

Project Update: April 2014

Greetings from the Wild Nature Institute in northern Tanzania! Our tri-lingual children's book, *The Amazing Migration of Lucky the Wildebeest*, tells the story of wildlife migration from the perspective of a young wildebeest. The distribution of the books to rural schools in the migration route was a resounding success! All the teachers commended and welcomed the initiative, viewing it as an important source of educational materials for both pupils and teachers given the extreme shortage of children's books in rural areas of Tanzania.

Our partners from the Masai Advancement Association (MAA) demonstrated initiative by not merely distributing the books to the schoolchildren in nine primary schools, but by implementing a set of procedures for using the book as a broad, multi-subject teaching aid, and for measuring progress and success of the book. An evaluation form for teachers will allow us to analyze usage and impact of the books over the next 3 months. African Wildlife Foundation funded the printing and distribution of a book for each child at the Manyara Ranch School.



Left: Children at Selela Primary School hold up copies of *The Amazing Migration of Lucky the Wildebeest*. Right: African Wildlife Foundation distributed 950 copies of *Lucky the Wildebeest* at Manyara Ranch School—one for each child.

On World Book Day (6th March 2014) the book was read to schoolchildren at Braeburn International School in Arusha. These children are from a more privileged background; books were sold to parents attending the event, which in turn provided more funding to distribute the books free-of-charge to underserved children in the migration route.



Andrea Athanas reads Lucky the Wildebeest to schoolchildren at Braeburn International School on World Book Day. Sales of the book enabled distribution of the book free-of-charge to underprivileged children in the Northern Plains.

Overall, 1,946 books have been presented to schoolchildren in the wildlife migration route, 37 to important Masai village and district leaders, and two to federal wildlife authorities (the Tanzanian Minister of Natural Resources and the director of the Wildlife Division). In the coming months, an additional 600 books will be distributed to schools, Masai bomas (family compounds), and village leaders. We are immensely grateful to Rufford Foundation for providing funding to print and distribute the books, and for supporting the campaign to protect the critical Northern Plains wildlife migration route.

Rufford Update 4 – Environmental Forums and Community Land-use Planning

In January and February 2014 the Wild Nature Institute and MAA met with leaders in eight villages within the Northern Plains project area to discuss the idea of establishing 'Environmental Forums' that would meet on a regular basis (every 2 or 3 months). As a platform where all village residents can discuss their concerns, the village-level, community-led forums will provide greater opportunity for rural people to exchange information and discuss solutions to environmental challenges, and empower them to engage in governance of their natural resources. These forums are an important step towards developing ecologically and culturally appropriate land-use planning to protect the Northern Plains wildlife migration route and important Masai rangelands.

The idea of community-led forums was received positively in all but one of the villages in the Northern Plains area. Some of the general village assemblies have already approved the names of the Steering Committee members and their functions! In addition, a comprehensive set of forum guidelines have been developed and adopted by the villages. We are off to a great start in the campaign to permanently safeguard the Northern Plains landscape for pastoralists and wildlife. Thank you, Rufford Foundation!



The Eastern White-bearded Wildebeest in the Greater Tarangire Ecosystem is threatened with extinction if its remaining migration routes are not protected.