



Nanai and Sipen hunt impala in Samburu (photo by Jeremy Lucas).

Ewaso Lions is a grassroots project in northern Kenya whose mission is to promote the conservation of lions through applied research and community-based outreach programmes.

Formed in 2007, Ewaso Lions investigates the ecological and social factors affecting the lion population in protected areas and community lands within the Ewaso Nyiro ecosystem. The research will guide the long-term conservation management of this area.

Ewaso Lions puts education and capacity building at the forefront of our conservation efforts.

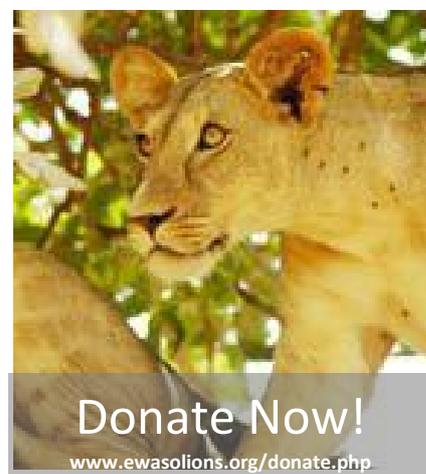
Message from Ewaso Lions

It is hard to believe that it's already June! Over the past several hectic months, our team has been busy monitoring the lions in the Ewaso Nyiro ecosystem, holding training workshops, responding to human-wildlife conflict, fixing camp following heavy rains, and much more. We received considerable support from an excellent team of volunteers, and our field team in Samburu is growing stronger each month. We are excited to report that we have a new sponsored student, and I am honoured to be profiled in the new book, *Wildlife Heroes* (page 4). The Ewaso Lions Project continues to receive recognition within Kenya and beyond. I hope you enjoy reading our latest Field Report.

—Shivani

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Nanai, Sipen, and Nabulo by the Ewaso Nyiro River in Westgate

Lion Update

In January, we received a special surprise in Westgate Community Conservancy. We spotted a lone lioness in the Conservation Area. We were excited and nervous at the same time – could this be Magilani? After moving closer, we identified the female as Nabulo (Nabo's older cub). We soon found Sipen, her sister, and Nanai (Nashipai's older cub). We had never seen these females this far from the Reserve. They stayed in the area for more than a week and returned again in March. It appears they are making Westgate their home, and we are working with the communities to accept their presence and to herd livestock carefully in the areas where the three lionesses are present.

Unfortunately, Jalalo lost one of her cubs when it was hit by a speeding vehicle on the highway outside Buffalo Springs National Reserve. The new tarmac road from Isiolo to

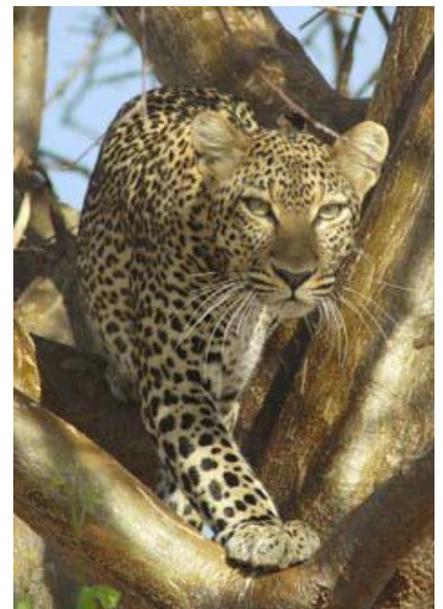
the reserves has decreased our travel time, but has had severe consequences for wildlife such as this cub. We continue to document the loss of wildlife on the road, and urge people to drive slowly.

Additionally, the Ngare Mara Pride lost one cub to unknown causes in November and Jabdu and Korti now have four cubs.

Following the heavy rains in October and November, it was hard work finding the lions in the tall grass. As the landscape dried up, we had more frequent sightings of Nashipai, Nabo, and her two cubs in the western part of Samburu National Reserve. In March, Nabo's cubs were in good condition, but have been sighted alone a few times since the April rains, struggling to find enough food. Fortunately, they reunited with Nabo in May, and we have had frequent sightings of mother and cubs since then

Other Predators

March was a big month for leopards! We had superb sightings of leopards in both Samburu and Westgate, including this stunning female (below) as she hunted through the plains near Koitogor Hill. The wild dogs have been hard to keep track of since the rains and we have only had one sighting of two dogs since July of last year. Cheetahs have also been hard to come by, with our only sightings



Female leopard in Samburu National Reserve in March

Camera Traps

The warriors continue to put out camera traps to monitor nocturnal and shy animals. A camel died in camp and this presented us with a great opportunity to see which predators were residing nearby. Leopards, spotted and striped hyenas and jackals all visited the camel carcass. Around the same time, an elephant died in the Loijuk area of Westgate. This is a well-known lion area, and we had tried for months to find these lions

but the thick bush in the area had made it difficult to spot them by vehicle. After just three days using the camera traps, we captured photos of two young male lions feeding on the elephant carcass. We will soon embark on a long-term camera trap study within Westgate to monitor carnivore populations across the conservancy, and are currently seeking funds to procure 30 camera traps.



Two striped hyenas feed on the camel near camp in January



Ngila (right) and Yesalai, our two Community Officers (Photo by Tony Allport)

Human-Carnivore Conflict

Conflict escalated in the region following the rains in November. The resident lions of the Reserves left the safety of the protected areas and moved into community areas. Nashipai moved north of Samburu and started attacking stray camels that were being left out at night. Jeneria and a team of warriors quickly moved to the area, helping the community to fence in the camels at night and speaking with people about

the lions and how to prevent attacks on livestock. As soon as the rains stopped, the lions moved back into the Reserves. Ngila, our Community Officer, has been busy conducting questionnaires within Westgate in preparation for two new Ewaso

Lions programmes: one to engage elders in conservation, and another to reinforce *bomas* (livestock enclosures).

Warrior Watch

Thanks to volunteers Emma Knott and Susie Offord, we now have an education curriculum for the Warrior Watch programme. The weekly lessons are going very well and we now have eight of our Warriors reading and writing. In addition to the lesson plans, we created visual wildlife cards, which are proving to be very effective. During the week, the Warriors stay busy in the field, following up on conflict incidences,

communicating and engaging with their communities, digging waterholes for wildlife during the dry spell, and setting up camera traps to capture images of wildlife in the area. In April, we welcomed back Heather Gurd and embarked on an evaluation study of the Warrior Watch programme with her, which will be complete in September.



Warriors check the camera traps to see what was photographed the previous night



Lpuresi and Reria learn the animals using the new "Wildlife Cards".

Climate News

In October and November, we had more rain than we have received in years – amounting to more than 200 mm in one month. The area transformed into lush green vegetation, and we had long grass in our camp for the first time in more than four years. As a result of the heavy rains, the Uaso Bridge connecting Samburu to Buffalo Springs Reserve was washed out yet again. This caused tremendous inconvenience for our fieldwork. By March, the green grass vanished and the Ewaso Nyiro River dried up. We easily found lions and other predators in search of prey along the river, and thirsty elephants dug into the dry riverbed using their tusks. The rains returned in April and continued through the end of May. The river flows once again.

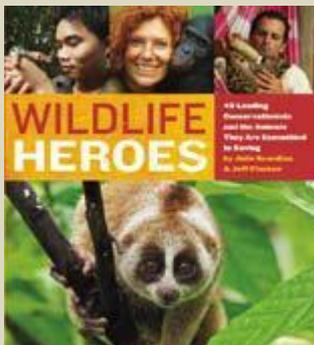


Top: Ewaso Lions Camp after the rains in late 2011, Middle: Ewaso Nyiro River dries up in March 2012; Bottom: Yesalai digs waterholes for wildlife.

Training

In January, we joined the Grevy's Zebras Trust (GZT) to give a five-day training workshop with their new warrior recruits from the Laisamis region. These Grevy's Zebra Warriors learned about predators and how to mitigate conflict, while the Ewaso Lions Warrior Watch team learnt about the behaviour and ecology of Grevy's zebras, the conservation issues facing the species, and what is being done to address their plight. We taught the warriors about other key species, while emphasizing the importance of creating a healthy ecosystem to sustain all life.

In March, Shivani attended the Human-Wildlife Conflict training at the Ol Pejeta Conservancy held by the Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration team. This week-long course was a very useful exercise where we learned about conflict resolution and mediation, which is very relevant and applicable for our work in Samburu. We thank the Denver Zoo for sponsoring Shivani's attendance.



Wildlife Heroes book.

In the Press

Ewaso Lions has received a lot of publicity over the past few months. Shivani was honoured to receive the inaugural *Virginia McKenna Award for Compassionate Conservation* from the Born Free Foundation. She was also featured in the recently published *Wildlife Heroes* book, and as a result of this recognition, was highlighted in the Huffington Post and More.com. Ewaso Lions was featured in the *Ndege Magazine* and in an article on Samburu and its lions in *The Nation Newspaper*. The April-June issue of *Swara Magazine* published by the East African Wildlife Society also featured Warrior Watch. See our website for links to these.

Shivani is a great example of a true wildlife hero. Thanks to her innovative, on-the-ground work for lions, there are more lions in Kenya today than twenty years ago. She is an inspiration," says Jeff Flocken, author of *Wildlife Heroes*.

Education

All of us at Ewaso Lions were deeply affected by the loss of Patrick Ouma Ojwang, the Wildlife Club teacher at the Lpus Leluai Primary School in Westgate, who died tragically from a crocodile attack. Patrick was a great leader who inspired everyone around him. He is sorely missed, and Ewaso Lions is committed to ensuring the Wildlife Club continues in his name. We are happy to see that Patrick's adopted son Dixon has taken over and is leading this enthusiastic young group of children at the school with their wildlife activities.

In January, Ewaso Lions sponsored our third student to attend secondary school. Painoti Letabare, the first young woman to receive our scholarship, comes from the Westgate area. We are excited to

watch her grow into a leader in this region.

Ewaso Lions produced an Educational Display for the Westgate Conservancy headquarters. The display features beautifully designed posters that illustrate how our research and conservation programmes benefit people and wildlife. We thank Shikha Savdas for volunteering her time to design this attractive Educational Display.

The Desai Memorial Foundation has made a second large donation of books for the local primary schools in Westgate. Together with book donations from Marjorie Wills, six local primary schools now have hundreds of new books for their libraries.

From left to right: We mourn the loss of Patrick (centre behind). His memory will endure through the children whose lives he touched; Painoti (right) with her mother and sister; Warriors admire the Ewaso Lions Educational Display.



Team News

Ewaso Lions welcomes Yesalai Lemachokoti as our Assistant Community Officer. Yesalai is one of the Warriors from our Warrior Watch programme, and is helping Ngila with recording all conflict incidences and working with the communities.

Paul completed his graduate work at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. He looks forward to returning to Samburu in June. Congratulations, Paul!

After more than four years, thousands of kilometres, and more driving hours than seems humanly possible, Shivani sold her beloved 4x4 Suzuki, Gypsy. This type of car is ideal for the terrain in our study area, so we bought another!

Ewaso Lions had three fantastic volunteers over the past few months. Emma Knott helps with our scientific datasets, producing models of the lion population, looking at population trends, and much more. Susie Offord also assisted with data, especially helping to improve our data-collection methods. Patrick Kabatha worked with both Emma and Susie to produce eye-catching maps. We are very grateful to them as they continue to churn out exciting results.

Towards the end of last year, we held our first Team Building Day where we brought together our core staff and Warriors. It was an exciting day with games and events where teams of four competed against each other. The focus of the event was to build teamwork and strengthen communication, respect, and trust among the staff

We Need Your Help

We are currently seeking funds for radios for our team to assist with security and communication in the area. We also need additional solar panels to power equipment for our growing team and camera traps for our new study that we will be embarking on soon. Please consider making a donation for any of these items. We are a small project that achieves comprehensive results with a small budget – all funds received go directly towards conservation and research. We are extremely grateful to all our funders who keep our project activities going. We would not be able to do any of our activities without you – thank you! Many thanks also to the WILD Foundation and Wildlife Conservation Network for being excellent partners in our financial administration.

Partners

In April, we travelled to Washington, D.C. to give a series of presentations and meet with African Wildlife Foundation, World Wildlife Fund, Defenders of Wildlife, and the Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group. The main purpose of the trip was to present our work to the staff at National Geographic as grantees of their Big Cats Initiative (www.causeanuproar.org). National Geographic is an excellent partner and we are excited about increasing our collaboration moving forward.

We wish to say a huge thank you to Tony and Ali Allport, managers of Sasaab Lodge who recently moved on to new ventures. Their support over the past few years was invaluable, and they will be sorely missed. We welcome Tanya and Doug Rundgren, the new managers, and look forward to continued partnership.

We also recently partnered with Bush Warriors, an online platform dedicated to creating global awareness of conservation issues through social media and supporting micro NGOs through these efforts, for an exciting new campaign that aims to raise funds through the sale of lion-themed shirts for the purchase of new tents for the camp. Be on the lookout for exciting updates from www.bushwarriors.org.

In May, Westgate Community Conservancy held their Annual General Meeting (AGM) where we presented our work of the past few years to hundreds of community members from Westgate. We received positive feedback from the community on the project. We congratulate the Westgate management for a successful AGM and wish the new board all the best in the future.



An elder peruses our 2012 calendar while listening to our update on Ewaso Lions during the AGM

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