REMEMBERING PAULINE

The Grevy’s Zebra Trust team pays tribute to an exceptional woman

It is with sad tears that we remember a fellow team member and a conservation hero. Pauline Siemit Lenene was our friend and colleague, who had worked as a Grevy’s Zebra Scout since 2005, a local community program which monitors Grevy’s zebra and raises local awareness. Tragically, Pauline passed away on 31st May 2013 from kidney failure after a long battle with the illness.

A single mother of four, we were always amazed by the dedication, determination and passion that drove her, humble and ever-smiling, to balance her work of patrolling for Grevy’s zebra on foot, creating awareness to her local community, and fulfilling her traditional role as a Samburu woman.

Pauline was extremely friendly and supportive to the rest of the team and always willing to share jokes with her GZT family. She dedicated her life to Grevy’s zebra conservation: she was one of those unsung conservation heroines, who go unnoticed to the public eye, yet their actions locally, contribute immensely towards realizing the dreams of saving an endangered species from extinction.

Even though Pauline tiptoed into our conservation world quietly with her humble, unassuming manner, and stayed only a moment, the imprints of her footsteps will forever remain in our conservation work.

NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH FONDATION SEGRÉ

The Grevy’s Zebra Trust is thrilled to announce a new partnership with Fondation Segré!

Founded by Claudio Segré, Fondation Segré supports nature conservation and education. The foundation is supporting our Grevy’s Zebra Ambassador Program in El Barta, our region-wide dry season water management and monitoring, and our mud rescue team in Laisamis.

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Girl Power!
Ann Lekararo shines at Manyani
Tracking an injured Grevy’s zebra
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HOW COMMUNAL COOPERATION CAN BUILD MOUNTAINS

By Peter Lalampaa

Communal living is common practice among many species from large terrestrial mammals such as the African wild dog to the smallest ants that build huge termite mounds. They are socially specialized in division of labour so they accomplish their tasks with ease. The pastoral community is equally social where people live a communal life to adapt to ecological, economic and social adversity. One such communal task was the “Harambee” to clear Pauline’s hospital bills. Harambee is a Swahili word meaning communal gathering that is called to make financial and material contributions towards addressing a certain problem.

Unlike the conventional fundraiser where dinners, lunches and conferences are used to raise money, the harambee is simply organised by a team selected from within the community. The organizing committee for Pauline’s harambee was tasked with raising Kshs 1.5 million (USD $17,650). GZT and partner conservancies were catalytic in starting the process and just like ants, the team quickly assembled the program and strategies to raise the funds. They identified all local institutions and individuals with potential to contribute towards the fund or serve as a Guest of Honour. Invitation cards were printed and distributed within three days.

On 8 June 2013 we all woke up with anticipation for the day ahead. We are thankful for the attendance of our locally-based guests of honour including the Ewaso Ward and El Barta County representatives, lodge managers and conservation partners. In total we raised Kshs 1.1 million (USD $13,000) and our sincere gratitude goes to all those who made this day successful! We also received donations from overseas friends for which we say Ashe Oleng!

Bit by bit, the “termite mound” was raised up! At the end of the harambee the Archer’s Post community showed its mighty heart by contributing to a cause it believes in. GZT is committed to raising the balance through several other initiatives. If you would like to honour Pauline with a contribution, please donate here through Wildlife Conservation Network

GREVY’S ZEBRA JOINT PATROL TEAM

Joel Loongo’nyo and Paulo Leroux report

From 22-25 May 2013 GZT undertook a joint patrol in Laisamis in partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Service and Melako Community Conservancy. The patrol was successful with 90 Grevy’s seen in six different herds during the second day. Fourteen foals of 3-6 months and 4 juveniles were observed. The two other species seen were Grant’s gazelle and gerenuk with respectively 196 and 96 animals counted. Fifteen Beisa oryx and a good number Somali ostriches were also spotted. While there was an abundance of animals in some areas, there was one vast area we patrolled that despite having plenty of pasture was devoid of wildlife. Further investigation needs to be done to find out what is preventing wildlife from occupying this area as the survey team identified it as an area of high conservation potential.
HONOURING THREE CONSERVATION HEROES!

The Grevy’s Zebra Trust is extremely proud to showcase the achievements of three remarkable people from Samburu who each won prestigious conservation awards in 2013.

In May 2013, Daniel Letoiye, Senior Research Officer for the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) won the Whitley Award for his conservation work in Westgate Community Conservancy.

GZT was proud to recommend him for this award. We have worked closely with Daniel since 2007 to pioneer holistic planned grazing as a tool for restoring degraded habitat, which is one of the critical threats facing Grevy’s zebra. With the proceeds from his award, Daniel will establish a learning centre in Westgate that will be used to transfer knowledge on rangeland rehabilitation and wildlife conservation to communities, students and other stakeholders.

In August 2013, our very own Senior Manager, Peter Lalampaa, was recognised as one of the 14 Disney Conservation Heroes selected by the Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund!

Peter was nominated by the Saint Louis Zoo and the Grevy’s Zebra Trust for his role in community-based conservation of Grevy’s zebra and its habitat. Peter’s honest, committed and hardworking approach are some of the admirable traits which have built trust and dedication from communities, co-workers, and partners and supporters of GZT.

This prestigious prize is testament to Peter’s incredible achievements for Grevy’s zebra conservation.

In September 2013, Tom Lalampaa, NRT’s Chief Programs Officer, and GZT Trustee, won the Tusk Award for Conservation in Africa which recognised his role in making NRT the successful community conservation model that is now known across Africa.

Tom has a remarkable ability to constructively engage people from all walks of life. Through his enthusiasm and easy going demeanour he gains their trust and support. Wildlife conservation and improving the livelihoods of rural communities go hand in hand in Northern Kenya - under Tom’s leadership this integrated approach has successfully scaled up across the region.

A NEW DRIVER AND CAR FOR GZT!

GZT has for the past 5 years been solely reliant on its Toyota Land Cruiser. This trusty friend gets us safely across the more challenging terrain of our programs further north in El Barta and Laisamis. It also acts like a mobile camp carrying all our camping gear for our various field trips. To increase the coverage of our research and monitoring work further south, GZT wanted to purchase a new, smaller car.

Thanks to support from the Handsel Foundation and Zynga.org through the Wildlife Conservation Network, we were able to purchase a Suzuki Maruti. Our team is now joined by Ropi Lekwale as the Maruti’s driver. We are thrilled to have this fantastic new man and machine team to make our operations even more effective!
The Grevy’s Zebra Bursary Program aims is to build local capacity for marginalized areas and to foster positive attitudes towards Grevy’s zebra conservation through education awareness where bursary opportunities can be directly linked back to protecting the species and its habitat. This aim has been made possible by World Women Work supporting scholarships for five girl students over four years to attend secondary school.

In recognition of the amazing conservation work done by GZT’s women scouts, and to further empower their role as change agents within their communities, these scholarships were offered to girls who were relatives or community members close to the women. The support from World Women Work will enable the Trust to build the profile of education for girls in Samburu and build the capacity of these young women in the community.

In the words of Isabel Allende “Giving women education, work, the ability to control their own income, inherit and own property, benefits society. If a woman is empowered, her children and her family will be better off. If families prosper, the village prospers, and eventually so does the whole country”.

WCN SPRING FUNDRAISER
This year, the Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) put on a Spring Fundraiser for GZT at the beautiful home of Susan McConnell and Richard Scheller who generously opened their doors to host the event. As always, the slick operations of the WCN volunteer team were impressive, from food to tech support and logistics. Artist Linda Dupuis-Rosen very generously donated an incredible portrait painting of a Grevy’s zebra based on a photograph by talented wildlife photographer Suzi Eszterhas. Prints of this painting will be available to buy at the WCN Expo on Saturday 12 October 2013. GZT is extremely grateful to Susan and Richard, to the WCN staff and volunteers who dedicated their weekend to the event, and to everyone who attended for their amazing support. Ashe oleng!
It was the early morning of 22nd June 2013, when a team of us including Grevy’s Zebra Warriors and Scouts set off in search of an injured Grevy’s zebra. The report came from a warrior who told us that the Grevy’s zebra was hurt on the fetlock of its right front leg. He reported that he could even touch its huge ears and it would not run away. This was very worrying as it meant the animal must be in a very serious condition for it to tolerate human touch. The warrior was unable to show us its exact location because he was on his way to participate in the Rendille traditional ritual called “sorio” which is an equivalent of the Jewish Passover. So we set off in search of the Grevy’s zebra based on his description of the area and also asked the Kenya Wildlife Service intelligence unit to join us which they immediately did.

Due to the lack of roads in this region, we undertook most of our search on foot. On climbing several plateaus and using them as vantage points for surveying the area, we eventually spotted a lone male grazing on the Sengererwa plateau. Two of our Grevy’s Zebra Warriors went to get a closer look to check whether that was the individual we were looking for. In the meantime a herd of 13 Grevy’s zebra emerged from below the pile of larva rock which we were using as our lookout. The herd stared up at us wondering who the unexpected visitors were in this arid, unoccupied landscape.

We watched as the two warriors approached the male Grevy’s zebra. It started walking away with a slight limp and its tracks showed that yes indeed it was not putting all its weight on its right front leg. We realised that the warrior had exaggerated its condition, flagging to us that we still have a lot of awareness work to do among the warriors in this part of the region! After critical assessment we all reached the conclusion that this particular case did not warrant veterinary intervention. The Grevy’s zebra was still grazing, its body condition was good and it was able to walk. We suspected that the injured male must have got into a serious fight with another leading to this injury. We arranged for two of our Grevy’s Zebra Warriors to follow up over the next few weeks and check its condition.

We then refocused our attention to collect data on the herd that was below us. After that we climbed down off the plateau and went to look for a convenient place to make some hot Kenyan Ketepa tea to refresh ourselves after the long walk. We all converged at the “filling point” just like the tributaries of a river meandering through the valleys and hills and converging at its end point where the energy of flow comes to a halt.

It was a happy ending at last and a chance for catching up with old friends separated by conservation duties and responsibilities. How satisfying and gratifying it was to lift the soul from an expected tragic situation to a happy chatting moment!
AN OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE BY ANN LEKARARO

Julius Lekenit, El Barta Regional Coordinator reports

Ann Kathekwa Lekararo was brought up in Machakos town to the south of Nairobi and married Mr Lekararo from the El Barta region. Due to her excellent public relations Ann assimilated into the local community learning the language and culture of the Samburu people.

It was here that she was recruited as GZT’s Senior Radio Operator at the Masikita radio base. Thanks to support from the Saint Louis Zoo, in February 2013, Ann was among a group of seven Grevy’s Zebra Ambassadors who attended the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Law Enforcement Academy in Manyani for three months of training. The only woman trainee, Ann’s performance was outstanding - she ranked 7th out of 68 in the class! The KWS director, William Kiprono publicly applauded Ann for her brilliant performance in a large group of strong men!

Ann found the course exciting and reported that it was a great experience for her. She learnt more about radio communication protocols including radio communication codes and message transmission. Upon graduating, Ann reflected: “I have learnt a lot; I have learnt the difference between the teeth of a female and male elephant, the colour of a rhino and the tour to Malindi was fantastic. I have never seen or even heard of a coral reef and the Giriama culture was also amazing. I think I walked the world in the three months at Manyani!”

STUDENT INTERNSHIP

This year Grevy’s Zebra Trust is lucky to host Masters student Paulo Leroux as a volunteer intern from the University of Perpignan in France. Paulo has contributed significantly to our research and monitoring by producing GIS maps, writing reports, training, and carrying out a critical camera-trap study on the Grevy’s zebra in Laisamis which is still on-going. Paulo’s presence is an asset to the Trust and he brings a lot of enthusiasm and energy to the work!
Traditional Tales

Chris Lekupe, Manager of Westgate Community Conservancy, passes on a fascinating story about human-wildlife co-existence from his father

My father, Subanya Lekupe, is a herdsman and wanders widely with his livestock. One day, many years ago, he decided it was time for me to go to school. I was very young and the school was sixty kilometres away from where we lived so he held my hand and we walked together, where after reaching the school he would leave me in the hands of the teachers.

We walked in the early mornings so the sun would not catch up with us and on one morning we came upon a herd of Grevy’s zebra. They made a loud noise and scared me - I thought they were trying to protect their young ones and I saw that their ears were enormous! They were hitting the ground with their hooves and making that noise. I grabbed my father’s hand because they were so big, and eventually we walked off in the opposite direction.

As we walked, my father recounted the time when he was a warrior and went to live on top of Mt Nyiro during a very dry year. They had to cut leaves from the top of the mountain for their cows to eat and then it reached a point where there were no more leaves for the cows. So my father had to go and do a survey to find what was next for his livestock. As he came down from South Horr to Loloworu, he found some tracks of Grevy’s zebra. He asked himself “Why is this animal going that way? If it is going to the water, then where is it feeding? It must be eating something”. He looked at the tracks and concluded that one path led to water and that the other must lead to pasture. So he decided to follow the tracks to pasture and after a day of walking finally found the Grevy’s zebra in an open plain resting under a tree. He thought to himself, yes, now I have found a place for my cows.

He went back to get his cattle which were already very weak. He took them first to the water point where the Grevy’s zebra drank and then he reached the grazing area. Even though the grass was very dry his cows could still feed. The Grevy’s zebra became my father’s neighbours because he did not disturb them. They grazed on one side of the plain and his cows on the other. He was the only human. It was him, the cows and the Grevy’s zebra.

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Very early in the morning the Grevy’s zebra would wake him up and on days when he went to water, the Grevy’s also moved with him. They understood that the cows are going for water and this man can give us water. The water source where they had been drinking was getting deeper, and the Grevy’s could no longer reach it. After he watered his cows, he filled the troughs for the Grevy’s. The Grevy’s adapted that way and they moved like a herd. It was like they could communicate with each other.

At first, there was no milk from his cows so my father ate acacia gum by making a fire and roasting the gum to make it soft so that he could eat it. For around six months he lived with the Grevy’s until his cows grew very strong.

My father told me if you ever find this animal and there is no pasture, just try to identify where it is eating. He said the Grevy’s really helped him so I must not disturb them. He was able use those cows as a dowry for his marriage when all the other cows of his age mates were finished.

I have never stopped looking for a job in conservation and now, coming to Westgate Community Conservancy as the Manager, I have once again met the Grevy’s zebra. Here in Westgate, I have also come across the holistic planned grazing being done for the Grevy’s zebra and the cows and I remembered my father.
This summer four research projects were undertaken. Two were done by Princeton University students Dan Marks and Delphine Slotten under Professor Dan Rubenstein. Their study investigated the impact of planned grazing on plants, wildlife and livestock health in Westgate Conservancy. We also partnered with Imperial College London where Lisa Wheeler used telemetry data to study behavioural responses of Grevy’s zebra in a pastoral landscape for her MSc thesis. Finally, Paulo Leroux from Perpignan University, France, has studied the Laisamis population using camera traps. All reports are currently being assessed by their academic institutions and we look forward to sharing the results in our next news update.

To foster education awareness and community outreach Grevy’s Zebra Trust prints primary school end of year exams so that students can practice before they sit the national exams which determine if they will be successful in getting in to secondary school. The “mock” exams allow teachers to identify gaps to focus on for further tuition, thus improving their students’ abilities to pass the national exams. This year, Grevy’s Zebra Trust increased its distribution of mock exams from 24 to 36 schools in the region.

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

Photo credits: Martin Bucher, JG Collomb, Suzi Eszterhas, Grevy’s Zebra Trust, Paulo Leroux, James Warwick and Marty Varon

HELPING STUDENTS TO PASS EXAMS

WHAT 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)

2. Spread the word and raise local and global awareness about Grevy’s zebra

3. Volunteer from anywhere in the world - we are looking for a dedicated volunteer to help us produce and improve our marketing materials. Equally, this is a unique opportunity to put non-profit experience on your CV!

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 zebra

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

DATES TO NOTE

12 October - Belinda Mackey and Peter Lalampaa present at the Wildlife Conservation Network Expo, Mission Bay Conference Center, San Francisco, California

6 November - Grevy’s Zebra Researcher’s Workshop hosted by KWS in Nairobi

12-18 November - GZT’s first phase of strategic planning using the Open Standards

RESEARCH PROJECTS

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