

# Lewa Wildlife Conservancy

NEWSLETTER N° 9

March, 2000

## In This Issue

- *More rhino births including Omni who roams around with his minder and Digby, an orphaned warthog*
- *Destructive bull elephants are moved to Meru National Park and chicken wire used to protect old tortillias trees*
- *Resurgence of elephant poaching in the north*
- *Anna's House available for use by Friends of Lewa*
- *A major new drive to improve and assist the local schools and a appeal for a truck to transport children onto Lewa*
- *New initiatives on the Ngare Ndare Forest Reserve*
- *Sarara Camp in Namunyak has been rebuilt and is open to guests once again*
- *The 49th most exciting thing to do in the World this year is to run in the Safari Marathon on Lewa*

**THE BIG CHALLENGE  
OF 2000**

RUNNING FOR AFRICA - IN AFRICA  
THE ONLY MARATHON IN THE  
WORLD RUN INSIDE A GAME PARK  
SUNDAY AUGUST 27th 2000



## Update

1999 was a year of change for Kenya, and new hopes have been raised for improvements in the civil administration of this country. The change in political attitudes within Kenya that allowed the restoration of **Richard Leakey** as head of the Kenya Wildlife Service, and then his promotion to head of the civil service, has had a wide-ranging impact. One has been the commitment to reducing the destruction of forests, which has been accompanied by many changes in the senior personnel of the Forest Department. This new attitude has greatly accelerated our plans to preserve the **Ngare Ndare Forest Reserve**. The new focus on transparency and effectiveness in the administration has opened the way forward for a number of co-operative initiatives between Lewa and government bodies. Our security staff are in the process of getting Police Reserve status; we have increased operational co-ordination with the Kenya Wildlife Service; there have been improvements in government teachers who staff the Lewa supported schools; and there is now the exciting possibility of restocking **Meru National Park** with surplus wildlife from Lewa.



*Omni, the four month old black rhino whose mother is partially blind and kept losing him, is now being hand-reared by Jane Craig. Mount Kenya is in the background*

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## Game Census

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Game counts are held every year to assess the number of wildlife on Lewa

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There are now about 10 lion, one is collared and can be tracked using its radio transmitter

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26 black rhino  
32 white rhino

■

Although migratory, there are usually about 170 elephant

■

There are at least 14 sitatunga; originally a few were moved to Lewa from the Saiwa Swamp in western Kenya

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There are 240 reticulated giraffe

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Surplus animals will re-stock Meru National Park

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Research is being done to identify Grèvy's zebra using the individual thumbprint stripes on their quarters and thereby assess any competition faced from Burchell's zebra

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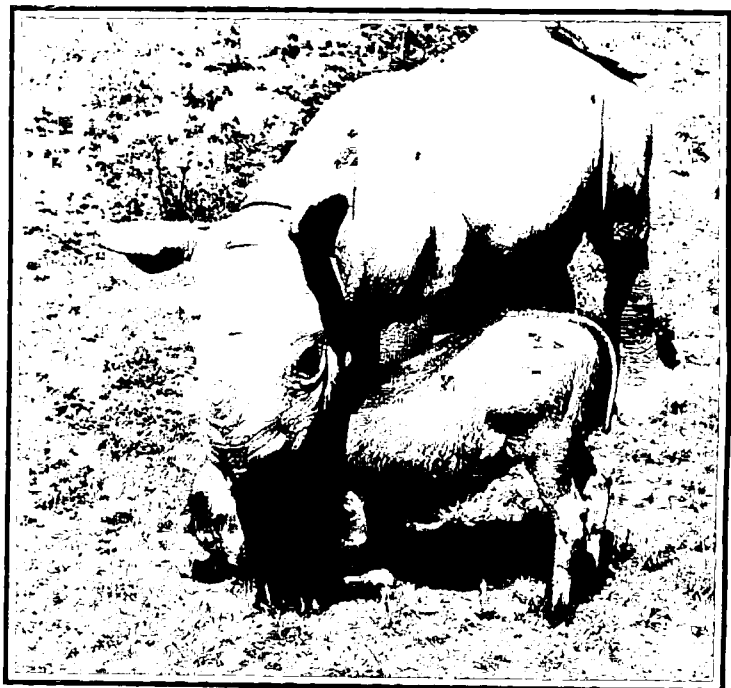
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## Rhinos

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Our good breeding success has continued. Since October 1999 four rhinos have been born - two of each species. The rhino population now stands at 26 black rhino and 32 white rhino. The breeding performance of black rhino has improved after several years of sluggish performance. The females are now conceiving 8 to 12 months after calving, giving them an inter-calving interval of just over two years, which is comparable to other top-producing rhino sanctuaries in Africa. Previously our inter-calving intervals were over three years. We believe that the reason for this is the increased area of the sanctuary after the removal of internal fences.

One of the black rhino mothers, **Mawingo**, is partially blind, and has a habit of leaving her new-born calves. On several occasions we had to pick up her latest calf and transport him by vehicle to re-unite him with his mother. As he grew, this became an increasingly difficult operation, and we eventually had to take the decision to rear him by hand. We have called him '**Omni**', after the California-based computer components company that has been one of our major sponsors in recent years. He sleeps in the hut built for Larangoi, and spends the days roaming round the Conservancy with his keepers and '**Digby**' - an orphaned warthog who is his constant companion. Because of the danger of Omni, like Larangoi, being killed in a fight with another rhino, we know that we cannot keep him on Lewa as an adult. As the security improves in the community areas in the north, we hope (pending the approval of the Kenya Wildlife Service) to take him back to one of these areas that were once favoured rhino country, as the advance guard of the black rhinos that may recolonise northern Kenya.



*Omni together with his companion Digby, the orphaned warthog*

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Look us up on the internet at  
[www.lewa.org](http://www.lewa.org)

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# Elephant

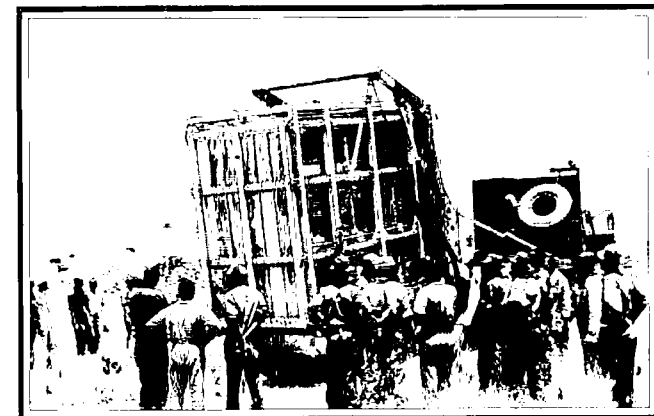
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Lewa is extremely fortunate to be favoured by the presence of large numbers of elephants, moving in and out through the **elephant gap** and the **Ngare Ndare forest**, and stopping off at the end of their long treks to Samburu and beyond. However, if the trees could express their feelings, they would not share in the general rejoicing. Elephants, particularly the bulls, take great delight in knocking over any trees that give way to their strength, and killing larger trees more slowly by stripping their bark.

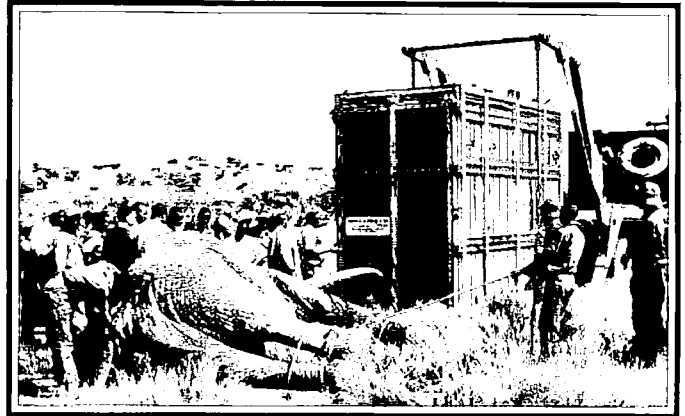
We have used electrified wires strung between trees to protect groves of fast-growing yellow-fever trees along the rivers and around the swamp. However, the ancient umbrella thorns are scattered over the ranch, and are still vulnerable. Over the last year, we have lost a number of these beautiful

trees and are increasingly concerned. We identified the three main culprits, and asked KWS to come in and remove them. They brought a capture team, and their elephant truck '**Hannibal**' and in the course of three days moved the three bulls to Meru National Park. This has gratifyingly reduced the rate of loss of umbrella thorns.

Another line of defence against the elephants is very simple, but so far has been surprisingly effective. We have wrapped **chicken wire** round the trunks of some of the umbrella thorns, and this has stopped elephants from stripping the bark of these trees. We are hoping to expand this programme to cover all the most ancient and attractive of the trees around the ranch.



*"Hannibal" - the specially adapted skip truck and box for translocating elephant*



*This elephant is now in Meru National Park*

Unfortunately, there has been a resurgence of poaching in the area to the north of Lewa and east of Il Ngwesi. One elephant carcass was found in late November; our security teams heard gun shots on Christmas Eve, and found a poached elephant the next day. There was a rapid and effective follow-up, in which the **tracker dogs** assisted, that resulted in the recovery of three **AK47** automatic rifles and several arrests. Despite this there was a further poaching incident a few weeks later when our security staff saw bandits shooting at elephants. Again KWS moved in after only four hours and another weapon was recovered. We hope that these prompt actions, which resulted from our effective 'early-warning' warning system, and good liaison with KWS, will act as an effective deterrent.

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## 'Anna's House'

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Friends of Lewa who are interesting in visiting the Conservancy may be interested in knowing that there is a fourth option in addition to the existing commercial tourist facilities based on Lewa - Wilderness Trails, Lerai Camp and the Abercrombie & Kent tented camps. This is to stay in **Anna Merz's** old house. She no longer lives full-time at Lewa, and for the 10 months or so in the year when she is away, she has allowed the Conservancy to use her house as a **guest-house**. It sleeps eight people in comfort, but not luxury, and is available for rent at \$150 per day for the entire house. This covers costs such as staffing and the generator. Visitors must provide their own food and transport, although we can arrange both for an additional cost. We are planning to upgrade the house, and once this has been done, we may increase the charges slightly.



*Anna's House - now available for use by Friends of Lewa on a self-catering basis for US\$150 per day for the whole house*

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## Acknowledgements

Ian and Jane Craig's fundraising trip to Europe and the USA in September to October would not have been possible without the assistance and hospitality of the following people, many of whom have also provided financial and other support to the Conservancy.

Libbie Agran, Jeffrey Bennett & Nan Easley, Marcel & Ingrid Bergauer, Patricia Bickell, Dr Gil Boese, David Buitron, Richard Buthe, Gil & Ildiko Butler, Jerry Chamales, John Cook, Yvonne Damelle, Tom Fey, Debo Gage, Patrick Henfrey, Sandy Houston, Tim Jackson, David Jones, Tim and Di Lapage, Patricia Lewis, John & Laurie MacBride, Mac MacQuoid, Andrew & Tracy Matthes, Charlie Mayhew, Phil Osborne, Herbie & Pattie Pearthree, Dr Alex Rubel, Jeffrey Short, Alan & Judy Snowden, Bernhard Trachsel, George Youssef & Susan Warren.

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*We are working on various ways to increase the amount and quality of our feed-back to our supporters. A new website, to be hosted by Herbie Pearthree at [www.lewa.org](http://www.lewa.org) should be in place by end March 2000*

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LWC has many other individual and institutional supporters. We would particularly like to thank the following:

Tammy Anderson, Scott & Jesselie Anderson, H Ross Arnold III and Claire Lewis, Halvor Astrup, John & Karen Bernard, Jon & Karen Berndsen, Richard Bingham, Niles Bolton, Jeffrey Breslow, Stuart & Ingvild Brown, Fritz Bucher, David Buitron, Louise Charlton, William & Judith Clements, Jane & Jim Coleman, Anderson & Betty Jo Currie, Howard & Anne Cusic, Diane Donnell, James & Elizabeth Dunbar, Gerry Ellis, Richard & Jenifer Emerson, Hugo de Ferranti, John Fisher, Robert & Cynthia Fisher, Meg Gammage-Tucker, Richard Gershon, Cecil Gibson, Debra Glidden, Jere Goldsmith, Peter Hanson, James & Melinda Henderson, Jane Horvitz, Mike Ivey, Adrienne Johns, William Jones, Karen Kane, Sandra Ketchum, Harvey King, Gery & Judy Langenbach, Alexander Laughlin, James Leckinger, Frederick Lippitt, Richard & Patricia Locke, Andy Lodge, Stewart & Joan Long, Pamela Lunny, Andrew Lyle, Judy MacDonald, Bradford & Sharon Malt, Simon Marriott, Maria Matisse, Leigh Matthes, Esther Mauraan, Steve & Kathy McConakey, Bertha McDaniel, Kathleen McGrath, Paul McIntosh, Burton & Deedee McMurtry, Anna Merz, Johanna Metcalfe, Pauline Metcalfe, Eva Metzger, Cassandra Milbury,

Alexandra Montgomery, Bernard & Margaret Nebel, R W O'Neel, Phil Osborne, Edward Paice, Judy Peil, Elizabeth Penfield, Kenneth & Carolyn Perley, Beki Pineda, Mark Pulido & Donna Walker, David Quinney, Tom & Nan Rees, Charlotte Rhodes, Richard & Helen Rietz, Paige Rice, John & Anne Roberts, Arthur Roscoe, Bill & Susannah Rouse, Susan Shapiro, Gloria Smith, Theodore & Denise Solso, HCL Spits, Maureen Stuhlman, Anne Kent Taylor, Scott & Betsey Thornton, David Tobey, Delulu Upson, Hans Utsch, Summer Tompkins Walker, Donna Walker, Dan Watts, Allen & Lynne Wheat, Carole & Charlie Wheeler, Lisa Wishnick, Carl Wolff, Ruth Hunt Wood, George Youssef & Susan Warren, David Zacks, Richard Zelinski.

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## The Future

The year 2000 will be a very busy one for Lewa. A 'medium-sized grant' from the **Global Environmental Facility**, administered by the World Bank, has been approved. This will soon allow us to replace some of our decrepit fleet of pick-ups, to buy some road-building equipment that will allow us to improve the network of game-viewing and security tracks on Lewa and surrounding community areas, and will support our community wildlife programme.

We are in an advanced stage of discussions with the **Kenya Wildlife Service** about the possibility of using some of our surplus wildlife, particularly reticulated giraffe and common zebra, to restock depleted neighbouring wildlife areas, especially **Meru National Park**. Although these operations will be expensive, time-consuming and complicated, we believe that they will give a real jump-start to these areas that are being restored after years of neglect. There is a possibility of getting dedicated donor funding for this work, but in the meantime, we plan to start the process by translocating 30 giraffe to Meru and Namunyak and 200 zebra to Meru.

The biggest event of the year for us will be the hosting of the '**Safari Marathon 2000**' on Lewa. This will be a high-altitude marathon and half-marathon run in rugged country which will be a real test for dedicated runners. We are arranging it in association with **Tusk Trust**, and **Bruce Tulloh Sports Consultancy**. Funds raised from sponsorship will go to LWC, Meru National Park, Il Ngwesi, Namunyak and the schools programme. We are expecting wide press and television coverage. An American newspaper has already listed it as the 49th most exciting thing to do in the world in 2000. We are pleased to report that this was a list of 100, not 50 events! We are particularly hoping that funds raised from this event will allow us to start the process of turning all the schools that we support into **centres of excellence**.

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## Schools

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The Lewa Wildlife Conservancy supports four local primary schools on its boundaries. These are government schools - teachers are provided, but other costs must be paid by parents or other supporters. The **Lewa School** was entirely built by LWC. For the other schools our support has been mostly in the form of bursaries, which allow successful pupils to go on to secondary school and with supplies, equipment and new buildings. However, three of these schools (**Lewa**, **Lolmotoni**, and **Leparua**) are suffering under severe handicaps. They are in remote areas, so they are considered hardship postings for teachers. Good teachers generally would rather work at schools with shops nearby, and to be able to return home at weekends.

Over the last year, the situation at the **Lewa** school became critical, and we have embarked on a crash building programme to improve the conditions for teachers and students. With funding supplied by **Eva Metzger**, we have built new teachers' accommodation. A group of **Royal Engineers** are currently staying at Lewa, rebuilding the staff room and upgrading the football field. With this evidence of our commitment to improving staff conditions, the District Education Officer agreed to bring in four new teachers, and we are anticipating that with these changes that exam results will improve over the next year.

The situation in **Ntugi** school is much more satisfactory, and this is fast becoming one of the leading primary schools in the district. However, **Leparua** and **Lolmotoni** need much more attention. Raising standards at **Leparua** is particularly difficult because the parents are Maasai. Previous generations felt that education was not as important as being a good cattle herder and warrior, and thus there are few, if any, role models from the community who can demonstrate the value of a good education. Still no-one from **Leburua** school has got good enough results to go on to secondary school, and the school has not been able to benefit from our **bursary scheme**.

Improving the standards of all these schools is becoming one of our highest priorities. Up to now our support has been piecemeal, with buildings constructed when the need was overwhelming, and intermittent donations of books and other materials. We now feel that our support should now be much more focussed, and the head teachers have agreed that we need strategic development plans for each school. Towards the middle of the year we are planning to employ a researcher to work with the teachers and parents to put together a series of plans on which future development can be based.

In the past, an important part of our educational programme consisted of **school visits** to the Conservancy. The children were taken on game drives in the LWC truck and given lectures by members of staff. Because of the high human density in farming areas, many rural children in Africa have had little exposure to wild animals, and this is one of the few opportunities local children have to learn about wildlife and conservation. Unfortunately as our building programme has increased, the truck has become less and less available for school visits, and a number of trips had to be cancelled at late notice. Regrettably, we have had to suspend the school visit programme, to avoid this kind of disappointment. One of our priorities over the next year will be to raise funds to purchase a truck that will be modified for carrying school parties, and will be exclusively used for this purpose.



*The Foundation for Wildlife Conservation donated funds for a water tank for Ntugi School. The Agreement was signed by Dr. Gil Boese and Ntugi School's Headmaster*

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## FUNDRAISING

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**Ian and Jane Craig** completed a six-week tour of the U.S. and Europe in September to October 1999, visiting many of our supporters. This was extremely successful, and we are most grateful for the generosity and hospitality of all the people that they met. Another trip will be carried out by **Chris and Caroline Thouless** in the autumn of 2000.

We are discussing the possibility of employing our own full-time fund-raiser to be based in the USA. Apart from allowing us to access additional sources of funds, in the quest to make LWC and our associated community projects financially secure, this should also allow us to keep our donors much better informed than at present.

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## Ngare Ndare Forest Reserve

The Ngare Ndare Forest, which lies on the escarpment on Lewa's southern boundary, is a unique fragment of the dry forest that used to cover the northern slopes of Mt Kenya. The forest contains beautiful groves of olive and pencil cedar and is an important dry season refuge for elephants. Thanks in part to the fence on its far boundary, which was erected in 1991 to protect the neighbouring small-scale farmers, it has been saved from the massive forest destruction that has affected the Mt Kenya forests. However, it is still under threat, with illegal logging and poaching continuing. This is a serious issue for Lewa, not least because our black rhinos make use of the forest.

Over the last few years, the attitude in Kenya towards forest management has changed because of the lack of capacity within the Forest Department, and the concept of community management has become accepted. We are part of the 'Ngare Ndare Forest Working Committee', which brings together the Forest Department, the Kenya Wildlife Service and members of local communities.



*The Ngare Ndare Forest between Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and Mount Kenya*

Once we have a management plan for the forest, the Forest Department has indicated that it will transfer management responsibilities to the working committee, which will become formally constituted as a Trust. Before starting the management plan, it was necessary to carry out consultations with all the communities, and to ensure that they were properly represented on the working committee. A Participatory Rural Appraisal was carried out with technical assistance from **James Munyugi**, our Community Development Officer, and **Onesmas Kahindi** of Save the Elephants.



Over the last few months, the destruction of Kenya's forests has become a national scandal, and as a result a new Conservator of Forests has been appointed. Since he is the former forestry conservation officer from the Kenya Wildlife Service, it is expected that conservation will become an increasing focus of the Forest Department's activities. Many other changes were made in the senior ranks of the Forest Department, and there has been a great increase in the commitment of its officers. At a meeting with the **Provincial Forestry Officer** at Lewa in November, we mentioned how useful it would be to have a forester permanently based at the Ngare Ndare Forest, since without an officer present, there was little incentive for the forest guards to carry out their duties properly. The PFO was very encouraging and said that if we could provide facilities for him to carry out

his work, a forester would be posted here immediately. This was no sooner said than done. We have provided the forester with temporary accommodation, and bought a motor-bike for him. This has given a real boost to the management of the forest. The next stage will be to work with the communities and government officials to put together a comprehensive management plan for the forest.

## Namunyak

Following the destruction by fire of the main building of the **Sarara Camp**, which was reported in the last newsletter, generous donors (including Tusk Trust, Marcel Burghauer, Halvor Astrup and Susannah Rouse) pledged enough money to rebuild it. This has given the **Namunyak Wildlife Conservation Trust**, that represents the local Samburu people, a 50% stake in the business. **Mark Glenn** supervised the building programme, and the new camp has risen like a phoenix, more spectacular than before. The first guests arrived in mid-December (only hours after the rains had refilled the spring that supplies the camp), and initial reports have been very favourable. There are already good bookings, and guests have been able to sit in the swimming pool watching elephants at the waterhole below. The Samburu elders are taking their new duties as managers very seriously, and there has been much discussion about the how close to the camp cattle should be allowed to graze.



*The view over the pool from the Sarara Camp*