NEW SCOUTS JOIN GZT

Andrew Letura, GZT Research Assistant, relates this year’s Grevy’s Zebra Scout recruitment

The Grevy’s Zebra Trust is thrilled to welcome three new Grevy’s Zebra Scouts to our team! In July we employed Salancho Lenawualbene and Nosuruia Lentawuo from Meibae Community Conservancy, and Dominic Lekinait from Kalama Community Wildlife Conservancy. All Grevy’s Zebra Scouts are in fact recruited by the community in meetings facilitated by the Trust. This creates greater community ownership and a sense of communal responsibility for Scout performance.

Although the majority of our Scouts are women, one story we’d like to share with you is the recruitment of Dominic Lekinait. GZT met with the community of Laresoro in Kalama Conservancy in July and it was through this meeting that the community selected Dominic to become a Grevy’s Zebra Scout because he is known to be disciplined, hardworking and respectful. Dominic is also from a very underprivileged family; he has no parents and his uncle and other close relatives raised him. It is due to the difficulties that Dominic faced at a young age as well as his invaluable character traits that his community selected him; their aim is to give him an independent livelihood. From the Trust’s point of view, we were able to achieve one of our goals, which is to empower bright and hardworking, responsible community members to better their lives through conservation.

After his selection, Dominic received encouragement and guidance from men and women elders. His dream is to deliver well covered patrols and accurate data collection. Dominic loves his job and has easily picked up the skills passed to him through training. We look forward to working with this amazing young man for many years to come!
GZT AND ITS AZA PARTNERS WIN CONSERVATION AWARD

27 AZA institutions and GZT were awarded Top Honors for the 2012 AZA International Conservation Award

In acknowledgement of a remarkable conservation partnership and in celebration of the collaborative Grevy’s zebra conservation successes in recent years, 27 AZA institutions and the Grevy’s Zebra Trust were awarded Top Honors for the 2012 AZA International Conservation Award on 13 September 2012 at the AZA Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona.

These institutions included: Brevard Zoo, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Chicago Zoological Society, Cleveland Zoo, Dallas Zoo, Denver Zoo, Detroit Zoo, Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund & Rapid Relief Fund, Fresno Chaffee Zoo, Jackson Zoo, Jacksonville Zoo, Living Desert, Los Angeles Zoo, Oklahoma City Zoo, Oregon Zoo, Phoenix Zoo, Reid Park Zoo (Zoo Teens Program), Riverbanks Zoo, Sacramento Zoo, Safari West, Saint Louis Zoo, San Diego Global, Sea World & Busch Gardens, Sedgwick County Zoo, Toronto Zoo, Utah’s Hogle Zoo, and White Oak Conservation Center.

Without this institutional support, the ongoing Grevy’s zebra conservation programs in Kenya and Ethiopia simply would not be possible. By collaborating together, we are able to accomplish so much more for Grevy’s zebra than any one of our institutions could accomplish alone, and this collective partnership is deeply appreciated.

This award demonstrates the commitment of AZA institutions to in-situ conservation. GZT’s positive experience of AZA support was highlighted during the Conservation Innovation Forum “Are Zoos Doing Enough?” convened by the Wildlife Conservation Network in October.

WILD EQUID CONFERENCE
Peter Lalampaa, GZT Senior Manager, reports

Thanks to a travel scholarship from the International Wildlife Equid Conference (IWEC) I was able to represent GZT at the IWEC in Vienna, Austria in September. I presented my MSc research on water use by Grevy’s zebra as well as a poster featuring GZT’s habitat restoration work. The conference was invaluable because our knowledge is limited to our own backyard and we rarely have access to what goes on around the world. Although we came from six different continents the issues of habitat loss and fragmentation were common and repeatedly featured. The return of the Przewalski’s horse to the wild was greatly celebrated by the participants and gives hope to field conservationists that although species are declining in the wild, all is not lost despite the numerous challenges.

Special thanks go to Martha Fischer of the Saint Louis Zoo and Chair of the GZT Board of Trustees, who has championed Grevy’s zebra conservation efforts among AZA partners over the last decade. She has dedicated her time to coordinating partner support and keeping everyone updated on GZT’s work.
AMBASSADORS GRADUATE

Eight Grevy’s Zebra Ambassadors graduate from the KWS Manyani Law Enforcement Academy - Julius Lekenit, El Barta Regional Coordinator, tells us more

Thanks to support from the Saint Louis Zoo Field Conservation Program, just over half the team of Grevy’s Zebra Ambassadors who operate in El Barta, attended a three-month training course at the Kenya Wildlife Service’s (KWS) prestigious Law Enforcement Academy!

This was a major milestone for the Ambassador Program which employs 14 people from two ethnic groups as Ambassadors for conservation. The main duty of the Ambassadors is to protect and monitor Grevy’s zebra populations and promote local conservation awareness. The eight Ambassadors successfully graduated on 12 October 2012. The course is multi-faceted focusing on fitness, drills, conservation and ecology, wildlife-based enterprise, wildlife law, bushcraft, patrols, and various other topics. We asked a few of them about their experience:

How will you use what you learnt in Manyani to conserve Grevy’s zebra and other wildlife in El Barta?

“I will continue conducting conservation awareness campaigns on Grevy’s zebra and other wildlife. I will work hard to strengthen participatory community wildlife conservation and also work as a team since teamwork is strength.’

– Moses Lenaigoromurua

Has your training changed the way you think about wildlife conservation?

‘I now appreciate the importance of every single wildlife species because man entirely depends on biodiversity for his existence from food, clothing and shoes, to shelter.’

– Moses Lenaigoromurua

When you go back to El Barta, what will you say in your next community meeting?

‘I will impart knowledge on wildlife education and the importance of conserving our wildlife. Our wildlife is our river of life; if we finish the wildlife it would be like the river we fetch water from drying up and no more water hence no more life.’

– Lmantros Lenangetai

How will this training help you in handling anti-poaching cases?

‘I will initiate peace talks with warriors of both sides (Samburu & Turkana) urging them to live together peacefully so as to promote wildlife conservation.’

– Micho Nakadon

How will this training add value to your role as an Ambassador?

‘I am now more knowledgeable and can now use a GPS better, I know how to carry out bush patrols more effectively. Also I have first aid knowledge and know how to handle an injured colleague in the bush.’

– Mulamba Lentimalei

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Kenya Wildlife Service for subsidizing the cost of having community scouts enrolled in the Academy. It is an invaluable contribution to community-based conservation and we look forward to the rest of our team being trained in 2013!
GZT BECOMES WCN’S NEWEST PARTNER

Belinda Mackey, GZT Executive Director, reports on this exciting development for the Trust

The Grevy’s Zebra Trust has had the privilege of attending the amazing Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) Expo as a guest speaker from 2009 to 2011. This year, WCN and GZT entered into an official three-year partnership which focuses on building GZT’s organizational capacity. We are thrilled to join the WCN family and be part of an amazing network of talented conservationists from around the world!

WCN has a truly unique approach to supporting conservation efforts. It offers access to expert support services such as marketing and conservation economics that conservationists would not otherwise have access to; it connects conservationists to individuals and organisations that want to invest in entrepreneurial conservation; it provides administrative support through the expert WCN team; and it profiles conservation efforts at the international Wildlife Conservation Expo Day where hundreds of people who are passionate about wildlife congregate to hear the latest from WCN partner conservationists, exchange knowledge and contacts and shop for eco-merchandise.

Over the next few years, WCN and GZT will be working together to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for the Trust as well as focusing on the establishment of the GZT headquarters and strengthening our capacity in data management, marketing and conflict transformation.

Our sincere thanks go to the WCN Board and staff for the amazing support they have given us since 2009 - Ashe Oleng!

GREVY’S ZEBRA BURSARY FUN WEEKEND

Lilian Seko, GZT Accountant, shares the experience

The Grevy’s Zebra Bursary Program aims to build local capacity for marginalized areas and to foster positive attitudes towards Grevy’s zebra conservation. Our students had their fun weekend this year at Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. The students shared what the bursary support has meant for them and learned more from the GZT team on conservation in theory and practice. The students were asked what they intend to pursue as their career and more than half of them were interested in environmental studies because it clearly emerged that we need the environment to sustain us in life; they feel the need to be great ambassadors of conservation to make the world a better place. Thanks to Lewa for making this weekend possible!

Through WCN we have met many remarkable people including fellow conservationists, donors and Expo-goers and we thank them all for their support and encouragement of our conservation efforts to save Grevy’s zebra. We look forward to sharing more stories in the years to come with our new friends.
DRY SEASON WATER ACCESS

By Joseph Kathiwa, GZT Field Director

With a growing human population and rapid infrastructural development in northern Kenya, water resources are experiencing increasing stress. Impeded access to water has been identified as a major threat to the survival of Grevy’s zebra.

GZT addresses this challenge by implementing dry season water management each year. In previous years, Grevy’s Zebra Scouts and Ambassadors have ensured that water points remain accessible by removing thorn barriers and digging out shallow approaches to wells. Last year, 36 water points, the majority wells, were proactively managed for Grevy’s zebra and other wildlife between June and October 2011. Management was done by Conservancy and Grevy’s Zebra Scouts in Westgate, Melako, Kalama and Meibae. In El Barta, the Grevy’s Zebra Ambassadors together with local community members managed wells and troughs.

This year, thanks to support from the US Fish & Wildlife Service’s Wildlife Without Borders - Critically Endangered Animals Conservation Fund, the Trust was able to make dedicated troughs for Grevy’s zebra. The aim was to monitor water levels and once they dropped to a point where water became inaccessible, the troughs would be filled by community members at the end of each day for nocturnal use by wildlife. During the day the community is free to use them for their livestock.

The field team, joined by local herders who also owned the wells and Princeton intern Max Silver, was able to assess water availability for Grevy’s zebra at 11 water points in Wamba and 10 water points in Laisamis. Water points were selected based on local information from the Grevy’s Zebra Scouts and community members. Grevy’s zebra water point use was then verified by sweeping a 3 metre radius around each water point in the evening and checking the swept area in the morning for tracks. The results showed that there was more water available in the Wamba region thanks to mid-August showers. Only two of the water points assessed required troughs to be assigned; at all the other points water was accessible for both Grevy’s zebra and other wildlife species. The GZT team held meetings with local community members and the well owners and trained them on how to monitor their respective water sources.

In the Wamba region we found there was inadequate awareness on the value of managing water for wildlife especially among warriors.

In Laisamis where water points are being used 24 hours a day, we agreed with the community that they would place troughs along Grevy’s zebra corridors to water. The need for this was abated by the arrival of the short rains; however the foundation is now in place for us to continue this approach in the next dry season.

GZT will focus future efforts on engaging community members on the importance of allowing Grevy’s zebra and other wildlife to have access to water, which should be an on-going activity during the dry season. We will be working with local partners on this to ensure a unified approach to water management.
Project Update by Andrew Letura, GZT Research Assistant

Since Hans and Ute Klingel first pioneered a system of using Grevy’s zebra stripes to identify individuals, efforts have been applied to make it more efficient. In 2008, Marwell Wildlife supported the development of stripe pattern recognition software which is now being used across large parts of Grevy’s zebra range in Kenya by members of the Grevy’s Zebra Technical Committee.

A year ago, GZT started a study of the Grevy’s zebra population that moves across Kalama, Meibae and Westgate Community Conservancies. I lead this project using my motorbike to reach Grevy’s zebra and photograph their stripe patterns. I also record information about the individual photographed. Data is then transferred to an excel spreadsheet which is forwarded together with the associated photographs to the central database housed at Mpala Research Centre.

NORTH KENYA’S KILLER HIGHWAY

We apologise for the disturbing image however this is the grim reality of what happens when development is done without considering wildlife needs. As part of much-needed infrastructure for the area, a new tarmac road was recently constructed as part of the Kenya-Ethiopia highway development. The road borders wildlife-rich areas including three national wildlife reserves and Kalama Conservancy. Where wildlife corridors cross the highway there is high mortality. The road has claimed 8 Grevy’s zebra lives in the last 4 months, as well as elephants, lions and many other wildlife species. A group of concerned stakeholders recently met to develop an action plan of how to address the issue and we will keep you updated on the outcomes.

The use of stripe-identification is important for monitoring the life cycle of an individual (from foal to adulthood), its distribution, and for overall population estimates. The Trust has been focusing its efforts in data collection and data entry, and now analyses of the data are underway. Stay in touch to hear about these exciting results! Thank you!

www.grevyszebratrust.org  email: conservation@grevyszebratrust.org
A VISIT TO ZIMBABWE

There is a Samburu saying “an exposed eye is more clever”; GZT facilitated a trip to Zimbabwe for a first-hand experience of the results that can be achieved when holistic planned grazing is practiced in the long-term.

Napusi Lekuye, a Samburu warrior from Meibae Community Conservancy, was invited on the trip to represent his peers. Since this trip, Napusi has been instrumental in convincing his fellow warriors and elders of the importance of well managed grazing.

It was Napusi’s first time to Nairobi, let alone Zimbabwe! After the trip we interviewed him to find out how he found the experience.

What did you think about the aeroplane ride to get to Zimbabwe?
I was so excited to have flown in the air, I was not expecting it. I couldn’t have imagined or dreamed that one day I would fly in a plane.

What was the most striking difference between Zimbabwe and Kenya?
The livestock is bigger and more healthy compared to ours and I was surprised by the amount of grass available.

What did you learn in Zimbabwe?
I learnt that everything is possible with unity. And I learnt the importance of using livestock put together in a bunch.

How will you use what you learnt to help your community?
I will teach my age mates to understand the importance of land management and grass.

What was Dimbangombe Ranch like?
I was surprised by Dimbangombe and that they are growing grass by using livestock and not planting it.

When you first saw Victoria Falls what did you think?
I thought this must be the place where God lives.

How do you think your visit to Zimbabwe will help Grevy’s zebra?
It will help Grevy’s zebra because by having grass all over there will not be more Grevy’s zebra dying. I think the population of Grevy’s zebra will increase and there will be no migration of Grevy’s zebra to dangerous zones.

Describe your experience riding Dojiwa the elephant.
I was surprised to see a wild and serious animal being with people and being able to transport people. I was also amazed that a wild animal can be communicated with by people.

What do you think is the warriors’ role in grazing management?
I urge more awareness and trainings to be done with warriors in order to change their minds about land being taken away. I believe the warriors should be put in the lead on grazing planning.
ASANTE

Asante means thank you in Kiswahili.

We greatly appreciate the generous support of all our donors. Please click here for a full listing.

HOW TO HELP

You can help us in making a difference to the future of Grevy’s zebra in the following ways:

1. Financial support to our conservation, research and education programs
2. Spread the word and raise local and global awareness about Grevy’s zebra
3. Volunteer - we are looking for a dedicated volunteer to help us produce and improve our marketing materials
4. Earn your stripes: send us your Grevy’s zebra photos for the national stripe-ID database by capturing the right-hand side of the animal

If you are interested in any of the above opportunities please email us at conservation@grevyszebratrust.org.

Or donate directly through our website.

GZT SCHOOL OUTREACH

Glove puppet shows make novel conservation classes!

As Andrew and three Grevy’s Zebra Scouts - Chereb, Irene and Rosemary - arrive at Nkutuk Elmugate school, there is much anticipation among the students. Little did they expect a glove puppet performance by the three Scouts! The entertainment that the children got from the show was evident from the excited smiles and laughter as the puppet drama played out - in short, a story about warriors bringing their livestock to water and shooing away a Grevy’s zebra mother who desperately needs to drink. A Grevy’s Zebra Scout on patrol arrives at the scene and convinces the warrior to give wildlife time to drink as well. This was followed by a conservation discussion on how humans and wildlife co-exist.

Photo credits: Martin Bucher, Martha Fischer, Grevy’s Zebra Trust, and Marty Varon (Wildlife Conservation Network)

LAIKIPIA-SAMBURU AERIAL CENSUS

The Grevy’s zebra and elephant census for the Samburu-Laikipia ecosystem and parts of Marsabit led by KWS and its partners was conducted from 26-30 November with 14 aircraft and 65 personnel (pilots, observers, GIS technicians, rangers, etc.). GZT’s Field Director Joseph Kathiwa was an observer and thanks to the Saint Louis Zoo Field Conservation Program we were able to contribute funding to this important survey. The survey results are currently being reviewed by members of the Grevy’s Zebra Technical Committee and data from other sources is being compiled to produce an updated quantitative estimate on Grevy’s zebra numbers for Kenya.

DATES TO NOTE FOR 2013
FIRST QUARTER

January 28-29: Grevy’s Zebra Scout Program Workshop
February 22-28: Establishment of the community-led Conservation Council in El Barta
April 17-18: Grevy’s Zebra Ambassador Program Workshop