



EWASO
LIONS

Annual Report **2021**



EWASO LIONS IS DEDICATED TO CONSERVING LIONS AND OTHER LARGE CARNIVORES BY PROMOTING COEXISTENCE BETWEEN PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE.

Ewaso Lions is an independent 100% African wildlife conservation organisation which engages and builds the capacity of key demographic groups in the area (warriors, women, elders and children) to reduce human-carnivore conflict by developing strategies for preventing livestock predation. We raise awareness of ecological problems to spur solutions from within the communities, and conduct research and educational initiatives that reinforce traditionally held beliefs and the evolving culture of wildlife conservation across the landscape.

ABOUT LIONS

The African lion population has disappeared from 92% of their historical range*. It is estimated that only between 20,000 to 30,000 lions remain across the continent - a significant decrease from the possible 200,000 lions that roamed Africa a hundred years ago.

In Kenya, the current lion population now numbers less than 2,500 individuals. The loss of lions in Kenya is primarily due to habitat loss and conflict with humans, typically when lions kill people's livestock. More recent threats now include the development of large-scale infrastructure projects, and climate change that leads to a loss of prey. Lions and other large carnivores are wide-ranging species so 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 this, the sense of ownership over wildlife, their story, and their place within our landscape as Africans, must be reclaimed.

*Stolton, S. and Dudley, N. 2019. The New Lion Economy. Unlocking the value of lions and their landscapes, Equilibrium Research, Bristol, UK

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Dr. Shivani Bhalla
FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Resson Kantai Duff
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Jeneria Lekilelei
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

Arzina Bhanjee
FINANCE DIRECTOR

Tobias Otieno
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS & RESEARCH

Francis Lendorop
SECURITY MANAGER

Evanson Kariuki
CONSERVATION MANAGER

Evelyn Oduor
OPERATIONS & WELLNESS MANAGER

LETTERS FROM DIRECTORS



It was an uncertain, rocky start to the year. I was hit with unexpected health challenges that was a struggle. My safe space for so many years – my tent – had made me sick. Thanks to my team, I was able to get through it and prioritise my health and eventually I was able to focus on the future and a dream I had had for a long time...

Kura my dog has always been my inspiration and for so long I have wanted to help more dogs in Samburu. This dream became a reality this year when we launched a new domestic animal veterinary unit with some amazing partners. Seeing their impact, how dogs and other animals are being saved and their welfare improved, makes me smile every single day and sometimes I need to pinch myself to realise this is actually happening. We are finally connecting work on domestic animals to conservation of wildlife, reducing disease spread and preserving the bond people have with their livestock. Through Kura's Pride, we are making a difference. And that gets me out of bed every single day.

Dr. Shivani Bhalla



2021 was the year where we as a team stopped accepting to just salve the wound, but instead, we are now aiming to heal the whole. I decided to stop trying desperately to look for silver linings.

It happened as I sat with Jeneria as he described to me the anguish he and the team had just experienced, trying to comfort a man whose camel had just been killed by a lion. I saw the determination in his eyes that a change in our approach was now the only way forward. Through acknowledging the difficulties, silver linings appeared, all on their own. We welcomed in 7 new warriors full of fresh energy into our team. We watched the Mama Simba ladies brim with pride as they saw grass grow in places they had never dreamed of. We brought together government officials, financiers and scientists to harmonise infrastructure and ecology. We embraced the evolving culture of pastoralism, and supported our team and community through the toughest of droughts. Healing is underway. Light is already shining through the scars.

Resson Kantai Duff



I found 2021 tough in some ways, but also very good. My team worked harder than I have ever seen, going to far away places to solve conflict, and monitoring lion movements every day in various locations. They set up temporary camps to keep a closer eye on lions and rescue lost livestock in conflict hotspots. It was non-stop.

Even with challenging work, we still had to adapt to the changing times, and what the community thinks should happen. I eased off talking about lions, and started talking more about cows and grass, because that is what matters most to us as pastoralists. As we began discussions about land planning, we strengthened partnerships with the Kenya Wildlife Service, helping community members to get their compensation claims to the government in an easier way. These were all new steps. My team and I had many moments of joy, spending time with lions and watching the fruits of our hard work – little cubs growing up and playing in the bushes. We continue to thank the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Reserves, the County Governments and all the Conservancies we work in.

Jeneria Lekilelei



2021 was a year of improvements, hope and anxiety. In spite of the numerous challenges last year including serious drought, we continued to focus on improving our processes and control our costs as optimally as possible.

To our amazement, we received more donations in 2021 compared to 2020. This a big achievement and this has given the team great confidence in our donor support while continuing to put our best efforts in conservation.

However, this could not have happened without the amazing support, reassuring words of encouragement, and guidance from our conservation partners and donors. On behalf of Ewaso Lions, I am truly humbled and immensely grateful to the partners and donors for their support. We will continue to do our best in our endeavours and are optimistic that 2022 will be a better year for everyone.

Arzina Bhanjee



2021 was the year of partnerships. We successfully strengthened our partnerships with the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Samburu County Government. We initiated our first ever working agreement with the county, which is soon to be signed.

I have always remained positive in the year and continue to remain hopeful in everything we do. At some point as an organisation, we were struggling to keep our spirits up with conflict happening all around us amidst a terrible drought. A trip to southern Kenya visiting our friends Lion Guardians and the South Rift Alliance of Land Owners gave us the much needed boost we needed where our new vision of “lions need grass” came to fruition. Much more work is needed on this and we are excited to work with our partners in this in 2022. 2021 was a great year for me personally - I was so excited to take on a new role of Director of Operations and Research where I can continue to grow as a leader and bring more to Ewaso Lions. I look forward to an even greater 2022. Watch this space.

Toby Otieno

OUR 2021 HIGHLIGHTS



61

STAFF RECEIVE EMERGENCY DROUGHT RELIEF TO HELP THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES



2

AWARDS WON BY JENERIA RECOGNISING HIS LEADERSHIP OF WARRIOR WATCH AND EWASO LIONS



200

PARTICIPANTS ATTEND THE AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON LINEAR INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT, HOSTED BY EWASO LIONS AND OUR PARTNERS



1

NEW PRIDE OF LIONS IDENTIFIED IN SHABA NATIONAL RESERVE



263

ANIMALS ATTENDED TO THROUGH NEW DOMESTIC ANIMAL HEALTH VETERINARY UNIT



47

HUMAN-LION CONFLICT INCIDENTS RESOLVED SUCCESSFULLY BY THE TEAM



331

COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENJOY WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS AND CONVERSATIONS ON COEXISTENCE ON COVID-SAFE SAFARIS



2

LIONS COLLARED TO HELP ALERT COMMUNITIES OF LION PRESENCE AND KEEP LIVESTOCK AND LIONS SAFE



7

NEW WARRIORS JOIN THE TEAM



9

CUBS BORN





CARNIVORE CUBS & PUPS – RAYS OF HOPE IN CRISIS

As we write this in 2022, the drought is again biting hard. It is a sign of the effects of climate change. But carnivores are the sign that this landscape is alive despite what it may seem. They are also a signal that it will bounce back.

As scenes of our parched landscape filled the media in 2021, the one thing that has been the antithesis of the devastation is the carnivores. We spent time with the cutest newborn cheetah cubs we’ve ever seen. Through all of our efforts with Kura’s Pride, vaccinating domestic dogs, we’ve spent hours with eight healthy wild dog pups and their pack, just minutes from our camp. And then, there are the lion cubs: Nanai’s, Nkarsis’, and best of all, Naramat’s grand cubs. While everything else was bleak, these carnivores remain the hope of recovery for all of us, and for all that has been lost. Watching them thrive has given us confidence that everything else will too, and balance will return. It is comforting that the very thing keeping us going is the thing that we’ve been working towards since the very start.



NARAMAT, A LEGACY OF COEXISTENCE

On the 7th of April 2021, we lost our community lioness, Naramat. The Caring One. Naramat’s very existence was proof to us that coexistence between people and lions is possible.

Naramat was born in 2008 in Samburu National Reserve to Samburu’s famed lioness, Nashipai. The Ewaso Lions team monitored her for years. We watched Naramat join the ranks of the very few lions we had seen successfully breeding in community areas at the time. She gave birth four times on community lands, often bringing her cubs to the bushes of Westgate’s Core Conservation Area, right near our camp. She would lie on the beach, basking in the sun, safe in community lands.

All the while, Naramat was carving a space for herself and her kin in the hearts of the community. People would inquire about her in the same way they would ask about children or cows. She became part of their story. But not in a romantic “happily ever after” sort of way. The landscape we live and work in is shared by people, livestock, and

wildlife. Many a time, Naramat went after people’s cows, goats, and camels. And understandably, there was anger against her. But her 13 years of survival was proof of tolerance and that every step the team and community took to keep lions and their livestock safe was worth it.

Over the years, more lions have followed in her footsteps, feeling safer in community lands, and making permanent dwelling in areas where lions were a distant memory.

Naramat succumbed to an attack. Not an attack by humans, but by a fellow lion. Humans – Kenya Wildlife Service, Conservancy teams and our team struggled with every last muscle to save her.

Naramat lived and died wild. As it should be. And in 2021, she left a legacy of lions. Her adult cubs, Mararoi and Narasha gave birth to their own cubs. And as they led their little lions out of the bushes for the first time, our team was there to celebrate Naramat’s legacy living on. Coexistence is not only possible; it is our reality.

KURA'S PRIDE: SUPPORTING THE CULTURE OF PASTORALISM



In partnership with formidable partners, supporters, conservancies, and the Samburu County Department of Veterinary Services, these are some of our achievements of 2021.

3891

VACCINATIONS COMPLETED

47%

INCREASE IN VACCINATIONS COMPARED TO 2020

50

DAYS OF VACCINATIONS COMPLETED

76

LOCATIONS VISITED

9

PARTNERS COLLABORATED



NEW DATA COLLECTION APP USED THROUGH MISSION RABIES



A NEW DOMESTIC DOG WELFARE VIDEO PRODUCED - RAMAT ELDEIN

Increasingly, we have come to realise the need to articulate that coexistence is hinged upon the continuation of pastoralism. There are so many pressures on communities to change this way of life, but while others are encouraging its end, we see pastoralism as a way of the future. Every family that gets to keep their camel gets to keep milk for their children and meat when things get really tough. In October 2021 we expanded our support by offering veterinary services to their domestic animals as well. Ewaso Lions (through Kura's Pride) partnered with Vet in Wild, Animal Care Centre, and the Foundation for International Aid to Animals to launch a new domestic animal mobile veterinary unit!

Dr. Jessicah Kurere leads this veterinary unit, the Community Animal Health Initiative (CAHI), with the support of Solomon Lenasalia, our first JLEF university graduate and our new Kura's Pride Officer.



“

Grappling with an outbreak of Canine Distemper in domestic dogs over the past few months has been difficult on the dogs, the community and the veterinary unit. However, it has also shown how timely and much needed the medical services are. And how vital the domestic dog health is to both the community and wildlife health.”

Dr Jessicah Kurere - Vet in Wild & Ewaso Lions

CAHI milestones between October and December 2021 include:

65

CAMELS HANDLED (VACCINATED, TREATED AFTER ATTACKED BY LIONS, DOGS AND DONKEY BITES)

4

CASES ATTENDED TO DUE TO WILD/DOMESTIC ANIMAL CONFLICT

54

CASES ATTENDED TO AFTER SUSPECTED RABID DOG BITES

94

CASES OF POPULATION CONTROL MEASURES

199

HOMESTEADS VISITED

NANAI'S JOURNEY

Nanai went through many ups and downs in 2021. In November, there was anguish in Jeneria's voice as he confirmed that she was the lion that was limping badly in the reserve. "Its Nanai," he said. Nanai is Jeneria's favourite lioness.

He named her Nanai, meaning "my own," and has tracked her since she was born. The vet arrived a few hours later, darted her and investigated the wound. We were very relieved to see it was not a gun-shot, but most likely an oryx horn penetration that ran deep all along her leg. The days and nights after that were long as our team kept a close eye on Nanai, camping out in the reserve. Her leg healed slowly, painfully so. But finally, she began to put some weight on her leg a few weeks later. Soon after, she was seen hunting a warthog! A huge relief for us all. And, an even bigger surprise was that her swollen belly was indeed signs of good fortune. Nanai gave birth to four cubs in late 2021 and Jeneria was the first to see them.



NEW WARRIORS: COMING FULL CIRCLE

We all shed some bitter-sweet tears watching a new group of warriors decorate themselves for the first time and strut their stuff. Out of the hundreds of newly initiated young men, we welcomed 7 into our Warrior Watch programme.

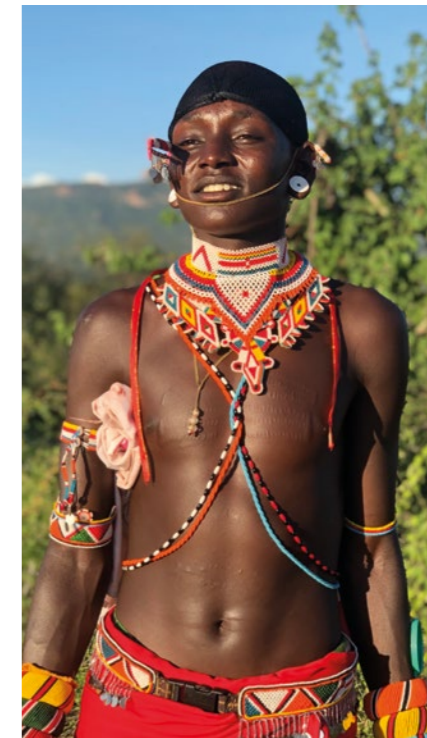
Lekalkuli, Lemarle, Lekoomet, Lekamario, Lekilemo, Lolchuragi, and head warrior Lkasian are here with new courage, new ideas, and new energy.

In this short time, they have helped solve conflict, rescued livestock, joined emergency conflict temporary camps, watched over wounded lions until they recovered, and learnt to track and identify lions.

But they are not a homogeneous lot. Too often, people talk about the communities that do conservation as a unit. But people are just people. They are different in their opinions and actions, and you have to work with each and every one of them if you want to have an impact. A few of the new warriors say that they are more attuned to conservation than the previous group. Maybe they are right. Maybe many of them are. But the challenges are greater than ever, and losing livestock to lions is just as hard, if not harder now. The new warriors have their work cut out for them.

Watching this monumental transition has shown us that conservation takes time. It takes a lot of people and a lot of failure and tears. Out of it comes resilience and hope. When Warrior Watch first began, Jeneria held binoculars in his hands and had no idea what they were or how to use them. It was a while before his passion for lions grew into his very bloodstream, and longer before others wanted to join him. 15 years later, dozens have clamoured to get these seven spots to join Warrior Watch. All of them want to be like Jeneria. They want to be there to get camels out of harm's way at dawn, just like him. They want to go out and see Nanai, daughter of Nashipai, and her new cubs.

We have come full circle.
That is conservation.





COLLABORATIONS IN CONSERVATION: RESTORATION

Lions need grass. It's a funny statement we often say, but it has never rung truer than in 2021.

The biting drought spurred our Mama Simba ladies into action. They have been working closely with the Grevy's Zebra Trust, which is leading efforts to restore our degraded landscape. With more grass, there will be more prey for the lions, helping to reduce human-carnivore conflict in the long term. Munteli, Painoti, and the Mamas have returned

on many occasions to the 'Lokere,' their grass enclosures, to reseed the area in preparation for the rains. Their work has already born fruit, but not without its challenges. The Mamas suffered setbacks when people entered their enclosure to feed their livestock without permission, and in the process, destroyed all their gains. But the Mamas are both forgiving and resilient. They have returned, reseeded and learnt new skills from our partners. They will not give up. Our parched drylands are ready for change.

COLLABORATIONS IN CONSERVATION: DROUGHT IN THE NORTH

To us, 2021 was a true climate emergency. While droughts are longer drawn out and don't make the news in the same ways as fires and floods, they have multiple devastating impacts and cumulative effects.

In 2009, the drought we suffered wiped out the buffalo population, and in 2017, we lost over 10% of our lion population as people and livestock converged on the last grass, which was also prime lion refuge. In 2021, our immediate worry was the increased conflict and decreased tolerance leading to lion killing. But the longer impacts include the devastation of an already dwindling prey base leading to a cycle of perpetual conflict.

We were not alone in our fears. The Grevy's Zebra Trust (GZT) and Ewaso Lions sprang into action together, taking a collaborative approach to achieve cumulative results. Our team worked together on water provisioning for both wildlife and livestock, ferrying water to thirsty animals, and digging for it in the dry riverbeds. We surveyed the condition of wildlife and forage across the landscape, and GZT led the supplementary feeding part of the efforts. Together with Save the Elephants, we supported the reserves with food, fuel, and the occasional motivational party to keep ranger spirits high.

The worst is not over. But our teams are ready to face this emergency with courage, speed, and consistency for the sake of our wildlife, livestock, and people.





BEHIND THE VEIL: VULNERABILITY IN CONSERVATION

As we closed the curtain on 2020, the hope was that we had seen the last of tragedy and crisis - or at least that it would get a little lighter. It was not to be.

2021 was the year we lost our most famous lioness, Ewaso Lions' symbol of coexistence: Naramat. We battled with our health in ways we had never imagined. And in the midst of that debilitation, we experienced human-lion conflict spikes scarcely seen for years. Then the Ewaso Nyiro dried up, beginning a drought which is still ongoing in 2022.

How do we speak about these things? Do we speak about them at all? We have chosen to share with you that this is what is behind the veil. While it is not pretty, it's what is building our team every day and has helped us forge long term solutions.

To deal with the conflict spikes, we are embarking on supporting better land management. Our hope is that even in these difficult seasons, there will still be grass for wild prey, and with that, there will still be lions. Additionally, we have taken the decision to support people who have lost livestock to lions, by transporting them to file their compensation claims with the Kenya Wildlife Service.

We cannot overlook our health. As a team, we know that this work takes a toll on our bodies and minds, so we have started to prioritise getting people out of the landscape from time to time to refresh and reset. Rested and healthy people are far more able to deal with the challenges before them.

We will continue to speak about our challenges, our grief and our questions. Conservation must have room for all of this, and all of us.

JLEF STUDENTS: EMERGING LEADERS

The Jeremy Lucas Education Fund turned 4 in 2021, and we took a step back to appreciate the sheer ability of our students to give back to their community.

Our first shining star is Solomon Lenasalia, our first student to graduate university. After 8 years with us as an Ewaso Lions scholar, Solomon finished his degree in Environmental Science and Natural Resource Management and has become the first student with a degree to join our Ewaso Lions team. He has gone from looking after the camp dogs in his free time to helping to lead our Kura's Pride Programme as the Kura's Pride Officer.

Painoti's story is no less impressive. When Painoti Letabare finished her high school education, she volunteered with us as the Mama Simba teacher. We would never have guessed that this would put in her heart a flare for teaching, which would blossom into her attendance at Teacher Training College and her return to roll out a curriculum for the Mama Simba and Warrior Watch literacy school.



Saniki Lelenkeju has finished her tourism studies, and was one of the first girls to leave the Ewaso Lions nest. With her passion for tourism, Saniki has volunteered in several lodges across Kenya, and now works as one of the few female safari guides in Samburu's famed Elephant Bedroom camp.

We couldn't be prouder of all our 11 students who are working hard through difficult pandemic times and are still motivated enough to volunteer whenever they can. Whether it is by helping vaccination campaigns, or Lion Kids Camps to helping in the camp kitchen, they have all proved their commitment not just to education, but to the conservation of their homeland.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT – ASHE OLENG

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

In 2021, 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 Kenya:

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| Kenya Wildlife Service | World Women Work | Lion Guardians |
| Samburu, Isiolo and Laikipia County Governments | National Geographic | Women for the Environment – Africa |
| Samburu, Buffalo Springs and Shaba National Reserves Managements | Grevy's Zebra Trust | All Ewaso Forum Members |
| Community Conservancies (Westgate, Kalama, Nasuulu, Nakuprat-Gotu, Naapo, Nanapisho, Meibae, Leparua, Il Ngwesi, Lekurukki, Namunyak) | Save the Elephants | Endangered Wildlife Trust |
| Wildlife Conservation Network | Northern Rangelands Trust | Global Alliance of Rabies Control |
| Whitley Fund for Nature | Vet in Wild | Milgis Trust |
| Houston Zoo | Animal Care Centre | Kalepo Camp |
| | Foundation for International Aid to Animals | Sarara Camp and Sarara Foundation |
| | Action for Cheetahs | Isiolo Conservation Trust |
| | Pride Lion Conservation Alliance | |
| | South Rift Alliance of Land Owners | |



Photo: Nanai and her cubs © Michael Laubscher (Wild Eye)

EWASO LIONS LANDSCAPE

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



Conservation landscape coverage
4530km²



Ewaso Lions

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