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Dear NCSG,

Please find below the overview written by Dr. Dame Daphne Sheldrick for the month of FEBRUARY 2013. This overview is designed to keep you informed about the Orphans' Project and all the dynamics each month, but for news specific to your fostered orphan, and to view recent photographs, please be sure to click the link to the Keepers Diary at the end this email.

We do just one comprehensive Newsletter a year. The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust's 2012 newsletter is complete a digital PDF version can be viewed or downloaded by clicking this link. <http://www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org/html/2012.html>
We hope you find the time to read the numerous stories and to enjoy the stunning images throughout this comprehensive publication.

Another great way to keep current with the Trust's work throughout the month is to join us on Facebook too. Here we look to share news and photographs and short films from the Orphans' Project and our many other Projects to ensure our supporters are up to date with the very latest developments. <http://www.facebook.com/thedswt>

Nursery:-

It has been a sad month in the Nairobi Nursery, having suffered the loss of 2 newcomers, ("Mwananchi" from the Tsavo Conservation Area and Ngobor from the Masai Mara), both of whom arrived too dehydrated and emaciation too advanced for us to be able to reverse. The unexpected and sudden death of little Pili Pili, the baby dikdik rescued from baboons in Tsavo left us all perplexed and distraught. We can only surmise that Pili Pili must have eaten something poisonous, possibly a toxic insect disguised on the leaf of a plant.

Then came the lion incident involving another Nursery favourite, one year old "Geri" the orphaned female Thomson's gazelle, reared from newborn after being confiscated from a bushmeat poacher who would have had her for lunch. This time, it was the lions who almost had her for lunch, but for the instinctive and very brave reaction of Angela, who gave chase after the lions (2 adult lionesses with 4 or 5 three quarter grown cubs, in attendance) that snatched Geri from the veranda of Angela's home, catching her totally off guard. Angela's brave confrontation at close quarters with Geri's would-be killers forced them to drop her, leaving her in a state of deep shock and very much the worse for wear. Instantly she was rushed to the Vet where she was gently held by Taru, (Angela's 14 year old son whom Geri adores above all others) and who came out of school especially to be with her. We believe it was Taru's presence that gave her the stimulus to fight for life rather than succumb. Good news is that Geri we believe will make a full recovery.

More good news to temper the bad is that all our elephant Nursery babies are thriving, including another newcomer from Loisaba Ranch named "Lima Lima" who was brought in on the 20th, as we were burying poor little Ngobor. Although very thin, this calf took milk eagerly from the start, and was sufficiently calm to be allowed out with the others by the 25th. All the bigger females are eager to comfort and watch over her, particularly caring of her during the public mudbath hour when human visitors are present. She is a gentle and beautiful elephant who is mightily relieved to find herself again amongst a loving family, even seeking out the Keepers as they keep vigil out in the bush, just to make sure that they (the bearers of life saving milk) are still around. To read about Lima Lima's rescue and to view images please click on this link: http://www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org/asp/orphan_profile.asp?N=285

Our youngest Nursery elephant, baby Lemoyian, is now plump and feisty, up to challenging Barsilinga, Ngasha and Balguda to Pushing Tests of strength, and earning quite a reputation as a mini wrestler but also as a bad loser! Turkwel is desperate to take over the Leadership of the Nursery herd, but is still being inhibited by Kainuk who resents giving up her position as Turkwel's favourite to the smaller calves. Turkwel has to resort to having to quietly sneaking away in order to spend time with the younger orphans, deliberately ignoring Kainuk's anguished bellows as soon as her disappearance has been noticed! Meanwhile Sities very ably fills the gap during Turkwel's enforced absences, ably backed up by Naipoki, Ishaq-B and Sonje, all of whom are very caring of the smaller calves. Sities especially adores Lemoyian and Balguda, both of whom missed Kilabasi sorely after she was upgraded to Ithumba. All the small Nursery boys - Faraja, Kwale, Ngasha, Bomani, Balguda, Kithaka, Lemoyian and Barsilinga comprise the Junior Boys' Pushing Club, endlessly challenging one another to tests of strength and teaming up to chase the new generation of baby warthogs as long as the piglets run away!

Best friends Quanza and Narok keep close to one another, both still a little wary of humans, but happy to down their milk before retreating back into the midst of the herd while the biggest girl, Murera continues as an independent spirit doing her own thing, but making sure to be around at milk feeding times! She looks upon herself as sufficiently self reliant not to be attached to human Keepers, and too independent to be amongst an infant elephant!

The Ithumba Unit:-

The main rains having fallen short of normal at the end of last year, it was not long before we were faced with another very hot and very dry February with no let up expected in March. We were, and are, most deeply grateful to our donors who have provided the supplements needed for our Orphans to help them through challenging environmental times besides keeping our Ex Orphans who are now living wild, close during a period of poaching danger.

Seldom a day has passed this month that the Ex Orphans have not turned up at the Stockade compound to share the Keeper Dependent orphans' morning supplements and interact with them, sometimes arriving in Splinter groups. At the beginning of the month just 15 came, and Kinna was being hotly pursued by two wild suitors at the time. (Now aged 13 it is time she conceived her first wild-born baby whom we look forward to welcoming in 2 years time!) The following day only Tomboi and Challa came in the morning but the entire Ex Orphan herd was back in the evening, and as usual, accompanied by wild friends. If they do not turn up at the Stockade compound in the early mornings, they often come to the noon mudbath venue, or else link up with the Juniors out in the bush.

There is concern over Tano, who as moved to Ithumba recently, and who is obviously finding conditions too challenging, especially the heat factor. Not only does she feel the heat terribly but also seems to be having difficulty keeping pace with the others, reluctant also to wallow along with the others, but instead standing on the sidelines to splash water behind her ears in order to cool herself down. We are considering returning Tano to the Nursery where she can be under closer surveillance, and instead relocate her to the Kibwezi Forest along with Murera and Sonje - whose mobility has been compromised by one stiff hind leg.

Ex Nursery main Matriarch Mutara also a newcomer to Ithumba, has settled in wonderfully well, now sufficiently confident to lead the Juniors along with established girls such as Suguta, Tumaren, Chaimu, and Murka,. Shukuru and Kanjoro and Kilabasi have also adapted well. Makireti has had eyes on a wild 6 month old calf whose mother is a regular visitor to the Stockade water trough, and sometimes has to warn Makireti off becoming too attached to her baby! Kilaguni, Sabachi, Kibo,

Kandecha, Chemi Chemi, Kasigau and Ololoo continue their obsession with Pushing Strength Testing bouts, occasionally even challenging the bigger girls. Kilaguni used to be the dominant "Pusher" but Ololoo is becoming a force to be reckoned with, although Kilaguni can usually count on the support of his friend Kandecha and sometimes even Kibo when the chips are down!

Ex Orphan Lualeni, who has long acted as an Ex Orphan/Junior go-between, came alone to be part of the Junior group as they browsed out in the bush 5th. She spent all day with them, accompanying them to their milk and mudbath venue where she gave a good demonstration of wallowing skills, browsed with them all afternoon and escorted them back to the Stockades in the evening where they met up with the family of Makireti's favourite 6 month old wild calf. On the 7th it was Ex Orphan Naserian who brought Big Ex Orphan Boys Kora, Challa, Kamboyo, and Rapsu along with the one Tusk bull named "Pembe Moja" (meaning 1 tusk), who seems to have joined Kijana and Mgeni as attachments to Yatta's Ex Orphan herd. He was with them again when they came to the Stockades on the 9th and also on the 10th when Kijana and Mgeni were there as well. On the 12th he turned up alone to join the Juniors at their noon mudbath, as did 7 other wild bulls on the 16th and another 12 on the 19th. Amongst this contingent was "Half Trunk" (an adult bull who has lost half his trunk to a poacher's snare), who is another regular "drinker" at the stockade water trough. And on the 27th the entire Ex Orphan herd brought 9 wild friends to share the Orphans' mudbath hour, Mulika's little "Mwende" and Yatta's baby "Yetu" confidently walking under a host of huge bodies closely overseen by all their caring Ex Orphan Nannies.

The Big Bull named Mshale (who had a poisoned arrow removed some months ago by our Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit), was amongst the Ex Orphans and 14 other wild elephants when they visited the Stockades on the 21st and again on the 23rd when Half Trunk was with him. The Keepers noticed that Mshale had another poisoned arrow wound. He was amongst 15 other bulls who joined the Juniors one day at the Mudbath trough, and included amongst them this time was the Big Bull "Rafiki" - the first adult Bull to befriend the Orphans and show himself during daylight hours all those years ago. Rafiki is an enormous bodies Bull who towered over his friends. It was wonderful to see him again and know that he was alright. Kilabasi, Shukuru, Kanjoro and even Tano had sufficient confidence to share the water trough with him and his huge male companions which would have been a huge thrill for Junior Boy Kanjoro! (Young bulls develop hero worship for the Big Guys). The Trust's Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit was able to treat Mshale's wounds in early March. To read about this story in more details please click on this link: <http://www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org/updates/updates.asp?ID=499>

The 27th saw a wild herd coming for a drink at the Compound, amongst whom was the father of little "Mwende" and "Yetu" and at month end the Juniors had a particularly busy morning when all the Ex Orphans plus their wild friends along with hordes of wild Bulls visited the Stockades and Kandecha found a wild age-mate with whom to play while Makireti singled out her favourite wild baby but was warned off by the baby's Mother. Then at the noon mudbath the Juniors were joined by 20 wild elephants and upon their return in the evening, 14 other wild Bulls were there drinking at the Stockade trough. It has certainly been an action packed month for the Ithumba Keeper Dependent Juniors.

Voi Unit:-

As the dry season tightened its grip, the Voi Unit dependent Orphans had to again focus on sourcing sufficient browse to fill their bellies, restricted to the area around and up Mazinga Hill and within human walking distance of the Stockades in the Park proper. However, the Big Waterhole continued to provide the usual mudbath venue on most days and has been greatly enjoyed during this, the hottest time of the year in

Tsavo.

Emily's Ex Orphans have been in the vicinity throughout the month, turning up periodically at the Stockades wither to drink of share the Juniors' supplementary feed. On the 5th they were sited from afar at the Big Waterhole before heading towards the Voi river but were back at the Stockades on the 13th, when they mingled with the Keeper Dependent group, and drained the Stockade water trough, forcing the Keepers to begin refilling it. They were accompanied by a wild teenaged bull on this occasion. Laikipia positioned himself actually in the drinking trough with his trunk attached to the inlet during this process! Meanwhile, as usual, Lesanju was preoccupied trying to entice her group away from that of Emily, ever fearful of the abduction syndrome. As it was Kivuko and Layoni were tempted to follow Emily's unit when they headed off, but thought better of it and turned back much to Lesanjui's relief.

The Ex Orphans again joined the Juniors out in the bush two days later, when the young bull was absent. Thoma was first to spot and greet Shimba who was feeding apart from the others on the 15th. After the usual greetings, Shimba then led the Ex Orphan unit to where the Lesanju and the rest of the Juniors were feeding, and as they approached, Lesanju desperately again tried to steer her group away! She is a very proficient and caring Matriarch ably assisted by her best friend, Lempaute, and Big Girl Wasessa

The youngest, and most recent addition to Lesanju's family is little Panda, who has been poorly of late, but whose health has considerably improved since a change of milk and a course of injectible penicillin. However, this month Panda has chosen to again keep closer to home with her orphaned zebra friend, Lualeni. She was given a special treat by Lesanju on the 23rd when she was escorted into the electrically fenced KWS Headquarter compound through the Spring Gate to enjoy some un-touched browse before the Juniors headed out. The vegetation within the fenced compound is what the Juniors fall back on towards the end of the dry season when all other browse becomes scarce.

The Juniors had a happy time browsing near wild elephant herds on the 16th rumbling to them, until a running hyaena panicked the orphans who fled bellowing in all directions! This alarmed the Keepers as they watched from a vantage point further up the hill and who rushed to determine what had spooked their charges. They had a difficult time rounding them all up again, and the orphans remained extremely nervous for the rest of the day. Only when they were back in their Stockades for the night did they calm down! The next day as the orphans approached the mudbath a huge dust-cloud advertised the presence of the huge buffalo herd which regularly drinks at the Voi Safari Lodge waterhole and at the waterhole the Juniors were joined by the Ex Orphans. Kenia decided to get out in a hurry to avoid being "mounted" by Big Boys such as Morani and Lolokwe!

There was a special treat for the Keepers on the 18th when Ex Orphan TSAVO, another of Emily's Big Boys, and one who had been missing from the group for sometime, was with amongst them again when they came to the Stockades. It was wonderful to see him again, and know that he was fine. His great friend Burra is another of Emily's Big Boys who has not been seen for sometime, and we sincerely hope that he will soon show up again. Laikipia again went to stand in the water trough in order to cool his legs, while Edie scratched her body against the big Boulder beside the trough. When the Ex Orphans returned the next day, Irima was a vigilant "Nannie" to Emily's calf, "Eve" as she played near the trough.

As the Juniors were heading out to browse, Lempaute and Sinya saw off a tiny Klipspringer who happened to be perched on the rocky hillside but the orphan group browsed peacefully near some 200 buffalo and about 30 Impalas on the 20th, until Tassia and Lempaute mischievously ganged up to disrupt the peace by running through the impala herd, sending them leaping off in all directions! And on the 19th an

unfriendly wild Matrarch who had a small calf warned the orphans off coming too close, as did another unfriendly cow Elephant on the 21st, who had an older baby of about 6 months, with whom the orphans would have liked to play. The orphans themselves thought twice about approaching a very big wild Matriarch who had exceptionally long tusks the next day!

The only young member of Lesanju's unit who can take liberties with Wasessa is Emsaya, who has replaced Tassia as the favourite "baby". All the others, especially Junior boys such as Mzima, Taveta, Tassia, Dabassa, Layoni and Rombo avoid getting on the wrong side of Big Girl Wasessa, especially when she is preoccupied at the supplementary feeding pile!

The next rains are due in April/May and we all pray that this time round they will be good and provide sufficient natural browse for all Tsavo's Elephants, including the Orphans and Ex Orphans hand-reared by the Trust.

Please find a link to the The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust's February Keeper's Diary should you want to keep abreast with your fostered elephant Turkwel

<http://www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org/asp/monthly.asp?o=Turkwel&month=Feb>

Also you will find attached a water colour painted by Angela Sheldrick for you to print off and keep.

We thank you for your valued support.

If you wish to renew or add an additional donation to your fostering of (Turkwel), please use this link below:

<https://www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org/asp/foster.asp?xgin=hjhfcuijgfjid>

Most Sincerely,

Dr. Dame Daphne Sheldrick D.B.E.

<http://www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org>