



2018 ANNUAL REPORT





About Lions

The African lion population has declined by 43% in the last 20 years and lions now occupy only 8% of their historical range in Africa*. The estimated number of lions across Africa is approximately 20,000. In Kenya, the national population now numbers less than 2,000 individuals.

At current rates of decline, the species could become extinct here within the next two decades. This reduction in lion numbers is primarily due to habitat loss and conflict with humans, typically when lions kill people's livestock. Lions and other large carnivores are wide-ranging species and designated protected areas are often not large enough to ensure their long-term survival. Therefore, it is crucial that conservation of these species, as well as their prey, is addressed throughout the landscape, which not only incorporates protected areas but also the surrounding areas where local people live.

(*Beyond Cecil: Africa's Lions in Crisis Report produced by Panthera, WildAid and WildCru, 2016)

Our Mission

Ewaso Lions is dedicated to conserving lions and other large carnivores by promoting co-existence between people and wildlife.

We work hand-in-hand with local communities to provide education, training and improved conservation practices that help people and wildlife. We use sound science to help guide the long-term conservation of lions across community conservancies and protected areas in northern Kenya.

Leadership Team

Dr Shivani Bhalla

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Resson Kantai Duff

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Jeneria Lekilelei

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

Tobias Otieno

RESEARCH MANAGER

Arzina Bhanjee

FINANCE MANAGER

Francis Lendorop

SECURITY MANAGER

Letter from the founder



Shivani with Kura and Nanyori © Meryt Harding

2018 was a tough year for me personally as I lost my father early in the year. It took me a few months to emerge from the dark clouds and the fog that engulfed me, but when I returned to work I was struck by something profound. I expected weeks of catch-up, however, it was more like a few days of catch-up. My exceptional team had continued to run the project with more passion and determination than ever before. I was so proud of them.

Looking back, there were many more silver linings in 2018. I was thrilled to welcome Resson Kantai Duff to our team as Deputy Director - she arrived when I was not at work and immersed herself in to Ewaso Lions from day one. In August we celebrated our 10-year anniversary with 400 community members and partners at our camp in Samburu. A special highlight for me was meeting Sir David Attenborough at the Whitley Fund for Nature's Hope Gala - what an honour. In the midst of all this, we said a sad but very fond farewell to Heather Gurd, our Conservation Manager who had been with Ewaso Lions for many years.

We have much to look forward to in 2019 including setting up what will be northern Kenya's first environmental education centre - which will be dedicated in memory of my father. Childhood safaris with my parents and sister inspired me to be a conservationist and I hope this centre will nurture a new generation of Kenyan conservationists.

This year, more than ever before, I want to thank you, our friends and supporters for not only keeping me going, but keeping the team going. We all couldn't have done it without you.

Dr. Shivani Bhalla

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EWASO LIONS



The Ewaso Lions team © Jillian Knox

A Year of Firsts



Strategic Plan for Ewaso Lions is launched



10 lion cubs born this year within our conservation landscape



Enormous celebration of a decade of achievements, hosting 400 people in camp



Lion gives birth for the fourth time in community areas; celebrating Naramat



Ewaso Lions expands to three new conservancies following our dispersing lions



Leadership training for 20 Ewaso Lions team members



Infrastructure trip to Nairobi, bringing 30 people together to see the effects of development



10th Lion Kids Camp is successfully completed





Lions in the Rain: Conservation in a Time of Plenty

The heavens opened in 2018. We received more rain than we had in over five years. With the thirsty ground singing for rain and the grass tall and lush, it was a good time for many animals. Community lands transformed during this time of plenty. Festivals were held and dances could be heard across the landscape. But a new challenge faced lions during this prosperous season: the cows came home.

Areas where lions had roamed unencumbered were teeming with cows that hadn't been home in two years. Weak from the journey back, these cows were easy pickings compared to the local wild prey that had fattened gradually.

Our team worked tirelessly to stop conflict at this time of plenty. Loeku, a maneless male lion who travels far and wide kept the team busy

patrolling to make sure he did not cause trouble. In Kalama, Nadala had us talking people down as she sadly snuck off with lost camels.

However, Naramat surprised us all. She left Westgate Conservancy, and headed all the way to Il Ngwesi Conservancy - covering 106 kilometres. She settled in thick bush, near permanent water and feasted on wild prey, avoiding the height of conflict altogether. Sadly, nature took its course soon after she moved there when the males whose territory she had invaded came back. Unfortunately, they killed her cubs so she could have their offspring. We will soon see if this indomitable mother has some more little ones.

We greatly appreciate the Kalama and Il Ngwesi Conservancies teams for all their efforts in keeping the lions safe.

Conflict to Coexistence with Warrior Watch

Culture is at the heart of our work at Ewaso Lions. Our warriors who spend much of their time out herding and living traditional lives play a vital role in monitoring wildlife and stopping conflict in its tracks.

They work with our uniformed scouts to record wildlife sightings and respond to any conflict incidents in the landscape, not with confrontation but with conflict resolution to really allow coexistence to take shape.

THEIR WORK IN 2018 SPEAKS FOR ITSELF:

699
PATROLS CONDUCTED

4,684 KM
OF FOOT PATROLS COVERED

1,472
DIRECT SIGHTINGS OF WILDLIFE

32
TIMES LIONS SAVED FROM
THE IMMINENT THREAT OF DEATH

64
TIMES WARRIORS RESPONDED TO
HUMAN-LION CONFLICT INCIDENTS





Mama Simba

They are 300 miles from home, further than they have ever been before. They are seeing one of the largest congregations of large animals on the planet; the Mama Simba ladies are in the Maasai Mara.

Key to our empowerment strategy is giving women exposure to new places and experiences, so they can infuse fresh ideas into the way they want to do conservation. The Mama Simba ladies' visit to the Maasai Mara signals to us a sea-change in how they think about their landscape. While they gasped with wonder at topis, wildebeest and rhinos - animals they had never seen before - they lamented the extensive fencing across the Mara and its implications for livestock and wildlife. Having seen their first pride of lions in the Mara - a whopping 22 strong pride - they returned more determined than ever to speak for the lions of Samburu. And speak they did. Even before they got home, the women who had long been voiceless, called conservancy managers to tell them what they had seen, and to set up meetings where they could talk about conservation. With their eyes wide open, and their voices louder than ever, the possibilities for the Mama Simba ladies are endless.



WE SAW MORE ANIMALS THAN WE COULD COUNT IN THE MARA. THERE IS A LOT OF FOOD FOR LIONS THERE AS OPPOSED TO SAMBURU WHERE WE HAVE VERY LITTLE PREY. BUT WILDLIFE IS FACING MAJOR CHALLENGES IN THE FUTURE BECAUSE OF LAND SUB-DIVISION AND FENCING. I WOULD HATE TO SEE THIS HAPPEN TO OUR LAND. WILDLIFE CORRIDORS WILL SOON BE LOST AND THIS WILL BE VERY UNFORTUNATE.”

Munteli Lalparasaroi



Lion Kids Camp

Four shy boys get off the bus and join the rest of the children at Lion Kids Camp. But they look strangely familiar. Upon further interrogation, they confess. “Yes, we have been here before. But we enjoyed it so much and learnt so much the last time, that we changed our names to come back!”

In the new lessons, the boys learn the latest threats facing wildlife and livestock movement in their region. Separately, they can tell by the distinctive tear and bite marks which carnivore killed the goat in the simulation. They will go home with fresh skills on how to protect their herds; they will go home conservationists.

Through slides, interactive models, games and wildlife safaris, the Lion Kids Camps of 2018 were life changing for children from Westgate and Kalama Conservancies. 100% of the children in the June camp considered themselves responsible for conserving wildlife in general, carnivores specifically, and for protecting their livestock from the threats of predation.

For us, watching wildlife champions take flight is a privilege to cherish. 2019 will see our conservation education centre complete, and then, flocks upon new flocks of new conservationists will take to the skies.



Following one of the lessons, young livestock herder Lgeyok (one of the Lion Kids who changed his name to return to the camp) said:



I NOW KNOW THAT EVERY TIME I SEE WILDLIFE DRINKING FROM A WATERHOLE, I WILL NOT CHASE THEM AWAY. I WILL WAIT UNTIL THEY HAVE FINISHED DRINKING AND WILL THEN TAKE MY LIVESTOCK DOWN TO DRINK.”



**SPECIAL
ANNOUNCEMENT
INTRODUCING:**

Ewaso Lions Conservation Game!

In 2015, Ewaso Lions designed a game to teach local primary school children attending our Lion Kids Camp about wildlife conservation, with a focus on lions. The game, which takes the form of an obstacle course, is designed to convey - in a fun way - the challenges lions face living in community areas, and what they need in order to survive.

With blindfolds, the children - who are each playing the role of different animals - must listen carefully to navigation instructions belted out by their leader, to the squeals and laughter of their counterparts watching from the sidelines. All this serves the additional purpose of developing their communication and leadership skills. Although it was initially designed with school children as the target audience, the Conservation Game has also proved a great success with livestock herders, warriors, women and elders; appealing to both literate and non-literate groups.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

PLAYERS:

- ✓ Understand the threats and challenges facing lions, and what they need to survive in human occupied landscapes.
- ✓ Internalise how different human activities can have positive or negative impacts on lions and their survival.
- ✓ Work out how their own actions and decisions can affect lions and their survival.
- ✓ Learn which tools/methods they can adopt to promote coexistence between people and large carnivores.

CONSERVATION IMPACT:

OUR HOPE!

- ✓ Communities' attitudes and tolerance towards lions and other large carnivores improved through conservation education.
- ✓ Local people inspired to take ownership over lions and their landscape.
- ✓ Everyone encouraged to support/adopt positive conservation behaviours that enhance coexistence between people and wildlife.



THE CONSERVATION GAME HAS GONE GLOBAL!

WHAT STARTED AS A SIMPLE LOCAL GAME HAS BEEN ADAPTED AND PLAYED BY CONSERVATION PARTNERS IN: UZBEKISTAN, MOZAMBIQUE, ARGENTINA & BOTSWANA WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHERE IT GOES NEXT!

Jeremy Lucas Education Fund

EDUCATING YOUTH, EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, ENCOURAGING CONSERVATION

The Jeremy Lucas Education Fund (JLEF) is now in its third year and is going from strength to strength. JLEF currently supports 16 young people in secondary and tertiary education. Ten of the students are in secondary school, three are in college, one at university and two students are doing internships with Ewaso Lions.

For these young people, affording further education and all the associated costs would be impossible. The continued support that JLEF will give them until they secure jobs means that they are looking towards positive, bright futures where they can look forward to successful careers in their chosen fields.

Joy and Saniki completed their last year of secondary school education, both achieving good grades in their final exams. They each did an internship programme with Ewaso Lions in 2018, one teaching Mama Simba ladies whilst the other worked at the Lion Kids Camps. With full support from JLEF, both girls started college in September 2018. Saniki is working towards a Certificate in Tour Guiding at the Coast Institute of Technology, whilst Joy is on a Social Work and Community Development Diploma Course at Mount Kenya University.



I LIKE COLLEGE BECAUSE IT IS A PLACE WHERE I AM GAINING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE FOR MY FUTURE CAREER IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY. AS A PROFESSIONAL IN THIS INDUSTRY I WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO HELP IN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION - AND THE CONSERVATION OF LIONS IN PARTICULAR."

Saniki Lelengeju



Saniki and Joy at our celebration in August © Jillian Knox

Taking on New Frontiers

An iron sheet house quakes lazily in the midday breeze. Behind it, a Turkana woman wearing beads emerges from her small traditional manyatta house. A barbed wire fence separates the two properties. The traditional and the modern world juxtaposed show Ngare Mara is a community in flux, yet at night, lions still roam here.

Our team has worked in the area on the fringes of Buffalo Springs and Shaba National Reserves for 5 years now. Thomas and Samuel, our Regional Coordinators who are born and brought up in the Ngare Mara area of Nakuprat Gotu Conservancy have to take a totally different approach to promoting coexistence as compared to their Samburu brothers further North. In more contemporary homes, when lions make off with goats, they will check and advise on the strength of the enclosure, the presence of guard dogs, the deterrents the family can use to keep lions away. But tradition still holds sway in many places. The Turkana believe that lions are the spirits of their ancestors who sometimes come to remind people of misdemeanors. So surfacing conflict is more a time of self-reflection and recreating harmony than it is of recriminations.

Although 2018 had its share of conflict, the community is becoming more and more resilient even as the winds of change blow new challenges our way. Thomas and Samuel are now working with the nearby Borana community promoting the same coexistence.



WHEN MY COMMUNITY SPOT LION TRACKS OR SEE LIONS ROAMING IN THE NEARBY BUSH, THEY CALL ME! THIS IS A SIGN OF COEXISTENCE BETWEEN MY COMMUNITY AND LIONS SHARING THE SAME ECOSYSTEM. 2018 WAS A GOOD YEAR WITH LESS HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT AND WE HAVE MANAGED TO EDUCATE AND WORK WITH MY COMMUNITY.”

Thomas Ekiru, Regional Coordinator





Collaborations in Conservation

A NEW WILDLIFE VET FOR NORTHERN KENYA

Northern Kenya has its first resident Kenya Wildlife Service vet. Emergency veterinary care is crucial to conservation in the regions we work in. Previously there was no vet dedicated to these wildlife areas.

Ewaso Lions has partnered with Save the Elephants, Grevy's Zebra Trust and the Kenya Wildlife Service, and thanks to the generosity of a group of donors, we have our own dedicated vet. Dr Michael Njoroge and his team (pictured) have hit the ground running and are already collaring lions, treating sick and injured elephants, Grevy's zebra, giraffes and numerous other wildlife species.

“

DURING THE PAST 6 MONTHS, THE UNIT HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS, COLLARING AND RESCUE OF VARIOUS SPECIES OF WILDLIFE IN THE REGION. I HAD CHALLENGES FAMILIARIZING WITH THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE GENERAL AREA. HOWEVER, WITH THE HELP OF THE MUCH SUPPORTIVE VETERINARY UNIT TEAM, I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OVERCOME THIS HURDLE. WE ENDEAVOR TO DO OUR BEST IN THIS WILDLIFE CONSERVATION JOURNEY AND I WISH TO THANK ALL OF THE SPONSORS FOR THE GREAT SUPPORT ACCORDED TO THE UNIT”.

Dr Michael Njoroge, Kenya Wildlife Service Vet

Collaborations in Conservation

STRIKING A BALANCE: SAVING WILDLIFE HABITAT WHILE STILL SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Large-scale infrastructure projects are currently being developed in northern Kenya at a rapid pace and at a larger scale than previously experienced. Without effective planning for harmonizing this infrastructure with wildlife needs, these projects will lead to profound ecological changes in the Ewaso Nyiro Basin and beyond, with long-term social, health, and economic impacts for people, and dire consequences for lions, Grevy's zebra and other wildlife.

Ewaso Lions, in partnership with the Grevy's Zebra Trust, have developed a programme to promote the harmonisation of this infrastructure. We have hired a Landscape Infrastructure Advisor, Sarah Chiles, and our combined approach is both solutions-oriented and dual-scale in that it tends to both national-level capacity building and influencing, while testing practical solutions at the landscape level.

We started by asking: "do you know what a railway looks like?" For many community members living in remote villages, railways, bridges and pipelines not things they have ever imagined. We therefore decided to get them to see these things for themselves. In November, we filled the Ewaso Lions bus and Grevy's Zebra Trust vehicle and brought people to Nairobi to behold the effects of mega-infrastructure in and around the Nairobi National Park. They saw how things can go wrong, where poor planning destroyed nature and inhibited movement. They also saw positive innovation in grey infrastructure development, lessons they could take home to make sure things go right for their communities, livestock and the wildlife, a most valued national heritage.



Team Highlights of 2018



“WATCHING THE WARRIORS GETTING DRESSED UP FOR OUR INCREDIBLE 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY EVENT WAS SPECIAL BEYOND WORDS. TO THEM WHAT THEY BUILT OVER THE DECADE, ALL THEIR EFFORTS, CHALLENGES AND TRIUMPHS WERE FEATHERS IN THEIR CAPS. I CONTINUE TO SALUTE THEM EVERY DAY.”

Resson Kantai Duff, Deputy Director



“SEEING LETUPUKWA, WHO 2 YEARS AGO WAS OUR CAMP COOK, TAKING CHARGE IN CONDUCTING THE SURVEYS WARMS MY HEART AND AFFIRMS OUR CONVICTION THAT LIONS STILL HAVE A FUTURE IN NORTHERN KENYA.”

Tobias Otieno, Research Manager



“I USED TO BE A YOUNG BOY JUST LOOKING AFTER COWS. NOW LOOK WHERE I AM.”

Lmalasian Letoiye, Field Officer



“IN NOVEMBER I WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE LIONS BECAUSE THEY WERE MOVING IN AN AREA THAT WAS NOT SAFE FOR THEM. I SPOKE TO THE COMMUNITIES HERE WHO WERE NOT FROM MY TRIBE AND I WAS SO HAPPY TO SEE THE LIONS MOVE THROUGH SAFELY AFTERWARDS.”

Nyasayon Lesiamito, Warrior Watch



“I AM SO PROUD TO WORK IN THE SOUTHERN REGION WITH MY PEOPLE AND TEAM. WE HAVE REALLY CHANGED ATTITUDES TOWARDS LIONS.”

Ben Lejale, Warrior Watch Coordinator

Ewaso Lions in the Spotlight



Shivani featured on Sir David Attenborough's *Dynasties* documentary by the BBC.



Jeneria received Africa's Rangers Award by the Paradise Foundation.



Jeneria was featured in *Geo* magazine - a 6-page main feature article and cover!



Ewaso Lions held its first TEDx talk in Nairobi.



The lion: He is your enemy. That's how Jeneria has learned it. He hated the big cats. Loathed, like all shepherds do. Do they not rob their most precious things: their cattle, sheep, goats? Can they not even kill people? When Jeneria talks about the big cats today, then it sounds like he's telling stories of good friends or relatives. Because the warrior has changed sides - he has become the protector of lions.

As translated from *Geo* Magazine



"LIONS DON'T HAVE ENOUGH FOOD AND THEY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH SPACE. BUT COMMUNITIES ALSO DON'T HAVE ENOUGH GRAZING FOR THEIR LIVESTOCK. THEY ALSO DON'T HAVE ENOUGH SPACE. WE'VE GOT TO TRY AND UNDERSTAND BOTH SIDES OF THE PICTURE."

As quoted by Shivani on BBC's *Dynasties*



"...[SHIVANI'S] WORK IS INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT AND HER IDEAS WORTH SPREADING." TEDx Muthangari



x = independently organized TED event

Thank You for Your Support - Ashe Olong

Ewaso Lions is an independent non-profit organisation and relies on donations and grants to run our programmes and operations.

In 2018, 93% of the funds raised supported our conservation and research programmes, 3% went to administration and 4% went to fundraising.

THANK YOU SO MUCH TO ALL OUR PARTNERS WHO ENABLE US TO MAKE A CONSERVATION IMPACT IN NORTHERN KENYA:

KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE

SAMBURU AND ISIOLO COUNTY GOVERNMENTS

SAMBURU, BUFFALO SPRINGS AND SHABA NATIONAL RESERVES MANAGERMENTS

COMMUNITY CONSERVANCIES (WESTGATE, KALAMA, NASUULU, NAKUPRAT-GOTU, OL DONYIRO, MEIBAE, LEPARUA, IL NGWESI, LEKURRUKI, NAMUNYAK)

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION NETWORK

GREVY'S ZEBRA TRUST

SAVE THE ELEPHANTS

NORTHERN RANGELANDS TRUST

LEWA WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

ALL EWASO FORUM MEMBERS

MALIASILI AND THE

KENYA WILDLIFE TRUST



Ewaso Lions Conservation Landscape

- Ewaso Lions Camp ●
- Ewaso Nyiro River ●
- Community Conservancies ●
- Study Area ●
- National Reserves ●
- Forest ●





Ewaso Lions

P.O. Box 14996, Nairobi 00800, Kenya

Kenya tel: +254 768 578 598

info@ewasolions.org

www.ewasolions.org

Follow us on:



[Facebook.com/ewasolions](https://www.facebook.com/ewasolions)



[Instagram.com/ewasolions](https://www.instagram.com/ewasolions)



[Twitter.com/ewasolions](https://twitter.com/ewasolions)



[YouTube.com/EwasoLions](https://www.youtube.com/EwasoLions)

To donate, please go to ewasolions.org/donate for more information.