

2015 Annual Report



EWASO
LIONS

Our Mission

Ewaso Lions is dedicated to conserving lions and other large carnivores by promoting coexistence between people and wildlife. We use sound science to help guide the long-term conservation of lions. We work hand in hand with local communities to provide education, training, and improved conservation practices that help people and wildlife. Ewaso Lions works across community conservancies, protected areas, and private lands.

Ewaso Lions Field Team



Ewaso Lions

Leadership

Shivani Bhalla
FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Paul Thomson
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT

Jeneria Lekilelei
FIELD OPERATIONS & COMMUNITY MANAGER

Heather Gurd
CONSERVATION MANAGER

Tobias Otieno
RESEARCH MANAGER

Francis Lendorop
HEAD LION SCOUT

Ewaso Lions is more than a wildlife project. Since 2007, we have put conservation directly in the hands of the people we work with in northern Kenya. From Samburu warriors to women, from children to safari guides, we engage everyone who is influenced by lions and other wildlife. In order to keep lions alive and thriving for the long term, we are ensuring people are at the heart of conservation.

We are proud of what we have accomplished despite a year full of challenges. During a time of intense human-lion conflict towards the end of the year, our team stopped lions from being killed more than 20 times. Several years ago, this would not have been possible. But today, we have a wide network of people across the landscape who inform us of lion issues, and we can respond to prevent retaliation. This change towards tolerance is an indicator that our work with communities is paying off.

I couldn't be more proud of our growing team who not only works tirelessly, but demonstrates the sense of conservation ownership we are encouraging throughout the area. Many of you know Jeneria, whose hard work and exceptional people skills earned him not one but two awards this year: Disney's Conservation Hero Award and Houston Zoo's Wildlife Warrior Award. Meanwhile, we continue to build capacity throughout our team, and are proud to see Yesalai and Letoiye demonstrate further leadership among our field team.

Throughout it all, I have endless gratitude to our donors and supporters. Without you, we would not be here to make a lasting change for both lions and people in Kenya.

Shivani Bhalla
Founder & Executive Director



When we started Ewaso Lions nearly ten years ago, every day was unexpected. We responded to the needs right in front of us, and we learned as we went. Today, our conservation and research programs are targeted and proactive. We have structured our Annual Report to tell our story through our three core strategic areas: community engagement in conservation, transforming human-wildlife conflict, and scientific research.

Looking ahead, we expect to focus on these key pillars, while also tackling a new threat head on: large scale infrastructure projects that threaten the landscapes, wildlife and communities in northern Kenya. This emerging issue is on a scale unlike anything we have dealt with before and all our work could be undermined unless we address it. It's a reminder that we must stay flexible and adapt to meet the needs of the changing times.

This year, we completed construction of our new headquarters: a modest but comfortable camp complete with solar power, running water, and Internet. To me, this is the physical manifestation of how far we have come. We've grown from a small startup to an award winning conservation organization with a long-term vision for lions and people in Kenya.

Our new Camp is also evidence of the incredible network of supporters who have been with us each step of the way. Your financial support is what keeps the project moving ahead – but perhaps equally important, the sense of community and camaraderie we feel keeps our team going. Every day we get messages of support from you and it gets us through the toughest times. Thank you.

Paul Thomson
Director of Strategy & Development





Ewaso Lions

Transforming Human-Lion Conflict

Our goals are to reduce the frequency of human-lion conflict incidences, such as livestock attacks, to prevent conflict from happening in the first place, and to minimize negative consequences when it does occur. This is how we are transforming conflict into coexistence.



Tyrel Bernardini

TO PREVENT CONFLICT RESULTING WHEN LIONS ATTACK LIVESTOCK LIKE COWS (TOP), OUR TEAM WARNS LOCAL HERDERS WHEN LIONS ARE IN THE AREA TO KEEP LIVESTOCK SAFE (LEFT). MEANWHILE, OUR WARRIORS RECORD CONFLICT AND WILDLIFE DISTRIBUTION DATA (RIGHT).

WARRIORS FOR CONSERVATION

Our Warrior Watch program continues to promote human-lion coexistence throughout local communities. The Samburu warriors on the team serve as wildlife ambassadors and are the first responders to human-wildlife conflict. By the end of 2015, Warrior Watch included 18 warriors working across four conservancies that span a total area of 1742 km² (673 mi²). The program is growing: we recruited and trained an additional three warriors from different locations across these conservancies. Warriors were involved in responding to and mitigating more than 100 incidents of human-lion conflict. The weekly 'Warrior School' continued each Sunday, providing education as an incentive for participation in the program. Now, 80% of Warrior Watch warriors from Westgate Conservancy are able to record their own wildlife sightings and use GPS units to collect data.

AVERTING CONFLICT

Our core field team works with members of Warrior Watch to respond to conflict

incidents as fast as possible and prevent retaliatory killings of lions. Our team stopped lions from being killed 26 times in one month alone. Our team is trained in conflict transformation, which means they are skilled in calming tensions, demonstrating empathy for loss of livestock, and mitigating future problems. By having our Warriors stationed in their home villages across the landscape, we can increase communication and response to conflict issues.

LIONS POISONED

In July, two lion cubs from the Ngare Mara Pride died in Buffalo Springs National Reserve. It was later confirmed that the cubs were killed by poison, following an incident whereby a herdsman laced the carcass of a camel killed by lions with a toxic pesticide. Ewaso Lions worked closely with the Kenya Wildlife Service and Buffalo Springs National Reserve authorities to respond and monitor the remaining pride members. Fortunately, the other three cubs and their mothers survived the incident. This marks the first recorded incidence of lion death by poisoning in our study area.

Tony Allport





Tyrel Bernardini

Conservation is About People

Our vision is to see people and lions coexisting within the landscape. To achieve this, we target various groups of stakeholders: women, children, Samburu warriors, the tourism industry, and more. By tailoring conservation programs for each demographic, we can better meet the needs of people which ultimately strengthens conservation.



Ewaso Lions

LEFT: LION KIDS CAMPS PROVIDE POSITIVE WILDLIFE EXPERIENCES FOR KENYAN CHILDREN. THIS YEAR WE HELD TWO CAMPS, INCLUDING A SPECIAL REUNION CAMP WITH 122 KIDS. ABOVE: THE CORE GROUP OF MAMA SIMBA WOMEN.

LION KIDS CAMPS

Our Lion Kids Camps provide Kenyan children with a multi-day wildlife experience through education, safaris, and conservation-themed games and activities. We held two Camps in 2015, including a Reunion Camp that brought together 122 children who have participated in all Camps. In April, we featured a new conservation game designed to teach kids not only about conservation but also to test their leadership and communication skills. All Camps are evaluated to ensure we meet objectives and to enable adaptive management. One outcome from the April Camp: 100% of children agreed that their wildlife and conservation knowledge had increased as a result of the Camp.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

In addition to Lion Kids Camps, we have a scholarship program that covers local students' tuition for four full academic years. We are currently sponsoring five promising students at highly ranked secondary schools. A further two students have now completed their secondary level education as a result of our scholarship program: Samson Lerosion, who graduated in 2013; and Painoti Letabare, who completed her secondary studies in 2015.

We are especially proud of Samson, who was our first sponsored student. Despite unimaginable challenges in his home life, he completed his secondary education. He is a gifted artist with a passion for wildlife, so we further sponsored him to attend Buruburu Institute of Fine Art in Nairobi. He then joined Ewaso Lions as our Resident Artist to develop the skills needed to set up his own wildlife art business.

MAMA SIMBA

Our Mama Simba program – which means “mothers of lions” in Kiswahili – engages and empowers Samburu women in conservation. This year, our core group of ten women participated in conservation training, and reported on lion sightings and conflict issues. In exchange, we offered weekly schooling to provide educational opportunities they never had before, and training in new beaded art craft, so they can diversify their income. This year, we conducted a feedback survey with the core Mama Simba women. The survey showed that the education component was highly valued and that the women are interested in more conservation training. The positive survey results will help us refine and expand the program in 2016.



Jack & Rikki Swenson / www.expeditiongallery.com

Using Science to Guide Conservation

We strive to secure key lion areas in northern Kenya to maintain breeding populations and ensure connectivity between Samburu, Laikipia, and beyond. Utilizing science and research to guide and evaluate our community programs is a key aspect of our work.



Ewaso Lions

LEFT: IN SAMBURU, WE MONITOR 40-50 LIONS, SUCH AS LOIWOTWA. LIONS MOVE FREQUENTLY ACROSS DIFFERENT LAND TYPES LIKE NATIONAL RESERVES AND COMMUNITY CONSERVANCIES. RIGHT: SKETCHING A LION ID USING WHISKER SPOT PATTERNS.

STUDYING LIONS ACROSS LANDSCAPES

The dramatic decline in lion numbers across Africa is driven by habitat loss and conflict with humans. Lions are a wide-ranging species, and protected areas like national parks and reserves are simply not enough to keep lion populations viable in the long run. This is why Ewaso Lions tackles conservation on a landscape scale. Our study area has grown from 935 km² to 4,786 km² (361 mi² to 1,382 mi²) and now includes national reserves, community areas, and private lands in Samburu, Laikipia, and Isiolo counties. In Samburu, we currently monitor 40-50 lions, and have mapped all lion prides and identified individuals using their unique whisker spot patterns. On the commercial ranches of Laikipia, we monitor 15-20 prides. In 2015, we recorded the birth of 44 cubs within our area.

MEASURING LION SURVIVAL

Together with collaborators in Kenya and from the University of California at Santa Cruz, we are studying the energetics of lions in order to better measure the impact that humans have on their survival in the

landscape. Energetics refers to the energy budget of an animal during a variety of behaviors and activities. From the data collected thus far we know that lions spend a lot of time on the move and require good cover like thick bush in order to properly rest during the daytime. Lions appear to avoid areas where human and livestock densities are very high. In areas where there are plentiful wild prey, lions rarely kill livestock. This research will help pave the way for our successful community-based conservation programs.

LIONS OUTSIDE PARKS

In April, Naramat gave birth to cubs in the community area west of Samburu National Reserve. For the rest of the year, Naramat raised her three cubs in the hills and swamps of Westgate Community Conservancy. Our warriors and Lion Scouts monitored them closely to ensure their safety by communicating their whereabouts with herders, keeping livestock at a safe distance, and talking to communities about their importance to the area. The cubs seem to be thriving, and we are encouraged by this success story of lions coexisting with local communities.

Ewaso Lions



2015 Highlights

Saving Lions

Our team stopped the retaliatory killing of lions 26 times in December alone. When Lengwe was found severely injured, we coordinated the first-ever X-ray of a wild lion in our area. We continued to monitor his remarkable recovery.

Warrior Watch

Warrior Watch has grown to include 18 warriors working across four conservancies that span a total area of 1,742 km² (673 mi²) in northern Kenya.

Lion Kids Camps

Two Lion Kids Camps were held this year, including a special Reunion Camp. A total of 122 Kenyan children have been exposed to conservation education.

New Headquarters

We completed and moved into the new Ewaso Lions Conservation Center. With solar power, water piped from a well, and satellite Internet, we are officially set up for the long term.

Awards

Jeneria received two awards: Disney's Conservation Hero Award and Houston Zoo's Wildlife Warrior Award.

Lion Cubs

We recorded the birth of 44 cubs in our study area. Naramat gave birth to three cubs in the community area of Westgate and raised them against all odds.

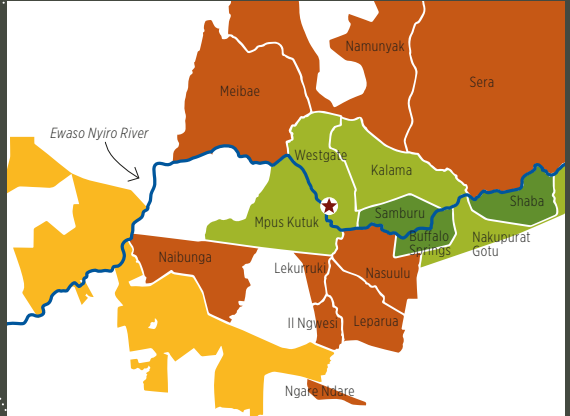
Ewaso Lions is an independent non-profit organization and relies on donations and grants to run our operations. In 2015, 91% of the funds raised went to support our conservation programs, 5% went to administration, 4% of the funds went to fundraising.

We are deeply thankful for the many donors – individuals and organizations alike – who support Ewaso Lions.

AFRICA

Kenya

Ewaso Lions Study Area



★ Ewaso Lions Camp

■ National Reserves

■ Community Conservancies

■ Commercial Ranchland



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