



# DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A GREVY'S ZEBRA SCOUT?

By Peter Lalampaa

Ngeeti Lempate has devoted her life to Grevy's zebra conservation for the past 12 years. Within her community she is known as "Mama Grevy". In addition to the traditional role of a Samburu woman, which includes household chores and being a mother, she works to save the endangered stripes of the Grevy's zebra. When asked why she does this, she said "I am a widow. I fetch firewood for cooking in my household. I find water for my livestock both small stock and cattle when they are at home. I find water for my children to drink and cook for them too. But besides all this commitment, I found something fulfilling in my heart in saving this magnificent species, which are a part of my heritage and that God created for me."



The work is very tough, however Mama Grevy is hardworking; read about a day in her life:

"As a woman, I wake up very early around 5:00am to prepare my calabash for milking and that is when I prepare food for those going out to herd. Then, I milk the cows. About this time the children start waking and seek all my attention. After eating, my son takes the cattle out for grazing and my daughter herds out the small stock. Before she goes, I give her instructions on where to take the small stock to graze. Before I leave to search for the Grevy's zebra, one of my neighbours comes over to watch my house, take care of the young goats and my young children who remain at home. The first data I record is my GPS location and time before I leave my home on a patrol data sheet. Then I walk for several kilometres in search of Grevy's zebra. Every thirty minutes I again record my GPS location and time. When I encounter Grevy's zebra, I am very excited! I record information about the sighting on data sheets. This is a regular day for me when I go on patrols."

Mama Grevy is key to the conservation of Grevy's zebra in her area. She said, "I love my job because it has changed my life as a widow, I have educated my kids because of this job!"

Mama Grevy is just one example of many who have dedicated their lives to saving the Grevy's zebra. To secure this species, community involvement and ownership is paramount. ♦

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The Grevy's Zebra Trust (GZT) is a Kenyan not-for-profit organisation, founded in 2007.

Our mission is to conserve the endangered Grevy's zebra and its fragile habitat in partnership with communities.

We work in Samburu, Marsabit and Isiolo Counties in Northern Kenya covering an area of over 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>.



## WATER: A LIMITED, CRITICAL RESOURCE IN LAISAMIS

By Joel Loongo'nyo and Peter Lalampaa

**“Water is life”.** This statement means a thousand words in many parts of the world where this critical resource is limited. It's common for us as human beings to take water for granted, especially when we have a running water tap! Rationing water needs for different users poses a great challenge when the needs compete against each other.

The Laisamis River is not an exception, being the only permanent water source in the area. The river, which is seasonal but has permanent pools and wells, is most important during very dry times. Livestock, wildlife and urban use put extreme pressure on Laisamis River. According to discussions with the local residents, the amount of water is decreasing drastically. Through GZT's 2013 camera trap study on the three main water sources in the region, Laisamis River, Lchoro lugga, and Kamotonyi

lugga, Laisamis River is the most important water source for a large number of Grevy's zebra, livestock and people.

Grevy's zebra are forced to drink during the night between 1:00 and 4:00 am. This is for two reasons: (1)



livestock are present at the water points most of the time during the day and at sometimes at night; and (2) Grevy's zebra travel very long distances between grazing fields at the Sengererua and Rusarus plateaus

and the Laisamis River. In addition, camels tend to arrive at 4:00am and displace Grevy's zebra away from the water point. Due to the large camel herds, Grevy's zebra are frequently sighted stranded around the water point during the day, and they remain very thirsty waiting to access the water.

Due to the heavy competition around Laisamis River, GZT brainstormed ways to balance water use needs amongst all users and to increase access for Grevy's zebra. The need to establish a Water Resource Users Association (WRUA) was highlighted as the most important. A trained WRUA would create communal ownership of the Laisamis River and highlight the need for proper management.

In partnership with Melako Community Conservancy (MCC) and Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT),

we embarked on a journey to restore structure to the use of Laisamis River. The WRUA is also able to address other significant threats to Laisamis River, including sand harvesting for construction needs and pollution from nearby urban expansion.

In February, a stakeholders' forum was conducted in Laisamis town led by GZT, NRT and MCC. The primary objective of the forum was to address the challenges facing Laisamis River and develop a way forward. The outcome of the meeting was to form a WRUA for implementation of a long-term plan for the Laisamis River which includes the construction of sand dams along the river as the first step to restore the ecosystem.

After the meeting, GZT and NRT facilitated community meetings in five areas around Laisamis River. The goal was to raise awareness on the challenges facing Laisamis River and on the WRUA formation by the community. 260 people participated in the meetings. Community

members were heartily touched by the goal of restoring Laisamis River to its natural form. The WRUA committee was selected from each area and included other stakeholders, such as sand loaders, to represent their group's interest for sustainable use of the resource. NRT is currently in the process of training the committee and formalizing the registration of the WRUA through the government arm of the Water Resource Management Authority.

With the WRUA in place, we are optimistic that management of the

Laisamis River will take a positive direction. The involvement of the community in the process is very critical for sustainable solutions to be reached. GZT is looking forward to working closely with the new members of the WRUA to ensure that both community and wildlife voices are heard. Our next big project there is to construct a sand dam for Grevy's zebra and other wildlife use. We hereby take the opportunity to applaud the new WRUA and look forward to a bright future! ♦



## NEW WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

By Lilian Seko



In collaboration with World Women Work and The Village Trust, we are rolling out a new women's program. The goal is to empower women through the production and marketing of reusable sanitary pads. Rose Bagajo is a new member of the GZT team and is managing the program, which is primarily targeted at our Grevy's Zebra Scout ladies and their peers. In April, 29 women and 10 men participated in a training workshop to make the sanitary pads and openly discuss problems facing women.

The program will enable girls and women to improve their personal

hygiene and health, as well as providing school-going girls with the confidence to continue classes during their menstrual cycle. In addition, the sale of sanitary pads will provide alternative income for women in the community.

Successful Grevy's zebra conservation is inextricably tied to the livelihoods of the people living with the zebras. The foundation of the Trust's work started with the women scouts; by investing in improving their livelihoods and their community we strengthen their intrinsic connection to the Grevy's zebra. ♦

# OUR NEW COMMUNITY OUTREACH STRATEGY

By Julius Lekenit

GZT recently changed its approach on community conservation outreach in order to engage an equal number of community members from each social group. The goal of these workshops is to not only to raise awareness on Grevy's zebra ecology and conservation, but also to empower the community to manage its own natural resources. This is done through the establishment of a Core Group made up of women, warriors and elders. The Core Group develops a Community Action Plan, focused on solving problems that emerge during the workshops such as land degradation.



Thanks to support from the Disney Conservation Fund and the Oklahoma City Zoo, we have conducted six community workshops reaching more than 800 people. Although held in different areas, the opportunities, challenges and lessons have been very similar.

The workshop participants have grasped the benefits of conservation both culturally and economically. One elder stated "In the past, in the Samburu culture, Grevy's zebra dung was used to light fire. They also lead us to where pasture and water is. Wildlife herbivores inform the herders by alerting them to approaching predators. Also, conservancies have been created and are employing hundreds of people and giving revenue to the county government." Although the conservancy model has been accepted and appreciated, wildlife ownership and communal management is still low in certain social groups. Here are two important observations from the workshops.

- Changes in Samburu culture are negatively impacting the community relationship with the environment and wildlife. The traditional institutions that used to govern are becoming eroded. The most significant change is the management of resources shifting from a communal viewpoint, to a more individualistic one.

- Involving warriors in wildlife conservation and land management is key in moving forward. One warrior commented, "Do not blame us when we misunderstand issues, because in the past we have been called to conflict meetings only. So now that we are called for educative forums to make decisions, we appreciate!"

In response, community members called upon leaders to involve the warriors in meetings and to re-establish the council of elders, the traditional institution to guide the community. GZT is now following up with each Core Group to support them in implementing their Community Action Plan. ♦



## 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. **DONATE HERE** through the Wildlife Conservation Network ([www.wildnet.org](http://www.wildnet.org))
2. Spread the word and raise local and global awareness about Grevy's zebra
3. Earn your stripes! Send us your Grevy's zebra photos for the national stripe-ID database by capturing the right-hand side of the zebra

If you are interested in any of the above opportunities please email us at [conservation@grevyszebratrust.org](mailto:conservation@grevyszebratrust.org)

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