calf had clearly gone to the camp in search of help. We named him Rafiki, which means ‘friend’ in Swahili. As orphans grow more established in the Nursery herd, new sides to their personalities are revealed. Although Mukutan always showed great bravado during milk feedings, he was generally quite reserved. Finally, he started challenging the other bulls to strength testing matches. He chose a wonderful sparring partner in Taabu, making a point to find the friendly boy in the forest most afternoons. Taabu reminds us a lot of Esoit; both are always so welcoming and gentle.

We also saw a funny new side to Kamili. She was very shy and quiet when she first arrived, but beginning in August, she started bullying the other orphans. Each time the Keepers told her off, she would angrily trumpet at them in protest — as if they, not she, were doing something wrong!

Over the course of September, our Nursery herd grew by an astounding seven new rescues. Weka, Muridjo, Kitich, Muwingu, and Elerai were all victims of the drought, either directly or through human-wildlife conflict. Little Shujaa, the latest addition to the ‘blanket brigade,’ was found stuck in mud. Ahmed, who was initially reported as a male orphan, lost her mother to a freak accident.

On 23rd September, we received a call from Ol Pejeta Conservancy. A newborn black rhino, no more than a week old, had been found abandoned. We’re not sure how she came to be orphaned, but opportunistic predators — likely hyenas — had attacked her, completely mauling her rear end. This little girl faced nearly insurmountable odds, but thanks to painstaking medical operations, round-the-clock care, and her own brave determination, she made it through her most vulnerable stage. We named her Raha, which means ‘joy’ in Swahili. In the fullness of time, our greatest hope is that Raha will follow the same path as Solio, growing up, reclaiming her place in the wild, and raising her own family.

Iletilal and Kitiak were our final two rescues of the year. Iletilal was found wandering the swamps of Amboseli,

likely a victim of the drought, while Kitiak was abandoned in the Mara. Both boys have large tusks that belie their otherwise diminutive size. Interestingly, Iletilal and Elerai had an instant connection, almost as if they knew each other before their rescues. They both came from the Amboseli ecosystem, so it is a distinct possibility that their paths had crossed in the wild.

After months of waiting and hoping, November finally delivered rain. When the showers began, the ‘blanket babies’ — Mzinga, Nyambeni, Shujaa, and Muridjo — sprinted home in a little pack, tails aloft in indignation. The bigger boys and girls remained in the forest, contentedly feeding and occasionally trunk hugging each other. Maxwell, our resident blind rhino, was delighted by the change in conditions. Enjoying the newfound chill in the air, he became particularly jovial, charging and huffing around. The orphaned elephants loved seeing this energetic side to their friend and would loiter outside his stockade before heading out into the forest each morning.

The arrival of the first rains in Tsavo also signalled that it was time for three members of our Nursery herd to take the next step in their journey back to the wild. After months and months of training, Neshashi, Roho, and Oldepe were finally ready to graduate to our Ithumba Reintegration Unit. Neshashi, our ‘big girl’, had clearly grown impatient with the Nursery age group. The Keepers were sad to say goodbye to their charges, but proud that they were embarking on this new chapter.

As the year ended, Sagateisa Naleku, and Suguroi began their own graduation training. Sagateisa, was becoming quite a bully, which is always a telltale sign that an orphan would benefit from being one of the younger members of a new herd. Naleku, who arrived as the baby of the Nursery herd, was also ready to take her next step. All three girls embraced their training routine with gusto, making us excited for their expanded horizons in the new year. By year-end, our Nursery herd numbered 32. 2022 was an incredibly challenging year for our Keepers, as they juggled the day-to-day demands of raising orphaned elephants and the influx of new orphans brought on by the drought. For all the heartache and hardships this year delivered, it was ultimately one of hope. Every member of our Nursery herd represents a future secured. In the years and decades to come, these babies will reclaim their place in the wild and start their own families, beginning dynasties that will stretch for generations.

And to think — it all began with one life saved.







# Voi Reintegration Unit - Established 1948

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26 milk-dependent orphaned elephants

6 partially dependent orphans

76 ex-orphans living wild

For our Voi family, 2022 began on an auspicious note: On the morning of 2nd January, Edie's ex-orphan herd arrived at the stockade compound after nearly a year away. Icholta was there with her firstborn, Inca, plus a tiny baby, who we have called Izzy! As has become a time-honoured tradition among our ex-orphan mothers, she promptly returned home to introduce her newborn to the people who raised her.

The birth of a baby elephant is always a remarkable moment, but Izzy's birth had special significance: She was the 45th known calf born to an orphan we rescued, raised, and reintegrated back into the wild. The fact that we met her just as we embarked on the Trust's 45th year felt very special indeed.

As it turned out, there were more exciting changes to come. We had been preparing for the graduation of Lemeki and Thamana for many weeks, and on the morning of 10th February, the happy day finally arrived. These two elephants were raised at our Kaluku Neonate Nursery, which was established in 2018 for our youngest and most vulnerable orphaned elephants. Because they would arrive not knowing anyone at Voi, we went about their graduation with great care. It was decided that one of their favourite Keepers, Joseph, would come with them from Kaluku and remain until they were fully settled in.

On 26th January, our extended family grew yet again. Long after all the dependent orphans had returned home for the night, Edie's ex-orphan herd stopped by the stockade water troughs for a drink. Peering into the darkness, the Keepers spotted a tiny calf amidst their feet. They realised that Edie had given birth to her fourth wild-born baby, who we called Enzo.

At the beginning of February, Edie's ex orphan herd went off into Tsavo. This marked a pivotal moment for ten special elephants. For a long time, Kenia and her semi-independent group had been experimenting with a wild life, but they lacked the confidence to make the full transition. When Edie and co. arrived in early January, Kenia, Ndi, Ishaq-B, Panda, Naipoki, Tundani, Bada, Mashariki, Ndoria, and Araba finally felt ready to join their ranks.

Kenia's departure meant the dependent herd was left in the capable care of Mbegu. Mbegu is not the oldest female at Voi, but she is the undisputed matriarch. Although they are her seniors, Mudanda, Arruba, Suswa, Rorogoi, and Embu were happy to defer to her leadership from the outset. Some females simply do not have matriarch aspirations.

On 12th March, something miraculous happened. Just as the dependent Voi orphans were finishing their noon milk feed, a wild herd approached. Suddenly, one of the younger elephants broke rank and ran towards our orphans, trumpeting with her trunk high in the air. We couldn't believe our eyes: It was none other than Tahri, an orphan who left with a wild herd just over a year ago! The orphans were delighted to be reunited with their old friend. It almost seemed as if the wild herd had come expressly to drop Tahri off; after stopping for a brief drink, they continued on their way without her. Although she had spent a gruelling dry season in the wild, Tahri looked remarkably well. She slotted back into the old routines without a hitch and clearly relished being part of the Voi herd once again.

April ended with a dramatic incident involving Pika Pika. The young girl loves wild visitors and, late one afternoon, she convinced Arruba and Embu to join a herd who was browsing nearby. As the wild elephants started walking away, the trio left with them. Try as they might, the Keepers were unable to extract them from the herd. After two days of fruitless searching, the Keepers were about to embark on yet another search party when they noticed unusual behaviour from the orphans. The dependent herd lifted their trunks, rumbled deeply, and sniffed the air. A few minutes later, Pika Pika, Arruba and Embu sauntered into the stockade compound, unharmed and looking quite proud of their little adventure!

This year, Ngilai developed a big crush on Tagwa. He always tried to single her out and orchestrate one-on-one time with her. Unfortunately, his overtures were rather clumsy, and Tagwa didn't always reciprocate his advances. Very often, Ngilai would try to climb on Tagwa's back, only for her to speedily move away. On these occasions, Ngilai closed his eyes and bit his trunk in frustration, deep in thought about how to win his girl's heart.

Our Voi herd grew significantly over the course of 2022, as the drought continued to take its toll. The first rescue arrived on 1st May, when we received a call that an orphaned elephant had been found near Lake Jipe. The Keepers rushed to the scene and brought her to the nearby Voi stockades, where she received urgent care. Because she was on the older side and in very precarious condition, the decision was made to keep her there and bypass the Nursery stage altogether. Juni, as we named her, spent much of the month recovering in the stockades and regaining her strength.

Some elephants play particularly pivotal roles in herd dynamics. The Keepers often say that Ndotto is a life-changer to many of his friends. He began 2022 by helping bring Mudanda out of her shell. The older girl had always been very temperamental, but Ndotto seemed to realise that this was borne from shyness, rather than ill-temper. He started singling her out for one-on-one sparring sessions, showing her that it was really fun to have friendships with fellow orphans.

Later in the year, he set his sights on Lemeki. Throughout June, the Keepers witnessed him inviting the younger girl to play. He clearly wanted to encourage Lemeki to branch out from Thamana and socialise with the rest of the herd. As the weeks progressed, Lemeki became more

confident leaving Thamana's side and joining the other orphans for games. Ndotto's efforts to get her outside her comfort zone had an instant effect!

Emoli has earned a reputation as a social butterfly — and sometimes, his extroverted tendencies get him into a bind. One day, he was on a mission to chase zebras who were waiting to drink at the water hole. Mid-game, he decided to link up with a wild elephant herd who was leaving the area. Unfortunately, a very aggressive female made it impossible for the Keepers to retrieve Emoli before they disappeared with him. Several hours later, the young bull bravely returned to the stockades all by himself. The orphans were delighted to have their friend back and welcomed him with lots of trumpets and charging about.

We were treated to several visits from our old friend Nguvu throughout the year. Although most of Voi's ex-orphans venture further afield during the dry season, Nguvu and his adopted wild family remained in the area. During his visits, he would approach the mud bath at a good clip, as if he couldn't wait to say hello to the dependent orphans. It always made us happy and proud to see how well Nguvu was navigating the drought.

On 12th September, poor Ndotto had a nose-ye ordeal. The Keepers noticed he was really fussing with his trunk and, upon closer investigation, discovered that he had a large stone lodged up one of his nostrils! KWS Vet Dr Limo came to the stockades, sedated Ndotto, and successfully removed the stone. As soon as he woke up, Ndotto reunited with his friends, who were calmly waiting nearby. No one was alarmed by the treatment, as they clearly understood that he was receiving help.

The drought hit the Voi sector of Tsavo particularly hard as the year wore on. Between August and October, Voi received a deluge of orphan rescues. A tragic number arrived too far gone to survive, but we also celebrated many lives saved. Hildana, Dabida, Kenderi, Seri, Ushindi, Akina, Kilulu, Baraka, Ashanti, Busara, Epiya, and Itinyi all nearly died in the drought, but now they have a future and a family with us.

Tamiyoi appointed herself head of the welcoming committee. Whenever a new rescue arrived, she made a point to approach their stockade and extend a warm, welcoming trunk touch. Sagala, Tagwa, and Godoma also relished looking after the new babies, while Mbegu took









overall charge with her calm, capable leadership style. The heartbreaking realities of the drought also hit close to home. On 18th November, ex-orphan Mweya arrived at the stockades with her firstborn, Mwituu; her best friend's daughter, Eden; and her tiny baby boy, who we named Mojo. They had made an extraordinary journey home at the height of the drought. Tragically, our joy was short-lived: Mweya and her family spent the rest of the month around Voi, only to leave for more than a week. When they returned, Mojo was not with her. Given the unforgiving drought, we can surmise that the fragile infant succumbed to the harsh conditions.

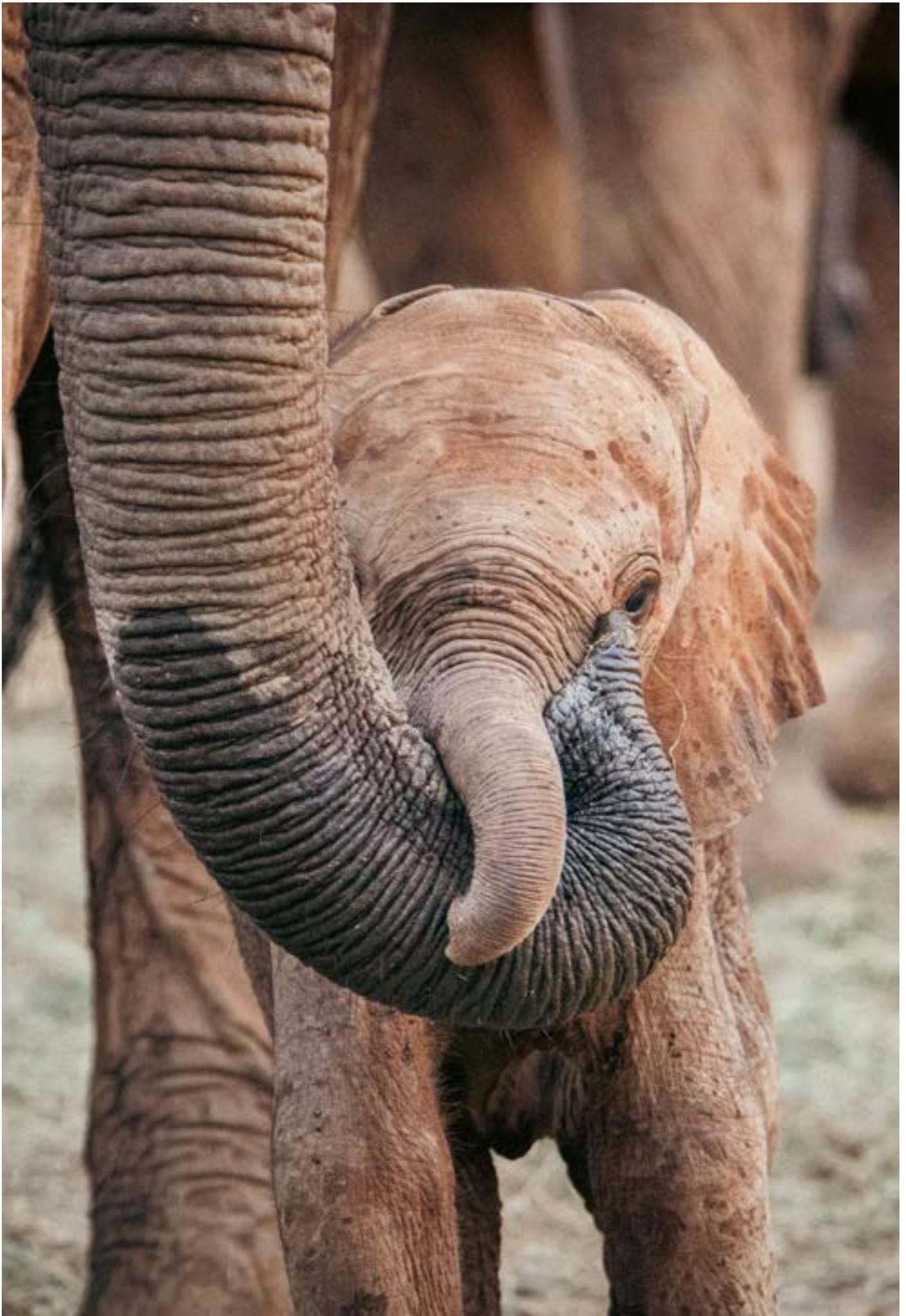
Little Ashanti is one of the drought victims who joined our Voi herd this year. While the drought wreaked havoc on her condition, she also came to us with a shortened trunk that had been cut by a snare. After spending many weeks recovering, she was finally ready to join the orphan herd out in the bush by the time December rolled around. Mbegu, Tamiyoi, Sagala, and Rorogoi were fascinated by the young girl, particularly when she got down on her knees in order to eat grass directly with her mouth. As Ashanti shows us, elephants are incredibly resilient.

December was a momentous month for four of our big girls: For the first time, Arruba, Mudanda, Embu, and Rorogoi spent the entire night out in the wild. Early the next morning, Mweya and her mini herd escorted Arruba and Mudanda back to the stockades. They also had a surprise addition: Tahri! As Tahri has been living wild for the past three months, we were particularly delighted to see her. Embu and Rorogoi were not with the little group; presumably, they chose to remain out with Tahri's wild herd.

It was a month of hellos and goodbyes. On 29th December, after an absence of nearly a year, Edie's ex-orphan herd finally returned to Voi. The Keepers awoke at dawn to find Edie, her babies Eco and Enzo, along with Kenia, Mbirikani, Lentili, Panda, Kihari, and Naipoki waiting outside the stockades. It was wonderful to see them looking so well, especially after such a long and gruelling drought. This was Kenia, Naipoki, and Panda's first year as ex-orphans — and based on their healthy appearances, they are thriving in their wild lives. We are incredibly proud of them.

The year concluded with one more happy reunion. 23-year-old ex-orphan Laikipia, who travels in the same orbit as Edie and Mweya, appeared in the company of two wild bulls. Everyone enjoyed catching up with friends old and new, as we bid farewell to 2022 and welcomed a new year.





# Ithumba Reintegration Unit - Established 2004

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34 milk-dependent orphaned elephants  
6 partially dependent orphans  
68 ex-orphans living wild

For our Ithumba herd, the new year began with new life. In the early hours of 2nd January, ex-orphan Kilabasi appeared at the Ithumba stockades with a baby boy by her side, who we named Kofi. This was a very proud moment for the Keepers, who have been part of Kilabasi's journey from the very beginning. She was rescued in 2011, after villagers spotted a calf staggering into Tsavo from the Tanzania side. We will never know what Kilabasi endured before her lonely trek towards Kenya, but given this was at the peak of the ivory crisis, we can safely assume that she lost her mother to poachers. Now, more than a decade on, she is living wild and raising her own family.

On 8th January, our dependent herd grew by three when Larro, Mukkoka, and Naboishu arrived from the Nursery. The trio earned themselves the nickname the 'good students', because they proved to be very fast learners! When it was time to go back to the stockades the first night, the Keepers handed over to Nabulu and Musiara to lead the way home. After walking into their new bedrooms, the babies copied Nabulu's every move, lining up along the fence for their milk and then snacking within their stockade. You would never have guessed that it was their first night in Tsavo.

At the Nursery, Naboishu earned a reputation as a menace during milk feedings. After a brief period of peace at Ithumba, he got back to his old tricks. Whenever friends overtook him in the run for bottles, he would complain vocally, shrieking at the top of his lungs. In the morning, he and Mukkoka would have screaming matches over who got the coveted 'right side' feeding spot. He brings all the drama during feeding times.

On 8th March, ex-orphan Mutara showed up at the stockades with a newborn baby in tow, who we named Mambo. While Mutara proved to be a very laid-back first-time mum, her friends Suguta, Sities, Turkwel, Kainuk, and Kalama proved to be obnoxiously vigilant. Poor Esampu, Mteto, Malkia, and Sana Sana were desperate to spend time with Mambo, but the nannies would not permit access!

April began with a miracle. One morning, ex-orphans Naisula, Kitirua, Olare, Loijuk, and her baby, Lili, arrived at the stockades with a tiny baby in tow. The calf, who was no more than a week old, was clearly an orphan. To begin with, he was in terrible condition. He was also desperately trying to nurse from all the females, but none of them were lactating. The ex-orphans must have come across him in the bush and, knowing that he needed help, delivered him to Ithumba. The baby, who we named Toto, was rescued and taken to our Kaluku Neonate Nursery.

A few years ago, a wild female elephant appeared on the scene. The Keepers nicknamed her the 'crazy one'. because she was extremely disruptive and aggressive towards them. Well, how things can change! The ex-orphans have taught her that the Keepers are a benevolent presence, and now she is just as friendly as an elephant raised by our hand. She became a mother this year and, interestingly, our ex-orphans slotted in as the primary nannies to her baby. They are all frequent visitors around the stockades. It is wonderful to see strong bonds forged between our orphans and Tsavo's wild elephants.

On 12th July, our extended family grew yet again. Walking back towards the stockades, the Keepers were greeted by ex-orphan Ithumbah, who had a newborn baby by her side. She had been around the stockades the night prior, still heavily pregnant, so she must have given birth in the early morning hours. We were incredibly honoured that she chose to share this moment with us. Iman, as we named her baby, has the distinction of being the 50th known baby born to an orphan we rescued, raised, and reintegrated back into the wild.

Kithaka has always been our resident troublemaker. Thus, it was little surprise when he showed up on 24th July with a swollen hind leg and a bad limp. He had clearly been injured during one of his wild misadventures and knew that he needed a safe place to convalesce. The Keepers put him in a stockade with lots of lucerne and pellets, where he could recover in comfort and peace. A vet concluded that he had sustained a bad sprain, which would heal with time.

August heralded lots of ex-orphans and wild visitors filtering through, as the drought continued to take hold. A fringe benefit was seeing all our ex-orphans' wild-born babies, many of whom are becoming big elephants in their own right. One day, Enkikwe had a disagreement with Wendi's firstborn, Wiva, who is nearly seven years old. Wendi is a notoriously naughty elephant, even as an adult, and Wiva is shaping up to be just like her mother. She often antagonises the dependent orphans, and Enkikwe evidently decided to teach her a lesson. It was funny to see how the other dependent bulls rushed over to support Enkikwe. Everyone has been bullied by Wiva and Wendi at one time or another!

Esampu, who is proving to be a mini Wendi, developed a fierce rivalry with buffaloes this year. Whenever the poor creatures would approach the water troughs, she would lasso a clique of friends to chase them off with a vengeance. It was funny to see how she had a singular grudge against buffaloes, while she would let other species drink in peace.

September began on a dramatic note. Ex-orphan Sunyei's baby, Saba, arrived at the stockades with a snare loosely looped around her leg. The Keepers tried to remove it, but her nannies prevented them from succeeding. Two days later, they managed to separate Sunyei and Saba from the main ex-orphan herd, so they could remove the snare from little Saba's leg. Fortunately, it hadn't yet

caused much damage. Sunyei seemed to understand that the Keepers were trying to help her youngest baby and didn't resist at all.

9th October was a very exciting day. Just after the dependent herd left the compound, Wendi arrived with a tiny baby girl, who we named Wimbi. We can hardly believe that the orphan we rescued 20 years ago is now a mother to three daughters. Wendi has always been a hopeless troublemaker, and motherhood hasn't exactly cured her of her old ways. Luckily, her eldest child, Wiva, is very diligent. On several occasions, the Keepers witnessed Wiva looking after Wema and Wimbi while Wendi was busy antagonising others.

However, Wimbi's arrival was usurped by an even more dramatic debut later in the month. 29th October began like any other morning, with some ex-orphans and wild bulls joining the orphans for lucerne and water. All of a sudden, there was a commotion and the elephants scattered — giving us a full view of a newborn baby who had just been born to ex-orphan Melia. Poor Melia got such a fright when her son dropped to the ground that she ran away!

It was heartwarming to see how Melia's friends banded around the flustered first-time mum, showing her the ropes and making sure her baby was safe. As the day wore on, Melia became more comfortable with motherhood. It's a reminder that every mother has a different learning curve. Melia, for instance, was never that interested in nannying her friends' babies, so this was an entirely new experience for her. Milo, as we named her baby, proved to be a very healthy, outgoing chap.

The morning after Milo was born, dependent orphans Malkia, Mteto, Maramoja, and Esampu got the precious opportunity to interact with him. Maramoja felt happy when Milo attempted to nurse from her and even propped her leg forward, just as mothers do to lower themselves so their babies can feed. The girls are fast learners and will make excellent mothers in the future.

In Ithumba, November began on a hopeful note. The stockade compound was deserted and not a single wild elephant or ex-orphan showed up, which told us that nearby parts of the park must have received good rain. Later in the day, we received our own heavy downpour — a hopeful sign that the end of the drought was in sight. With the arrival of the rains, we were finally able to move









forward with graduations, which had been put on hold during the drought. On 28th November, the Ithumba herd received a very special delivery from Nairobi: a moving lorry containing three new Nursery graduates! Neshashi, Oldepe, and Roho arrived mid-morning and were enthusiastically welcomed by friends new and old. Roho was particularly popular, as many remembered him from the Nursery.

December also began on a hopeful note. In the early hours of 5th December, Naisula, Olare, Loijuk, and Lili arrived at Ithumba with a tiny baby in tow. Naisula had given birth earlier that evening and wanted to share the joy with her human-elephant family. The group spent the night outside the stockades, waiting for everyone to wake up so the baby could make her grand debut.

Although the month began with a joyous arrival, we also suffered a tragic, sudden loss. In early December, Oldepe became unwell and stopped eating. We sent in two vets to examine him, but they were unable to establish a diagnosis. Everyone rallied around Oldepe — the Keepers stood by his side day and night, his fellow

orphans checked on him diligently, and even visiting ex-orphans like Teleki offered their support — but it was to no avail. On the morning of 7th December, Oldepe succumbed to his mysterious illness. We take comfort in the fact that he passed peacefully, surrounded by his loving Keepers.

We will always remember December as the month that Enkikwe, Karisa, Sapalan, and Mundusi fully transitioned to the wild. Many of the older Ithumba dependent orphans had been waiting for the rains to arrive in order to take this step, and the recent showers finally presented their golden opportunity. Kamok and Kauro don't seem quite ready to transition from our care, but we know their moment will come soon, too.

Also of note was Kithaka's departure. After spending several months convalescing at Ithumba as his hurt leg healed, he finally felt ready to re-embark upon his wild life. We couldn't have asked for a more fitting end to the year than these new opportunities for our Ithumba orphans.





# Umani Springs Reintegration Unit - Established 2014

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12 milk-dependent orphaned elephants

5 partially dependent orphans

1 ex-orphan living wild

While Murera has experimented with the occasional night away from the stockades, she clearly does not feel ready to take the plunge. Instead, she began the new year by settling into her new quarters within the Umani compound. She also rekindled her motherly love for Mwashoti, the younger bull who originally stole her heart. It was lovely to see some spark back in Murera, after she mourned the loss of Luggard so deeply last year. On the other hand, Zongoloni has fully embraced a wild life. She is the leader of the ‘nightclubbers’, the semi-independent orphans who spend their nights out but still link up with the dependent herd most days. During her night-time safaris, Zongoloni has mapped out the best hidden secrets of the Kibwezi Forest and Chyulu Hills. As the temperatures soared towards the end of January, she led the Umani herd to some as-yet-undiscovered water holes in the Chyulus. She seemed proud to share these special spots, and the dependent orphans were very grateful for her local knowledge.

Unfortunately, the new year was also marked by the beginning of a feud. In a clumsy attempt to assert himself as the dominant bull of the Umani herd, 11-year-old Ngasha became obnoxious and ill-mannered. His bad behaviour alienated his old friends, Jasiri and Faraja, who started giving him a wide berth whenever they visited the dependent herd.

Although the other orphans will always defer to her, Murera decided to take a step back from day-to-day matriarch duties in 2022, leaving the herd in the capable care of Sonje and Quanza. Enkesha also emerged as a mini matriarch in her own right. She is calm, loyal, and

diplomatic, and the young orphans know they can count on her. Mimicking Murera, Enkesha started making her morning rounds, stopping by each stockade and checking on her friends. While Enkesha does a great job of looking after everyone, she has always had a soft spot for her best friend, Maktao.

Lima Lima fully transitioned to the wild in 2021, but she continues to visit the dependent herd on a near-daily basis. She also continues to astonish the Keepers with her intelligence and intuition. One March afternoon, she kept walking to the swamp then back to the orphans. The Keepers thought something must be wrong, so they followed her and found a buffalo had got stuck in the swamp. They called the nearest SWT/KWS Mobile Vet Unit, who managed to extract him. Because of Lima Lima’s observant nature, the buffalo was saved.

Later in the month, Kiasa showed off a naughty new talent. After mastering the art of holding her own milk bottle, she decided to put this skill to mischievous use. She would drink her milk very quickly, then dash over to steal Kiombo’s bottle. Understandably, this made Kiombo quite upset, and he would respond by trumpeting loudly in Kiasa’s face. At the Nursery, Kiasa was known as a troublemaker, and these actions proved that she hasn’t entirely outgrown her old ways!

A long time ago, Sonje developed a romance with a wild bull called Osama. He moved on, as bulls do, but we believe they made an agreement to meet up again one day. On 12th April, Osama finally reappeared in the company of the nightclubbers, who treated him as if he

was a king. As soon as Sonje saw him, she approached and they moved off into the bushes together. The Keepers quickly realised that Sonje was in season. Several hectic days ensued, in which Osama relentlessly pursued her. To give her a break from all the amorous overtures, the Keepers finally decided to shut the orphans inside the stockade compound. Osama remained outside, waiting for his beloved Sonje. As soon as she emerged the following day, he made a beeline for her and they mated near the stockades. We hope to see a baby for Sonje in 22 months' time.

The evening of 14th May was very special, because Ziwa returned after a long absence. He arrived in the company of a wild female herd, which has clearly adopted him as one of their own. The Keepers were delighted by their surprise visitor and welcomed him with milk and lucerne pellets. The dependent orphans were already in their bedrooms for the night, but they rumbled loudly to say hello to their old friend. Ziwa visited several times throughout the month, which was such a treat for all of us. He is really thriving in his wild life.

In June, Ngasha's feud came back to haunt him. One afternoon, he strolled up to the dependent herd with a wild girlfriend in tow. The female seemed very happy to be with Ngasha, and he clearly wanted to introduce her to his human-elephant family. Unfortunately, Faraja and Jasiri became jealous of their friend's good fortune and promptly set about stealing her. It looked like Faraja would win the girl, until Jasiri swept in and emerged victorious. At this stage, everything is a charade anyway, as all three boys are relatively young and thus unlikely to be a female's preferred mate. All the same, poor Ngasha's pride must have been hurt.

Later in the month, everyone banded together to help Ngasha's love life. Yet again, he strode up to the dependent herd in the company of a wild girlfriend. They spent the day hanging around the Umani Springs, remaining a bit separate from the orphan herd. Their romantic afternoon came to an abrupt halt when a wild bull challenged Ngasha over the girl. The orphans felt sorry for their friend and joined forces to defend him. The wild elephant was overwhelmed by all the orphans and ran into the bush, allowing Ngasha to reunite with his girlfriend. It was a nice victory for our Romeo.

It's a well-known fact that all the girls are obsessed with wild babies. Surprisingly, several of the boys have

baby fever, too! After one July milk feed, Kiasa raised her trunk over her head. The Keepers assumed she was just stretching and thought nothing of it. Little did they know that Kiasa, Kiombo, Maktao, Enkesha, and Sonje had scouted out wild friends who had tiny babies in tow. They disappeared with the wild herd and the Keepers briefly lost track of them. In the end, it was Quanza, Mwashoti, and Murera who saved the day. They showed the Keepers where the wayward group had gone, so they could wrangle them.

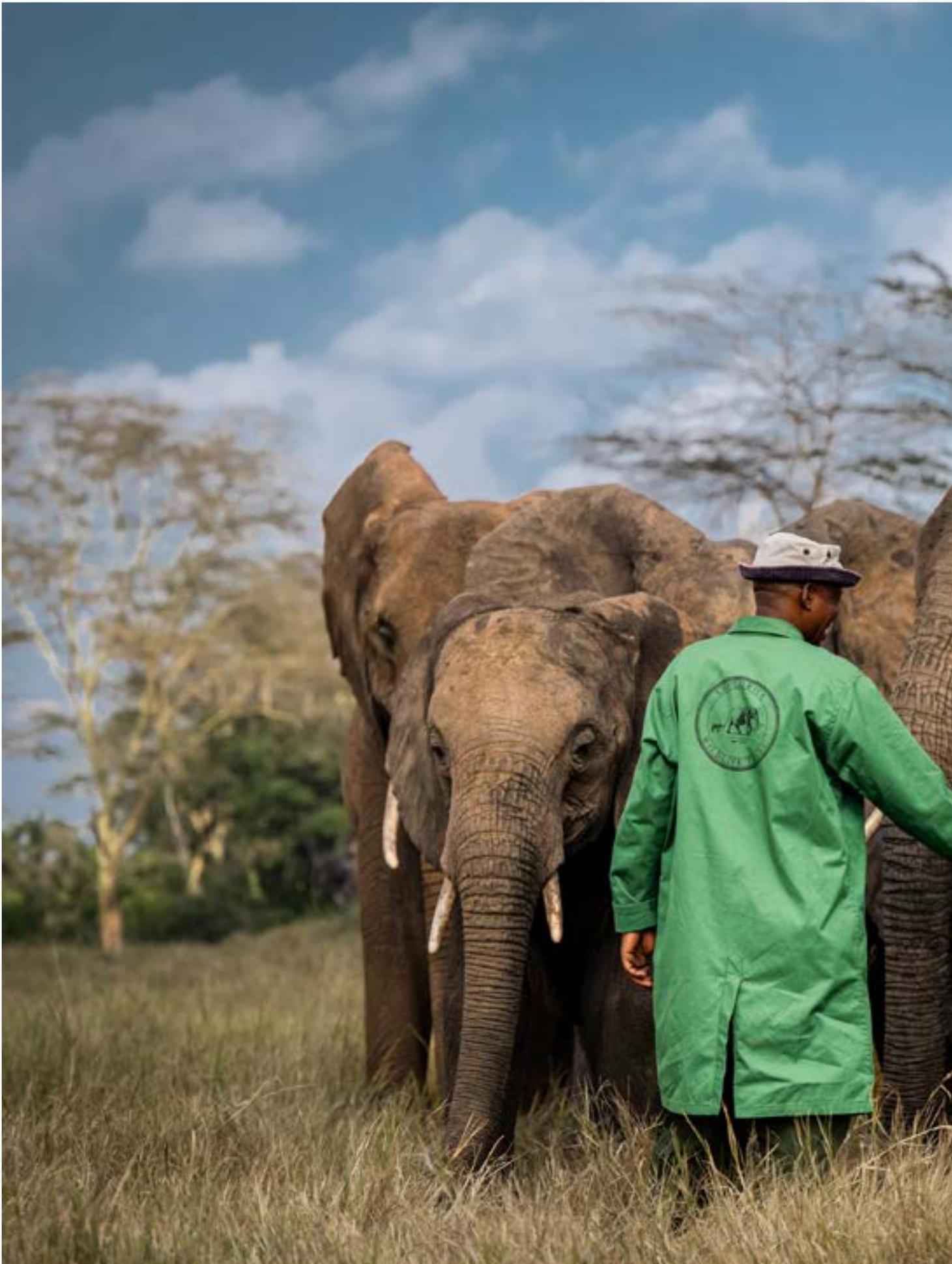
As the Tsavo and Amboseli ecosystems continued to descend into drought, the Kibwezi Forest was spared the worst of it. Still, it wasn't immune to its ripple effects. Thanks to the Umani Springs, the forest remained relatively bountiful as the surrounding landscape dried up. This brought an influx of wild animals to the area. Interestingly, the difficult times created bonds that transcended species; even antelopes and baboons walked together as friends, with the baboons climbing up acacia trees and dropping pods for the antelope below. While the Keepers appreciated this camaraderie, Alamaya was staunchly opposed to it — purely because he felt that he should have first pick of all the acacia pods!

14th September was a big day for our Umani family. The Keepers received a surprise call, alerting them that a young drought victim named Kapei would shortly arrive at the stockades. This was a first, as Umani is not usually a destination for newly rescued orphans. However, given the deluge of orphans brought on by the drought — circumstances in which every minute counts — we had to get creative. It was getting late and, given that Kapei was on the older side and had been found relatively nearby, Umani was the only viable destination for him.

Almost as if on cue, Lima Lima materialised. She had been away for a spell, but she suddenly appeared and made a beeline for Kapei's stockade. She spent more than three hours with the newcomer, giving him trunk hugs and patting his head. It was a very special welcome for little Kapei.

The arrival of Kapei made us realise that Zongoloni seems to think she can have her cake and eat it too. While she is enjoying a largely wild life, she is constantly trying to recruit new members for her ex-orphan herd. Kapei proved to be an enormous temptation for her. As soon as she clocked a new rescue, she decided to escort him to the waterhole, flagrantly hoping to whisk him into









her herd. Unfortunately for Zongoloni, Sonje was wise to her ways and promptly body-blocked her from interacting with Kapei. Murera agreed with Sonje and loudly rumbled a warning to Zongoloni, who was forced to concede defeat.

Exactly a month after Kapei arrived, on 14th October, another new rescue entered the fold. Amali was found alone on Rukinga Ranch with a cut trunk, likely as a result of a snare. This injury, coupled with the devastating drought, left her terribly vulnerable. Fortunately, she was rescued in time.

Kapei was the first 'new' orphan to enter the Umani fold — and it must be said that the status went to his head! The Keepers noticed that he enjoys testing Sonje and Quanza's affections. Oftentimes, he rumbles for no reason at all, just to see if they will check on him. He likes to feel special.

Although she has been embraced by the entire Umani herd, Amali has not captured the hearts of the older girls in the same way that Kapei has. When she rumbles, Quanza and Sonje do not scramble to help her. Instead, it is Maktao and Mwashoti who rush to the little girl's side. Truth be told, Amali doesn't really need the support; she is such a confident, self-sufficient young girl. She is a very good swimmer and is usually the first one into the mud bath and the last one out.

We had a very upsetting incident on 3rd December. Shaka, one of our new drought rescues, bolted when she was let out of her stockade. She had always been flighty, but had calmed down sufficiently in recent weeks. On this day, however, something sent her running into the forest. The Keepers spent several days looking for her, and even the orphans joined the search party, but she clearly did not wish to be found.

Ten days later, we received the news that runaway baby Shaka had been spotted along the road to the Chyulu Hills. The Keepers rushed to the scene, hoping to bring her home. They could hear her running through the bush, but it was impenetrably thick. Later that afternoon, they had a breakthrough when they caught a glimpse of Shaka running deeper into the forest. She is clearly terrified of humans, which indicates that she suffered serious trauma before she was rescued. Because she is on the older side and the Kibwezi Forest has so much food, the Keepers are confident that she will be able to survive on her own, if that is her wish.

2022 was dominated by Ngasha's feud with his old friends. Just like parents, the Keepers worried about his bad behaviour, but by year-end, they saw glimmers of improvement. As December came to a close, some big bulls joined Ngasha at the mud bath. The Keepers were curious to see if he would misbehave, but instead, he respectfully moved off to the side in order to give the older elephants right of way. One of the bulls followed him, and they proceeded to dig for minerals together. It was striking to see how tiny Ngasha looked compared to his wild friend. Hopefully, these interactions help our wayward boy learn his manners.

Looking forward, our Umani family has a momentous occasion on the horizon. Early in the year, the Keepers began to suspect that Murera might be pregnant. As the months passed, their suspicions were confirmed. Murera usually eschews the company of wild elephants, but in the immediate wake of Luggard's death, she left the dependent herd and disappeared on a four-day 'safari'. This must have been when she found a mate. With this timeline in mind, we can expect Murera's baby to arrive in March 2023. She ended the year with a very round belly, hinting at the miraculous little life growing within.



# Kaluku Neonate Nursery - Established 2018

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12 milk-dependent orphaned elephants

1 orphaned rhino

1 orphaned giraffe

For our Kaluku herd, 2022 began with some exciting changes. After holding court at Kaluku for more than four years, the time had come for Lemeki and her sweet-natured sidekick, Thamana, to embark on the next chapter in their journey back to the wild. We earmarked our Voi Reintegration Unit as their destination. Tsavo received ample rains in December, quite literally rolling out the green carpet for our new graduates.

Because Kaluku is such a small, tightly knit herd, we approached the graduation with great sensitivity. On 10th January, the entire group was taken on a dawn patrol to the airstrip, where the translocation truck was waiting. Lemeki and Thamana boarded without hesitation, while their little pack watched on — curious, but completely unbothered.

As Lemeki and Thamana thrived in their new home, our Kaluku herd adjusted to life as a foursome. At the time, she was the youngest member — and the only girl — of her boy band, but Rokka emerged as the undisputed leader. We were reminded of this one afternoon, when Vaarti, Mayan, and Manda all piled on top of her. The Keepers stepped in and shooed them away, but they needn't have: Rokka sprang to her feet, shook her little head at the boys, and gave an angry trumpet. She then proceeded to charge them down, as if to remind everyone that she was still the boss!

Manda was only rescued in December 2021, so he began the year as a newbie. Shy by nature, he started putting himself out there and getting involved in the herd dynamics. His neighbour, Rokka, proved to be a lovely shepherd in this respect. She always made a point to include Manda, be it inviting him to browse from the same shrub or joining him for a drink at the water trough.

Twiggy the giraffe is Rokka's other neighbour. Like Manda, she arrived at Kaluku in December. We braced ourselves for a long adjustment period, poised to give her plenty of time to acclimatise and accept her Keepers. This is vital for any orphan, but particularly giraffes — even a baby has serious kicking power, and anxiety-induced flailing legs must not be underestimated! However, Twiggy settled in without missing a beat.

Twiggy quickly became a favourite among our Kaluku Keepers. Everyone jostled to give her long, luxurious brushing sessions. This has remained one of her favourite pastimes; she relishes every brushstroke, eyed closed in contentment as she is lulled into a state of giraffe bliss.

Apollo celebrated his third symbolic birthday in March. The famous rhino trait of stubbornness started to come out in full force, as did the territorial nature of the species. We noticed how he became increasingly annoyed about wild buffaloes and elephants, and took it upon himself to chase after them. While the Keepers appreciated his protectiveness, everyone agreed that they could do without his mad dashes through the bush. Interestingly, while he never warmed to wild visitors, Apollo is generally welcoming to new orphan additions, as if realising that they are part of his extended family. As April began, a miracle baby entered the fold. It all started at our Ithumba Reintegration Unit, when ex-orphans Naisula, Kitirua, Olare, and Loijuk arrived at the stockades with a newborn baby in tow. The calf was clearly an orphan; he was in terrible condition and didn't belong to any of the females, as none of them were lactating. The ex-orphans must have discovered him in the wilds of Tsavo and, realising that he needed help, delivered him into the safe hands of our Ithumba Keepers.

Neonate orphans are notoriously tricky to raise. The decision was made to bring the orphan to Kaluku, where Joseph, one of our most gifted Keepers, would be solely focused on his care. In a nod to his young age, we named him Toto — a play on ‘mtoto’, which means ‘child’ in Swahili.

Toto had his ups and downs, as do most infant orphans during the precarious teething stage. However, he has a real fighting spirit. The unwavering support of Joseph, who he looks upon like a parent, undoubtedly helped him pull through. They have a treasured tradition of weekly coconut oil baths, which protect the young bull’s skin and have the fringe benefit of beautifully conditioning his hair. As a result, Toto looks like a tiny woolly mammoth!

At the other side of Kaluku near Trust House, Angela and her husband Robert’s Tsavo home, another miracle baby was finding her feet. Doldol’s story began on the northern frontier of the Laikipia Plateau, an area that stretches from the snow-capped slopes of Mount Kenya to the rim of the Great Rift Valley. On the evening of 22nd November 2021, a tiny calf was discovered in the heart of community land. Her mother must have been disturbed during birth and then took off into the night, leaving her abandoned calf behind.

We couldn’t believe our eyes when Doldol landed at Kaluku: She was the tiniest orphan we had ever seen, almost certainly born prematurely. Given her extraordinarily fragile state, we decided to raise her at the smaller stable block under the leadership of Mishak, a Keeper with decades of experience raising the youngest babies. Although we braced ourselves for a difficult road with Doldol, she sailed through with relatively few complications. She earned the nickname ‘little beetle’, which is fitting in every sense: Doldol is tiny, with adorable, protuberant eyes and perfectly round ears that are constantly flapping like wings. Even her demeanour is like an insect; she buzzes around with great purpose, always busy and investigating. It is rare to be part of an elephant’s journey from the very, very beginning. Abandoned minutes out of the womb, Doldol defied the odds simply by surviving. Now, this miniature miracle has her whole life ahead of her.

May brought about another remarkable moment. We are usually the ones rescuing orphaned wildlife, but this time, a juvenile buffalo turned the tables and decided to ‘adopt’ us! She had been hand-raised nearby through her

infancy, then transitioned to the wild. One afternoon, she appeared out of the blue and started hanging on the periphery of the orphan herd. As the weeks progressed, she became a fixture at Kaluku, sleeping outside the stockades and spending her days with Mkubwa the buffalo and Susu the eland. We called her Kidogo, which means ‘little’ in Swahili.

We call Vaarti the compassionate elephant of the Kaluku herd. He is so sweet and soft-natured, even at an age when many males are embracing their bullish side. Thus, everyone was surprised when he and Manda developed an unlikely friendship; somehow, the calmest and most assertive elephants gravitated towards each other. We believe that this is a credit to Vaarti’s gentleness; he had been at Kaluku for much longer than Manda, yet generously tolerated his dominance.

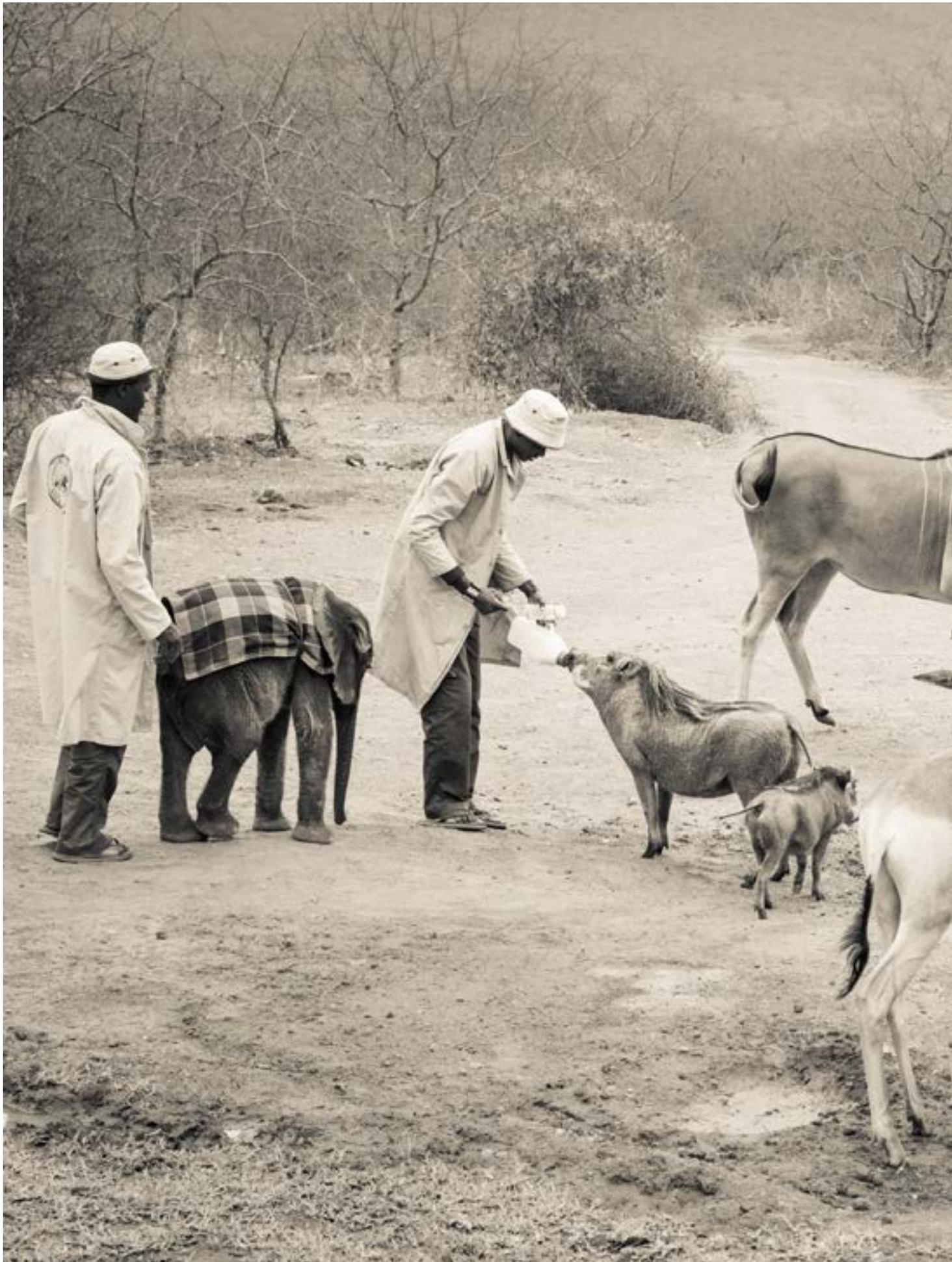
As the year progressed, it became clear that Manda was on a mission to establish himself as the herd leader. He developed two effective strategies to achieve this: When the elephants moved somewhere, he would either wander off-piste, to see if the others would follow him, or nudge Mayan in the direction he wanted to go, knowing the easygoing older boy would happily join him.

In September, a new arrival really shifted the Kaluku dynamic. Mwinzi’s story began in the parched plains of Amboseli, where he was found collapsed at the height of the drought. Our rescue team was met by a heartbreaking sight that had become all-too-familiar in 2022: Yet another drought victim, lying unresponsive beneath the baking sun.

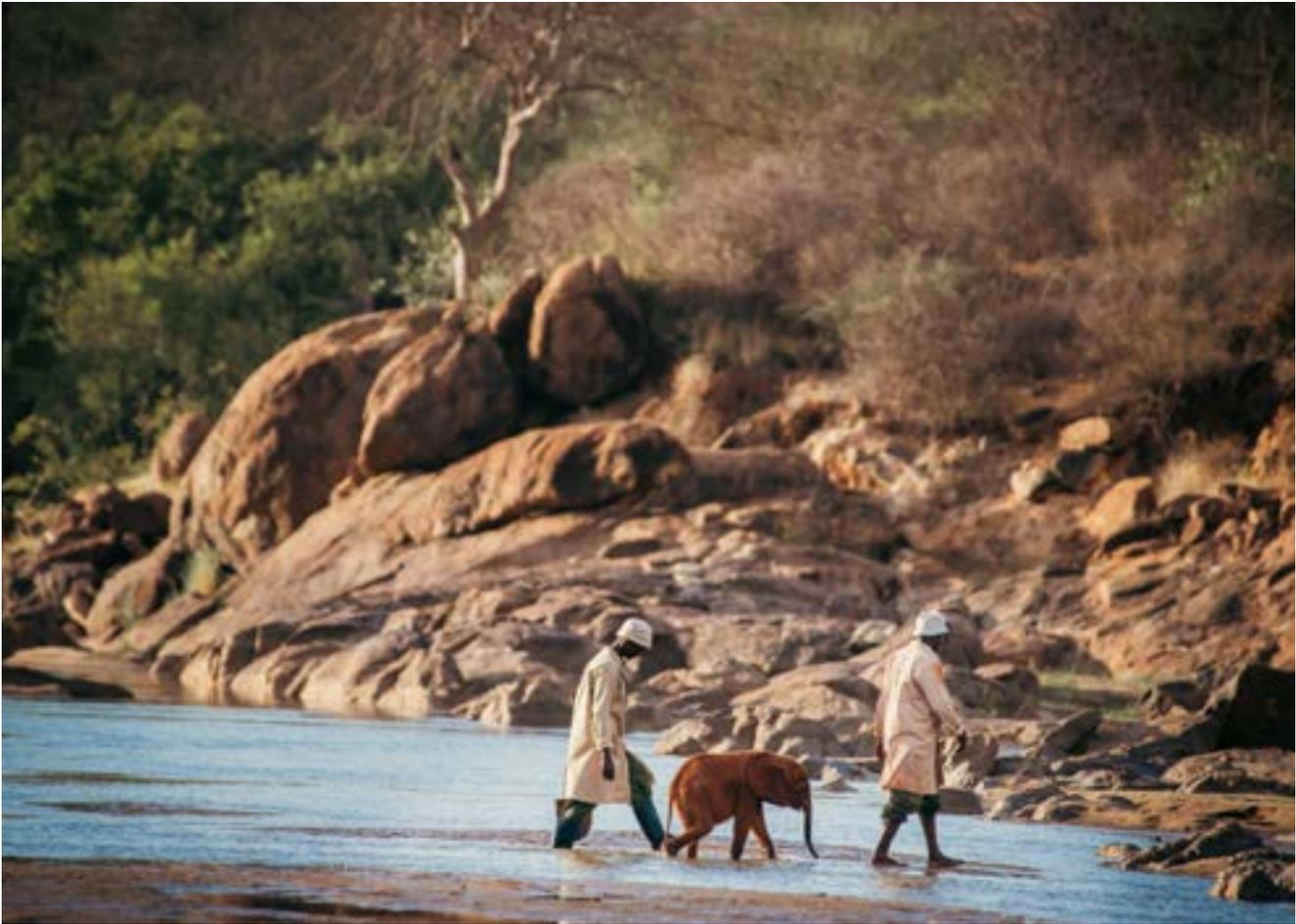
The team was grappling with a difficult juggling act, because they also had to respond to another urgent field emergency in Amboseli. They came up with a plan to buy some time, flying Justus, one of our Keepers, and the calf to a quiet corner of Kimana Sanctuary. The calf was settled beneath a shady tree, where IV drips were administered. The pilots left him in the capable care of Justus while they responded to the other case.

The helicopter returned an hour later — and nothing could have prepared them for the scene that greeted them. To their absolute astonishment, the comatose baby had miraculously sprung to life in their absence. “He is my biting elephant!” exclaimed Justus. As is procedure, he had felt inside the calf’s mouth to see if he had gone through teething yet. This can be a fraught investigation,









but given the calf's unresponsiveness, he figured it was an opportune time to check. Much to his surprise, however, the little chap chomped down on his finger — vehemently affirming that he did in fact have teeth and that he had life in him yet.

Unusually for a calf in his infancy, Mwinzi has a prodigious appetite for greens. We suspect that is how he survived for as long as he did before his rescue: As the drought wore on, Mwinzi's nutrient-deprived mother likely stopped producing milk. He saw elephants around him consuming greens and, rather than wither away, he started eating opportunistically. Although most of what he ate passed right through him, this survival response saved his life.

At Kaluku, Mwinzi has a constant flow of milk at his disposal, but he remains obsessed with greens. If his stable is not filled to the brim with branches, he throws a temper tantrum and bangs on the door until his Keepers deliver an adequate quantity. Peeking inside the jungle that is his bedroom, it's often hard to spot the tiny elephant munching away amidst all the greenery.

Mwinzi brought out an interesting side in Rokka. She was always very mischievous, more intent on causing trouble than forging sentimental friendships. Since the young calf arrived, however, she has become calm and attentive. She is fiercely protective of Mwinzi and loves to shepherd him from activity to activity. She remains quite naughty, but there is a new, nurturing slant to her behaviour. We can tell that she will be a strong matriarch one day.

Although rhinos are a solitary species, Apollo continues to attract quite a following. Kwale the hartebeest and Twiggy the giraffe very much have their own routine, but they have a standing date for the 11 o'clock mud bath. By the time Apollo makes his way over, his leggy friends are already there, waiting expectantly. Unlike Apollo and the elephants, Kwale and Twiggy don't get their milk bottles at the mud bath, so they are present solely because they enjoy Apollo's companionship.

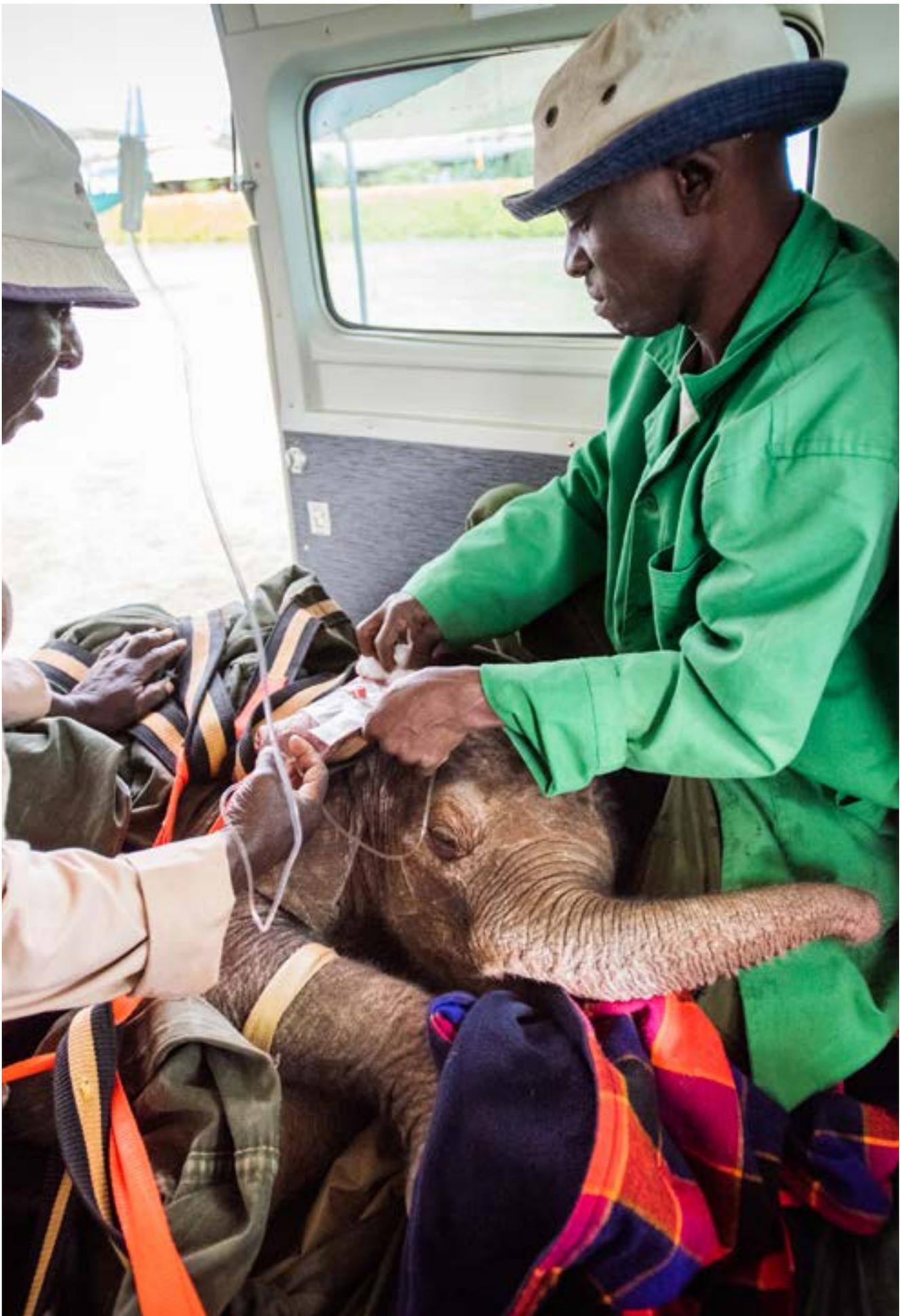
In mid-November, the heavens finally opened and some direly needed rain fell. With the rains came some exciting developments for our orphaned buffaloes. Mkubwa, who we have raised since infancy, and Kidogo, the semi-wild female who 'adopted' us earlier this year, decided it was an opportune time to transition to a wild life. We still see them from time to time, looking healthy and very satisfied with their new chapter.

For all its happy moments, November also delivered a great tragedy for our Kaluku family. Scooter, our beloved orphaned warthog, had an accident and broke her right hind leg. Warthogs are notoriously difficult to sedate and treat, but we were determined to try. KWS vet Dr Poghon attended to Scooter and cast her injured leg in plaster of paris. However, he warned us that hers was a very tricky break and that her prognosis was guarded.

We hoped for the best, but it soon became clear that Scooter was in great discomfort. The vet came to check on her and confirmed our worst fears: Scooter's break was not improving, and she was feeling its effects keenly. Following his advice, we made the heart-breaking decision to humanely end her suffering.

Scooter was one of those little characters who sticks with you for a lifetime. In her time on earth, she fully commandeered an entire compound — a team of humans, a herd of elephants, even a rhino and a giraffe were under her control! It is hard to believe that we will no longer see Scooter trotting around Kaluku in her signature, sassy manner, tail held aloft and snorting with great importance. Her time on earth was cut short, but we believe she is in a better place now, taking charge with her singular panache.

December marked Doldol's one-year 'rescueversary'. Although she remains markedly small for her age, our little girl has grown a lot over the past year. Like Toto and Mwinzi, she is still in the beginning stages of her journey with us — one that will extend upwards of a decade, until she is ready to reclaim her place in the wild and start her own family.



# 2022 Orphan Rescues

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*“2022 came with a deluge of rescues which included 34 orphaned elephants, one orphaned rhino, and a myriad of other small species, as the drought and interconnected challenge of human-wildlife conflict took its toll. Given that an elephant’s lifespan mirrors our own, the orphans rescued this year may be dependent on our care for the better part of a decade before they are ready to reclaim their place in the wild, but it feels good to be able to offer the lucky ones a second chance of life.”*

- Angela Sheldrick -



### – LODO –

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Date rescued: 18 January 2022

Reason orphaned: Human-wildlife conflict

Age at arrival: 2.5 years

Rescue location: Loisaba Ranch, Laikipia

Current location: Nairobi Nursery



### – MZINGA –

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Date rescued: 9 February 2022

Reason orphaned: Unknown

Age at arrival: 1.5 months

Rescue location: Tsavo East National Park

Current location: Nairobi Nursery



### – SILEITA –

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Date rescued: 28 March 2022

Reason orphaned: Human-wildlife conflict

Age at arrival: 16 months

Rescue location: Il Ngwezi Group Ranch, Laikipia

Current location: Nairobi Nursery



### – NYAMBENI –

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Date rescued: 9 May 2022

Reason orphaned: Stuck in a man-made hole

Age at arrival: 3 months

Rescue location: Imeni Forest, Meru Ecosystem

Current location: Nairobi Nursery



## – MAGENO –

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Date rescued: 15 June 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 1 year

Rescue location: Taita Ranches, Tsavo Ecosystem

Current location: Nairobi Nursery



## – RAFIKI –

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Date rescued: 4 July 2022

Reason orphaned: Human-wildlife conflict

Age at arrival: 3 years

Rescue location: Buffalo Springs, Samburu

Current location: Nairobi Nursery



## – WEKA –

---

Date rescued: 8 September 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 18 months

Rescue location: Tsavo East National Park

Current location: Nairobi Nursery



## – MUWINGU –

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Date rescued: 9 September 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 18 months

Rescue location: Lewa Downs Conservancy, Laikipia

Current location: Nairobi Nursery



### – KITICH –

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Date rescued: 14 September 2022

Reason orphaned: Human-wildlife conflict

Age at arrival: 1.5 years

Rescue location: Namunyak Conservancy, Samburu

Current location: Nairobi Nursery



### – MURIDJO –

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Date rescued: 15 September 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 10 months

Rescue location: Ol Malo Ranch, Laikipia

Current location: Nairobi Nursery



### – SHUJAA –

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Date rescued: 21 September 2022

Reason orphaned: Stuck in mud

Age at arrival: 9 months

Rescue location: Tsavo East National Park

Current location: Nairobi Nursery



### – RAHA –

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Date rescued: 23 September 2022

Reason orphaned: Attacked by hyenas

Age at arrival: 1 week

Rescue location: Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Laikipia

Current location: Nairobi Nursery



– AHMED –

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Date rescued: 26 September 2022  
Reason orphaned: Mother died, natural causes  
Age at arrival: 2.5 years  
Rescue location: Tsavo West National Park  
Current location: Nairobi Nursery



– ELERAI –

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Date rescued: 30 September 2022  
Reason orphaned: Drought-related  
Age at arrival: 2 years  
Rescue location: Amboseli National Park  
Current location: Nairobi Nursery



– ILETILAL –

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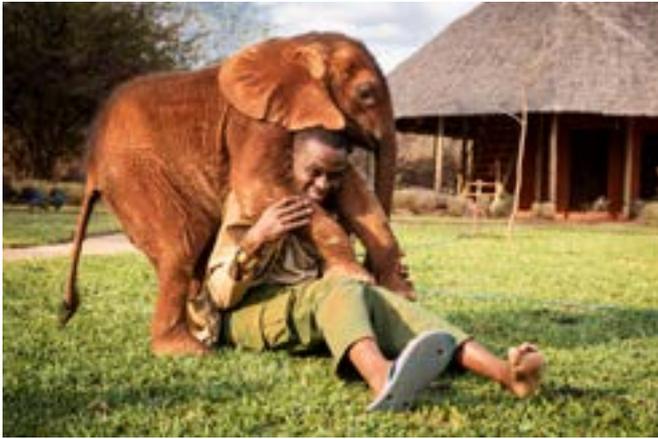
Date rescued: 4 October 2022  
Reason orphaned: Drought-related  
Age at arrival: 3 years  
Rescue location: Kuku Ranch, Amboseli Ecosystem  
Current location: Nairobi Nursery



– KITIAK –

---

Date rescued: 5 November 2022  
Reason orphaned: Drought-related  
Age at arrival: 13 months  
Rescue location: Masai Mara  
Current location: Nairobi Nursery



## – TOTO –

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Date rescued: 1 April 2022

Reason orphaned: Unknown

Age at arrival: 1 week

Rescue location: Tsavo East National Park

Current location: Kaluku Neonate Nursery



## – MWINZI –

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Date rescued: 19 September 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 4 months

Rescue location: Kimana, Amboseli Ecosystem

Current location: Kaluku Neonate Nursery



## – JUNI –

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Date rescued: 4 May 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 3.5 years

Rescue location: Tsavo West National Park

Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



## – HILDANA –

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Date rescued: 8 August 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 3 years

Rescue location: Taita Ranches, Tsavo Ecosystem

Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



## – DABIDA –

---

Date rescued: 15 August 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 2 years

Rescue location: Taita Ranches, Tsavo Ecosystem

Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



## – KENDERI –

---

Date rescued: 22 August 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 3.5 years

Rescue location: Tsavo East National Park

Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



## – SERI –

---

Date rescued: 23 August 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 3 years

Rescue location: Tsavo East National Park

Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



## – USHINDI –

---

Date rescued: 28 August 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 3.5 years

Rescue location: Tsavo East National Park

Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



– AKINA –

---

Date rescued: 8 September 2022  
Reason orphaned: Drought-related  
Age at arrival: 3 years  
Rescue location: Tsavo East National Park  
Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



– KILULU –

---

Date rescued: 26 September 2022  
Reason orphaned: Drought-related  
Age at arrival: 3 years  
Rescue location: Taita Ranches, Tsavo Ecosystem  
Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



– BARAKA –

---

Date rescued: 11 October 2022  
Reason orphaned: Drought-related  
Age at arrival: 1.5 years  
Rescue location: Taita Ranches, Tsavo Ecosystem  
Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



– ASHANTI –

---

Date rescued: 17 October 2022  
Reason orphaned: Drought-related  
Age at arrival: 2 years  
Rescue location: Taita Ranches, Tsavo Ecosystem  
Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



– BUSARA –

---

Date rescued: 21 October 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 1.5 years

Rescue location: Taita Ranches, Tsavo Ecosystem

Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



– EPIYA –

---

Date rescued: 27 October 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 2.5 years

Rescue location: Tsavo East National Park

Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



– ITINYI –

---

Date rescued: 2 November 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 3.5 years

Rescue location: Taita Ranches, Tsavo Ecosystem

Current location: Voi Reintegration Unit



– KAPEI –

---

Date rescued: 14 September 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 2 years

Rescue location: Rombo Ranch, Tsavo Ecosystem

Current location: Umani Springs Reintegration Unit



– AMALI –

---

Date rescued: 14 October 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 2 years

Rescue location: Taita Ranches, Tsavo Ecosystem

Current location: Umani Springs Reintegration Unit



– SHAKA –

---

Date rescued: 5 November 2022

Reason orphaned: Drought-related

Age at arrival: 2.5 years

Rescue location: Tsavo East National Park

Current location: Umani Springs Reintegration Unit



– NESHASHI –

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Date rescued: 27 January 2022

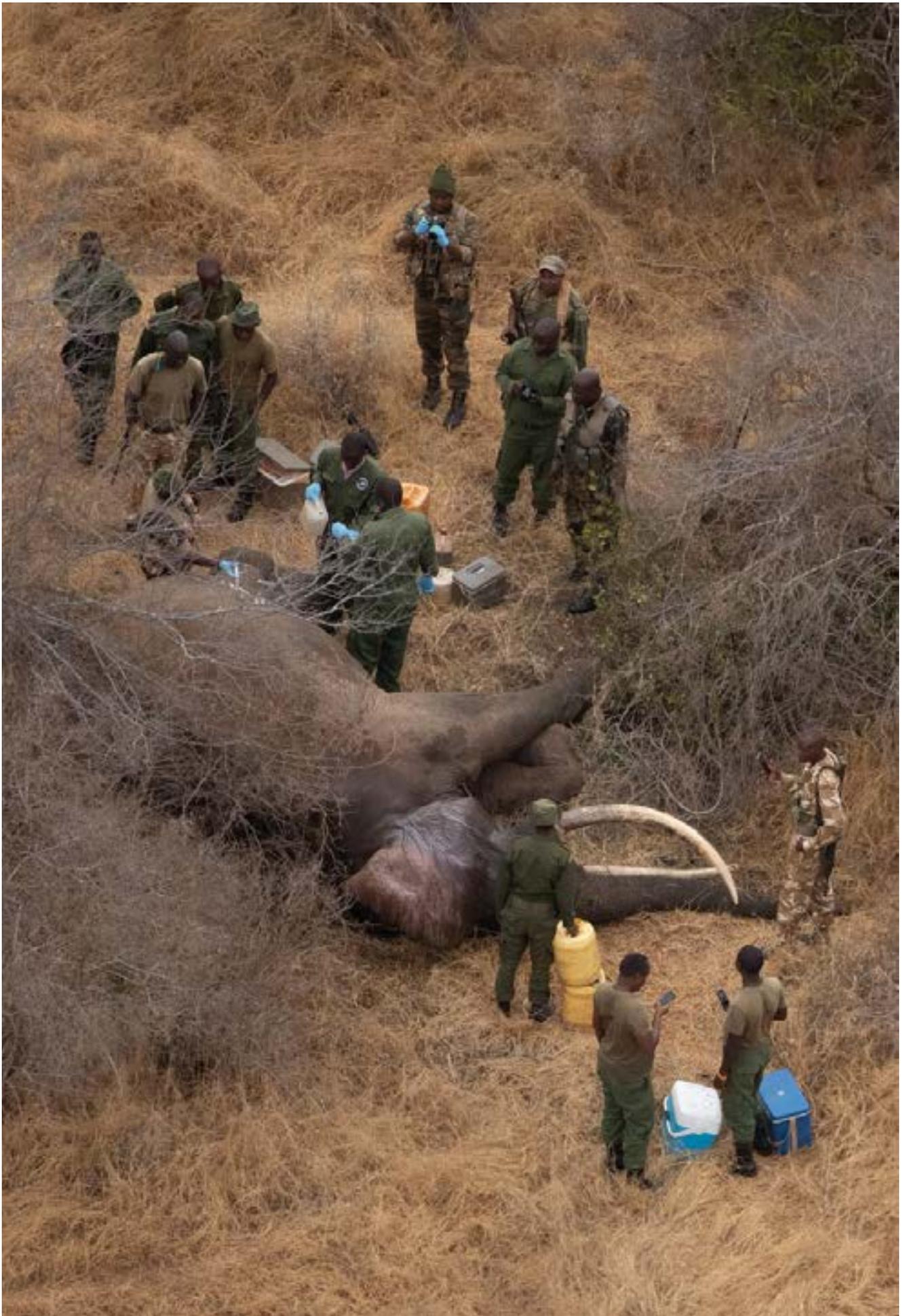
Reason orphaned: Human-wildlife conflict

Age at arrival: 3 years

Rescue location: Ol Malo Ranch, Laikipia

Current location: Ithumba Reintegration Unit





# Mobile Veterinary Units

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6 mobile veterinary units

1 sky vet unit

17 major ecosystems covered across Kenya

1,924 animals attended to in 2022

10,410 animals attended to overall

3,262 elephants attended to overall

This year, SWT/KWS Mobile Veterinary Units achieved — and promptly passed — the milestone of 10,000 animals attended to. This amounts to scores of second chances, given to species large and small, young and old, across Kenya. It is a remarkable impact, particularly considering the fact that our teams have been in operation for less than two decades.

In 2003, we launched our first Mobile Veterinary Unit in partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Service. Since then, this project has grown into a cornerstone of our conservation work. Our six SWT/KWS Mobile Veterinary Units, along with an aerial Sky Vet initiative, provide a lifeline to ill and injured wildlife across the country.

Collectively, they provide coverage across Kenya's key ecosystems: Tsavo, home to the country's largest population of elephants; the Mara, famous for its great migration; Meru, a sanctuary for Kenya's white and black rhinos; Amboseli, renowned for its population of tuskers; Mount Kenya, dominated by the highest peak in Kenya and the second highest on the continent; and the Rift Valley, a diverse habitat with an equally diverse array of birds and wildlife.

While these ecosystems act as their anchors, Mobile Vet Units work much more broadly across the country. The Tsavo Unit attends to cases as far as the coast, while the Mara Unit covers all the way to Lake Victoria. The Rift Valley, Meru, and Mount Kenya Units serve the northern reaches of Kenya, while Amboseli covers the southern sector of the country. For anything in between, our rapid response Sky Vet initiative is poised to answer the call.

Sheldrick Wildlife Trust fully funds every Vet Unit. Led by an experienced KWS field veterinarian, each team is completed by KWS capture rangers and a driver. They operate from a central base, travelling within their designated region to respond to all manner of wildlife emergencies. Each unit relies on crowdsourced 'eyes on the ground' to alert them to cases. This informal surveillance network includes KWS personnel, local NGOs, lodge staff, guides, tourists, and local communities. Their dedication and responsiveness greatly enhances the efficacy of each unit.

Collaboration is pivotal to the success of our Mobile Vet Units. Each team is equipped with a customised Land Cruiser to reach their patients. Occasionally, aerial support is required to successfully complete a treatment, be it darting a patient from the air or helping the team reach an inaccessible area. Our Aerial Unit has vastly increased the number of patients Mobile Vet Units are able to successfully treat. This year, there was some reshuffling of vets in charge of each Unit. A new KWS field veterinary officer named Dr Duncan Aminga took the helm of the Meru Unit. Dr Ephantus Nyambergi, who was based in Meru, moved to the Mara Unit. Dr Campaign Limo, who was previously in the Mara, brought his vast experience to the Tsavo Unit, replacing Dr Jeremiah Poghon after he was seconded to Nairobi.

Over the course of 2022, Mobile Vet Units collectively attended to 1,924 animals in 734 cases. The teams attend to all manner of creatures, spanning predators and plains game. Elephants comprise a significant proportion of their patients, representing 10 percent of all cases in

2022. In addition to 203 elephants, teams also attended to 91 rhinos; 69 lions, leopards, and other predators; 127 giraffes; 589 plains game; and a variety of other species. Removing research cases from the total number of animals attended gives a more accurate perspective of trends in the field: Nearly a quarter of 2022 cases were the victims of poaching activities (281 in total), while nearly one-third (379 in total) were victims of human-wildlife conflict.

A field veterinary presence is vital to the long-term health of an ecosystem. Human activities have disrupted the natural balance around the world, destroying habitats, driving climate change, and bringing species to the brink of extinction. Our teams' caseloads serve as a daily reminder of this fact: While ivory and rhino poaching has declined in recent years, bushmeat poaching is on the rise. Worryingly, what was once a subsistence-level activity has risen to a commercial scale. Bushmeat poachers are prolific, capable of killing dozens of animals in a single night. Snares, their preferred weapon of choice, have an infinite lifespan. Set to catch small game, these wire loops tighten noose-like around any animal unlucky enough to cross their path. Over the course of 2022, teams treated a range of snare victims, from a tiny elephant calf in the Shimba Hills to a leopard in the Tana River to a giraffe in the Mara. While we were able to give the majority of our patients a second chance, teams also encountered a sobering number of snare victims who were too far gone to save.

The drought intensified as the year wore on, driving an uptick in field emergencies. Across Kenya, failed rains put a severe strain on wildlife and the communities who live alongside them. Elephants are particularly susceptible to drought. Given their size and inefficient digestive systems, they must consume enormous quantities of vegetation in order to sustain themselves. The drought evaporates these food sources, leaving elephants young and old at risk of starvation. Lactating mothers, who are feeding for two, struggle the most. If they do not succumb to drought conditions first, many stop producing milk and are forced to abandon their babies. Mobile Vet Units rescued dozens of orphaned elephants over the course of the year, each of whom will grow up in our care.

While a heartbreaking number of elephants succumbed to the drought, our teams celebrated many life-saving successes in the field. In early September, the SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Vet Unit spearheaded a Herculean effort

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## TSAVO MOBILE VET UNIT

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**UNIT LEADER:** Dr Jeremiah Poghon, Dr Campaign Limo (as of April 2022)

**ESTABLISHED:** 2003

**AREAS OF OPERATION:** Greater Tsavo Conservation Area, Chyulu Hills National Park, and Shimba Hills National Reserve

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## MARA MOBILE VET UNIT

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**UNIT LEADER:** Dr Campaign Limo, Dr Ephantus Ndambiri (as of April 2022)

**ESTABLISHED:** 2007

**AREAS OF OPERATION:** Maasai Mara National Reserve, adjacent Mara Triangle, neighbouring community areas, Ruma National Park, and Lake Victoria

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## MERU MOBILE VET UNIT

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**UNIT LEADER:** Dr Ephantus Ndambiri, Dr Duncan Aminga (as of March 2022)

**ESTABLISHED:** 2012

**AREAS OF OPERATION:** Meru National Park, Bisanadi National Reserve, Kora National Reserve, and surrounding dispersal areas, parks, and reserves

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## AMBOSELI MOBILE VET UNIT

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**UNIT LEADER:** Dr Edward Kariuki

**ESTABLISHED:** 2014

**AREAS OF OPERATION:** Amboseli National Park and the Southern Conservation Area of Kajiado, Namanga, Magadi, and Lake Natron; Southern Tsavo West and Lake Jipe

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## MOUNT KENYA MOBILE VET UNIT

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**UNIT LEADER:** Dr Dominic Mijeje

**ESTABLISHED:** 2017

**AREAS OF OPERATION:** Mount Kenya, the Aberdare Range, and Southern Laikipia

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## RIFT VALLEY MOBILE VET UNIT

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**UNIT LEADER:** Dr Titus Kaitho

**ESTABLISHED:** 2021

**AREAS OF OPERATION:** Lake Naivasha-Nakuru-Elementaita regions, Bogoria-Baringo region

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## SKY VET

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**UNIT LEADER:** On-duty KWS veterinarian

**ESTABLISHED:** 2013

**AREAS OF OPERATION:** The whole of Kenya, with a focus on cases in remote or inaccessible areas









to save two elephants who had got stuck in a drying dam. Just a few days later, they successfully extracted a mother elephant and young baby who had been incarcerated in the same dam for two days. You can read more details of this operation in the accompanying story. At the peak of the drought, the SWT/KWS Mount Kenya Vet Unit responded to reports of a collapsed baby elephant who had been abandoned by her herd. They arrived to find the calf lying unresponsive beneath the baking sun. As they administered IV drips and planned their next move, two elephants exploded out of the undergrowth. Miraculously, the calf's mother and elder sibling had come back to retrieve their baby! Their timing was perfect: The glucose and rehydration drips had worked their magic, and the calf was beginning to stir. With some gentle prodding from her mother, she rose to her feet and they disappeared into the wilderness. This was a field operation with the best possible outcome: A wild family kept together.

Drought also contributes to an increase in human-wildlife conflict, as competition over dwindling resources intensifies. In their quest for food and water, wildlife leave protected areas and venture onto community land.

While they are simply trying to survive, an animal's presence in human settlements ranges from unwelcome to downright dangerous and, too often, people resort to drastic measures to send them away. The number of animals — particularly elephants — treated for bullet, spear, and arrow wounds serve as tragic reminders of the impact of human-wildlife conflict.

For all the heartbreak of 2022, there were plenty of successes to celebrate. Memorable treatments included the rescue of an infant rhino calf who had been attacked by predators (Mount Kenya Unit), the treatment of a young lion who had been speared by herders illegally entering the reserve (Mara Unit), the successful removal of a poisoned arrow from an ostrich's neck (Rift Valley Unit), and a comprehensive zoonotic disease surveillance exercise in which 83 animals were sampled (Meru Unit).

Of course, many remarkable treatments involved elephants. In a single day, three generations of Amboseli's iconic EB Family were saved, all of whom were suffering from serious spear injuries. We worked alongside field partners in Mount Kenya to extract an elephant who had become caught in a dam and was dangerously close to drowning. In a marathon Sky Vet operation, we saved two elephants over the course of an afternoon: a young calf who had a snare slicing cruelly across his face and an enormous bull who had likely been speared.

As these operations remind us, our Mobile Veterinary Units mean the difference between life and death. We are incredibly proud to be in a position to help these creatures, saving innocent lives and keeping Kenya's wild families together.



# A Drought Miracle

## SAVING A MUM AND HER BABY



In the depths of the drought, we found a remarkable display of hope. With her own life on the line, a mother elephant remained fiercely devoted to her baby. Shoulder-deep in mud and unable to move, she continued to protect him with the only remaining avenue left at her disposal, shielding him with her trunk. Although he was barely an infant, her baby was equally heroic, refusing to leave his mother's side.

This story unfolded just a few days after a massive operation to save two female elephants from a muddy fate. On 9th September, KWS and Wildlife Works reported that yet another pair of elephants had become stuck in the same dam. This time, a mother and her baby had become trapped.

During the drought, the quest for water becomes increasingly fraught, especially for a creature as large as an elephant. At first glance, the dam must have looked like a safe bet for a drink. The mother elephant wasn't to know that its shallow shoreline was actually a mire of thick, sticky mud — or that one little slip would

turn into a life-or-death situation. As had happened to the elephants the week prior, the mother lost her footing in the slick mud. She thrashed around, trying to gain enough traction to stand, but this only made her more stuck. Her tiny baby was collateral damage, sinking ever closer to his mum's side. Shoulder-deep in mud, both mum and baby had no chance of surviving their muddy prison. They were now on their second day of incarceration. Each passing hour exacerbated their situation, as the unforgiving sun beat down from above and mud encroached from all sides. While adult elephants are surprisingly resilient, the baby was surely struggling without the milk feedings he needed to survive at such a young age.

As soon as we received the report, we mobilised our helicopter. After picking up Dr Limo and the SWT/KWS Tsavo Mobile Vet Unit, the team headed south towards the Kenya-Tanzania border. KWS sent two Land Cruisers to the scene, which were joined by a tractor. Usually, we don't have to anaesthetise trapped elephants; although they are completely wild,

they intuitively know that we are there to help and cooperate with their rescuers. However, a protective mother is an entirely different situation. Stuck as she was, her maternal instincts were out in full force, and she was adamant that no human approach her baby. She continued to pull him closer with her trunk, defending him with the only method she had left. It was heartbreaking and heroic to watch. To ease her anxiety and streamline the rescue operation, Dr Limo administered a sedative.

As it turned out, the baby shared his mum's fighting spirit. The team was able to free him by hand, but with a chorus of hearty bellows, he kept running back to his mother's side. Dr Limo also sedated the baby, so he could peacefully rest on terra firma until the mission's completion.

It was a prodigious undertaking to free the mother. Usually, elephants become stuck on their side, but the mud had a quicksand-like effect. She was trapped standing, mired up to her shoulders. The team dug around her, trying to weave straps as low as possible. They eventually managed to secure the tow ropes beneath her front legs and backside. These were attached to the tractor, which was then caravanned to two Land Cruisers. With a mighty pull, the three-vehicle convoy managed to haul the elephant out of her muddy prison.

At last, it was time to wake up the patients. First the baby was revived, then his mum. He waited by her side until she got to her feet. Together, they walked off into the wilderness. There was still ample water and browse in the area, so we felt confident that both would find the sustenance they needed. Most importantly, they would remain together. The next few months would be difficult, but with their fighting spirit and fierce devotion to each other, we feel optimistic that this little family saw it through to the other side of the drought.

### **Epilogue: A happy ending for all**

While both rescue operations had happy outcomes, this dam was clearly a danger zone for elephants. We feared that its next victim might not be so lucky. Working with the local chief, KWS corporal, and county government, we funded a long-term solution: An excavator came and scooped out the dam, resealing its floor and removing the perilous layer of mud. Not only does this benefit the local elephant population, but also the community who relies on the dam. With luck, this will be the last rescue operation that unfolds here.





# Anti-Poaching Teams

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24 mobile anti-poaching teams

1 canine unit

65,174 kilometres patrolled on foot in 2022

989 wildlife offenders arrested in 2022

12,582 snares confiscated in 2022

For more than two decades, SWT rangers have been working on the frontlines of conservation, tackling the most pressing threats facing Kenya's wildlife and habitats. They are a vital link in our work, connecting the dots between all our other initiatives. Rangers wear many hats; aside from anti-poaching patrols, they also support all manner of field operations.

Our anti-poaching operations began in 1999 as a single Tsavo-based team. They have since evolved into an extensive presence protecting habitats across the country, in partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Service. Today, we operate 24 fully mobile Anti-Poaching Teams. 21 of these teams patrol within the greater Tsavo Conservation Area, collectively securing Kenya's largest national park and the surrounding wilderness. In 2014, we expanded our presence to Meru National Park, which provides sanctuary to a critically important population of black and white rhinos. Under the direction of Mara Elephant Project, we also fund two teams based in the Mau Forest, an important water catchment area in the Rift Valley.

Given the success of our existing Anti-Poaching Teams, we were asked to expand our operations to more vulnerable habitats that would benefit from a permanent presence. Last year, at the request of KWS, we established five new teams: Kajiado, Shompole, Lake Jipe, Dakadima, and Kulalu. These teams became fully operational in 2022, as did the brand new Kapangani team, based in the Galana Conservation Area.

While each team has a designated habitat under their remit, several also work as mobile rotating teams, providing continuous and much-needed coverage in areas when other teams are on leave. This helps to ensure a constant level of vigilance in Kenya's key ecosystems. With a combination of intensive training and innate

ability, rangers have unparalleled bush prowess. Each new recruit undergoes a three-month course at the KWS Manyani Training Academy before being deployed to the field. Teams are accompanied by two armed KWS rangers who have the power to make arrests. Tapping into a carefully cultivated intelligence network, they hone in on hotspots for illegal activities. Ambushes are carefully orchestrated: Ground teams move in to cut off escape routes and confiscate any weapons or paraphernalia left behind, while the KWS ranger makes the arrest. Over the course of the year, our Anti-Poaching Teams supported the arrest of 989 perpetrators for a variety of offences.

Each team is outfitted with a driver, a cook, and a specialised 4x4 vehicle capable of navigating rugged, backcountry terrain. While they conduct most of their patrols on foot, our Aerial Unit is poised to support operations and deploy rangers to remote destinations.

A trend that has been rising in recent years, bushmeat poaching continues to wreak havoc on ecosystems across Kenya. Snares, the poacher's weapon of choice, have an immortal lifespan. Affixed to a stable post or tree trunk, they lie in wait for any creature to cross their path and then cinch noose-like around their victims. Snares are as indiscriminate as they are cruel, capable of killing a creature as small as a dik-dik or as large as a bull elephant. Caught around a leg or neck, snares can inhibit an animal's ability to eat and move, ultimately leading to their demise. We have even seen elephants in their prime felled by a simple snare.

Our Anti-Poaching Teams are vital in combating snares. Their incredible bush prowess allows them to spot subtle signs of poaching activity that would go unnoticed by most. They are able to discern subtle disturbances in the ground, broken branches, and cleverly disguised snares.

They confiscated 12,582 snares over the course of 2022, which marks a 145 percent increase from five years ago. While this figure represents a rise in poaching, it also showcases the impact of having boots on the ground. Through their daily patrols, our teams seize snares that otherwise would have laid in wait indefinitely. On many occasions, they were even able to save trapped animals who were found alive.

To increase their haul, bushmeat poachers have adopted a previously used strategy called lamping. On moonless nights, they shine bright torches at their quarry, oftentimes accompanied by loud bells. While the animal is temporarily blinded and startled into submission, the poacher moves in and butchers them with a machete. Lamping is devastatingly effective; a single poacher can kill dozens of animals in a single night.

As new threats continue to come to the fore, we are committed to equipping our teams with the tools and skills they need to excel in their roles. In 2022, we contracted the services of a South African company specialising in self-defence training, particularly the technique of Krav Maga. Over the period of 42 days, two instructors trained 150 SWT rangers in the art of self-defence at Kaluku Field Headquarters in Tsavo East.

In tandem with the worsening drought, human-wildlife conflict escalated as the year progressed. Anti-Poaching Teams are the first port of call in these instances. They identify the animals from the ground, temporarily remove a section of fence line, and help push them back into protected areas, often with aerial support. Elephants are the primary species caught in the crosshairs; with their prolific appetites and larger-than-life presence, they can decimate a farmer's crops in a single night. Too often, their excursions have lethal implications.

By mitigating these encounters, Anti-Poaching Teams save countless wild lives each year — and, in the process, protect local communities and their livelihoods. Rangers have developed a productive rapport with local communities, which has long-term conservation benefits: When people know they can call upon our teams to respond to marauding wildlife, they are far less likely to resort to violence. In total, Anti-Poaching Teams responded to 473 elephants involved in human-wildlife conflict over the course of 2022.

The drought brought about all manner of field emergencies. As life turned into a daily struggle for survival, wildlife also had to contend with human actions. Poachers targeted the remaining water sources



# SWT Anti-Poaching Teams

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## TSAVO CONSERVATION AREA

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- Mtito** - Tsavo Triangle, Tsavo East, Tsavo West (1999)
- Peregrine** - Trust land, Tsavo East (2001)
- Burra** - Southern sector of Tsavo East and surrounding ranch lands (2002)
- Ithumba** - Northern sector of Tsavo East, including Ithumba (2002)
- Tiva** - Northern sector of Tsavo East (2004)
- Ziwani** - Southern sector of Tsavo West and surrounding ranch lands (2004)
- Chyulu** - Chyulu Hills (2006)
- Kenze** - Kibwezi Forest, Chyulu Hills (2013)
- Yatta** - Northern sector of Tsavo East, including the Yatta Plateau (2016)
- Mobile North** - Where most needed in northern sector of Tsavo Conservation Area (2016)
- Sobo** - Central and western sectors of Tsavo East (2018)
- Mobile South** - Where most needed in southern sector of the Tsavo Conservation Area (2018)
- Chyulu Mobile** - Where most needed in Chyulu Hills, Kibwezi Forest, and KARI Ranch (2019)
- Mukururo** - Northern sector of Chyulu Hills (2020)
- Galana-Thabangunji** - Galana Conservancy and Thabangunji (2020)
- Kajiado** - North of Amboseli and Chyulu Hills, and where most needed (2021)
- Shompole** - Shompole, Namanga, and Ibisil, and where most needed (2021)
- Lake Jipe** - Lake Jipe, Tanzania border (2021)
- Dakadima** - Southern Tsavo, Lali Hills (2021)
- Kulalu** - Southern border of Tsavo East, Kulalu and Galana Ranches (2021)
- Kapangani** - Galana Conservation Area and where needed (2022)

## MERU NATIONAL PARK

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- Meru** - Meru National Park and Mwea National Reserve (2014)

## MAU FOREST

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- Mau Forest Alpha Team** (2018)
- Mau Forest Charlie Team** (2019)







in the parks, knowing wildlife had little option but to congregate in these concentrated areas. Illegal herders brought their livestock into protected areas to graze, depleting already scarce resources in the process. There were also a staggering number of veterinary emergencies and orphan rescues that unfolded in the landscape, supported by our Anti-Poaching Teams.

Bushfires remain a persistent challenge. Over the course of 2022, a total of 42 fires swept through the greater Tsavo ecosystem. Anti-Poaching Teams fight these fires from the frontlines, frequently battling the flames through the night, alongside other field partners. Bushfires can occur naturally, but the majority of this year's incidents appeared to have been set deliberately. Arsonists include herders burning to create new grazing pasture for their livestock, farmers clearing their farms adjacent to the park, and poachers promoting new growth to attract animals. They are also started as a diversion so that culprits can engage in illegal activities elsewhere.

Poaching remains the greatest focus of our Anti-Poaching Teams. While poaching activities continue to decline in the national parks — a testament to our extensive presence within the Tsavo landscape — bordering ranchlands are highly vulnerable. We saw this firsthand in Galana and Kulalu Ranches, which form much of Tsavo East's eastern boundary. This vast landscape has become a hotbed for bushmeat poaching, charcoal burning, and livestock incursions.

Our efforts in Galana began in May 2021, when we were asked to assume management of Galana Wildlife Conservancy by its board of directors. Spanning 60,000 acres, the dedicated wildlife conservancy sits within Galana Ranch and was struggling with the same challenges that plagued the wider landscape. This year, we agreed upon a second arrangement with ADC, in which the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust manages the conservation mandate of both Galana and Kulalu Ranches.

These plagued landscapes were the focus areas of our 2022 anti-poaching operations. While there is still extensive work to be done, comprehensive aerial and ground patrols have already contributed to a marked reduction in illegal activities. It has also been a sobering reminder of the prolific capabilities of bushmeat poachers: In February, a two-day ambush exercise yielded multiple successful arrests. Four poachers were arrested with the carcasses of 142 dik-diks, three genenuks, three bustards, two kudus, two hares, and one warthog in their possession. The scale of the bushmeat haul was staggering, particularly when one considers that this can happen on a nightly basis. These poachers had employed the lamping method.

Over the years, our Anti-Poaching Teams have helped transform landscapes and tackle the greatest threats facing conservation. These threats are ever-evolving — and so are our teams, rising to meet the challenges of today and preparing for those of tomorrow.



# SWT Canine Unit

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Our anti-poaching operations started small, with a single Tsavo-based team in partnership with the KWS. Over the years, our operations have expanded across the country, now spanning 24 Anti-Poaching Teams. To further evolve our capabilities, we launched our Canine Unit in partnership with the KWS in 2016. This special team was established to complement our existing anti-poaching operations in the Tsavo landscape. Tracker dogs would provide an essential link, with capabilities for scent-based tracking that no man could replicate.

The KWS had individual tracker dogs in various landscapes across the country, but no permanent unit existed in the Tsavo Conservation Area. As Kenya's largest National Park and a habitat of great biodiversity, this vast landscape is inherently vulnerable to wildlife crime. The mere presence of tracker dogs proved to be an immediate and very effective deterrent to poachers and other would-be perpetrators. Now with six years of field operations to its name, the Canine Unit has emerged as a formidable anti-poaching asset in Tsavo.

The year began with a tragic loss for the team. On 12th April, we said goodbye to our beloved teammate, Naiko, following a short battle with cancer. Naiko was a founding member of

our Canine Unit. He arrived in Tsavo having never set foot in Kenya before, fresh from training in the Netherlands and Tanzania. He found himself in a challenging, unforgiving landscape — but he absolutely flourished. Naiko thrived in the heat and seemed right at home in the vast wilderness. We built state-of-the-art kennels to house the Canine Unit and, while Naiko enjoyed his down time, he was happiest when out on the trail.

Over the course of his career, Naiko assisted in the arrest of dozens of poachers. He often tracked them through the park, back into the community, and right up to their houses. While many dogs have raw talent, Naiko also had extreme endurance. Most police dogs follow a scent for one kilometre, but Naiko routinely completed 15-kilometre tracks, navigating thick bush and virgin terrain. His record was a whopping 19 kilometres, which resulted in an arrest by the KWS.

Naiko was a dog, a partner, and a precious friend. The six years he spent in the field had an effect that will be felt for decades. While we mourn the loss of Naiko, the Canine Unit is left in the capable paws of our two veteran females, along with a rotation of KWS dogs in training. The permanent members of the team comprise:

**Aya:** ‘The workaholic’. Born 2018. Belgian Malinois / German Shepherd mix. Aya is known for her determination. She is remarkably focused on whatever task is at hand and never gives up.

**Zora:** ‘The tank’. Born 2018. Belgian Malinois. Zora is a bit larger than Aya. She has enormous power and drive, but she is also a sensitive soul who requires delicate handling.

A KWS Corporal heads the Canine Unit, leading SWT dog handlers who have undergone rigorous training. The team is accompanied by armed KWS rangers on every patrol, who have the power to make arrests.

The Canine Unit also has a collaborative relationship with our Anti-Poaching Teams. They take up ‘residency’ with specific teams to address security concerns within the region. Rangers are very receptive to this four-legged support: On long-distance patrols, Canine Unit handlers must carry enough water for themselves and their dogs, which adds up to a hefty load of 8 litres. In a poignant display of camaraderie, anti-poaching rangers often volunteer to shoulder this burden.

Consistent training ensures the unit remains at the top of their craft. Daily exercises reinforce protocols and keep the dogs and their handlers in peak fitness. We also invest in an annual six-week training course with external experts, which allows the team to deepen and evolve their skillset. To address the rising threat of

bushmeat poaching, Aya and Zora underwent specialised training to hone their bushmeat detection skills. They are in the early stages of motorbike tracking, which will be invaluable in apprehending poachers.

A mid-year success illustrated the enormous strengths of the Canine Unit. The team had been doing focused training exercises in heavily trafficked environments. This entails the challenging art of discrimination tracking, in which they must follow a single scent among many people. The Canine Unit put these new skills to immediate use in the field, tracking a poacher about seven kilometres from inside the park, through the community — in which his scent intermingled with countless other people — and to his very front door. The poacher was arrested with contraband in his possession.

When the Canine Unit was first established in the Tsavo Triangle, it was common to see telltale signs of human activity within the area. Now, with widespread knowledge that they are a permanent presence in the area, it is rare to find so much as an errant footprint. In the longer term, we are looking to install kennels in Ithumba and Galana, so the Canine Unit can work for longer periods of time in these vital landscapes.

From their mere presence to targeted patrols, the Canine Unit is making a tangible impact in the Tsavo landscape. Working in concert with our other field teams, Aya, Zora, and their handlers are protecting habitats and the creatures who call them home.



# An Interview with Benjamin Kasaine

## ITHUMBA ANTI-POACHING TEAM LEADER



### How long have you been working for Sheldrick Wildlife Trust?

I started working for the Trust in 2009. I began as a night watchman at the Umani Springs Eco Lodge, a job I held for many years. In 2014, I was promoted to an anti-poaching ranger. I attended the paramilitary course at Manyani, where I spent three months training. My first posting was with the Kenze Anti-Poaching Team, then I was transferred to Ithumba in 2018.

### Where do you call home?

I am a Samburu from northern Kenya. I grew up in a small town, remote and surrounded by lots of wildlife.

### Were you interested in wildlife conservation as a child?

Yes, very much. I am lucky to have the opportunity to work doing something I love. This opportunity is one of a kind. I have passion for what I do — this is my dream come true.

## What is a normal day like for an anti-poaching ranger?

We don't have patrol times; we work different times of the day and night, depending on what is needed. For instance, today we woke up around 5 o'clock. We had planned a patrol based on poaching intelligence and were able to confiscate 112 small game snares this afternoon. We usually move to areas where we see illegal activities, following the problem.

## You work closely with the Aerial Unit, don't you?

Yes, we work together very closely. Without the Aerial Unit, it would be very difficult to do our jobs. They are able to patrol areas that would be hard to reach by foot. For instance, yesterday, the SWT helicopter was able to take us to a hot zone 25 kilometres away which yielded positive results.

## Of course, you also work with the Canine Unit.

Yes, we were just working with the Canine Unit. We patrol along community boundaries, because the dogs act as an amazing deterrent to any perpetrators. When they see the dogs, they do not cross the park fence. The dogs also help us track in difficult and challenging terrain and have assisted us in this difficult work enormously.

## Benjamin, your team has been named 'SWT Team of the Year', an award given to the top-performing Anti-Poaching Team each year.

Yes, every day we are doing our best possible job, so at the end of the year we can arrive as the best team. This incentive creates healthy competition among the teams and their team leaders, and I am very proud to say my team has won this recognition.

## You have worked in the field for a long time now. Have you seen any changes to illegal activities in that time?

It is improving, but the challenges are always changing. Snaring is a big problem now, targeting the bushmeat species. This is not only for subsistence purposes, but often commercial. At the height of Coronavirus, we confiscated 2,000 snares in two days. Life was difficult, but wildlife and vegetation was the one to pay.

## Snaring is a very big problem, but you must always remain vigilant about ivory poaching. Can you share more about this threat?

Ivory poachers are a whole different league from bushmeat poachers. In March, we arrested two ivory poachers. They were on bicycles, and we tracked them for about four hours through the park. Eventually, we went in for an ambush. One guy had a knife, which he tried to use on me. We managed to arrest him, although not before he cut my arm. These guys were so smart — they had three poisoned arrows, but just the head without the shaft, so they could travel light and search for elephants. This also means when you arrest them, they don't have the incriminating evidence on them.

## What do people back home think about your job?

They love hearing about it. They don't think it can be real, me standing here, just in front of a wild elephant. [This interview took place at the Ithumba stockades, as a number of wild elephants filtered through.] By sharing my stories, we are telling our families and friends about another side of wildlife.

## What is your favourite part of the job?

Working in this beautiful, huge, challenging park, doing important work every day.



# Aerial Unit

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8 fixed-wing aircraft  
3 helicopters  
6 pilots  
2,534 hours flown in 2022  
347,024 kilometres covered in 2022

The vastness of Kenya's wild spaces is both its strength and its challenge. Entire landscapes remain untouched by man, traversed only by the creatures who live there. This is particularly true in the Tsavo Conservation Area. Spanning more than 40,000 square kilometres — roughly the same size as Switzerland — Tsavo and its environs form one of Africa's few remaining great wildernesses.

Given their size, protecting these remote landscapes is a prodigious challenge. All manner of vital tasks are nearly impossible — and certainly less effective — if undertaken from the ground alone. Over the years, our Aerial Unit has emerged as the single greatest differentiator in our field work. Our aircraft are absolutely vital tools in our conservation arsenal as we support the Kenya Wildlife Service. They enable us to rescue orphans, patrol and protect vast swathes of wilderness, mitigate human-wildlife conflict, respond to veterinary cases and other emergencies, medevac injured personnel, extinguish bushfires, and more. Aircraft have been part of our conservation story from the very beginning. David Sheldrick, in whose memory Sheldrick Wildlife Trust was founded, was an early adopter of aviation for conservation. As the founding warden of Tsavo National Park, the sturdy, bush-friendly Super Cub was his wings of choice.

More than three decades after David's tenure in Tsavo, fittingly, it was a Super Cub that launched the Trust's Aerial Unit. The addition of this plane in 2008 marked a watershed in our field operations, quite literally elevating our capacity for conservation. Over the years, our fleet has expanded to eight fixed-wing aircraft and three helicopters, each of which plays a pivotal role in our conservation work.

## **CUBCRAFTERS TOP CUB (5Y-DTP)**

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CubCrafters took the famous Piper Super Cub and redesigned it, keeping what made the original so great and making it even better with modern aerodynamics and wing structure, increasing the gross weight carrying capacity, and adding a 180 HP engine. The Top Cub has become the benchmark of backcountry surveillance, flying in and out of rugged surfaces with ease. Our pilots spend up to six hours at a time in slow flight, cruising around 60 MPH, with the all-around visibility of this aircraft, patrolling the vast landscape of Tsavo. Our Super Cubs are the backbone of our air-wing operations, flying around 250,000 miles a year on patrol.

## **PIPER SUPER CUB (5Y-STP)**

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This aircraft is an original Super Cub that has been modified and modernised, with increased gross weight, a bigger 180 HP engine, and a Wide Body conversion, which adds four inches to cabin width. With huge Tundra Tyres and comfortable wide cabins, STP is perfect for bush flying patrol work. It is a firm favourite amongst our pilots, as it handles beautifully and just wants to get off the ground and fly.

### **PIPER FAMILY CRUISER (5Y-TRA)**

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This is a larger four-place version of the standard Tandem Two-Seat Super Cub. Fitted with huge, 35-inch Tundra Tyres, this aircraft is ideally suited to carry three people and their gear; for example, it would be the perfect aircraft to transport a veterinarian and his assistant, along with their tranquillisation equipment and drug box, and land in a remote riverbed or open field to treat an injured elephant. This is a fantastically versatile aircraft and a favourite amongst our pilots.

### **CUBCRAFTERS CARBON CUB FX3 (5Y-STR)**

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With the FX3, Cub Crafters once again set the bar very high. They took a Carbon Cub and added a slew of features, including a constant speed propeller, wider cabin space, higher gross weight capacity, and modern avionics, to make one of the most amazing bush planes on the market today. For example, you can take off from a sand bank next to a river in ten rotations of the big 35-inch Tundra Tyres, climb at 1,500 feet per minute, pull the prop RPM back, and quickly cruise back to base at 140 miles per hour with a digital autopilot. The FX3 takes our patrolling of the Tsavo landscape to a new level.

### **CUBCRAFTERS CARBON CUB EX3 (5Y-STB)**

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The FX3 proved to be so essential to our field operations that, in light of our increased operations across the Tsavo landscape and further afield in Kenya, we added another to our fleet. The EX3 is just like its sister, the FX3, except it was assembled by a professional aircraft builder in South Africa. One of our pilots flew it north to Kenya when it was ready, and it has already made a marked impact as part of the Aerial Unit.

### **CESSNA 206 (5Y-CFZ)**

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The 206 is Cessna's infamous 'truck'. Like the Cessna 185, the 206 is renowned for its reliable, tough load carrying capabilities, making it a favourite amongst many a bush pilot all over the world. For us, this aircraft is most suited for carrying personnel to further afield places or, for example, to fly one of our tracker dogs and a handler on a specialist operation.

### **CESSNA 'BABY' CARAVAN 208 (5Y-STW)**

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Relatively new to the SWT Air Wing, the Cessna Caravan is one of Cessna's best-selling aircraft and is widely regarded as the premier medium-sized bush plane. This very robust aircraft can carry eleven people, including the pilot, or haul a massive amount of cargo or rescued wildlife in and out of rugged terrain. The vast majority of our orphaned elephants have been carried back to the Nursery in a Cessna Caravan. Equipped with the latest avionics technology, this aircraft can safely fly in most weather conditions and night operations. This aircraft is equipped with a Life Port system for medical evacuations.

### **CESSNA 185 (5Y-FLY)**

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5Y FLY is a Cessna 185 much favoured by bush and backcountry pilots all over the world. It is a robust, tough aircraft that can carry a lot in and out of unprepared airstrips. 5Y FLY also has STOL (short take off and landing) conversions fitted that really make it perform well when you need to access remote bush airstrips. This is vital when dropping a vet, his assistants, and all their gear to treat an injured animal, for example.

### **AIRBUS AS350 (5Y-CXP)**

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The addition of our first helicopter was a game-changer. Being fortunate enough to have an Airbus AS350 has taken our operations to a whole new level. This helicopter is so versatile. In anti-poaching operations, it drops our sniffer dogs and handlers at remote, inaccessible sites. In human-wildlife conflict operations, it shepherds wildlife back into parks and reserves. During fire-fighting efforts, it drops water on fires with a Bambi Bucket. It can sling-load cargo into difficult-to-get-to places; conduct medical evacuations of injured personnel, taking them from site directly to hospital; and support our veterinarians, providing a perfect platform for them to dart wildlife from the air. If there was one piece of equipment that has dramatically changed our operations for the better, it would be this helicopter.









## AIRBUS EC120 (5Y-KUI)

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Given the game-changing success of the Airbus AS350, and through the generosity of our incredible supporters, we were fortunate to add a second Airbus to our fleet last year (5Y KUI). Out of great demand, we have expanded our field veterinary initiatives with KWS to the northern and central parts of Kenya. This helicopter will expand our aerial reach across the country, specifically in these regions. It will enable our Mobile Vet Units to rapidly access and treat injured wildlife, and will provide invaluable support to KWS in conservation efforts in the same region.

## AIRBUS EC120 (CXT)

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This is the smallest of our three helicopters. Still with the robust Airbus technology and TurboMeca turbine engine, this five-seater helicopter is ideal for economical surveillance, patrol work, responding to human-wildlife conflict, medical evacuations, and deploying rangers and sniffer dogs. If conditions are right, it is used in many veterinary cases to dart wildlife from the air and land close by for the vet to jump out to treat the animal. Because of the relative economy of using this helicopter, it is also very useful in human-wildlife conflict mitigation.

Our Aerial Unit augments the forensic strengths of our ground teams with capabilities that can only be achieved in the sky. Pilots can cover an area in a fraction of the time it would take on the ground and land in places that are inaccessible to vehicles. They enable us to rescue orphans, patrol and protect vast swathes of wilderness, mitigate human-wildlife conflict, respond to veterinary cases and other emergencies, medevac injured personnel, extinguish bushfires and more.

2022 was a very busy year for our Aerial Unit. Our six pilots logged a total of 2,534 hours in the air, covering a distance of 347,024 kilometres on patrol. To put that figure into perspective, that is the equivalent of flying from Tsavo to London 50 times, or to Los Angeles 22 times. The beginning of the year was dominated by livestock incursions in Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks. Under the direction of KWS, both our fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters helped locate livestock and enclosures in protected areas. Coordinates were passed to KWS ground teams, who drove the livestock out of the park. While persistent aerial and ground-level efforts paid off, large-scale influxes of cattle and other livestock remained a persistent challenge throughout the year.

By February, it became increasingly clear that we were destined for a drought year. This realisation brought with it an early uptick in illegal activities, from continued livestock incursions to bushmeat poaching. Although one search for an injured bull elephant with a suspected arrow wound was unsuccessful, the lives of two other bull elephants near Kasigau were saved. In addition to several human-elephant conflict callouts, the team also responded to the first fire of the year, near Ithumba. It was believed to have been caused by a honey harvester, creating small fires to smoke bees out of hives. The fire

burned for two days, but aerial and ground teams were able to limit the damage to an area of 350 acres before it was fully extinguished. In a testament to persistent efforts on the ground and in the air, March saw an encouraging reduction in illegal livestock incursions.

There was also a massive decrease in human-elephant conflict callouts, even when compared to last year. While one case was unsuccessful, aircraft managed to successfully push elephants out of farmland and back into Tsavo East National Park on two occasions. Also notable was the successful arrest of two poachers. During a routine aerial patrol, they were spotted with a dead crocodile on the Athi River, and both were apprehended after the helicopter landed nearby.

April was marked by a spate of illegal activities, ranging from charcoal burning on Galana to logging in northern Tsavo. In one successful callout, four wooden beams were confiscated from a logging site, along with drying buffalo meat. As this incident illustrates, even small-scale logging, while seemingly innocuous, is frequently carried out in conjunction with other illegal activities.

Several aerial-assisted veterinary treatments unfolded throughout April. In the Shimba Hills, the team removed a cable snare from the leg of an infant elephant before reuniting her with her mother. During a fixed-wing patrol in Tsavo East, a pilot raised the alarm of a bull elephant with a deep penetrating wound, who was then successfully treated. Unfortunately, the Aerial Unit's final veterinary case of the month ended on a tragic note. On 27th April, an iconic tusker known as Tolstoy was found collapsed in Kimana Sanctuary. He had been treated weeks prior for a spear injury, but the wound had become infected and severely compromised his condition. Despite a herculean

effort to save him, Tolstoy never got back to his feet. He died that night, closing the chapter on one of Kenya's most magnificent elephants.

Heading into May, the Aerial Unit was poised for action. This is always a busy period, but impending drought across Kenya exacerbated the situation. Very little rain fell in November-December, which is typically Tsavo's most significant rainy season. On top of that, the April-May rains failed almost entirely, causing many farmers to miss out on two potential crop seasons. As resources become scarce, there is an inevitable uptick in illegal activities and human-wildlife conflict.

The busy period continued to ramp up in June, which was marked by a number of veterinary treatments. Although several stories had happy endings, some creatures were not so lucky. A snare severed the entire foot of a giraffe in Ishaqbini (Garissa County), leaving the KWS veterinarian with no option but to euthanise the patient. In the Mara, an elephant was speared in the head. While the attack left him blind in one eye, rapid veterinary intervention saved his life. The Aerial Unit also attended to a very unusual case, in which a lion escaped from her cage while being moved off community land. The SWT helicopter responded to the incident, helping KWS recapture the lion so she could be successfully translocated to Tsavo West National Park.

Veterinary cases also dominated July, most of which entailed treating patients for human-inflicted injuries. In the remote northeastern corner of Tsavo East, a SWT/KWS Anti-Poaching Team discovered fresh poaching activity. This warranted a follow-up helicopter patrol in which three poachers' harbours, 29 snares of various sizes, and a snared kudu were discovered. Ground teams traced several well-worn paths leading into the park from the north, which led us to ramp up patrols in the area with increased intensity.

Bushfires returned with a vengeance in August. Human-wildlife conflict also continued to increase as the drought intensified. In a single day, the SWT helicopter responded to three veterinary cases: Two adult elephants with arrow wounds and an elephant calf with a snare. Because of the speedy response, which was only made possible through aerial intervention, all three treatments were successful. The Aerial Unit also performed an urgent medevac in August, transporting KWS veterinarian Dr Jeremiah Poghon to Karen Hospital in Nairobi after his team was

involved in a vehicle accident in Tsavo East. Tragically, one member of the team lost his life in the accident.

Although aerial orphan rescues unfolded throughout the year, they really ramped up in September, as the drought reached its peak. As food sources dwindled, more and more elephant calves were found abandoned and/or collapsed. In addition to all the elephant emergencies, the SWT helicopter was involved in the rescue of Raha, an orphaned black rhino who had been mauled by hyenas. The odds were stacked against her, but thanks to urgent veterinary intervention, Raha is recovering well at the Nairobi Nursery.

Over the course of 2022, the Aerial Unit responded to 42 bushfires. These reached a peak in October, when it felt like much of the month was spent fighting fires in the Chyulu Hills. Fires are typically set by herders seeking to improve grazing conditions for their livestock but, this year, many were set by poachers and miraa (khat) harvesters. The worst of the blazes, which burned for several days, destroyed more than 10,000 acres. Without the round-the-clock efforts of teams on the ground and in the air to bring it under control, it could have been even more devastating.

November marked the beginning of the rainy season, which brought relief to a parched landscape. Unfortunately, however, the rains were not particularly widespread. As select areas became verdant, elephants increasingly wandered outside the park in search of proverbial greener pastures. This led to an increase in human-wildlife conflict, which kept the Aerial Unit busy throughout the month.

A rapid response is vital in instances of human-elephant conflict, as is persistence. Elephants are very large, very wild, and very stubborn. Even the presence of an aircraft is not always enough to coax them back onto protected land. Our pilots must be patient and precise, flying low enough to shepherd their targets towards openings in the fenceline without causing panic. The challenge is compounded when they have an entire group of unruly bulls to wrangle, as is often the case. Despite the difficulty involved, our pilots are experts at human-wildlife conflict mitigation and are usually successful in removing elephants from community land. As is common at the close of a severe drought, the onset of the rains brought with it a rush of wildlife emergencies. The shift in conditions and the sudden availability of fresh food









can accelerate death in the weakest individuals. During December alone, seven elephant carcasses and two sets of tusks were discovered from the air, all of whom are presumed to have died of natural causes. For all the heartbreak they witnessed, pilots celebrated many field successes in November. These included the rescue of several orphaned elephants, veterinary treatments that resulted in three lives saved, and the apprehension of multiple poaching suspects on Galana Ranch.

Over the course of the drought, the Aerial Unit helped give many orphaned elephants a second chance. Time is of the essence in drought victims, and a rapid response can mean the difference between life and death. The versatility of our aerial fleet allowed us to give orphans big and small the life-saving ride they needed. The likes of Amali and Kapei needed every inch of the spacious SWT Cessna Caravan, whereas little Mwinzi survived only because the SWT helicopter was able to pick him up, drop him down for emergency drips, and then fly him to Kaluku. Weka, yet another drought victim, was spotted by our fixed-wing pilot during a routine patrol. Thanks in large part to our aerial capabilities, a herd's worth of orphaned elephants are alive today.

December is invariably the quietest month of the year for the Aerial Unit. Satiated by the rains, scarce as they were, both field emergencies and illegal activities hit a temporary lull. However, the month began on a high note, with the miraculous search-and-rescue of a four-year-old boy who had been lost in the wilderness for six days. The full saga can be read in the accompanying article.

The Aerial Unit was involved in one significant poaching incident in December. While on patrol, SWT rangers tracked the footprints of suspected poachers for approximately 25 kilometres. The team eventually found the suspects, but they managed to flee up the Yatta Plateau and make a successful getaway. However, this was not before they dropped an enormous set of ivory tusks that they had been hauling out of the Park. The tusks weighed 69 and 70 kilograms (152 pounds and 154 pounds, respectively), making them some of the largest in the world by today's standards.

Due to their size and remote location, the tusks had to be slung out of the park by helicopter, where they were to then be destroyed by KWS. The carcass of an elephant was found where the suspects' tracks had originated. Because of the advanced decomposition of the remains,

compounded by the age of the elephant, it was impossible to ascertain whether he had been deliberately poached or if he died of natural causes and the tusks were seized opportunistically. Either way, he lived a full life and passed on his remarkable genes to another generation of elephants in the northern sector of Tsavo.

The end of the year was marred by an unimaginable tragedy. One of our pilots, Mark Jenkins, and his son, Peter, lost their lives after their plane went down during an operation in Tsavo East National Park. Mark was a legend in conservation and Peter was following in his father's footsteps. Both were remarkable men and exhibited so many qualities that we shall strive to emulate. They died doing something that they were passionate about and their legacy will live on. You can read a full tribute to Mark and Peter at the end of the newsletter.

Being a pilot is a challenging job. However, as they fly across the most stunning parts of Kenya, our Aerial Unit is treated to sightings that few ever have the privilege of witnessing. They saw a pride of 16 lions, a leopard and her cub lazing in the top branches of a baobab tree, and a cheetah surveying the sunrise from Mudanda Rock. After watching a rhino named 'Christmas' grow up in Tsavo, they were delighted to spot her with a newborn baby in tow. Painted hunting dogs are making a comeback in Tsavo, as are oryx in Galana and sable antelope in the Shimba Hills. During one memorable patrol, a pilot spotted a tiny hippo hitching a ride atop mum's back in Mzima Springs.

As we always say, it is wildlife who serve as the best barometer of success in a landscape.

The presence of a diverse array of plants and animals is the greatest indication of the health of an ecosystem. Take Galana and Kulalu Ranches, for instance. Not long ago, elephants avoided many parts of the ranches. We only started our operations in the landscape in May 2021 but, with a reduction in illegal activities, hundreds of elephants are accessing the deepest reaches of the landscape. On any given day, as many as 130 elephants visit the Lali water hole. Lions, cheetahs, painted hunting dogs, and leopards have taken up permanent residence in the conservancy, while healthy numbers of oryx, zebra, gazelle, impala, giraffe, warthog, and gerenuk have been witnessed across Galana and Kulalu. These sights represent everything our Aerial Unit is flying to protect.

# Pilot's Perspective

THE SEARCH-AND-RESCUE OF A LOST CHILD



*“I was incredibly eager to keep searching. I kept thinking of the poor little guy alone out there and wanted to do everything possible to find him - even if it seemed like an impossible mission.”*

- Roan Carr-Hartley -

On the evening of 29th November, we received a call from the Chief of Asa, a community 52 kilometres east of the northern boundary of Tsavo East National Park.

He reported that a four-year-old boy had gone missing during a storm the day prior, while out herding livestock with his brothers. It was too late to initiate a search that night, but the following morning, I left Kaluku HQ at around 6:15am and flew 70 minutes to reach the boy's village. By the time I was overhead, a search party of 70 men were fanning through the wild scrubland in search of the little boy. I had a rough direction of the search party's location given to me by the Chief. The party had tracked the boy to an area 7 kilometres from his village, but then the tracks started to become unreadable.

With no way of communicating with them while I was in the air, I had organised for the search party to walk with a white cloth tied to a long stick, which would make it easier to find them in the dense bush. After locating the group in this area I began my search. Four hours of scanning the sea of vegetation revealed nothing but an empty fuel tank and various animals, including hyenas and jackals. It was an unforgiving environment for any person to be alone, let alone a child so young. However, because of heavy rains, there was no shortage of surface water. This at least gave me some peace of mind that the boy would be able to find water.

After refuelling, I flew for another 3.5 hours before we ran out of daylight and I had to return to base. It seemed hopeless searching for a tiny boy in such a huge expanse of wilderness. There have been times where I haven't been able to locate a particular elephant for up to a week, let alone a four-year-old child. It rained heavily that night, and the following morning, the boy's tracks were nowhere to be seen. The Chief and the boy's family determined that in the absence of fresh tracks and a general area to narrow down the search, nothing more could be done from the air. It would be a case of looking for a needle in a haystack. Instead, the search party would continue on foot.

On the evening of 3rd December — five nights after the boy went missing — I received another call from the Chief. He told me that the ground team had re-discovered the boy's tracks, a staggering 15 kilometres from his village. I was in shock that the boy was still alive, let alone walking. After nearly a week of heavy rainfall, with no food and predators roaming the area, one can

be forgiven for losing hope. However, hope had been reignited, and I was incredibly eager to keep searching. I kept thinking of the poor little guy alone out there and wanted to do everything possible to find him — even if it seemed like an impossible mission.

The next morning, I was wheels up at 6:15am and headed to Asa. 70 minutes later, I arrived and began to look for the search party. Once again, I couldn't speak with the ground teams while in the air, but I had been given the general direction to fly north of the village for 15 kilometres. This time, however, the search party was completely out of communication, so there was no way to ask them to signal the aircraft. They themselves had been out for three days looking for the boy, surviving off milk mixed with water.

I spent the next hour and a half flying transects in an attempt to find the search party, so I could narrow down the general area and begin my search, but they were nowhere to be seen. But then, when I turned back to begin my westward transect, a miracle happened: Off my left wing, I saw a tiny figure below me, surrounded by a mass of shrubs and trees. I could not believe my eyes, but there he was: A tiny boy surrounded by endless wilderness. I was in shock that he was still alive and walking. I had not even begun to look for the boy; at that point, I was still searching for the group, which made it ten times harder to believe what had just happened.

The boy initially cowered away from the plane, then began darting under bushes and trees. He was obviously hypoglycaemic and stumbling as he walked. I immediately gained altitude and began to circle tightly, keeping my eyes fixed on him. In a land where everything looks the same, once you lose sight of something it can be very difficult to find it again. With no way of communicating with the search party, I was trying to figure out how to get a team to him, when the nearest village was 18 kilometres away.

After circling for a half hour, three men suddenly appeared off my right wing. They were part of the search party and had come from kilometres away after seeing me circling for a while. I opened the door of the aircraft and began pointing at the boy. They realised I had found something and began running. They eventually got to the boy, who was frozen still in disbelief that his ordeal was over. Upon reaching him, they lifted him above their shoulders and began cheering and chanting. It was a sight that made me well up as I watched from above. Finding him was a

near-impossible objective, but somehow the stars aligned and he happened to be standing in a small, open area at the very moment I decided to turn.

In his people's custom, it is imperative that the search party walk back to the village with the boy, all the way chanting a song of blessing and thanks. It is also necessary that the boy's mother and father provide food and water for the search party upon their arrival. I left the boy with the party and found a road close to the village where I could land. I was met by the elders of the village and the area Chief, who told me the boy's name, which was Ayub, before taking me to see his mother and father. When I showed his mother the photos of her boy, she broke down into tears. She couldn't believe he was still alive and was flooded with emotion, as one can imagine. The rest of the village — brothers, sisters, cousins, grandparents — all crowded around the camera, in disbelief that he had finally been found. We waited two hours, drinking tea and telling stories, until we heard the distant chanting of the search party, who had carried him for 18 kilometres. The women of the village began to chant and dance to welcome the boy home.

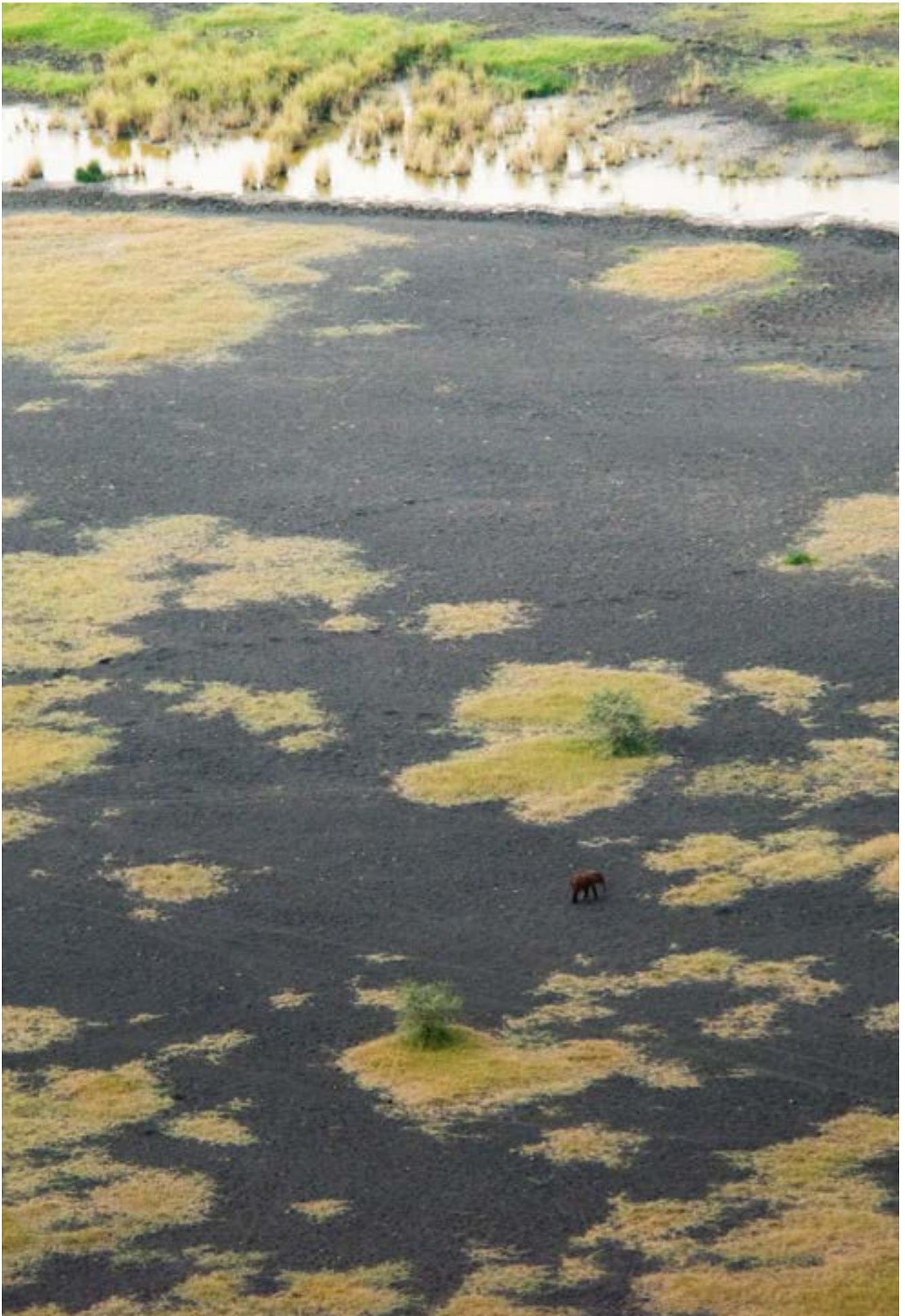
After an emotionally charged welcome, we gave the boy some rehydration and put him on a slow drip. He was covered in mosquito bites and scratches from the bristling thorn bushes. His feet were blistered and riddled with thorns and cuts, which is little surprise given the huge distances he walked. He was extremely weak, as one can imagine. Two roaming doctors arrived to tend to the boy and ensure that he was okay.

Before leaving the boy in good hands, the village elders came together and gifted me a young billy goat. This was a very generous, meaningful gift, as billy goats from this area are highly sought after. The goat and I flew home, feeling extremely content and grateful. For the boy, his six-day ordeal had finally come to an end. Afterwards, I received a message from Ayub's parents, with the update that their son has fully recovered. They also shared that they have added Roan to his name, which left me very touched. His friends have nicknamed him 'Pilot' — a wonderful way to commemorate his six-day saga!

– Roan Carr-Hartley, SWT Pilot –







# Saving Habitats

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## GALANA WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY, GALANA RANCH AND KULALU RANCH

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In today's increasingly developed world, most buffer zones bordering national parks are small-yet-vital pockets of land. But on the eastern frontier of the Tsavo Conservation Area sits a behemoth. Galana and Kulalu Ranches stretch along almost the entire eastern boundary of Tsavo East, collectively covering two million acres that extend towards the coast. They are stacked on top of each other and bisected by the Galana River, with Galana Ranch to the north and Kulalu Ranch to the south. It is important to note that they share an unfenced border with Tsavo East, meaning wildlife can roam freely between the park and the ranches. Like their neighbour, the ranches provide vital habitat for all manner of species, including elephants, lions, cheetahs, giraffes, wild dogs, leopards, and plains game.

Both Galana and Kulalu Ranches are managed by the Agricultural Development Corporation, a parastatal that oversees sustainable agriculture development in Kenya. Galana and Kulalu were always intended to be mixed land use, with selective ranching activities that are complementary to conservation efforts. However, it is a vast landscape, and ADC lacked the resources to focus on the conservation aspect. Over the past 40 years, the landscape had become increasingly hostile, overrun by illegal activities such as poaching, charcoal burning, and livestock incursions.

Our efforts in Galana began in May 2021, when we were asked to assume management of Galana Wildlife Conservancy by its board of directors. Spanning 60,000 acres, the dedicated wildlife conservancy sits within Galana Ranch and was struggling with the same challenges that plagued the wider landscape. Galana Wildlife Conservancy is an important area. Fully protected for conservation, it is essentially a continuation of Tsavo East. Insecurities in Galana affect not only the conservancy, but also the national park. Galana Wildlife

Conservancy is also a favoured tourist destination, with game roaming seamlessly between the two.

Everyone quickly realised, however, that in order to truly secure Tsavo's eastern frontier, we needed to work across Galana/Kulalu as a whole. As we continued to build upon our conservation work in Galana Wildlife Conservancy, we also agreed upon a second arrangement with ADC, in which the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust manages the conservation mandate of Galana and Kulalu Ranches.

From KARI Ranch to the Kibwezi Forest, we are no stranger to prodigious undertakings — but even by our standards, Galana/Kulalu was daunting. Over the past decade, illegal activities had taken hold across the landscape. Bushmeat poaching had reached rampant levels; poachers saw it as open season across the ranches, killing scores of creatures for the commercial bushmeat trade. This, coupled with illegal cattle incursions from the north and widespread charcoal burning, had degraded the land and created a hostile environment for wildlife.

Our goal was to turn Galana/Kulalu into a flourishing wildlife habitat once more. Our first move was to establish a field base at Lali, which would serve as our hub in the landscape. The Lali Hills, which sit at the heart of Galana Wildlife Conservancy, offer one of the few elevated vantage points in the region. With 360-degree visibility, the camp is in prime position to spot disturbances in the land unfolding around it. We also graded Lali airstrip and based a plane there to support field operations.

Given the pervasive threat of bushmeat poaching, we placed great emphasis on targeted patrols. We began by rotating our existing Anti-Poaching Teams into Galana/Kulalu. As the year progressed, we established four Anti-Poaching Teams that are permanently based in the ranches. They are supported by the 18 SWT/KWS Anti-

Poaching Teams who are already working within the Tsavo Conservation Area. Fully equipped, their collective manpower has proven to be a formidable presence.

The teams have logged countless hours on the ground, understanding perpetrators' favoured routes and routines. For targeted operations, the Canine Unit is brought in to track down perpetrators. Extensive aerial patrols bring a new dimension to our anti-poaching efforts, ensuring no corner remains unsurveilled. Already, we have witnessed a decline in poaching on Galana/Kulalu. The teams have spearheaded many significant arrests — each one a sobering reminder of the devastating effect that poaching has on wildlife populations.

Faced with a prolonged dry season that evolved into a brutal drought, we focused significant resources on water projects across Galana/Kulalu in 2022. We installed a borehole at Lali, which supplies both the teams in situ and local wildlife, and upgraded dams and watering points. To

support animals through the drought, a watering team harnessed water from the Galana River to keep the banks green and viable. We also provided supplemental lucerne and range cubes to more than 45 hippos who would otherwise have been at risk of starvation.

Just as wildlife feel the effects of the drought, so do rural communities bordering conservation areas. Building on our successful school feeding program in the Tsavo Conservation Area, we secured funding to expand the program to Galana/Kulalu, providing daily lunches to 900 students from four local schools.

Like the rest of the Tsavo Conservation Area, Galana/Kulalu is a difficult place even in the best of times. The drought took it to a new level. Field emergencies became an everyday occurrence, from orphan rescues to veterinary treatments. And yet, in little over a year, we have already seen marked improvement in the landscape — and this is just the beginning.

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## KIBWEZI FOREST AND THE CHYULU HILLS

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The Kibwezi Forest set the foundations for our land conservation management template. In 2008, we were presented with the opportunity to fund, manage, and protect the landscape in partnership with the Kenya Forest Service. Decades of poaching, logging, charcoal harvesting, and livestock incursions had severely degraded Kibwezi Forest. Its biodiversity had suffered as a direct result, causing many creatures to flee the landscape entirely.

Upon assuming management of the Kibwezi Forest, our immediate priority was to erect fencelines, connecting it to the adjacent Chyulu Hills National Park and creating a buffer with the community. The purpose of these fencelines was twofold: Prevent human incursions, which led to illegal activity within the forest, and protect bordering homesteads from marauding wildlife, which inevitably led to human-wildlife conflict. In total, we erected 93 kilometres of fencelines.

We employed members of the local community to patrol the fencelines, working in collaboration with our staff. Over the years, we have expanded our conservation presence in the Kibwezi Forest to include two in-situ Anti-Poaching Teams, comprehensive aerial surveillance patrols, and continued infrastructure support.

Conservation is a proverbial marathon, not a sprint. And yet, almost immediately after our concession began in the Kibwezi Forest, we saw a staggering impact on the landscape. As illegal activity decreased, wildlife numbers increased. Every year since, that trend has continued to accelerate. Once upon a time, it was unfathomable to encounter a wild elephant in the forest; today, it is an everyday occurrence. To see such a transformation in little over a decade is humbling indeed.

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### UMANI SPRINGS REINTEGRATION UNIT

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Umani Springs is the Trust's newest Reintegration Unit, established in 2014. Thanks to its gentle, forested environment, it is an ideal place for our most vulnerable and physically-compromised orphaned elephants to reclaim their place in the wild. The dependent Umani Springs herd is currently 12 strong. Another six orphans are semi or fully independent, spending nights away from the stockades and fraternising with the local elephant population. During the 2022 drought, two new rescues were brought directly to Umani Springs: Amali and Kapei. We expanded the stockades at Umani Springs to be able to accommodate more orphans, aware that drought and other human-inflicted challenges will only continue to escalate.





## **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

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Umani Springs Eco Lodge continues to be a treasured destination for domestic and international travellers alike. Run on a not-for-profit model, funds raised through the lodge directly support conservation initiatives in the area.

## **KIBWEZI FOREST APIARY**

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To deepen community engagement and further contribute to local employment, we established a Women's Beekeeping Group in the Kibwezi Forest. We built an apiary at Umani Springs and employed women from the local community, who sell the honey with all proceeds going back into community projects.

## **KIBWEZI FOREST TREE PLANTINGS**

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For 11 years and counting, we have led annual tree plantings in the Kibwezi Forest Reserve. Our goal is to make these exercises as collaborative as possible, bringing in participants from Kenya Forestry Research Institute, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service and, crucially, individuals from the local communities. Our team nurtures indigenous saplings within the Kibwezi Forest Tree Nursery, which are then planted at four different locations within the Kibwezi Forest degraded by historic charcoal burning and logging: Umani Springs, Manyanga, Kenze, and the zone along the power lines. The current capacity of the Kibwezi Forest Tree Nursery is just over 55,000 saplings, which are planted on an annual basis.

## **CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION PROGRAM**

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Bushfires have become seasonally pervasive throughout the Chyulu Hills ecosystem. While the overall number of fires was down from 2021 to 2022, the ecosystem still contended with several significant blazes. In addition to members of our own team, we also hire labourers from local communities to fight fires in the Chyulu Hills. Separately, we employ a crew of casual staff to maintain over 40 kilometres of road throughout the Kibwezi Forest. This includes grading roads to serve as fire breaks and maintaining a network of roads to support conservation efforts within the forest.

## **CHYULU HILLS REDD+ PROJECT**

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The REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) program is a global initiative to mitigate climate change and provide economic incentives for forest conservation. In partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, Big Life Foundation, Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust, and four group ranches on the western side of the Chyulu Hills, we are proud to operate the Chyulu Hills REDD+ Project.

Collectively, partners own or manage 410,533.84 hectares of wilderness in the Chyulu Hills ecosystem, including Chyulu Hills National Park (KWS), a sector of Tsavo West National Park (KWS), the Kibwezi Forest (KFS, under our management), Mbirikani Group Ranch, Kuku Ranch, Kuku A Ranch, and Rombo Ranch.

Much of the past two years have been consumed by a rigorous verification process, which allows the project to unlock and begin marketing the next batch of carbon credits that accumulated in the time since the original verification. The plot sampling bore testament to the positive impact of the project. The greatest increase in carbon was observed in Kibwezi Forest, which is under the conservation management of the Trust and is where we first began our operations in the Chyulu landscape.

In 2022, the project successfully finalised its second verification. As a result, the Chyulu Hills REDD+ Project can now issue 3.1 million new credits to the market, which will provide a reliable stream of funding for the next three to four years.

With funds disbursed to SWT from the Chyulu Hills REDD+ Project, we were able to build a fence around the KFS Kibwezi Tree Nursery. This important site for reforestation sits outside the forest at Thange and serves the neighbouring communities of Kibwezi and Chyulus. We also installed a 20,000-litre fuel tank for KWS at their Chyulu Hills National Park Headquarters, which will allow them to more efficiently fuel their vehicles and track usage.





## KARI RANCH

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Buffer zones are the unsung heroes of conservation. As habitats continue to shrink across the continent, wild spaces adjacent to national parks and other protected areas are an increasingly precious resource. KARI Ranch is a 63,321-acre wilderness spread across the foothills of the Chyulu Hills. It sits within a zone of recent volcanic activity, making it of marginal agricultural use.

However, it is also a vital habitat for all manner of wildlife. Chyulu Hills National Park lacks surface water, which drives creatures great and small to the bordering lands of KARI Ranch. This location also has special significance for our Orphans' Project, as it will be favoured rangelands for the orphaned elephants who go wild from our nearby Umani Springs Reintegration Unit. Our conservation mandate in KARI Ranch began in 2019, when we finalised a 25-year lease with the Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO). Years of human-wildlife conflict, illegal livestock grazing, charcoal burning, bushmeat and ivory poaching, and human encroachment had taken their toll on the landscape. These issues largely originated from KARI's unfenced eastern border, which abuts community land that is used for subsistence farming.

Upon commencing management, our first priority was to construct an elephant exclusion fence that could effectively mitigate the human-wildlife conflict on KARI's precarious boundary. In addition, we deployed a third full-time Anti-Poaching Team to the Chyulu area, providing dedicated surveillance and security.

The original fenceline, which stretches 43 kilometres along KARI's eastern boundary, was completed in mid-2020. It is an extension of the Chyulu Hills National Park / Kibwezi Forest fenceline, though with a different configuration. Unlike its predecessors, the KARI Ranch fenceline is an elephant exclusion fence, which features a three-strand design with five-foot-high outrigger wires. The fenceline benefits wildlife and the people who live alongside them. It effectively deters elephants from leaving the protection of KARI Ranch, while also sparing neighbouring farms from crop-raiding, alleviating human-wildlife conflict in the process. The fenceline also safeguards the landscape against poachers and other illegal incursions. Last year, we added a 7-kilometre extension on the eastern boundary to mitigate human-wildlife conflict. Askaris (guards), who are based at seven

fence outposts, conduct daily patrols and ensure fence maintenance. Building off the demonstrated impact of the original fenceline, we completed a 2,100-metre elephant exclusion fence around KARI Headquarters and School in 2021. This was borne from a productive challenge: As it flourished as a conservation area, KARI had become a favoured destination for elephants and other creatures. Securing headquarters within KARI was necessary to protect both staff and wildlife from unwanted encounters.

All current fencing phases, gates, and infrastructure on KARI Ranch have been successfully completed. In 2022, we established another road that runs from the north of the ranch to the south, following the river. This is for community use, allowing us to close the original road, which ran through the middle of the ranch and created security concerns.

The SWT/KWS Chyulu Mobile Anti-Poaching Team is in charge of the security of KARI Ranch. Established in tandem with our lease agreement in 2019, it has had a staggering effect on the environment. The team patrols the landscape daily, stamping out threats to conservation and responding to all manner of illegal activities, from livestock incursions to charcoal burning to timber harvesting. Their presence has led to a marked decline in poaching. In addition to making significant arrests of bushmeat and wildlife trophy poachers, they have also addressed illegal livestock incursions, which has had a positive impact on local wildlife populations by removing competition over precious resources.

In 2022, we began erecting a new tented camp at the airstrip on KARI Ranch. This will be used by the SWT/KWS Mukururo and Mobile South Anti-Poaching Teams, which patrol the area on rotation. As more frequent and intense droughts become a reality in the landscape, we also expanded our water works on KARI Ranch, through a new borehole and a dedicated water bowser.

We are only three years into our agreement with KARI Ranch, but have already witnessed significant progress in the region. Patrol teams have reported a notable rise in elephant, eland, hartebeest, zebra, and giraffe populations. In time, we are hopeful that the resident rhinos of the Chyulu Hills will take advantage of KARI Ranch, as it extends into their traditional rangelands.





Our presence in KARI Ranch has also benefited local communities. Lives and livelihoods are protected through the elephant exclusion fence, which prevents elephants from crop-raiding on neighbouring homesteads. Prior to installing the fenceline, we responded to many human-wildlife conflict callouts after elephants ventured onto

farms; today, these incidents have been reduced to zero. As KARI Ranch reminds us, effective conservation serves wildlife and the people who live alongside them. County government and the community have rallied around our work in the ecosystem, and the landscape has flourished.

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## PROJECT AMU AND WITU RANCH

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Located on the north coast of Kenya, Amu is home to one of the largest mangrove forests in the world and some of the oldest coastal forests in Africa. It is an important habitat for all manner of creatures, from small herds of elephants to large populations of reticulated giraffe, Cape buffalo, topi, and eland. Some of the most genetically diverse lions in East Africa can be found in Amu, ranging from the typically maneless Tsavo lions to the unique blue-eyed Somali lions.

Since 2012, we have been working to protect and regenerate this fragile ecosystem in partnership with the Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, and local stakeholders. We do this primarily by providing financial support and management expertise to the Lamu Conservation Trust (LCT), a community-led umbrella organisation that manages marine ecologies of the greater

Lamu region and preserves local wildlife populations. Last year, a dam was constructed on Amu with an electric fence erected around it to keep wildlife out. With a liner added, the dam has a carrying capacity of approx. five million litres and will supply water to the tree nursery, which can hold 500,000 saplings at one time.

To address degradation and carbon decline, we kicked off the Amu Ranch Expansion Project, a collaborative reforestation project with local communities. Under the leadership of Eden Reforestation Projects, our tree-planting partner, an astounding 11,809,418 mangroves have been planted in Lamu since July 2020. This initiative has created 76 full-time jobs for the local community, along with dozens of seasonal opportunities for workers who collect seeds and plant the terrestrial trees in the rainy season.

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## PEREGRINE CONSERVATION AREA AND TSAVO FARM

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The Peregrine Conservation Area sits in the Tsavo Triangle, at the intersection of the Mtito and Athi Rivers. Established in 1997, it positions our headquarters in the heart of the ecosystem and creates a vital buffer zone for two segments of the Tsavo East National Park boundary. To date, the Peregrine Conservation Area makes up about 5,000 acres of protected land.

In 2022, we purchased an additional 650 acres of land to expand this conservation zone. By securing these plots of land, we are able to create soft transitional boundaries along Tsavo's fencelines. This provides a buffer for wildlife and keeps habitation and cultivation away from the immediate boundary of the park. The new land titles were purchased from sellers inside the wildlife fence area that is already adjoining the Peregrine Conservation Area. Separately, 88 acres were also purchased on top of the Yatta Plateau, while 152 acres were purchased along the Ithumba fenceline. When we established the Peregrine Conservation Area, decades of human interference had driven most wildlife from the landscape. Now, it has

become a flourishing habitat once again. It is common place to see a diverse array of species: Leopards, lions, big herds of buffaloes and other plains bachelor groups and breeding families of elephants. In a telling display of the trust we have built with our wild neighbours, wild herds of zebras regularly choose to sleep on the Kaluku compound lawn.

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### TSAVO FARM

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Tsavo Farm is located on the periphery of the Peregrine Conservation Area. Using sustainable farming methods, it provides important employment opportunities for members of the surrounding community. In 2019, we developed a reforestation program based on Tsavo Farm. The six-acre reforestation area can nurture over 600 indigenous trees, which are then planted in the surrounding ecosystem.

We also installed a 17,000-litre aquaponics system at Tsavo Farm, which has the capacity to hold up to 600 tilapia fish. The tanks drain into 12 plant beds inside

an adjacent greenhouse, where vegetables grow in lava stone fed by the fish waste. Vegetables grown through aquaponics require about 10 percent of the water needed to grow the same crops through conventional, soil-based agriculture. The farm is also sustainably raising a number of chickens and goats. A new chicken house was constructed, with the capacity to house 55 birds.

In 2022, works on new staff quarters were completed. These encompass rooms for 20 farm staff, along with a kitchen, mess hall, and ablution block. These works were vital, as the old staff quarters were cramped and had fallen into a state of disrepair.

### **COMMUNITY PETAL PROJECT**

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As part of a new community outreach initiative, in 2022 we revived the bougainvillea fields at Tsavo Farm. This Petal Project will farm and harvest bougainvillea for the

production of botanical confetti, which can be exported to raise funds for conservation. This sustainable alternative to traditional confetti is derived from plants grown organically without the use of pesticides, chemicals, or fertilisers.

The hand-picked bright and colourful petals - also known as bracts - will be air-dried before being hand-sorted, graded, and ultimately exported to overseas markets. We hired women from the area to work on the Petal Project, providing valuable employment opportunities to traditionally marginalised members of the community.

In 2022, the bougainvillea field was hand pruned and weeded, while a wildlife-proof electric fence was erected around its perimeter. The old flower factory building, which processes the petals, was also rehabilitated. The first petal harvest will be ready in early 2023.

## **KIMANA SANCTUARY AND CORRIDOR**

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Wildlife corridors and dispersal areas are the arteries that connect habitats across the country, ensuring that migratory species, such as elephants, can move uninterrupted. While these areas are absolutely essential, they are particularly vulnerable to development, as they sit outside the protected confines of National Parks.

Such was the case with Kimana, one of the last remaining open tracts that connects Amboseli to the Chyulu Hills and Tsavo ecosystem. Spanning just 5,700 acres and flanked on either side by human settlements, it offers a safe passage and permanent habitat for all manner of creatures.

Since 2018, we have partnered with Big Life Foundation and local Maasai landowners to protect this special jewel. Historically, we covered the annual lease fees for Kimana Corridor and Kimana Sanctuary, which provides local Maasai landowners with a reliable and competitive income stream, effectively incentivising them to use their land for conservation, instead of farming.

Last year, a sublease agreement was finalised with Angama, a respected tourism entity in Kenya. Angama was granted tourism access to the Sanctuary and, in 2022, commenced the building of a lodge. The resulting revenue streams will allow Kimana Sanctuary to become self-sufficient, simultaneously covering its own running costs and increasing income to its landowners. While Big Life retains the head lease and management responsibilities, Angama has taken over the payment of the Sanctuary's lease fees. In lieu of lease fees, we began financially contributing towards the security fees for Kimana Sanctuary, including 57 community game rangers who are employed and managed by Big Life. We also continue to pay the lease fees for the Kimana Corridor, which comprises more than 17,700 acres of land that is privately owned and leased from individual landowners. Big Life similarly deploys rangers to the corridor and oversees all management in this ecosystem.





## SHIMBA HILLS AND MWALUGANJE ELEPHANT SANCTUARY

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In 2021, we finalised the purchase of an 800-acre corridor between Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary and the Shimba Hills. This area is a vital — and increasingly vulnerable — habitat for a small-but-mighty population of elephants.

When ivory poachers descended upon Tsavo in the 1970s and 1980s, many elephants fled towards the Indian Ocean, seeking sanctuary in the forested Shimba Hills. Half a century later, the area remains a stronghold for the coast's elephants. Over the years, human encroachment has fragmented the landscape and impeded wildlife's migratory passage back to Tsavo. It was critically important that this corridor did not fall into the hands of developers.

The success of Shimba Hills - Mwaluganje hinges on community engagement. Our first priority was to enhance support to Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary by increasing the annual compensation payments to the landowners and subsistence farmers in the program. We also implemented a substantial bursary program for staff and continued to fund the Mwaluganje rangers.

In order to protect this vital ecosystem and to reduce human-wildlife conflict, the area needed to be secured. Construction of a new electric fence surrounding the boundaries of Shimba Hills and Mwaluganje began in March 2022. This was a vital measure, as the old fence was extremely ineffective, with many gaps and little-to-no oversight. With the support of KWS, local village chiefs, and the sanctuary chairman, we initiated an educational drive to inform people living along the new fence of the proposed project and the benefits. This engendered community buy-in and support.

We also constructed six energiser houses along the new electric fence. These enable fence attendants to regularly patrol the fenceline, ensuring its proper functioning and sharing intelligence about possible breaches and significant wildlife sightings. The fenceline has been completed around Mwaluganje and is continuing into the Shimba Hills, reaching the area of Tiribe. In total, a distance of about 64 kilometres is now protected. To tackle prevalent threats in the Shimba Hills and Mwaluganje, SWT/KWS Anti-Poaching Teams were installed in both areas on a rotational basis. Their daily patrols helped reduce illegal activities in the area, notably bushmeat poaching and charcoal burning. Early next year, the new SWT/KWS Kwale Mobile Anti-Poaching Team will be deployed to patrol the ecosystem full-time. Augmenting the efforts of our rangers, Mwaluganje community scouts also patrol the landscape. We provided them with new uniforms, which contributed to a more visual, cohesive presence in the area, and taught enhanced patrol techniques. The scouts have now intensified their daily foot patrols, covering six to eight kilometres per day in the sanctuary.

In our continued commitment to improve infrastructure and operations in the landscape, we purchased a new 4x4 Isuzu truck in 2022. This has been customised into a water bowser, which will support ongoing projects within the Shimba Hills and Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary.

Because the Shimba Hills and Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary sit within a lush, forested environment, it is very challenging to get an accurate count of their elephant population. However, aerial patrols suggest that around 250 elephants live within the area.

Thanks to a permanent conservation presence, intensified patrols, and a new electric fence, the future now looks hopeful for Mwaluganje and Shimba Hills.

## MT. KENYA NATIONAL PARK

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Mount Kenya is an icon of Africa. The highest peak in the country and the second highest peak on the continent, this goliath and its surrounding landscape make up one of Kenya's key habitats. However, human encroachment has effectively turned Mount Kenya National Park into an 'island', surrounded by dense settlements and agriculture.

Mount Kenya Trust was established to promote the long-term conservation of the ecosystem and reduce conflict between local communities and wildlife. It created the Mount Kenya Elephant Corridor, a 14-kilometre elephant migration route that links the mountain with the Ngare Ndare Forest, Borana Ranch, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, and beyond to Samburu National Reserve. Over 1,000 elephants use the route in a single year. Through regular mobile camping patrols, Mount Kenya Trust effectively secures the mountain, elephant corridor, and surrounding areas against pervasive threats. For five years, we have directly supported the team's work by funding their equipment, fuel, rations, and supplies.

This team responds to any emergency calls within the region, tackling poaching issues and illegal activities, while also supporting elephant rescues and veterinary interventions. Keeping them in motion is vital to the security of the ecosystem.

In 2016, we donated a Land Rover Defender 4x4 to the team, which continues to support their daily operations. In 2022, we donated a second vehicle to the team. With the addition of the new Land Cruiser to their fleet, rangers will work on a one-month rotational basis, ensuring they can both detect hotspots in the region and tackle threats, from poaching to logging.

## ARABUKO SOKOKE FOREST

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Once upon a time, the East Africa coast was dominated by lush forests. The Arabuko Sokoke is one of the largest remaining fragments, situated just inland between Malindi and Kilifi. It is home to a spectacular array of flora and fauna, including a small population of elephants who have found refuge beneath its leafy canopy.

However, years of illegal incursions and activities had taken their toll on this coastal gem. In 2022, we put forth a proposal to co-manage the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Reserve. The Framework for Collaboration has been signed and finalised with the Kenya Forest Service. The SWT/KWS Kajiado Anti-Poaching Team has been deployed on the ground, providing support and surveillance in the area.

The KFS teams based in the Arabuko Sokoke had no vehicles for operations or security, so we purchased two new Land Cruisers, which will be used as security vehicles to further our conservation mission in the landscape. Both vehicles will be maintained by the Trust and manned by SWT drivers.





# Water for Wildlife

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Across Africa, water is an increasingly fraught resource. The seasons have always been characterised by severe polarities, searing dry spells followed by bountiful rains. Historically, droughts were a periodic reality, a harsh but just way of regulating wildlife populations.

However, human actions have changed the natural order, driving climate change across the world. Here in Kenya, dry seasons are growing longer, rains irregular or absent entirely, and droughts more frequent. Climate change contributed to the drought of 2021-22 — a drought that, for many parts of the country, is far from complete.

Typically, the long rains arrive in March through May. They tide over the landscape until late October through December, when the short rains arrive. In the past two years, however, the long rains were negligible. The pattern was repeated later in the year: In Tsavo, the heavens didn't properly open until December, although swathes of the park still received negligible rainfall. In many parts of Kenya, the rains never arrived.

As weather patterns grow more uncertain, Water for Wildlife, our supplemental water program, has become even more important. In consultation with hydrology experts and KWS we implement tailored water solutions in traditionally arid areas, with a focus on the Tsavo Conservation Area. They are particularly vital in the Tsavo Conservation Area. While Tsavo is one of the last remaining vast wildernesses in Kenya, vast tracts of the park lack natural drinking sources during the dry season. A lack of suitable water renders even the most ideal habitat unviable for long-term habitation.

We install boreholes in places where aquifers are plentiful, but surface drinking water is scarce. Sustainably powered by wind and solar, and augmented by generators where needed, pumps tap into water tables located deep beneath the ground. Water is then filtered into nearby troughs and pans. To date, we have installed 32 boreholes, each of which our team diligently monitors, cleans, and maintains.

These watering points are strategically placed far from communities, drawing wildlife deeper into the park. The dry season inevitably brings an uptick in human-wildlife conflict, as elephants and other creatures venture onto community lands in search of food and water. By creating water sources deep within the park, we are able to mitigate these oft-lethal encounters. Boreholes can also support area conservation initiatives, supplying water for field teams and facilities.

In areas where boreholes are not workable, we bring in water on wheels. Our bowsers fill up at a borehole or flowing river, and distribute the water in protected areas that lack natural drinking sources. We have a fleet of eight bowsers, five of which have a holding capacity of 20,000 litres. These are particularly important in transporting water to our Tsavo-based Reintegration Units, which serve our older dependent orphans, ex-orphans, and wild elephants. In total, we have the capacity to rapidly transport 124,000 litres of water at any one time

Distributing water in such a vast area requires careful coordination and dedicated resources. Every ten days, our field teams conduct service checks of all water projects, cleaning out troughs and tuning up equipment as needed. Meanwhile, our drivers have carefully orchestrated daily routes, delivering water across the Tsavo Ecosystem.

Given the drought, it was a very busy year for Water for Wildlife. As we ramped up water deliveries and ensured our existing watering points remained in top working order, we also spearheaded several new initiatives. At Chyulu 2 Station, Tsavo River Gate, and Ndara, we installed new solar power units. We also built a new solar-powered water system in Aruba, pumping 6,500 litres of water an hour to troughs and water pans for wildlife. We created three new boreholes in areas that were struggling on the water front: One in Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary in Tsavo West, and two on KARI Ranch. In addition, we fabricated two new water bowsers for use in the Shimba Hills and KARI Ranch.

This year, we also commenced the Tsavo Wetlands Project, an ambitious undertaking to create an artificial wetland in Tsavo East National Park. Greenlit by KWS, this initiative is a direct measure to address human-wildlife conflict instigated by water scarcity. The Tsavo Wetlands Project is designed to extract water from the Athi River, convey it over the Yatta Plateau, and deposit it within a historically waterless sector of the park located east of the plateau. With water readily available in this region, it is expected that elephants and other wildlife will stop migrating to the western side of the Yatta Plateau, where human-wildlife conflict is a growing challenge.

The conveyance of water from the Athi River to the water storage on top of the Yatta Plateau has been designed to operate sustainably, without the use of external power. It will employ a hydraulic ram pump, which uses the momentum of a large amount of flowing river water to pump a relatively small amount of water uphill. The project remained on target throughout the year, with an expected completion date in 2023.

As we look to the future, we must prepare for increasingly extreme weather, unreliable rains, and longer droughts. Through actions big and small - be it drawing water from a borehole, or channelling it over the Yatta Plateau - Water for Wildlife is forging a viable future in these uncertain times.



Tsavo Wetlands Project





# Support for The Kenya Wildlife Service

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We have a long-standing and productive partnership with the custodians of Kenya's wildlife and habitats, the Kenya Wildlife Service. As the Government of Kenya's authority for conservation and management, the KWS has the country's national parks, conservation areas, and sanctuaries under its jurisdiction. Above and beyond the extensive projects we operate in partnership with the KWS, we continue to provide significant financial support to enhance their efforts. Historically, our collaborative work was focused in the Tsavo Conservation Area. In recent years, however, our support has grown to address conservation challenges across the country.

## HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT MITIGATION

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Human-wildlife conflict is a grave and growing challenge. While it affects all manner of species, it has emerged as one of the prominent threats facing elephants. As the human footprint continues to expand, communities and wildlife are increasingly clashing over resources. Without rapid intervention, these encounters can be fatal on both sides.

In 2020, we rolled out our Tsavo Elephant Translocation Unit. This specialised unit is on-call to support KWS in the translocation of problem elephants (KWS term for elephants that repeatedly enter human settlements and pose a threat to people) in situations where they cannot be safely pushed back into protected areas by vehicle or helicopter. We have also supported the KWS Animal

Capture and Translocation Unit through the donation of vehicles and equipment over the years. Set against the backdrop of a drought, human-wildlife conflict became an even bigger threat in 2022. As resources became scarce in protected areas, elephants were increasingly tempted to venture onto proverbial greener pastures. We have developed productive relationships with local communities, who report these incursions to our teams or KWS. We rapidly coordinate an aerial and/or ground response, pushing the elephants back into the protection of the park. Over the course of 2022, we responded to reports of 473 problem elephants — a 44 percent increase from the prior year.

## FENCELINES

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Fencelines are a conservation tool that benefit wildlife and the communities who live alongside them. Not all landscapes should be fenced, as natural migratory movement is essential, but they are indispensable on precarious boundaries. Over the years, we have financed the construction, patrolling, and continued maintenance of 408.1 kilometres of fenceline. These wild borders prevent human-wildlife conflict and inhibit illegal activities within protected areas. We employ over 80 full-time staff who are responsible for the maintenance and monitoring of fencelines, many of whom are recruited from the local community. Teams are in radio communication with the corresponding SWT/KWS Anti-Poaching Unit, who are in position to respond to any security breaches. Most fencelines have been constructed in the Tsavo Conservation Area, with a focus on areas that struggle with human-wildlife conflict or illegal activities. In

2022, we completed Phase 1 (spanning 41 kilometres and five energizer houses) of an ambitious project to secure Shimba Hills Conservation Area. We have since embarked on Phase 2, which will extend another 42.5 kilometres around the vulnerable border of the Shimba Hills and Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary.

In Meru Rhino Sanctuary, we commenced upgrading a 23-kilometre section of the original fenceline. This will span the eastern boundary of the sanctuary, where the old fence is compromised and in a state of disrepair. Given that Meru Rhino Sanctuary is a stronghold for Kenya's vulnerable white and black rhino populations, stringent security is of paramount importance.

Fencelines require significant resources, from an upfront investment to implement the fencelines to dedicated

patrols to ensure their ongoing maintenance. However, they are one of the single most effective ways to protect habitats and communities. As of 2022, our fencelines protect the following conservation areas.

- **Mwaluganje - Shimba Hills - 120 kilometres**

We have finalised plans for our most ambitious fenceline project yet, securing the vulnerable boundaries of Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary and the Shimba Hills. Construction of the fenceline commenced in 2022.

- **Chyulu/Tsavo West to Mtito - 96.5 kilometres**

The Kibwezi Forest is now protected along three sensitive boundaries, connecting it with Chyulu Hills National Park and preventing all manner of illegal activities. Its presence has had a transformative effect on the forest.

- **Northern Tsavo East - 63 kilometres**

Over the years, we have constructed a 63-kilometre elephant-proof fenceline along the Tsavo East northern boundary, bordering the Ithumba area. We added two extra wires to the bottom of the fenceline to deter livestock incursion, while rehabilitating any old posts or problem areas.

- **KARI Ranch - 43 kilometres**

KARI Ranch is an important buffer zone in the Tsavo Conservation Area, with a direct link to Chyulu Hills National Park. Securing precarious boundaries has protected the landscape and benefited neighbouring communities, who historically struggled with human-wildlife conflict.

- **Meru Rhino Sanctuary - 48.1 kilometres**

We partnered with the KWS to upgrade and extend the Meru Rhino Sanctuary, which sits within Meru National Park. The resulting fortified fenceline nearly doubled the size of the sanctuary, providing more space and heightened security for its growing resident rhino population.

- **Voi - Ngutuni - 17.1 kilometres**

Stretching from Voi Safari Lodge towards the Ngutuni Ranch boundary to Ndara, this fenceline protects elephants and other wildlife from accessing the Nairobi-Mombasa Standard Gauge Railway. It also provides further security for our Voi orphans.

- **Kamboyo IPZ - 16 kilometres**

This fenceline was built to enhance the protection of Tsavo West's free-release rhino population. To further secure this threatened species, we also built a new electric fence around the IPZ KWS security base in Rhino Valley.

- **KWS Voi Headquarters - 15 kilometres**

As the hub of all KWS operations in Tsavo East National Park, security around the Voi Headquarters is absolutely vital to conservation in the region.

- **Nairobi National Park - 16.7 kilometres**

As one of the only national parks within a capital city, Nairobi National Park is known as the 'World's Wildlife Capital'. Securing this precious wilderness not only benefits the myriad of creatures who call it home, but also the orphaned elephants growing up at our Nairobi Nursery, which sits within the park.

- **Ndii Ndaza - 4 kilometres**

This fenceline fortifies the area around the Ndi Ndaza KWS camp, further enhancing security in this crucial sector of Tsavo East National Park.



## OPERATIONAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

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As resources allow, we are proud to fund ambitious, large-scale conservation initiatives with the KWS. Of equal importance, we also fund essential infrastructure and equipment that underpin the success of these projects.

The mobility of teams is vital to their impact on the ground. In 2022, we donated new, customised Land Cruisers to the KWS Senior Warden of Tsavo East, the team based in the northern sector of Tsavo East, Meru Rhino Sanctuary, and Mount Elgon Rapid Response Team. This will ensure teams are able to patrol effectively and rapidly respond to emergencies and field operations. Using our onsite expertise, we also rehabilitated several KWS vehicles, giving them a second life in the landscape. In addition to rehabilitating the KWS Capture Unit Truck, we donated three black rhino crates and two white rhino crates to KWS.

To facilitate operations on the ground, we provided varied support to KWS teams. This spanned rehabilitating mobile ranger bases in Tsavo West; donating tents for rangers in the field; and donation and installation of a digital radio

communications system to expand network coverage for KWS security personnel, facilitate enhanced patrolling capabilities and enable ground-to-air communication in response to live incidents. In addition, we spearheaded projects to rehabilitate KWS team infrastructure and upgrade road networks throughout the park.

As the drought continued to take hold, we provided supplementary feedings for wildlife in Lake Jipe (Tsavo West), Rhino Valley (Tsavo West), Galdessa (Tsavo East), and Galana Ranch. For struggling wildlife, these lucerne feedings provided a lifeline during difficult times.

Building on our sustainable tourism model, we took on the complete renovation of the old KWS camp at Lake Jipe. This will turn the camp into a viable property, drawing tourism to the southern sector of Tsavo West. The camp is now close to completion, encompassing a two-bedroom family unit and two single units, along with a dining area, kitchen and swimming pool.

## INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

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In 2020, we began a project to eliminate the invasive *Opuntia* Cactus from the southern sector of Tsavo East. Better known as 'prickly pear', the plant had overtaken stretches of the park, threatening indigenous plant life and disrupting the biome. In our greenhouse at Buchuma, we bred cochineals as a means to naturally tackle the prickly pear. These insects feast upon, and ultimately kill, the cactus.

After the cochineals flourished, we then scattered infected cuttings throughout targeted sectors of Tsavo East, where they spread through the invasive growth. The project is ongoing but, in most areas, the infection has taken hold, effectively eradicating prickly pear from the landscape.



# Rhino Conservation

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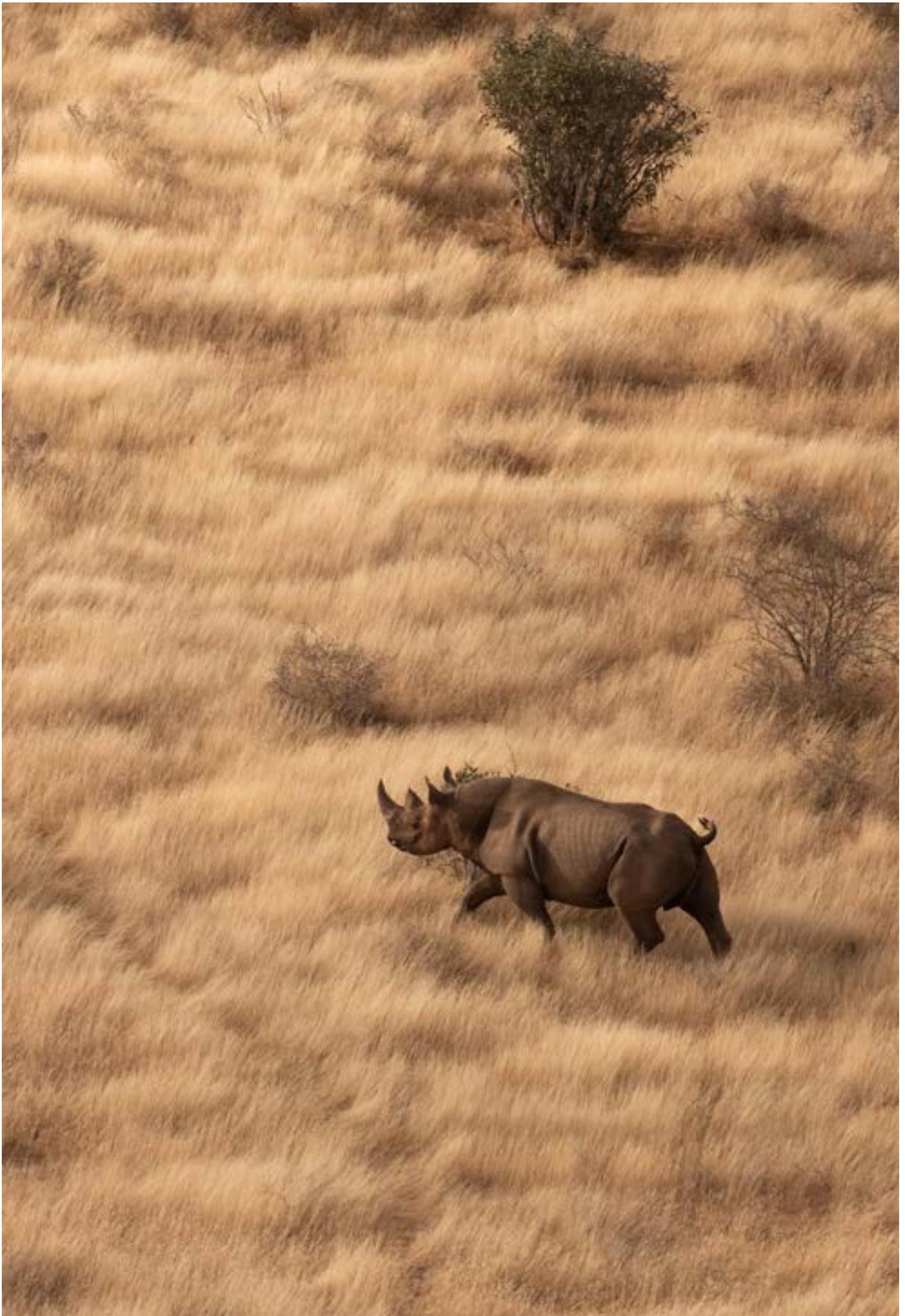
Although our work with elephants has earned us global recognition, our origins begin with rhino conservation. During their Tsavo days, Daphne and David Sheldrick raised some of the first orphaned rhinos in Kenya. Over the intervening decades, we have built upon this husbandry. To date, we have successfully raised 17 orphaned rhinos.

In the 1960s, Kenya was home to a thriving population of 20,000 black rhinos. However, poachers decimated the species, and just two decades later, their numbers had dwindled to 300. Thanks to dedicated conservation efforts, Kenya is now home to over 900 black rhinos. As we continue to navigate rising threats, we remain deeply committed to securing a future for this prehistoric species.

In 2022, we donated five customised rhino crates to the KWS Animal Capture Unit: three were made for black rhinos, two for white rhinos — each custom-made to accommodate the unique dimensions of the subspecies.

We also continued to expand our support to Meru Rhino Sanctuary, which sits within Meru National Park. In 2017, we partnered with the KWS on a large-scale fenceline project to expand the sanctuary and establish security bases and entrance gates. This nearly doubled the sanctuary's size, providing both increased space and upgraded security for its growing rhino population. In 2022, we rehabilitated the original main gate and upgraded a 23-kilometre stretch of fenceline.

Every year, we fund essential infrastructure and operating costs in Meru Rhino Sanctuary, ensuring teams are fully outfitted to protect the sanctuary. This includes funding annual fence maintenance and the salaries of full-time staff patrolling the fenceline. We also donated a new Land Cruiser, which will be used for security and operations.





# Community Outreach

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If we are to secure a future for Kenya's wildlife, we must also support the people who live alongside them. About 38 percent of rural-dwelling Kenyans live below the poverty line. As these communities struggle to make ends meet, many view wildlife as a threat to their livelihoods — and their very survival.

We are committed to creating a sustainable future for wild animals and their human neighbours. We focus our efforts in communities bordering Kenya's National Parks and protected areas, ensuring conservation initiatives also improve their quality of life. This support takes the form of local employment opportunities, education initiatives, food distribution programs, and conservation solutions that benefit both humans and wildlife.

## FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

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Beginning in 2021, we rolled out a new school lunch program. In speaking with local communities, we understood that many families struggled to adequately feed their children. Too many rural Kenyans are tragically familiar with poverty, and the drought created even more hardship. As a result, many children were skipping meals and withdrawing from school, as they lacked the energy to attend to their studies. Our school lunch program, targeted at learning institutions in struggling areas, is a direct response to these hardships. We provide a balanced, nutritious porridge, which forms a complete meal for students to eat at school.

This year, our Tsavo school lunch program was sponsored by the Chantecaille Conservation Foundation. Running from September to November, we distributed food supplies to a total of 20 schools in the Tsavo area, serving 4,944 students. The schools are located around Ithumba, Kone, and Galana and Kulalu Ranches. A further 1,303 students were reached from schools bordering KARI Ranch and throughout Nasaru Conservancy. Between Kaluku and Mtito Andei, we supported 20 schools with an estimated enrolment of 1,487 students for the entire year. Hard times are far from over, but we have received very positive feedback about the school lunch program. Previously, schools had been struggling with under-enrolment or closing early because children lacked energy. Teachers reported that since the program began, morale is up and students have been attending school in large numbers, including many who had dropped out. Bombi Primary School, located near Kulalu, is a good example of the program's positive impact. Since our food donations began, school attendance has grown 33 percent.

## SCHOOL SUPPORT AND STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

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Last year, our School Field Trips made their triumphant return after a pandemic-imposed hiatus. We debuted our new bus, a sleek green machine with plenty of room for eager learners. We also expanded our area of operations beyond the Tsavo ecosystem. At the request of members of Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary, a community conservancy bordering Shimba Hills National Park and Mwaluganje Forest Reserve, we brought our beloved class trip experiences to their local students.

In rural landscapes across Kenya, children grow up with a complicated relationship with wildlife. Some have never seen an elephant, while others associate them with frightening encounters or crop destruction. By introducing students to Kenya's natural world from the safety of a school bus, we connect the next generation with their country's natural heritage and foster an interest in conservation efforts.

In 2022, we led 84 fully subsidised class trips into protected landscapes. Over the course of the year, 2,373 students and 215 teachers joined us aboard the school bus, creating priceless memories that will lay the foundations for the next generation of conservationists. In addition to these experiences, we also work closely with local communities to improve school infrastructure. Over the years, we have donated more than 710 desks to schools around the Tsavo Conservation Area, along with resources that spark intellectual curiosity and physical activity. In 2022, we provided stationery and sports donations to a further three schools, providing them with equipment to play football (soccer), volleyball, and basketball.

To further our mission to support the continued education of rural Kenyans, we proudly fund a scholarship program. We currently sponsor the education of 24 students from communities in the Tsavo Conservation Area. 17 of these students are in secondary school, while seven are studying at the university level. In the Mwaluganje area, we subsidise the partial bursary for 42 students in primary school.

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## COMMUNITY TREE DONATIONS

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Throughout the year, we conduct community tree plantings. We donate saplings that were nurtured within our tree nurseries, which are then planted in schools, government facilities, and other strategic areas that would benefit from reforestation.

In 2022, we donated a total of 15,226 saplings, which were dispersed among nine Tsavo-area communities. In the coming years, they will flourish into tall, sturdy trees that provide much-needed shade and take in and store carbon from the atmosphere.

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## BEEHIVES AND BEEHIVE FENCELINES

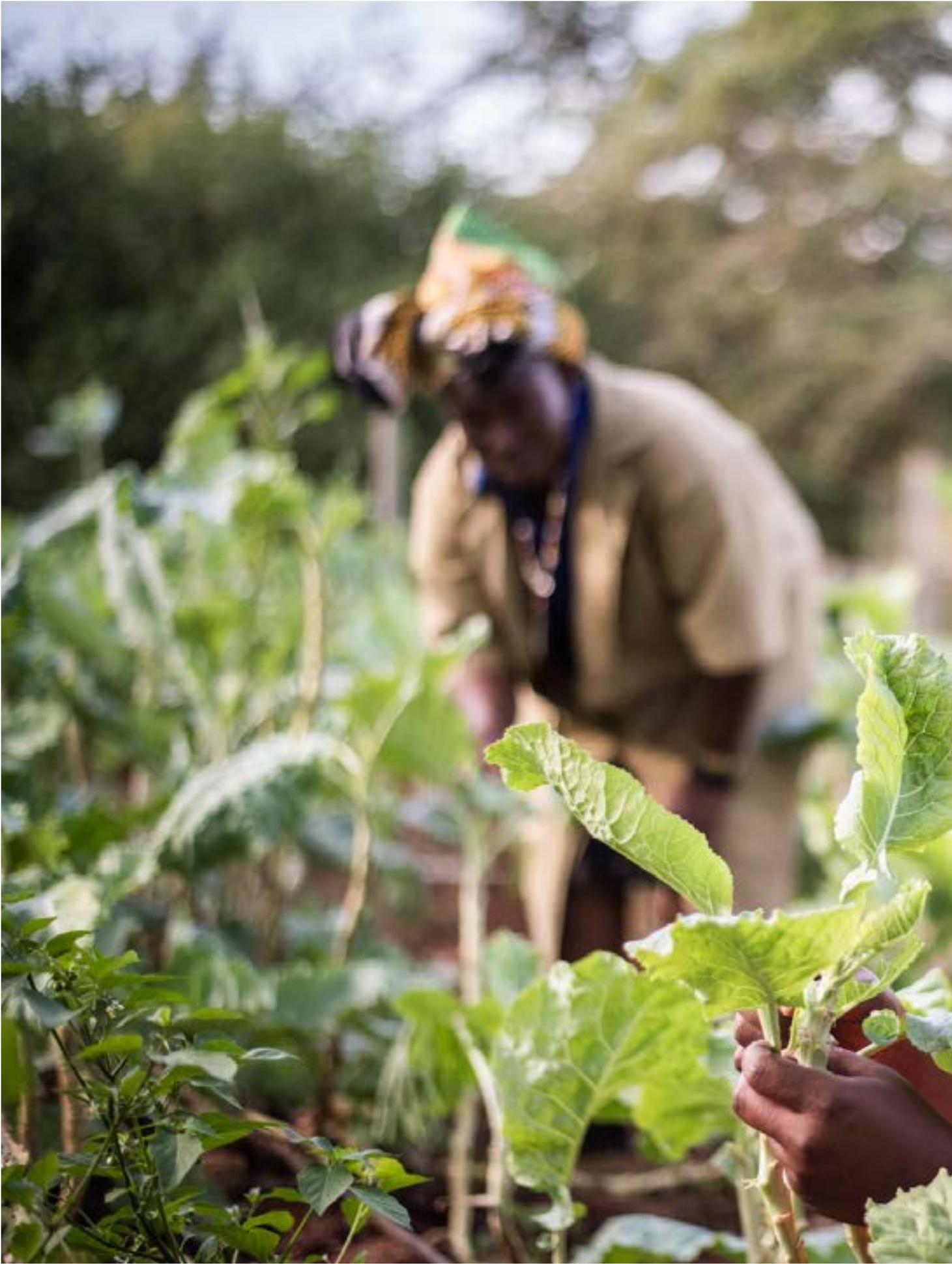
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In 2014, we launched our beehive fenceline project. This is a sustainable, non-aggressive method to mitigate human-wildlife conflict, as elephants have an innate aversion to buzzing bees. We have installed 144 hives across seven community farms that were historically targeted by crop-raiding elephants. Last year, we installed 78 new beehives. We also have 78 in the Kibwezi Forest and Tsavo Farm, along with ten catcher boxes in the Kibwezi Forest. In total, we manage 232 beehives.

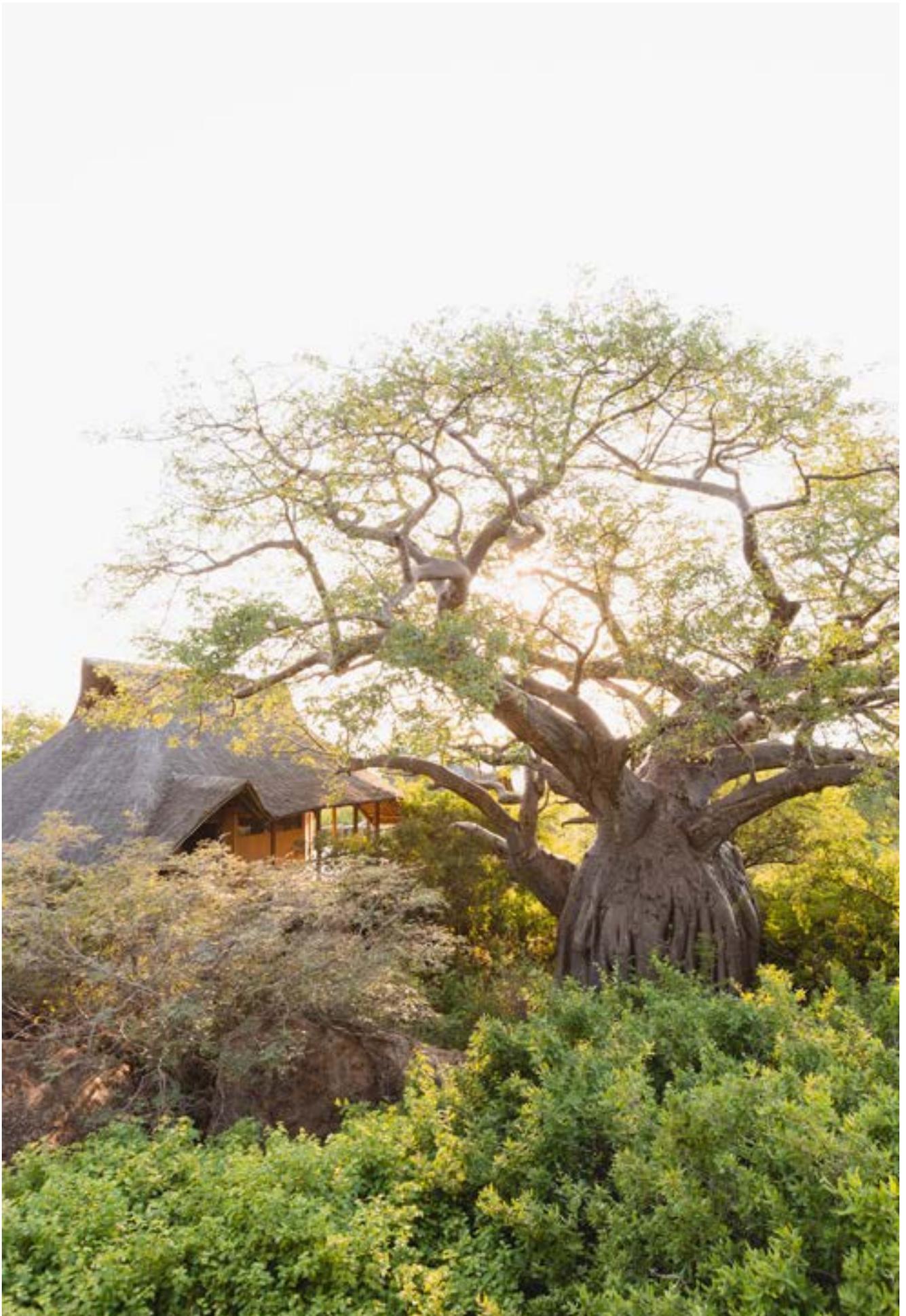
In 2021, we launched our women's beekeeping group in the Kibwezi Forest. Women from the local community are employed to look after 30 hives in the Kibwezi Forest. Each has undergone a five-day training course and is outfitted with professional beekeeping equipment. This program further connects local communities with conservation initiatives and provides valuable employment opportunities for women.











# Eco Lodges

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## 6 Eco Lodges

### The revenue they generate goes towards supporting conservation

Sheldrick Wildlife Trust's Eco Lodges add a unique dimension to our conservation projects, inviting supporters into the most wild corners of Kenya and immersing them in the work they make possible. Thoughtfully designed and sustainably managed, our portfolio of Eco Lodges offer a bespoke safari experience for the discerning traveller. Each Eco Lodge is located within close proximity to one of our three Reintegration Units, giving guests exclusive visiting privileges to meet the orphaned elephants there and experience the Orphans' Project firsthand.

Simply by staying in our properties, guests directly support these elephants and the ecosystems they call home: Operated through a not-for-profit model, all proceeds from our Eco Lodges support vital conservation projects in the area. Our portfolio includes three lodges in Ithumba, the remote, northern sector of Tsavo East; two on the Galana River, a destination for some of Kenya's most iconic species; and one in the Kibwezi Forest, a groundwater forest known for the array of life it supports.

In 2022, we began construction on a new eco lodge. Rhino Valley is located in the heart of Tsavo West National Park. Tucked in the shadow of Ngulia Mountain, it has sweeping views across a stunning section of the park. Rhinos, elephants, buffaloes, and an array of other creatures frequent the water hole at the base of the property. We hope to debut this new lodge in early 2024, and anticipate that it will become another treasured destination that brings the magic of Kenya to life.

Lodge enquiries and reservations:  
[info@sheldrickwildlifetrust.org](mailto:info@sheldrickwildlifetrust.org)



## **ITHUMBA HILL CAMP**

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A luxurious tented camp built into the hill that earned it its name. Designed with the discerning traveller in mind, this camp offers panoramic views of Tsavo's rugged wilderness.



## **ITHUMBA PRIVATE**

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A special annex to Ithumba Hill Camp. Built among the rocks of Ithumba Hill and shaded by giant baobabs, this hideaway offers an intimate oasis within the vast wilderness of Tsavo.



## ITHUMBA CAMP

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A stylishly rustic hideaway set at the base of Ithumba Hill. It is designed for the intrepid traveller who relishes big skies, star-studded nights, and an array of fascinating species at your doorstep.



## UMANI SPRINGS

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An elegant African lodge tucked within the ancient Kibwezi Forest. It offers an oasis of tranquillity and comfort, surrounded by a spectacular range of birds, butterflies, and other wild creatures.



## GALDESSA CAMP

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An enchanting camp set in the heart of the Galana River. Wildlife abounds in this section of the Tsavo, from elephants meandering along the shore to hippos wallowing in the mud below.



## GALDESSA LITTLE

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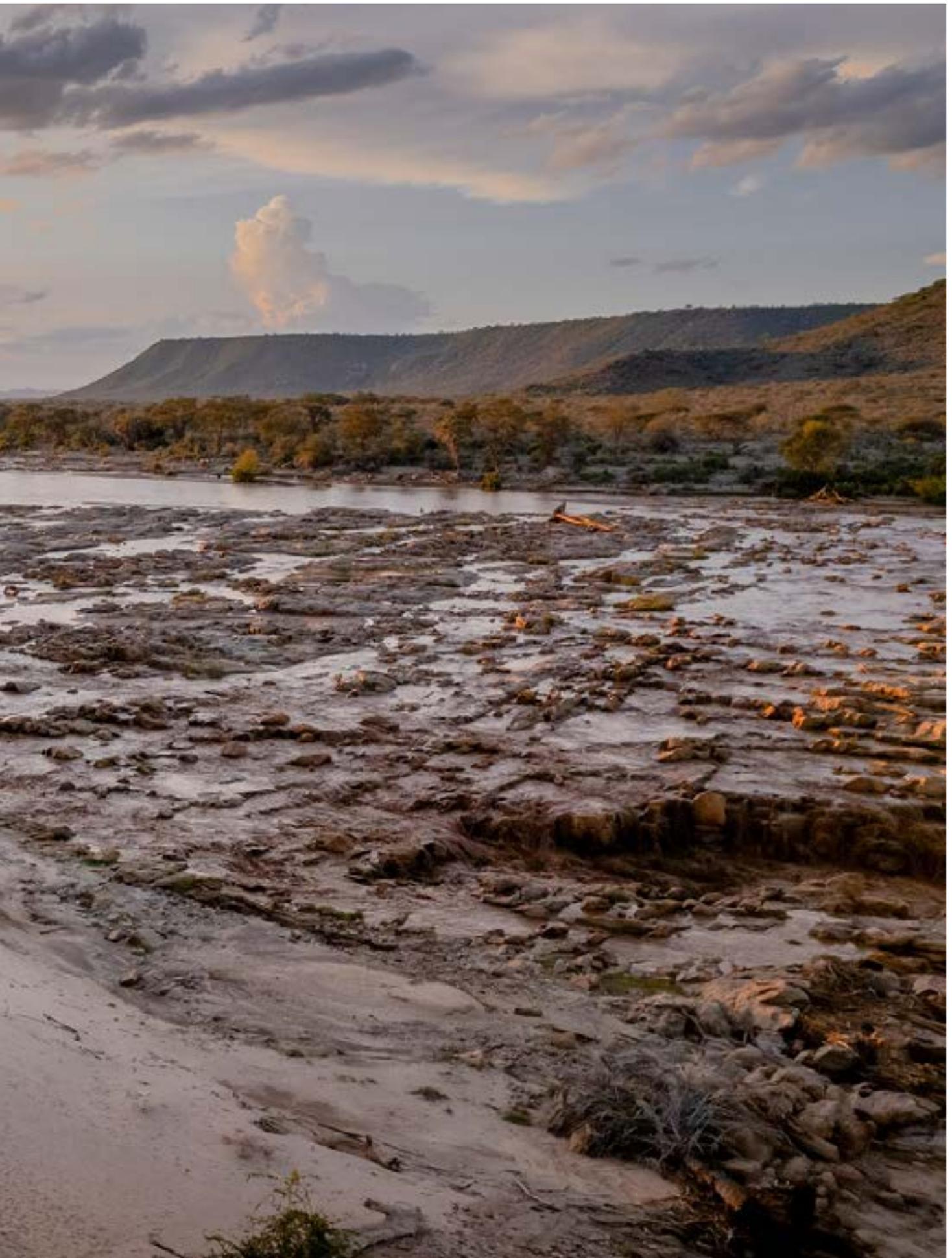
An intimate annex perched on the banks of the Galana River. Fringed with doum palms and overlooking the Yatta Plateau, the camp promises unparalleled wildlife sightings.







Tsavo East National Park - Galdessa



## Remembering Mark & Peter Jenkins

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*“Even with a lifetime spent in the wild, Mark never lost his enthusiasm and passion for the work he did.”*

On 8th December 2022, Mark Jenkins and his son, Peter, died after their plane went down during a patrol of Tsavo East National Park. Mark was a once-in-a-generation conservationist. He devoted his entire life to protecting East Africa's wild spaces — and he showed that same dedication as a father, husband, friend, and leader. Peter was following in his father's footsteps and was already a force of nature in his own right. He had completed his conservation degree and was spending time in the field before beginning his training at Sandhurst in April. He had a bright future ahead of him.

While his time was cut too short, a man like Mark never really leaves us. His legacy lives on through the wildernesses he helped transform, from the Selous and Serengeti in Tanzania, to Uganda, to swathes of Kenya, the country where he was born and raised. His father, Peter Jenkins, was the founding warden of Meru National Park. Mark spent much of his childhood there and later became the Meru park warden himself. His career then took him across East Africa, where he left his mark on some of the continent's most remarkable landscapes.

Mark could tell a great story — and how many stories he had! His life was defined by action. He was never one to stand by; he was always the first to roll up his sleeves and dive into a project. Where many would only see impossibilities, Mark saw endless opportunities. He was happiest when out in the field, working alongside his team.

Everyone admired Mark. He was a gentleman and a bush man, equal parts passionate, principled, and practical. Mark was never after recognition or personal glory; he was a team player in every sense. Those lucky enough to work with Mark will agree that he was only interested in getting the job done — and relishing every second of the process. Last year in May, when we were given the monumental task of enhancing conservation in the Galana/Kulalu Ranches, we knew Mark was the perfect person to spearhead the project. Covering some two million acres, this vast landscape spans nearly the entire eastern boundary of Tsavo East National Park. Decades of poaching, charcoal burning, cattle incursions, and other illegal activities had blighted the ranches. Far from being daunted by the task at hand, Mark was galvanised. He established a field headquarters, assembled a capable

team, and got to work. Our presence in Galana/Kulalu began 18 months ago, but already we have seen a dramatic improvement. Leery of lurking threats, elephants used to avoid many parts of the ranches. Thanks to Mark and his team's anti-poaching work, illegal activities are down and hundreds of elephants are accessing the deepest reaches of the landscape.

Even with a lifetime spent in the wild, Mark never lost his enthusiasm and passion for the work he did. A message from Mark usually contained a photo of an impressive tusker he had just spotted, or a captivating tale of his latest field operation. It is hard to believe that we won't receive these messages again.

Mark and Peter died doing what they loved. They were flying for the Trust when their plane went down. We will never know the precise circumstances that caused the crash. Mark's last communication called for ground teams to move out while access remained possible, ahead of a huge storm that was moving in. We are deeply moved by the outpouring of love from all those who knew Mark over the years. The teams he worked alongside, the communities he collaborated with, the countless people he impacted along the way — everyone is devastated by his loss. As someone who never sought the limelight and worked only for the purest reasons, we can't help but think he would be surprised by all the lives he touched over the years. Mark has inspired, mentored, and shaped a generation of conservationists.

He will never, ever be forgotten. Like his father, Peter was a powerhouse. With a natural competence that belied his years, he had already achieved so much in his life. All who knew Peter will remember him as conscientious yet fun-loving, extraordinarily capable of whatever was thrown his way. We are devastated that this remarkable young man's life was cut so cruelly short.

The best way we can honour Mark's legacy is to continue the work he started. He is a tough act to follow, but we will carry on in his name. And we believe that the greats never really leave us. Mark and Peter are looking down on us from beyond, their blue eyes ever sparkling.

## SPECIAL THANKS

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### **Trusts & Foundations**

Aaron and Patricia Blumberg Foundation  
Acton Family Giving  
Aiyana Foundation Inc.  
Anderson-Formolo Family Foundation  
Ann E. Dickinson Revocable Trust  
Benjamin River Fund  
Bill Hannon Foundation  
Bright Funds Foundation  
Bulrush Foundation, Inc.  
Crystal Springs Foundation  
Dennis Jenks 1929 Trust  
Elbaz Family Foundation  
Empty Cages Forever Charitable Trust  
Friese Foundation  
Grousbeck Family Foundation  
Head and Heart Foundation  
Heather Martin/TPC Foundation  
Ian Mactaggart Trust  
Jeffrey and Mary Smith Family Foundation  
Julian A. Montoya Revocable Trust  
Kempton Memorial Family Trust  
Landgraf/Walker Living Trust  
Leonard P. Steuart Foundation c/o John Friday  
Mallory Hathaway Revocable Trust  
Marcello and Graziano Roviario Foundation  
Marisa Hormel - MIH Trust  
Marta Heflin Foundation  
Melville Charitable Trust  
Mickles Elephant Foundation  
Midler Family Foundation c/o Sussman and Associates  
MRB Foundation c/o Bell and Anderson  
Nancy Sherertz Family Foundation  
NC Giving Fund  
Patricia and Paul Bragg Foundation  
proWIN  
Raidance Charitable Trust  
Red Butterfly Foundation  
Rockwell Foundation  
Scott (Eredine) Charitable Trust  
Simeon and Jean Locke Charitable Foundation  
Swenson Family Foundation

The Argus Fund  
The Bruce and Carolyn Costin Martin Foundation  
The Craig-Scheckman Family Foundation  
The Danson Foundation  
The Fredman Family Foundation  
The Hayes Foundation  
The Hyman Levine Family Foundation / LDor V'Dor  
The Loke Foundation  
The Maue Kay Foundation  
The Merlin Foundation  
The Michelson Found Animals Foundation  
The Pecorino Family / Mey Share Foundation, Inc.  
The Rob Trust  
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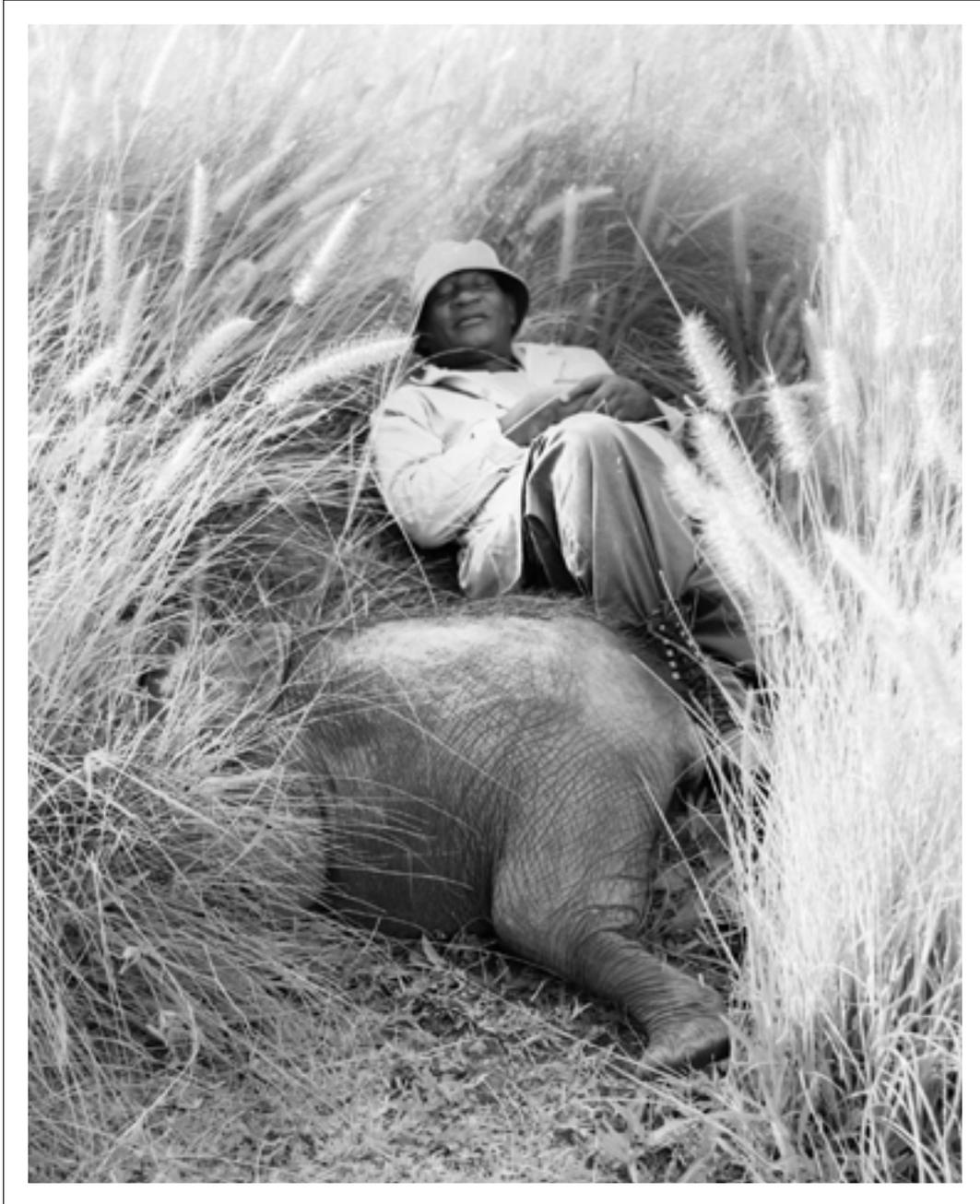
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Big Life Foundation  
Galana Conservancy  
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Kenya Forest Service  
Kenya Wildlife Service  
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KENYA

Sheldrick Wildlife Trust  
P.O. Box 15555  
Mbagathi, 00503  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Email: [info@sheldrickwildlifetrust.org](mailto:info@sheldrickwildlifetrust.org)  
Telephone : +254 (0) 202 301 396  
+254 (0) 111 044 200

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UK

Sheldrick Wildlife Trust  
3 Bridge Street  
Leatherhead, Surrey  
KT22 8BL  
Telephone: +44 (0) 1372 378 321  
Email: [infouk@sheldrickwildlifetrust.org](mailto:infouk@sheldrickwildlifetrust.org)

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USA

Sheldrick Wildlife Trust USA  
25283 Cabot Road, Suite 101  
Laguna Hills  
CA, 92653  
Telephone: +1 (949) 305-3785  
Email: [infous@sheldrickwildlifetrust.org](mailto:infous@sheldrickwildlifetrust.org)



SHELDRIK WILDLIFE TRUST

P.O. Box 15555 Mbagathi, Nairobi, 00503 Kenya  
Tel: +254 (0) 111 044 200, +254 (0) 20 230 1396

[info@sheldrickwildlifetrust.org](mailto:info@sheldrickwildlifetrust.org)

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