

Lion Kids Camps

Despite living in close proximity to world famous National Parks and Reserves, many Kenyan children have never had the chance to observe wildlife at close range and to experience what attracts thousands of tourists to their country each year. In rural areas, their perceptions of wildlife are instead shaped by largely negative interactions: they see elephants chasing people, the remains of a camel after a lion attack, or a leopard snatching their goats. Children's attitudes may also be influenced by longstanding cultural beliefs and practices. In urban areas, children tend to be even more disconnected from wildlife and typically have limited knowledge about native fauna. Recognising that children are the future custodians of Kenya's wildlife, Ewaso Lions launched its Lion Kids Camp (LKC) programme in 2013.

OUR VISION:

To educate & inspire a new generation of wildlife conservationists in Kenya

To date, we have run **48 LKCs**, providing **over 1275 children** from across **four Counties** with a fully immersive wildlife experience. Currently, we focus on two key demographic groups:

- **Students:** By engaging students, we hope to inspire the next generation of conservation leaders, park wardens, safari guides and wildlife biologists.
- **Livestock herders:** By engaging herders, we hope to have an immediate, positive impact on wildlife.

LKC: NENYIRAU CAMP MAY 2025

We held a Lion Kids Camp with 26 livestock herders from Nenyirau Location in Westgate Conservancy between the 5th and 9th of May 2025.

The Camp combined wildlife education, safaris and conservation-themed games and activities. The children were taught about:

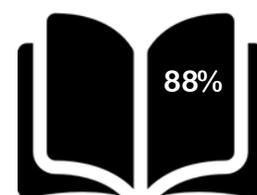
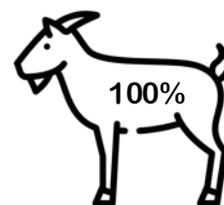
- The value and importance of lions/large carnivores and other wildlife species;
- The threats facing wildlife in Kenya;
- Techniques local communities can adopt to promote peaceful coexistence.

Emphasis was placed on topics of particular relevance to herders, such as adoption of wildlife-friendly livestock husbandry practices.

*two of the kids had attended LKC previously.



Livestock herders:



Had a family member in a wildlife/ conservation role

Had never received any formal teaching about wildlife/conservation

Evaluation: Methods & Results

Multi-choice Quiz

All attendees completed a pre-camp and post-camp quiz containing a series of multi-choice questions aimed at assessing changes in attitudes and knowledge. The quiz was administered using Promethean Activotes, a type of student response device (pictured left).



Questionnaire Survey

All attendees also completed a short pre-camp and post-camp questionnaire containing open-ended questions which could not be answered using the Activote devices. The questionnaire surveys were administered by Samburu enumerators using Survey 123 app on mobile devices.



Objective: To provide Kenyan children, many of whom live adjacent to National Reserves but have not seen wildlife close up, with a positive and enjoyable wildlife experience.



Children closely watching an Ostrich on their first ever wildlife safari

Setting off before dawn, the children were very excited to be going for their first ever wildlife safari in Samburu National Reserve. We saw two beautiful cheetahs, a spotted hyaena returning to its den, jackals, among others. We also saw a lot of herbivores including reticulated giraffes, Grant's gazelles, gerenuks, Grevy's zebras, warthogs and oryx. We also had a fantastic sighting of large herds of elephants swimming in the river. The children were very fascinated! We also saw ostrich and a monitor lizard whilst explaining the importance of each species.

92%

went on their first wildlife safari

Objective: To increase knowledge about wildlife, and conservation of wildlife species and their habitats, amongst LKC attendees.



86%

Attendees' ability to identify resident mammal species improved, with 86% attaining higher scores post-camp. The average score increased by 50%, from 36% pre-camp. The children were lucky to see a lot of wildlife during the wildlife safari and this was a good opportunity to reinforce what they learnt during their classroom Mammal ID session.



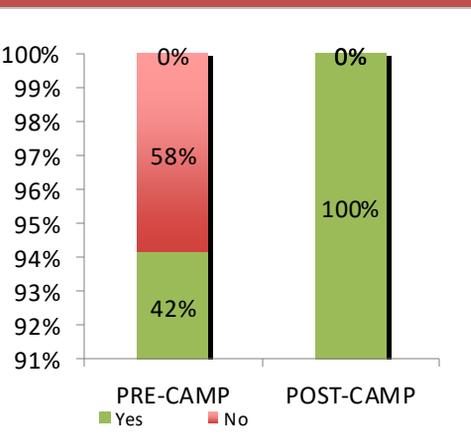
92%

Attendees' ability to identify carnivores by tracks, signs or sounds improved, with 92% attaining higher scores post-camp and the average score increasing by 68% from 24% pre-camp. The greatest percentage increase from pre-camp to post-camp was 78%.



Children playing The Herding Challenge game in between the classroom lessons

“Are there any THREATS facing Lions in Kenya?”



INCREASE from pre-camp to post-camp in the average number of threats identified per child from: **2.4 to 11.2**

Threats

Food & water

- Lack of food (↑28.7%)
Pre: 63.6% | Post: 92.3%

Drought

- Drought (↑5.2%)
Pre: 90.9% Post: 96.2%

Pollution

- Pollution (↑3.5%)
Pre: 27.3% | Post: 30.8%

Habitat loss

- Degradation (↑20.2%)
Pre: 5.9% | Post: 26.1%
- Deforestation (↑87.1%)
Pre: 9.1% | Post: 96.2%
- Development (↑33.2%)
Pre: 9.1% | Post: 42.3%
- Encroachment (↑96.2%)
Pre: 0.0% | Post: 96.2%
- Human population (↑49.7%)
Pre: 27.3% | Post: 76.9%

Killed by people

- Poaching (↑46.9%)
Pre: 45.5% | Post: 92.3%

Objective: To foster and sustain positive attitudes towards wildlife, and wildlife conservation, in LKC attendees – with an emphasis on lions and other large carnivores.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS WILDLIFE

Pre-camp, 42% of children strongly agreed that, "living with wild animals brought [them/ their] family more benefits than problems". However, there was a significant change in their response post-camp – 100% strongly agreeing that the benefits outweighed the problems.



“VERY BAD”

100% of children, following the camp, thought killing wild animals was “very bad” compared to 96 % pre-camp.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS CARNIVORES

A similar trend was also observed when children were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement: "Living with carnivores brings me/my family more benefits than problems" the proportion agreeing or strongly agreeing increasing from 73% to 85% post-camp.

+35%

Following the camp, 35% more children 'strongly agreed' that it was "possible for [their] community to live alongside carnivores peacefully" (100%, compared to 65% pre-camp). The total 'strongly agreeing' was 100% post-camp.

BENEFITS > COSTS



96% of children, following the camp, said that when they think of a lion it is something they 'like' or 'strongly like'. The proportion stating that they 'strongly like' lions increased by 15%, from 81% but even before the camp most children had positive perceptions of lions.



58% of children, following the camp, said that they wanted the number of lions in their home area to 'increase' or 'increase a lot', compared to 38% pre-camp.

Objective: To develop and sustain a sense of responsibility to protect wildlife and other natural resources in LKC attendees.

4% → 100%

Before the camp, 4% of children considered themselves as responsible for conserving wildlife and other natural resources in their home area. Following the camp, this increased to 100%.

8% → 100%

Before the camp, 8% of children considered themselves as responsible for conserving carnivores. Following the camp, this increased to 100%.

0% → 100%

Before the camp, none of the children considered themselves as responsible for protecting their livestock from predation. Following the camp, this increased to 100%.



100%



would like to learn more about wildlife and/or conservation following the camp

Objective: To promote coexistence between people and large carnivores by empowering LKC attendees to help conserve large carnivores, their prey and habitats.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP PROTECT WILDLIFE/ THE ENVIRONMENT IN MY HOME AREA?

Actions listed by **>22% more** children post-camp:



Not kill/ injure wildlife



Not graze livestock inside protected areas



Report dead/injured wildlife



Follow grazing plans



Report human wildlife conflict



Raise awareness about wildlife/conservation

Average number of actions listed per child increased from:
6.9 to 9.9

WHAT MEASURES CAN I TAKE TO PROTECT LIVESTOCK FROM PREDATION?

Measures listed by **>11% more** children post-camp:



Use scarecrows



Use guard dogs



Use fire/ lights/ torches



Put bells on livestock



Herd away from bushy/rocky areas



Locate home away from bushy/rocky areas

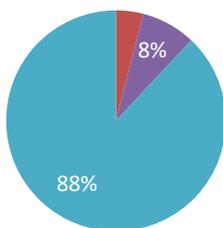
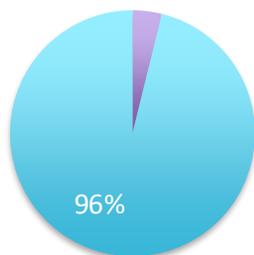


Strengthen boma

Average number of measures listed per child increased from:
7.2 to 9.5

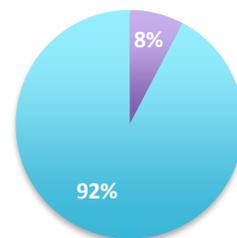
Attendee Feedback

"I enjoyed the LKC and would attend another if given the opportunity"



"My attitude towards wild animals has improved as a result of this camp"

"My knowledge of local wildlife has improved as a result of this camp"



■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree

Room for Improvement?

Despite some encouraging results, we feel there is always room for improvement. Some specific areas identified include:

- ◆ As geographical boundaries of countries and continents are not well understood by the children, we need to create a zooming out video for them so they can orient themselves in the world.
- ◆ An extra car during the wildlife safari would be helpful in helping find lions. More coordination with lion monitoring teams where they can also talk about important wildlife corridors and important lion habitats and safe refuges.
- ◆ Consider Murals/Models for Education topics like from conflict to coexistence boma models to enable more interactive lessons and move kids round the classroom.
- ◆ Consider dividing the class into smaller groups for more personalised instruction when we have herding children.
- ◆ Add some videos in the presentations to make them more interactive.



Photo Collage



Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to our local partners **Westgate Community Conservancy** and **Samburu National Reserve** for enabling this Camp to take place. We also extend special thanks to **Julian and Susie** for their financial support. Thank you all so much for bringing conservation education to Westgate's herding children and for inspiring them to become conservationists!

Credits: photos © Ewaso Lions