



**For lions. For people. Forever.**



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.



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## Message from Ewaso Lions

Welcome to Ewaso Lions' new Field Report through which we share some of the highlights from the past few months. It's been an intense field season with a mixed set of accomplishments and challenges. The lion population in northern Kenya remains at risk and we are literally working around the clock to advance conservation.

The project is in its third year now, and we continue to evolve and sharpen our effectiveness. Our research and conservation activities use sound science coupled with practical goals to make sure our impact is greatest. We always work

with local peoples' needs in mind; coexistence between carnivores and people cannot be achieved without the support of local communities.

We are a small, independent project and rely on the support of people like you who share our passion for the lions, people, and intact ecosystems of northern Kenya. We are stretching our funds as far as we can, but we need your help to keep going this year.

-- Shivani and Paul



### Did you know:

Less than 2,000 lions remain in Kenya

50% of Africa's lions have disappeared in the past twenty years

In the Ewaso Nyiro Ecosystem human-lion conflict is the number one threat

## Lion Update

We currently monitor 40 lions in three prides across 1,100 km<sup>2</sup> of the vast Ewaso Nyiro ecosystem. We are constantly on the move, traversing the Samburu, Buffalo Springs and Shaba National Reserves and surrounding community conservancies. Our team is in daily contact with local people to keep track of the lions in the community areas.

In 2010, two lions were killed. One young male lion from the Ngare Mara Pride died in November upon choking on an impala bone. Another young male was shot after it preyed

on two camels. Currently, the population in the Reserves is doing well and taking advantage of this prolonged dry season when prey is concentrated along the river.

Magilani, the famous solitary lioness who gave birth to two cubs in Westgate, was seen in February for the first time since last August. We are relieved to her and her cubs tracks. Living outside the reserves, Magilani and her cubs face constant threats from people and competition with livestock. Ewaso Lions scouts and warriors monitor their whereabouts and we hope she'll move back into the safety of the Westgate Core Conservation Area soon.

In July we successfully removed Lguret's tracking collar. Unfortunately, the collar's GPS unit was damaged – possibly chewed off by his brother Loirish – and did not collect as much data as we expected. The decollaring operation, held in conjunction with Kenya Wildlife Service, Samburu National Reserve staff, and Save The Elephants, was a long and costly operation, but went smoothly. The data collected by the collar has revealed some interesting trends. Lguret moved quickly out of the safe confines of the reserves at night following a camel settlement south of Buffalo Springs. He would return early morning and settle back in the reserves before repeating this pattern. Lguret now roams the reserves without the collar and was last seen mating with females in the Ngare Mara area.

### Lion Census in Shaba

We have resumed our lion census in Shaba National Reserve since stability has returned to the area. Shaba is a spectacularly beautiful landscape, but extremely difficult to work in. Roads are few and tough on vehicles; lions are difficult to track in

the rocky hills; and temperatures soar over 35°C (95°F). It's not uncommon to go for days without seeing a track. However, we remain determined to find these elusive Shaba lions and complete this vital census. Doing so will provide the first complete lion census in this part of northern Kenya.

Due to the drought in the region and the potential increase in conflict between livestock and predators, we are focusing a lot of our efforts in Westgate Conservancy. We need funds during this critical prolonged dry period to continue with our efforts of helping the communities, providing water, mitigating conflict and tracking the predators.

## Warrior Watch

The Ewaso Lions Warrior Watch programme has now been running for one year. The five Samburu warriors, supervised by our own Jeneria Lekilele, are actively engaged in wildlife conservation within Westgate. They host meetings in their community areas, investigate cases of human-wildlife conflict, and report on wildlife sightings on a weekly basis. Our Sunday education lessons have been very effective and the Warriors are now able to read and write. Due to the success of Warrior Watch we will be including three new Warriors in February.

We are looking at the wider picture of creating a regional network of warriors engaged in wildlife conservation. With the support of the

Northern Rangelands Trust, we recently expanded in the neighbouring Mpus Kutuk Conservancy. In January 2011, we included a further 3 warriors from Westgate and 6 warriors from Mpus Kutuk to join this successful programme. After a 2-day training session, the 14 warriors are now excited to be working in conservation and have already reported interesting wildlife sightings including packs of wild dogs, lions, kudu and eland. Through this expansion, we hope to have a connection of warriors engaged in conservation.

As an evaluation and incentive for the Warriors, we took them on a game drive in Samburu National Reserve. It was a great day and we were fortunate to see lions, elephants and

more. Sasaab Lodge continue to support our wildlife educational drives into the reserves with children, warriors and teachers, as we continue to implement our Kenyan Kids on Safari programme.

Thanks to donations from Madeliene Todd and Stuart Allum, and Afrique Horizons, we provided GPS units for data collection and mobile phones to improve communication between the warriors, the conservancy scouts, and Ewaso Lions.

We are seeking donations for more field equipment. Through the support of the warriors, and engaging them in conservation, we hope to secure a future for wildlife. We can only do this with your assistance and encourage you to support this important programme.

## Working in the National Reserves

### Uaso Bridge Reopens

In the massive floods last March the main entrance into Samburu National Reserve was destroyed. Thanks to your donations, Ewaso Lions provided a new and improved entrance into the park. We worked with a Kenyan artist and reserve management to design a striking mural that will welcome visitors to one of East Africa's best parks. The entrance now showcases Samburu's unique wildlife and landscape, with a gorgeous lioness based on one of

Shivani's own photographs.

And we're happy to report the bridge connecting Samburu and Buffalo Springs has been rebuilt and reopened, allowing us to reduce our travel time and costs between the two reserves.

### New Management Plan

Between 2008 and 2010, Ewaso Lions played an important role in developing a new overarching management plan for Samburu,

Buffalo Springs and Shaba National Reserves. The management plan was facilitated by the African Wildlife Foundation and officially launched in November. It signals an historic moment for the region by unifying management for the three reserves which make up one shared ecosystem. Through the plan, Ewaso Lions will play a large role in all predator monitoring. We congratulate the Samburu County Council and County Council of Isiolo on this joint management plan.

## Camera Traps

Our new Camera Trap project has successfully captured images of rare and elusive predators within the Conservation Area of Westgate. Using non-invasive camera traps is helping us build a valuable database of predator sightings both spatially and temporally. Unfortunately, one

camera trap has malfunctioned, but thanks to Madeliene Todd we acquired two new cameras. However we would still like to deploy a further trap in the Conservation Area and one in the Pukur Lugga near camp and are currently seeking additional funds to do so.





## Other Carnivore News

The long rains appear to have failed and vegetation in Westgate has quickly disappeared with livestock overgrazing. As a result of the dry conditions, predator sightings have been superb. One day provided a predator bonanza: 11 wild dogs, 1 hyena, 7 lions, 3 cheetahs – all within 2 hours! We had more than 20

sightings of leopards in Westgate in November alone. African wild dogs are present and we recently recorded a large pack of 20 individuals. Cheetah numbers have also increased and we are happy to report that a few females have cubs. The Ewaso Nyiro River has dried up, however, and wildlife dynamics within the parks will change as it gets drier.

## School Support & Scholarships

We have continued to support the local schools in Westgate Conservancy over the past few months. With support from Chip Owen and the Desai Memorial Foundation and Karuna Charitable Trust we founded a new library at Ipus Leluai Primary School named the Simba Library. The library was officially opened in November and we were excited to have several dignitaries of the area present for the occasion. We still require more books for the library and are grateful for any assistance towards this.

As an incentive for the teachers of the Ipus Leluai School we were able to offer them a Teachers Safari, an educational wildlife tour in Samburu National Reserve. This was an ideal opportunity to get the teachers excited about wildlife and encourage them to share this excitement with their students.

Samson and Edward, the two boys sponsored by Ewaso Lions, have just completed their first year of secondary school and received good marks. We hope to sponsor more

students in 2011. If you would like to give a child the benefit of education through 4 years of secondary school education, please do get in touch with us. These children are the future leaders of the area; whether they become park wardens, tour-guides, teachers, nurses or wildlife researchers, secondary education is vital to their future.



“Working with Samburu warriors on wildlife issues is about finding the meeting point between peoples’ needs and wildlife’s needs. They are tomorrow’s leaders and so it’s critical to empower them today.”

-- Shivani, Warrior training session, Jan. 2010

## Staff News

**Shivani** returned to Oxford in August to spend a few months working on data analysis for her PhD. She has one year remaining and is currently looking at how prey changes over the years could have affected lion sociality in the reserves and conservancies. She will focus on writing in 2011.

**Paul** is deep in his Masters degree at Yale University's School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. From across the pond, Paul is busy juggling Ewaso Lions administrative duties with his demanding school schedule. He eagerly awaits leaving the snow behind and returning to Samburu in May.

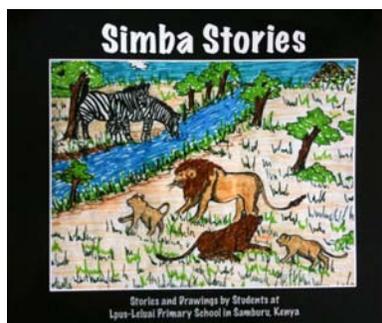
**Jeneria**, the project's Field Officer, recently completed a First Aid Course at the St John's Ambulance in Nairobi. This was a huge success and although Jeneria couldn't wait to leave Nairobi ("too many people and cars," he said), he is confident in dealing with a medical emergency should one arise in Samburu. We have not been able to send all our scouts on this course in Nairobi due to lack of funds; however, we recognize that this is important as they work in the bush on a daily basis.

**Philip Lesasuyan** is our new Camp Chef. Philip received professional training from two lodges. He is now settled into camp life and making full use of the new cooker that was donated to us by the Wills Family and New World.

Ewaso Lions Scouts **Jeremiah**, **Moses**, and **Francis** continue to monitor lions and wildlife in the community areas. With the failure of the rains, they are recording interesting dynamics with migration of people, livestock and settlement areas. The Ewaso Lions family grew in December with the birth of Moses' baby girl named **Liona**.

## Simba Stories

Ewaso Lions' first book, *Simba Stories*, was released in August. The book is a collection of poems, stories and illustrations made by students from Lpus Leluai Primary School. We are selling the book online and through gift shops in local lodges. Profits from book sales will go towards the creation of a Wildlife Club at the Lpus Leluai Primary School. *Simba Stories* makes a great gift so buy your copy today and help support Lpus School! To date we have managed to purchase Kenya's best bird book for the Wildlife Club; however, the club needs more books, binoculars and much more to be actively working in the area.



Buy online at <http://bit.ly/d32w7k>



The Ewaso Lions team visited the famous Maasai Mara National Reserve in February (photo above). This educational tour was sponsored by our great friend and supporter, Chip Owen. We are grateful to Porini Lion Camp staff in the Olare Orok Conservancy for hosting us and showing us a successful eco-tourism camp and conservancy, and to the hard-working team of the Predator Aware Project who showed us around the Siana Conservancy and interacted with our scouts and warriors.

## In the Media

Ewaso Lions has received some good media coverage in the last quarter. *Africa Geographic* and *Africa Talks* ran pieces on the Warrior Watch programme. In November we made our debut on television in the U.S. on *Jack Hanna's Into the Wild*. We will also be featured on an Austrian radio show in June and in a feature article in *Africa Geographic* later in the year. Keep updated on all this through our Facebook page.

## Visitors in Camp

We have had a number of visitors and volunteers at the Ewaso Lions Camp. Heather Gurd was a fantastic volunteer who assisted with data entry and analysis in July and November. Taylor Tully is interning with us for a few months to continue what Heather started. He completed a successful GPS training for all the scouts and warriors in Westgate. Lauren Ross has recently arrived to work on all Warrior Watch data. Camp also hosted Bansi & Mark from Conservation Safaris in July. Dr. Paul Funston, a lead researcher of lions in Southern Africa, visited us in November and offered tremendous insight to our research activities. In January we hosted the AWF team to discuss boma work, and in February Tim Jackson, the Scientific Editor from *Africa Geographic*, visited the project.

## Active Sharing

Jeneria, Paul and Shivani traveled to Nairobi in July to present at the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) annual carnivore researchers meeting. Jeneria presented the Warrior Watch programme and excelled at speaking to a large, distinguished audience.

Shivani attended the Compassionate Conservation Conference sponsored

by the Born Free Foundation in September at Lady Margaret Hall in Oxford. She also presented our work at the African Studies Conference. In October, she traveled to the United States to give a presentation to the Wildlife Conservation Society at the Bronx Zoo in New York City. The presentations were well received and will hopefully open up new opportunities for Ewaso Lions.



Jeneria and Shivani presenting at the KWS carnivores research meeting, July 2010.



## Funding Update

We are excited about a new partnership with The WILD Foundation which acts as our fiscal sponsor, enabling our supporters to make secure tax-deductible donations to Ewaso Lions. The WILD

Foundation is a premiere international conservation organization dedicated to wilderness protection around the world for over 30 years.

Ewaso Lions relies on the support of foundations, organizations, and donors to make our lion conservation efforts possible. We wish to thank Panthera and African Wildlife Foundation for their continued support and also to welcome new donors Afrique Horizons. Thanks also to Conservation Safaris for computer equipment, Sasaab Lodge for their support to the Warrior Watch programme, the Desai Memorial Foundation and Karuna Charitable

Trust for donation of library books. Vintage Safaris and the Rothschild Trust also responded quickly when we were desperate for new tents after they were damaged in the rains. We thank the National Wildlife Humane Society for providing much needed support. We are grateful to the Wildlife Conservation Network and the Sidney Byers Scholarship for their continued support towards Shivani's PhD. Finally, a very special thanks to the individuals who have come to our assistance this year and are true champions of Kenya's lions.

## We Need Your Help

We still have many important lion conservation activities in desperate need of funding. Our vehicle maintenance costs have increased due to more wear and tear from tough radio-collaring operations and covering more mileage on rough roads after the Uaso Bridge was destroyed in the floods. We want to expand our Camera Trap project to continue capturing exciting data on lions and other wildlife not seen by day. We are running out of money to pay salaries for our lion scouts and camp staff – the guys that keep Ewaso Lions going. They also need

new uniforms and equipment that need replacing such as rechargeable batteries for their GPS units. We want to continue supporting the local community through our Warrior Watch and education and wildlife awareness programmes which have been so successful to date.

Your donations have kept Ewaso Lions running since the beginning. Now, we need your help in 2011. Thank you for all your generosity and continued support.

<http://ewasolions.org/donate.php>



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