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NEWSLETTER FOR 1999

Another year past; the end of a century; the end of a millennium; the end of an era , and the beginning of another. Time again to wish all our friends and supporters a **very happy, prosperous, and above all, healthy New Year** and many more to come and to thank everyone for their input.

We embark on this new millennium with renewed hope for better times ahead - a more accountable public service, less corruption, proper services for taxes paid, an uplifting of the country's deteriorating infrastructure, and, above all, the recovery of the Kenya Wildlife Service so that once again it can become functional and efficient, handling its custodianship of the country's priceless natural heritage with commitment and dedication. Kenya's National Parks were at one time considered some of the finest in the world. We pray that they can become that again.

Great confidence is vested in the capability of Dr. Richard Leakey who, in a surprise move that stunned everyone, was elevated to the lofty position of Head of the Civil Service and Secretary to the Cabinet, thereby empowered for a period of three years with a bigger broom to put to right all that is wrong in the country generally. As Director of the Kenya Wildlife Service, a position he held briefly for the second time after the departure of Dr. David Western, he was unable to trim the inherited crippling bureaucracy that left the National Parks in a state of ruin and collapse. Things have improved, but not enough to make the Service fully functional again, so the task of retrieving it now falls to the man who took over, Nehemiah Rotich, and it is a daunting one. Previously at the helm of the East African Wildlife Society, and having come through the Wildlife Clubs during his school years, the new Director has the correct conservation background and the essential caring credentials to be able to tackle this huge job. Strengthened by the backing of a better informed Board, he has the passion it takes to make the correct decisions, which are not always easy, but everyone also knows that without first having grasped the nettle to rid the Department of all the dead wood, it will continue to wallow in inefficiency. Above all, National Park Wardens must be responsible and au fait with what goes on in their Park and if this can again happen, there is no reason to believe that Kenya's National Parks cannot retrieve their former glory and again become something of which the country and the world can be proud.

Throughout the world the advent of a new millennium was heralded with wild jubilation marked by spectacular firework displays costing billions - billions that perhaps could have been better spent repairing some of the damage done to the planet by humans over the past millennium. Whilst fireworks might be entertaining for us humans, they terrify the others that share the earth with us, who must have thought that the world was about to end! We, or some of us, that is, welcomed the new millennium in Tsavo beneath a cloudless sky, marvelling at the stars. We indulged ourselves by being "when-we's", reminiscing about the past and contemplating what the

future might bring to the wild places and animals so close to our hearts. With an awesome stellar spectacle spread out like a map above us in a big sky untarnished by city lights, we felt as insignificant as a grain of sand and before the mosquitoes drove us all to bed, but for alcohol induced merriment, the stillness was penetrating and profound. It does one good to **listen** to the silence, and in so doing feel and hear the pulse of Nature.

It was sobering to dwell upon the impact we humans have had on the planet in even just one lifetime, let alone a thousand years and to ponder on the sad fact that whilst technology might have brought benefits to the human species, it has surely been at the expense of the natural kingdom. After all, the satellites that we watched streaking across the heavens might enhance communications, but surely disrupt the migratory pattern of the birds; low frequency diesel engines scramble the infrasound signals of the elephants and many sophisticated marine mammals; forests are felled with impunity to provide more and more paper for more and more people who are becoming more and more wasteful as they are bitten more and more by the modern consumer bug. Most disturbing of all is that even after a thousand years, mankind generally has still not made his peace with the Animal Kingdom and continues to view it as existing merely for his benefit, becoming increasingly greedy, arrogant and isolated. Yet it is man's technology and sophistication that may, in the end, turn out to be his Achilles heel.

As we embark on the next millennium it is high time that we humans acknowledged the importance of the other creatures to the wellbeing of the whole, understanding the animals as sentient beings worthy of compassion and kindness rather than just another commodity to be "utilized" in whatever way we wish. We gleaned satisfaction in knowing that our orphans had played a key role in bringing about a better appreciation and more awareness of animals, at least in our country, and this made us feel a little easier.

For the Trust 1999 has been a work-filled year that has flown by so rapidly that we are hardly able to digest the fact that it has past! It will always be remembered as the year for orphaned elephants, with the arrival of 15 into our Nairobi Nursery, and it will also be long remembered as a year beset by snakes. Not only did Daphne's son-in-law, Jean Francois, (commonly known as J.F.), find himself in the unenviable position of being cornered by an enraged 8 foot Egyptian cobra down in Tsavo which took twenty minutes to overpower, but we lost two very special animals to poisonous snakes. The first casualty was our precious premature elephant baby "Laibon", born in June on a busy road in the Masai Mara ahead of his allotted time, and who overcame insurmountable physical problems with a determination that was moving. For three weeks he slept in the foetal position before suddenly coming to life and thereafter wobbled unsteadily after the others for five months, becoming a little stronger with every passing day, before the poisonous snake ended his life. No one actually witnessed the incident, or saw the snake, but when his foot turned so necrotic that it was about to fall away, we knew the battle was lost.

The next victim was our wild bushbuck friend, "Bee", whom we found dead one morning with just three tell-tale fang punctures in the neck. Bee was born wild, but trusted us enough to take a treat from a hand. For three years she brought back her mate and her wild born young to share with us, and the garden was her salad bowl. She was living proof that through empathy with the wild kingdom humans can forge friendships that breach the barrier of fear which segregates man from the animals and relegates him to a pariah. We shall miss her, but life goes on, for her daughter, now grown and pregnant, has taken her place.

Another severe heartbreak was the unexpected loss of "Maluti", our oldest and supposedly fittest elephant baby, who came in aged 6 weeks and had reached 11 months without any sign of a problem. Since she had always appeared so healthy, we were stunned when she died quietly and unexpectedly in the early hours of the morning of the 13th December. The autopsy revealed a longstanding chronic lung condition, which was not tuberculosis, as we first suspected, but could only have come about as a result of having inhaled some mud into the lungs when she was bogged in a waterhole in Meru National Park prior to arrival, with only the tip of a tiny trunk visible.

We lost the battle to save the lives of another two baby elephants as well, one a poaching victim from Lamu, who had a bad start in life deprived of his mother's first colostrum milk and fed on tea, maize meal and cows' milk for five days, and another whose trunk had been almost severed by the tribesmen that found him, and was so irreparably damaged that like Laibon's foot, would have fallen off entirely, leaving him with just a few inches. Yet another two babies never made it to the Nursery, and were dead on arrival.

Irrespective of these losses, we are still left with eleven infant elephants in our Nairobi Nursery, the most we have ever had to cope with at any one time. We also have a new rhino named "Makosa" (in addition to "Magnum" and "Magnette" now nearly 3 years old), a tiny zebra foal from the Mara and two lesser kudu fawns which are being raised by our employees down in Tsavo where the habitat better suits this species. Because of all this, the Trust's workload (and expenditure) has risen dramatically. We have had to build six additional sleeping stables for the elephants, modify some of the Rhino Pens and employ a horde of new Elephant Keepers to work in shifts throughout the day and the night. To cater for their needs, it has been necessary to open up a Canteen and a Laundry, since the Keepers do not have the time to see to these chores for themselves. And, because the little elephants are always so popular, our daily visitor load has swelled dramatically, so much so that Daphne's home resembles Piccadilly Circus between 11 a.m. and 12 noon every day when we are open to the public. It is rewarding to see so many more Africans turning up to enjoy the little elephants' mudbath.

Elephant babies need very intensive care during their milk dependent infancy, so rearing them is always an emotional roller coaster, with inevitable ups and downs, because so much can go so wrong and so quickly. An elephant baby duplicates its human counterpart in terms of development, and is equally as dependent on its family until the age of puberty. Hence the emotional input from a surrogate human family is an essential ingredient to success. It is mandatory that the human family, which replaces the lost elephant one, loves the orphans sincerely and from the heart, and that they, too, are equally as fond of the humans. With elephants one reaps what one sows, something that obviously still has to be learnt by many people involved with them.

The elephant orphans are in our Nairobi nursery for their fragile first year, before being moved to Tsavo National Park to begin the gradual process of reintegration back into the elephant community which will take upwards of five years to accomplish, the time factor being dependent upon how well an orphan recollects its family and other elephants. It is a source of pride to us that we have now managed to offer over 30 elephants not only a second chance of life, but also ultimately a *quality* of life back amongst the wild herds in a protected area that provides them with the space elephants so desperately need.

The following orphans, most of whom were hand-reared in the Nairobi nursery from early infancy, are now fully established amongst the wild herds of Tsavo, leading perfectly normal elephant lives:- **Only Mary born in 1977, Lissa born in 1986, Chuma born in 1987 and Mpenzi born in 1992 were old enough to escape the nursery, and hence were handed into Eleanor's care. Of those reared from very young in Nairobi, the following have also made the transition into the wild herds of Tsavo - Olmeg and Taru both born in 1987, Dika born in 1988, Ndume, Malaika and Edo all born in 1989, Ajok born in 1990 and Lominyek born in 1995.**

Still dependent on the Keepers but down in Tsavo in the process of re-integration are Emily born in 1993, Aitong and Imenti born in 1994, Uaso born in 1996, Lewa born in 1997 and Mweiga born in 1998, and in the Nairobi nursery we are left with Natumi, Ilingwezi, Edie, Salama, Serara, Icholta, Mukwaju, Lolokwe, Yatta, Kinna and Nyiro, all born between February and October 1999.

The arrival of Mweiga in Tsavo in April necessitated some changes to the Tsavo group. This calf from the Aberdares, whose herd strayed into croplands, was estimated to be over a year old when rescued, and because of this was flown directly to Tsavo. In fact she was very much younger, and still milk dependent, so should really have come to Nairobi.

Malaika always pampers the smallest calf most, wanting it for herself. Up until this point little Lewa basked in the privileged status of "favourite calf", so the arrival of one smaller who was attracting so much attention from Malaika, turned him and his older friend, Uaso, green with jealousy and openly antagonistic towards the newcomer whenever Malaika wasn't looking! The fact that little Mweiga, recently from a chilly mountain environment, still needed regular milk feeds, and also suffered from the Tsavo heat, exacerbated the dilemma, all of which was relayed to us by phone from Voi.

Daphne went down to assess the situation, and decided to split the Tsavo group, thereby releasing Malaika and the boys to go further afield as before in search of fodder and friends, and leaving Emily and Aitong in charge of Mweiga within reach of the Stockades and the milk. This was no easy task. Interference between a mother and her baby, even a surrogate one, is a recipe for trouble and Malaika made it quite plain she was not best pleased with the new arrangement. Fortunately, however, she eventually accepted the new routine, so now she and the boys form the older group, and Emily, Aitong and Mweiga the younger set, separated at night in a different section of the Stockade.

Our problems were not over yet, because the new arrangement sent Imenti into a decline. He preferred Emily to Malaika, who had never been overly fond of him. Emily and he were reared together in the Nairobi Nursery, and he was miserable without her. One day he came limping home with a swelling on his back leg, obviously having been bitten by either a semi poisonous snake or stung by a potent insect, so we had to relent and let him join the younger group. Now, having recovered, he is allowed the choice and so divides his time between the two.

Whilst the names given to our elephants may sound strange to most people, they do, in fact reflect their origins, and in this way enable us to keep tabs on who comes from where. Why, suddenly, so many turning up in the Nairobi Nursery, is the question on everyone's lips! A factor exacerbating the difficulties besetting the elephants is, of course, a burgeoning human population in most African countries, depriving them of much of their former range, and

compressing them into remnant forests and private ranches. Here in Kenya, it is no secret that it is poaching that has driven the elephants out of the far North, a region infested by gun wielding displaced bandits, forcing the elephants onto friendlier turf where they are better tolerated. It has also brought them onto private ranches too small to offer them permanent sanctuary where they are constantly in conflict with human settlement.

Many of our orphans are victims of the deep wells dug in dry riverbeds by Samburu tribesmen to water their cattle. Crazy by thirst, the elephants crowd around once the cattle have left and the babies accidentally fall in beyond trunk reach. Were the outlying home ranges of these elephants in the North safe, they would not have to drink at such places.

That poaching has increased since Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia were sanctioned by CITES to sell 25.3 tons, 20 tons and 13.8 tons of ivory respectively to Japan, is known. This once again opened up loopholes for the resumption of the illegal trade and ivory, both fresh and previously buried, is again on the move, with several large stockpiles intercepted in Kenya in 1999. When most of the African range states do not have the wherewithal to monitor their elephants, even in the protected areas, let alone beyond, and have no possibility of adequately safeguarding them, the relaxation of the International Ivory Ban to satisfy a few countries further South, which, in African terms are economic giants, must surely rank as one of the mega conservation blunders of the past millennium. If the extent of poaching cannot be accurately assessed, surely then the elephants **must** be given the benefit of the doubt.

On paper, from the comfort of an armchair in far removed Switzerland, it all sounded fine. A strategy designed by Statisticians at I.U.C.N. would be in place to endorse a new system to monitor elephant populations and poaching throughout Africa and S.E. Asia. It would be known as M.I.K.E. (Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants) and if there was any sign of an escalation in poaching, the trade could again be shut down. What was not so clear was who, and how, these “experts” were going to enact this; where the money would come from, and who would be prepared to be in places where angels feared to tread - in the Congo, for instance, or rebel held territories in Angola, Sudan or even the Northern Frontier of Kenya! And then, of course, the biggest loophole of all – i.e. the thorny issue of **proving scientifically** and without doubt that an elephant had, in fact, been shot for its ivory by a man who was definitely a commercial ivory poacher and not just a starving desperado in need of food or someone who wounded the animal in defence of property or crops. The reality is that no one tends to be around when elephants die in a hail of automatic gunfire, so the spectators necessary for the needed verification are always absent!

Even in those countries that boast “too many” and are the great “utilizers” of all things living and dead, elephant and rhino poaching has escalated, as has the same sort of corruption at a high level that dogged Kenya in the seventies and eighties. History has a habit of repeating itself. It is a pity that the bureaucrats that make these sort of decisions persist in ignoring this fact. Furthermore, usually economic incentives rather than the welfare of the species fuel such decisions, so lay people could be excused for concluding that the International Convention for Endangered Species operates primarily to promote the *trade* rather than to protect an endangered species.

In Tsavo, for us, the year began on a high note, with the arrival in January of orphan Lissa's wild born baby, a female, whom we named "Lara", and the mating of "Malaika" by a wild friend introduced to her by two of our older bulls, namely "Dika" and "Ndume", who returned to pay

their respects after a long absence far afield with the wild herds. Malaika took to their handsome friend (aged about 25) immediately, and she was mated on the 10th January. Although, at 10 years old, we felt that Malaika was somewhat young to be in breeding mode, the consensus of opinion is, however, that she is now definitely pregnant, so we anticipate another happy event early in the year 2001.

For us and her Keepers it was an accolade that Lissa chose to bring her baby back, an endorsement of the fact that she had nothing to fear from those who had always been careful to handle her with kindness and respect. Accompanied by five other wild females, amongst whom was eight year old "Mpenzi", now obviously filling the role of "proud Nanny" to the new arrival, and protectively so, Lissa spent four days sharing her baby with the other orphans and her human friends.

We remembered Lissa as she was when she was rescued near Mackinnon Road - a pathetic emaciated waif near death with a misshapen back leg which had obviously previously been fractured in several places. Since she was over a year old at the time, she could be handed directly into Eleanor's custody, though brought back regularly for supplementary feeding until such time as she was strong and healthy and could be weaned. Lissa grew up within Eleanor's adopted unit helping to care for all those younger, including "Mpenzi", and was with them until the day that Eleanor, in her forties, decided to sever her human ties, and leave her adopted elephant family, including Lissa, with a wild friend, the Matriarch we have since named "Catherine" (and the one responsible for "re-arranging" Daphne's leg way back in 1994).

The sudden absence of Eleanor, a cow Daphne has known for years, would have been cause for concern, had she not been seen soon afterwards amongst a wild herd. The rampant poaching of the seventies, eighties and early nineties, when Eleanor filled the role of surrogate mother to the many orphaned calves that were brought in, is the reason that she had not joined the wild herds earlier, as did many of the others. Not only was she ostracized by the wild elephants due to her human ties, but she was fully occupied with the younger orphans.

Why, then did Eleanor leave, having been a friend for so long? Events following the birth of Orphan Mary's first calf provide a possible clue. Mary is an orphan who spent the first ten years of life as a captive in a Zoo situation at the Mount Kenya Safari Club, and when we managed to secure her freedom in the early eighties, she also joined Eleanor's unit, greeting each new day of freedom with an ecstasy that touched the heart. Dogged by the stigma of being labelled "anthropomorphic", there are few wildlife professionals who have brought themselves to consider the psychological social ramifications to an elephant community of decades of genocide, where most of the elders have been eliminated from the community and the natural structure of the female families has been totally fragmented. This tragedy has touched almost every elephant herd in the entire country.

Female elephants all aspire to a "family", irrespective of age, and none more than the orphans who have lost one. Robbed of a family, orphaned elephants all try to create one, abducting calves from others, or cajoling other young orphans to leave the herd of their choice and join their own. Eleanor was no exception. We witnessed her and Lissa coaxing and cajoling little "Mpenzi" away from Malaika's group into their own. They worked hard and deliberately to bring this about over a period of two months, and having succeeded, we saw the subsequent resentment Malaika harbored against Eleanor, and the suspicion with which she viewed Lissa right up until the time that Lissa returned with a calf of her own. Now, Malaika and Lissa are

good friends, regularly meeting up out in the bush and choosing to spend time together, often also joined by Dika, Ndume or Edo, or all these three together, often with their wild male friends in tow.

For many years, Eleanor has watched Daphne turning up with new baby elephants – those that have completed their Nairobi period, and she has probably puzzled as to where they came from, perhaps concluding that humans also hijack elephant calves from others (not far wrong when one considers the Tuli scandal!) Recently, however, there have been two (unconfirmed) reports that Eleanor is back again and with a two year old calf at foot. She and this calf are reported to have been seen near the Voi Entrance in amongst a small group of adult cows, and again near Mudanda, when an adult cow of about her age left the herd, strolled casually up to a KWS Security vehicle and would have inserted its trunk to explore the contents had the driver not lost his nerve and moved on! Could it really be that Eleanor left home to have a baby of her own at last, and left because she was fearful that it might be stolen from her? Daphne believes this to be a valid explanation for Eleanor's absence and also for her subsequent reluctance to renew contact, avoiding the Elephant Stockades as does Mary, though for a different reason. Eleanor has, after all, been a very conscientious "Matriarch" of an orphaned adopted elephant family since the age of five and it seems strange that she should suddenly forsake this role in her forties. Mary's reluctance to return to the Elephant Stockades is more understandable, because, having spent the first ten years in a Zoo situation, she is fearful of being locked up again.

Of the older Tsavo orphans, only Edo, Dika and Ndume have been regular visitors to the Stockades throughout the year. Edo has always been Malaika's closest friend ever since they shared time in the Nairobi nursery, whilst Ndume and Dika are good friends. When Dika is elsewhere, as he often is, Ndume enjoys throwing his weight around Edo, but when he tries to get fresh with Malaika, and attempts to mount her, she reprimands him soundly! Malaika obviously looks upon Ndume as she would a brother for they are both from the same beleaguered herd of Imenti Forest elephants and came into the Nursery together. A third orphan from this remnant population is "Imenti" himself. Today, the Imenti elephants have all but gone, as has the forest that once sheltered them. Our three orphaned survivors are, indeed, the lucky ones.

Our oldest nursery orphan, "Olmeg", who has always been somewhat clinging, has been conspicuous by his absence in 1999. He appeared briefly only once to mete out revenge on his pet hate - the Airfield and everything associated with it which includes the old Airfield Attendant, who, in the past, has chased him off. The Wildlife Service aircraft, which once showered him in grit on landing also falls within this category. Olmeg took to raiding the Airport Attendant's house, piling all his clothes onto the top of his head, and scattering them far and wide in the bush when he left! This was a complaint made to Daphne the moment she set foot in Tsavo, and whilst she found it difficult to repress a smile, nevertheless such wayward behaviour has the potential of becoming more than just a joke. A mock electric fence was hurriedly thrown around the Airport Attendant's little house and the aircraft in its hangar, embellished with all the correct fittings to make it look genuine, and this has solved the problem, and persuaded Olmeg to behave.

Taru and Chuma have long been classified "wild". Chuma calls more often than Taru, who, accompanied by Olmeg, turned up just once at the beginning of the year to pay a quick visit, but it is Ajok who has been a permanent absentee since the very wet period of El Nino in 1998 when he left with the wild herds. Raised alone in the Nairobi nursery, he never had a close friend

amongst the other orphans, but found one in the wild herds when only four years old, and ever since has obviously found no reason to return. A tough desert elephant, Ajok has, from the very start, always been the most independent and adventurous of all our orphans. Just a week old on arrival, he was born near the Turkwell Gorge in Turkana land and grew up in the nursery with the rhino that was Magnum's mother, "Scud", so named because she was born during the Gulf War. Ajok is the youngest of our hand-reared elephants to have made the transition into the wild herds and sever all human ties entirely. That said, there are now few Keepers in Tsavo who would recognize him even if he did reappear, since many are new. A curious entry in the Keepers' Diary made Daphne wonder - that a lone young bull, roughly the size of Edo, who appeared to know his way around, turned up one evening up at the Elephant Stockades, and was greeted enthusiastically and with great affection by all the others. Could this, we wonder, possibly have been Ajok?

Because of the Trust's long exposure to the animal psyche, it is usually on issues of welfare that we find ourselves at variance with others responsible for the handling of animals. Time consuming has been the ongoing battle to try and secure the freedom of the Tuli elephant calves abducted from their families in Botswana way back in 1998, and which, a year later, were still being subjected to a living hell in their "training" Warehouse near Brits in South Africa. As one of the Expert Witnesses in the Tuli case, Daphne was sent yet another tape in June by the National Council of SPCA's depicting the most brutal beating of the remaining Tuli calves, even a year after capture, and despite custody having been awarded to the NSPCA, who were, apparently, powerless to remove the elephants from the Warehouse, or control the abuse, because the owner obviously has influential connections. Nor has this man been brought to trial on the charge of cruelty levelled against him, despite the passage of so much time.

Daphne decided that "enough was enough" and blew the whistle by extending an invitation to the South African Investigative Programme, "Carte Blanche". They travelled to Kenya the next day to view the incriminating evidence of what was going on behind the scenes in their country and to see how young elephants should be handled.

The subsequent expose which was screened for three days running on South African television sent the owner of the Warehouse into hiding and generated such a public storm that 9 of the 14 young elephants were hurriedly released into Marakele National Park. Since then they have made contact with the resident wild herds, and have either been absorbed into them, or are still in the process of forging bonds.

Unfortunately, however, all this came too late to save 7 of the original 30 abducted babies, who were clandestinely flown out on a chartered Russian plane to life imprisonment in the European Zoos of Dresden, Erfurt and Basle, irrespective of the fact that they were wild caught and that there are over 800 ex Circus and Zoo victims in Europe, too psychotic to be used as money spinners any more, and in need of homes.

Six of the original 30 calves, who had not yet been subjected to training were moved earlier onto a private hunting block known as Sandhurst in the Tosca district of the N.W. Province of Transvaal, joined later by another 3 who were to have been sold to a Japanese Zoo, but were later rejected when the Japanese authorities were persuaded to cancel the deal. Concern remains over the future of these 9 young elephants who are certainly not yet out of danger, for they could still end up either being shot for a fee, or being brutally "trained" away from the public spotlight or, worse still, shipped clandestinely off to the Far East where animal welfare is an alien concept.

Five calves remained in the Warehouse, the subject of an ongoing wrangle, allegedly having been sold to a friend of the Dealer, a man who had been a party to the abuse all along. Up until Christmas Eve he doggedly refused to allow them freedom, but eventually capitulated for a fee, so these five have also now joined the others in Marakele, much to everyone's immense relief. There they were greeted joyfully by some of the others who, of course, knew them instantly, and returned to the Holding Bomas to welcome them.

Something that has perplexed everyone is the attitude of all the main South African Conservation bodies, who appeared supportive of what was going on until the public outburst forced them to change their stance. From our perspective, however, we trust that the unhappy Tuli elephant chapter can at last be closed, but if nothing else, it has brought to the attention of the South African public what goes on behind the scenes in the name of "sustainable utilization" in their country, highlighting the greed and corruption that drives this industry. It also provided the deterrent that Kenya needed to take the considered decision not to allow Elephant Back Riding in this country, something that is both lucrative and popular further South. No matter how well managed, this would invariably entail some degree of training and restraining, which would be difficult to monitor and control once commercialism crept in.

Nearer to home, the Trust had to speak out about several welfare issues; initially about the unnecessary harassment of Tsavo's endangered Hirola antelope, who were chased in the heat of the day to be radio collared, and then about some of the lions who were unfortunate enough to find themselves embroiled in the same study, and who ended up almost strangled by their radio collars. This time, however, unlike before, the powers that be listened and acted, promising ethical guidelines to govern what can and cannot be done in a National Park in the name of Science, something that is currently lacking. The tendency always exists to overlook the welfare of study animals in the interests of furthering an academic career.

The next bone of contention were Rhinos translocated from Nairobi National Park to Tsavo at the height of the dry season, some of which were held for over three months in cramped Holding Pens, ironically originally funded by the Trust, but which were never intended to be used in such a combination. Since the animals cannot speak for themselves, it is the duty of others to do so for them, and as usual it was disappointing to find ourselves yet again the lone voice that spoke up about something that so obviously needed correction.

The controversial mobile Holding Pens in Tsavo, yielded "Makosa", whose name means "mistake" in Kiswahili. He was born to a Nairobi Park mother, in an enclosure so small that she kept treading on him, added to which she had no milk due to the trauma of translocation and the side effects of the drugs. When he arrived in Nairobi, three days later, he looked more like a battered lizard with an oversized head rather than a baby rhino, which is usually born sturdy and strong. His metabolism had almost shut down entirely, and only a mammoth dose of soft brown sugar dissolved in his first bottles of milk got things moving as they should in time.

Often we have lamented the fact that those responsible for the handling of wild animals have not had the opportunity to get to know them intimately, because were this so, they would handle them with more sensitivity. With rhinos, the trauma involved in translocation is immense, for they are so rigidly territorial, and hence the factor of stress needs to be addressed and minimized at the other end through quiet and gentle handling. Large animals **must** have enclosures spacious enough for them to be able to move around, particularly if they are going to be held for

long periods and they must, of course, also have adequate shade and water. It is also important to understand the significance of the dung, and the essential need to establish dungpiles beyond the Holding Pens to lead the way to water, thereby giving an animal whose entire life revolves around chemistry and scent, something it can recognize once free. Failure to do this will result in it walking forever searching for something familiar.

The reason given for holding the rhinos for so long was that the WWF sponsored radio collars had not arrived – collars which in any case are known to be unsuitable for the neck of a rhino, and furthermore only have an extremely limited range. We felt that the adverse impact on the animals concerned, particularly such an endangered species, was not justifiable for this reason.

Illustration of the stress a rhino suffers on being moved was graphically illustrated when we had to shift our own two orphaned rhinos, “Magnum” and “Magnette”, (now both aged 3 years old), just 20 paces from their Nursery quarters into larger Night Stockades. Even this small change in routine sent them into disarray, so much so that their Keepers had to be paid overtime to keep them company at night until such time as they settled down!

Today, the newcomer, little “Makosa”, is a fat and flourishing 5 month old, doing the rounds of the dungpiles and urinals of the wild community as a vital pre-requisite to eventual re-introduction later on. With him is the orphaned baby zebra, whose mother must have made a meal for a lion in the Mara, for she was found newly born, wandering entirely alone, with no other zebras in sight. Since rhinos and zebras both stem from the horse family of animals, Makosa and the baby zebra, Tumaini, enjoy the same milk formula, and share the same Nursery Keepers, the only change being that the Keeper now **has to wear a striped jacket**. Baby zebras bond to the stripes of their mother, and it is the stripes that enable an orphan to understand its identity and thus prepare it ultimately for a life in the wild amongst its own kind.

Since Magnum and Magnette, have been correctly “introduced” over a three year period, we can now risk allowing them out at night to make physical contact with the wild rhinos. Their scent is known to the wild community and therefore they qualify as rightfully “belonging” and as such are not so likely to be dispatched as interlopers. Like most of the orphaned rhinos previously raised by the Trust (which now number 12), Magnum rid himself of his first horn which got wedged beneath the bars of his Night Stockade and ended up hanging by a thread. A hacksaw completed the job as he lay contentedly in the mud, and the new horn, now growing broader based and more sturdy, is being carefully sharpened and shaped to his satisfaction.

Rearing rhino orphans is easy compared to the elephant babies, but the reintroduction back into the wild community is much more complex. Inevitably one must brace oneself for trials and tribulations for an orphan must struggle for rank and territory, particularly if it is male. This, of course, is how Nature sorts out the men from the boys in such a territorial species. Bull rhinos are not usually dominant and as such qualified to breed, until the age of 10, whereas a female is ready to breed, as indeed did Magnum’s mother, “Scud”, when just five years old.

Magnum and Magnette still travel together, but this will undoubtedly change as they become more confident and comfortable without their Keepers. They continue to return periodically for reassurance, when they are inspected for any wounds and abrasions, get their filarial sores annointed, and are given a treat of bran, kitchen peelings and a mudbath before being escorted out again into the big wide world. They know where to find us, and their Night Stockades are ajar at all times should they feel the need for protection. So far, Magnum has had just one mild

tussle with a wild rhino which left a few tell-tale marks on both his face and his rear, but this is all part of the learning process. How to conduct oneself amongst the wild community has to be learnt the hard way, and is not something a human foster parent can impart.

With the two orphaned rhinos on the loose at night, we have had to erect a “Heath Robinson” electric wire around the car-park to stop the cars being used as Horn Sharpeners at the expense of headlamps and bumpers! Having been “stung” just once or twice, our rhinos now understand the boundaries, and are careful not to breach them, even during the hours of daylight.

Many people, who do not know rhinos intimately, view them as aggressive and stupid, a relic of the dinosaur age that has probably outlived its allotted time. In fact, they are highly sophisticated and successful animals. In terms of nature, they are perfect, for evolution has seen no reason to adjust the model for millions of years. Within them, instinct is strong and it is this that has led to their fearsome reputation, their means of defence being attack. When a rhino feels threatened, it moves instinctively and is not in control of its actions. Essentially, rhinos are sensitive and affectionate animals, easily taught the boundaries of behaviour around humans, and once taught, unlike the elephants, they are always obedient. It is indeed a touching sight to see the love our orphaned rhinos hold for their Keepers whenever they return, or to see little Makosa sleeping with his head resting on a Keeper’s lap, and a tiny zebra cuddled close. Compassion, care and comfort are the ingredients a human can bequeath an animal to ensure its psychological health, and this will also contribute towards physical wellbeing.

Throughout Africa, it is the commercialization, or trade, in wild game meat that has systematically denuded countries of their indigenous fauna, leaving much of Africa an impoverished faunal desert. East Africa was blessed by being populated by many tribes who traditionally shunned game meat. Up until the early nineties, it was also an offence to be in possession of any wild game meat, and to a certain extent this limited the illegal take-off by those of Bantu origin who had no such tribal inhibitions. Sadly, the bush meat trade throughout East Africa has become a run-away train with the legalization of game meat and so-called controlled “culling” of surplus animals for profit, on the flawed “sustainable utilization” ticket. . The preferred “meat species” are going, and going fast.

We can foresee the end of the game in our lifetime outside of all *adequately* protected areas. The Kenya Wildlife Service is still starved of working funds and desperately short of field Rangers. Meru National Park, which has suffered a decade of bush meat corruption and neglect, is an example of what can happen, and in a very short time. There the remaining gazelles, giraffe, and zebra, can be counted on the fingers of two hands, the buffalo population has been seriously eroded, as have the elephants, (but for ivory rather than meat). It is good to know that Meru now once again has a Jenkins at the helm, because the name “Jenkins” is as synonymous with Meru as “Sheldrick” is with Tsavo. The appointment of Peter Jenkins’ son, Mark, as Meru Park’s Senior Warden, brings hope that this beautiful little Park, one of the loveliest in the land, and with a little help from donors, it will again flourish faunally as it did under his father. We are also very relieved to see Mr. Kio back in charge of Tsavo East, Daniel Woodley assigned to the vast Northern Area of this Park, and Mr. James Isichi at the helm of Tsavo West.

Nevertheless, the bush meat trade is taking a very heavy toll of wildlife in Tsavo, especially along watercourses where all resident water dependent animals must drink, creating vacuums that siphon others from the interior. And in small Parks such as Nairobi where migratory species annually leave for the dispersal areas beyond, each year sees fewer returning. A recent

survey estimated an overall reduction of 10,000 head in the total Kitengela/Nairobi Park/Kapiti plains population of animals, a figure that is terrifyingly *unsustainable*.

Along a 20 Km stretch of the Tsavo National Park boundary, between Nguluni and Mtito Andei **inside the Park itself**, 777 wire snares were lifted in the course of a three week exercise, some holding dikdik and buffalo, and some of these victims still alive, anchored in unbelievable agony, awaiting collection. Tons of Tsavo bushmeat is transported to inland destinations by rail, or in the heavy transporters that ply the route constantly. This is not subsistence poaching – it is **commercial** and unless the lid is put back on the trade, the smaller animals will disappear faster than both rhinos and elephants. Assuming that just 1000 snares have a success rate of 5% (a very modest assessment), the toll of animals killed just along that one small 20 Km. stretch of boundary in a year would be in the region of 18,250, a figure that gives some idea of the magnitude of the bushmeat problem. Another prevalent practice is known as “spotlighting” where animals are blinded by a powerful beam at night, and then either hamstrung or clubbed to death. One horrifying report tells of almost an entire herd of buffalo immobilized by being hamstrung just outside the Eastern Tsavo boundary, with tracks of precious few survivors spared to return.

There is, however, one small ray of hope in all this - a very marked and growing awareness amongst the educated younger generation of Kenyans who are sincere in their commitment to conservation having been exposed to Wildlife Clubs throughout their school career. Entirely on their own initiative, post-graduate students from Moi University have formed a post graduate Wildlife Club known as Youth for Conservation, which has been very energetic. They have lobbied for the protection of the forests and planted trees on the Ngong Hills, they have cleaned up litter in Nairobi National Park and in the city recreational areas, they have spoken out in support of the Tuli Elephants and on other conservation issues such as the bushmeat trade by whatever means they can, and with logistical support from the Trust, and in conjunction with K.W.S. Rangers, it is they who have de-snared the Park boundaries both in Tsavo and Nairobi and also along sections of main Nairobi Mombasa railway line. We are deeply indebted to Mr. Joe Cullman III who has given the Trust the wherewithal to ensure that the Youth for Conservation de-snaring patrols can continue on a regular basis. To date they have lifted 1,572 snares and in so doing have provided a beacon for others to follow, demonstrating that *everyone and anyone can make a difference given a little help*. Rukinga Ranch, which abuts another long sensitive Tsavo boundary, now plans to do likewise and consequently, literally hundreds of animals which would otherwise have perished, will have been saved. Faced with the magnitude of the problem, this small holding action might appear insignificant, but it is, at least, a start, and a start made by committed young Kenyans who are very aware that without the wildlife, Kenya will be far worse off than it already is. All hope is now vested in Dr. Leakey who, by virtue of his new position, could have the power to redress what has now become political and highly sensitive. We trust that he will give this issue the priority it needs before it is too late..

At the end of September, Daphne and Jill went to Toronto, Canada, for a fund-raising Art Auction in support of the Northern Area of Tsavo, organized by Louise Charlton of the Canadian Kenya Wildlife Fund. Being a hopeless traveller, easily lost and confused in concrete jungles, Daphne's support group, besides Jill, entailed a very talented Sculptor, Steve Winterburn, who is deeply committed to the wildlife cause, and, as before, Chris Jordan, of Care for the Wild International, who is always at hand to help and whose organization is the Trust's mainstay. At a small reception graced by the presence of the famous film star, Robin Williams, we managed to

sell the beautiful large bronze elephant generously donated by Mike Ghau. Many other wonderful Art pieces were likewise donated by well wishers and supporters of the Trust, including David Shepherd, Simon Combes, Terry Mathews and Robert Bateman, plus others too numerous to mention, amongst whom was Kim Bassinger, another film celebrity, who provided a signed portrait of herself as well as an original script. The Auction itself was enhanced by the presence of Christopher Plummer, and raised Canadian \$50,000 for Tsavo's Northern Area. This crucial and very important elephant area has long been neglected, but with Daniel Woodley's appointment, we hope that we shall see a change.

Tsavo harbours the country's single largest population of elephants, and is the only Park large enough to hold elephants within its boundaries in perpetuity. Permanent water for the long, harsh dry seasons has always been the limiting factor, particularly in the North, so the funds raised in Canada will be used primarily on sourcing underground sources, if any, deepening existing waterholes so that they last longer, and establishing run-off catchments wherever possible. We sincerely thank Louise Charlton who worked so very hard to pull this function off, at the expense of her already fragile health, and we are grateful to the celebrities who provided the draw for the evening. We thank Chris Jordan and Steve Winterburn for taking such good care of two bush girls in an alien environment, and above all, we thank all who donated the Art which made the evening a success. They can be proud of having made a difference in a pristine wilderness area where a difference can be made and we are proud to be the catalyst who will try to ensure that this difference is translated into reality.

Care for the Wild International continues to organise and administer the Orphans' Fostering Scheme as efficiently as ever and we thank Dave Rogers who makes the time to come out every year to put together the material for the video. We enjoy the support also of Care for the Wild's other branches in Germany, Denmark and America, and of Rob Faber and his embryo charity in the Netherlands, which also offers fostering of the elephant orphans. Hans and Barbara Rohring of Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas e.V., continue their generous support, and have enabled us to procure an excellent second hand Toyota Double Cab, which, with 11 elephants in the fold, is badly needed. Funds generated by Esther and Philip Wolf and their Swiss Volunteers are being used to enlarge the Elephant Stockades in Tsavo East in order to comfortably accommodate the new influx when the time comes and as always grateful thanks go to all our longstanding donors who have had the "staying power" it takes to raise the long lived species - the Australian Fund for Animals, Elefriends Australia, the Swedish Foreningen Forsvar Elefanterna and more recently the International Fund for Animal Welfare. We value just as deeply the ongoing support given by the Eden Wildlife Trust which helps towards the Trust's administrative burden and provides the wherewithal to enable us to function more effectively and with a little more help.

It goes without saying, however, that we are equally as indebted to all our private donors, for their personal donations, both large and small, which have empowered our small Trust to be active for the past 22 years, ever since the death of David Sheldrick, Daphne's husband. It gives us peace of mind to know that the Trust that bears his name has lived up to his principles and would receive his endorsement of its actions, particularly within the sphere of animal welfare. In this respect, David was ahead of his time. He revered Nature and all life, affording each and every species equal prominence as an integral part of the whole. He would certainly have been proud of our achievements with the orphaned elephants, for through those early orphans of the fifties, he was the first person to fully understand the complexities surrounding the role of elephants, and also the elephant mind, but he never lived to see the successful rearing of the

orphans that were still milk dependent. He would be proud that through the Trust his involvement with Tsavo has been perpetuated, and that through our Field Manual, The Wilderness Guardian, his expertise and example has been disseminated Africa-wide. He would have been especially pleased that the Trust has been able to keep the security wheels turning in Tsavo East by funding fuel costs since October 1997, at a time when the Wildlife Service was unable to fulfill this commitment.

The Trust's water input in Tsavo during 1999 centered mainly around Windmills. We applaud the children of the Bury Church of England High School, who again have achieved their Millennium target of raising the money needed for a Windmill to re-activate the old Ndara borehole, thereby bringing back into production a large stretch of otherwise arid country during the dry season. Again, entirely through their own initiative, the children raised a handsome £9,000 sterling for this project. They baked and sold cakes, did sponsored walks and rides, threw 60's and 70's evenings, organized balloon races and used a host of other innovative fundraising ideas including washing the local fire engine. Well done Bury Church of England school children, and sincere thanks to their energetic teacher, Jackie Vet, who provides the necessary motivation to make it all happen. Throughout the year, their achievements prompted others to offer matching contributions, and we thank them also.

What a thrill it was to again stand at the borehole site on the Ndara plains in Tsavo, with a little Windmill, (surprisingly unobtrusive, and not as easily stolen as was the original diesel engine and submersible pump) whirring quietly in the background, and see clear water gushing from a pipe into the old waterhole; a waterhole that reflected the clouds in the sky, whose edges were spongy with the dung and spoor of hundreds of different animals, including predators big and small, a herd of elephants approaching, another huge herd of buffalo in the distance and zebra grazing peacefully nearby. A small flotilla of ducks and water birds floating on its surface completed the magic!

The Trust also gave attention to two other important Windmills in the Northern Area of Tsavo, in need of repair - one at Ndiandaza (which Daphne remembers well when it first struck water way back in the sixties, and everyone was so elated that they enjoyed a facial mudpack with the sediments brought up from the bowels of the earth). The other was at Kone, just beyond the Park boundary, which is vital to keep the Orma and their cattle out of the Park. The Orma people give the Park authorities early warning of the presence of Somali bandits in the area, so it is important to keep them sweet.

Another 1999 project of the Trust was to fund an electric fence around the Nairobi Park Workshops. With the old chain link fence having seen better days, the buffalo of the Park were constantly in trouble, breaking through and posing a threat to pedestrians. The Trust has a vested interest in the buffalo population of Nairobi Park, since it has its origin in orphans, among them 16 raised by Daphne in her Tsavo days.

Community projects funded by the Trust include support in the form of text books and equipment to the tune of Shs. 100,000 for the Kumunyu School on Tsavo's Athi boundary, and chartering a plane to bring in 12 elders, including the local Chief as well as the tribesman who rescued our little "Ilingwezi" in an erosion gully on the group ranch Il Ngwezi. We hosted them for a day so that they could see for themselves the care and compassion extended to the orphans by their Keepers, amongst whom are several of their own tribesmen and we later

presented them with a beautiful framed picture of little Ilingwezi with the man who rescued her from the erosion gully.

Finally, but by no means least, we are deeply indebted to Mike Seton of East African Air Charters, who gives us an aeroplane at cost to bring in the orphans from every corner of the country, and latterly to K.W.S., who, for the same basic cost refund, has taken over this commitment whenever possible. We applaud the K.W.S. Vets, who provide the Veterinary expertise needed to bring the orphans in alive, and we continue to be indebted to Dr. Dieter Rotcher who is always willing to respond to an emergency and fill in at short notice when necessary.

Above all, we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Wyeth Laboratories at Taplow Maidenhead, England, who have provided re-worked milk free of charge for all the infant elephants over the last 13 years, ever since Olmeg appeared in the Nursery as an emaciated waif from Maralal and touched Don Barret's heart. Words cannot adequately describe how grateful we are to him and Sharon John, and to the staff of Care for the Wild International, who have to coordinate everything at the other end. We thank British Airways for their help over one consignment, but most of all, we are eternally grateful to Dave Jarvis of the Royal Airforce and all his merry men at Bryes Norton and Lyneham for their ongoing assistance always so readily given whenever possible. We thank the personnel of Batlisk, too, for bringing the milk to our front door for us. One thing is certain and that is that raising the infant elephants would not have been possible without the help of many, many people all over the world. We acknowledge this and are deeply grateful for it.

Finally, we again thank all our trusty Volunteers, many of whom are now members of the Youth for Conservation Wildlife Club, who continue to relieve us at the public visiting hours. Heartfelt gratitude is due to Paul Mackenzie of Elehost Web Design Inc., Canada, (<http://www.elehost.com>) who has plunged us into the 21st Century by donating and designing our very impressive Website <http://sheldrickwildlifetrust.org>. For any further information about our work, please try surfing the web!

Finally, mention must be made of our Works Supervisor, J.F. who undertakes all the Trust's maintenance and building work and by so doing has saved us a fortune. Thank you J.F.

This year, Daphne plans to pick up the long neglected threads of her Autobiography, which has had to be on hold for many years due to the administrative workload of the Trust and its many conservation projects. She hopes to now be in a position to delegate, placing Jill (kicking and screaming) at a computer at last, and with the help of our Staff and Volunteers, be able to take a back seat for a while and get the Autobiography out of her head, and safely onto paper in black and white for the Trust Archives and anyone else who might be interested. If then another signature appears at the bottom of the Trust's letters, please understand that Daphne is still with us, but otherwise preoccupied, grand-children permitting! Speaking of grandchildren, another is due in August when Angela and Robert will be providing 18 month old Taru with a much needed playmate.

Adios, and Good Luck to all our friends.