



HISTORIC GREVY'S ZEBRA DISEASE STRATEGY WORKSHOP



Thanks to support from the Saint Louis Zoo and San Diego Zoo Global through GZT, the Grevy's Zebra Disease Response Committee led by the Kenya

Wildlife Service, hosted the first-ever Grevy's Zebra Disease Strategy Workshop.

After years of decline, the population of Grevy's zebra in Kenya now appears to be stabilizing and may be increasing. In the past ten years, Kenya may have lost more than 7% of its Grevy's zebra population to disease, yet this threat remains largely understudied.

As disease is a cross-cutting issue, an interdisciplinary approach was taken with this workshop, bringing together participants from multiple sectors, including international and local experts on wildlife disease, experts from the livestock sector, leaders from local community conservancies, researchers investigating disease and health in Grevy's zebra, and conservationists specialising in Grevy's zebra ecology, protection, and conservation.

The purpose of this workshop was to 1) develop models and research to understand the impact of disease on Grevy's zebra population dynamics; 2) identify Grevy's zebra disease prevention and control measures; 3) develop a framework for implementing disease mitigation and monitoring; and 4) develop a long-term surveillance plan for diseases in Grevy's zebra. These objectives were achieved and the various stakeholders will be taking them forward.

Dr Wolfgang Beyer, an anthrax expert from the University of Hohenheim in Germany, also undertook a field reconnaissance to review areas where Grevy's zebra

had died during a previous anthrax outbreak in 2006. In some places, he was able to take soil samples which will be analysed for the presence of anthrax spores. His presence in the field was timely as Irene, one of



our Grevy's Zebra Scouts, reported the death of a lactating female that appeared to be in good condition. Dr Beyer was on-site to collect samples for disease diagnosis which is being carried out by the KWS veterinary department. The female's foal stayed around her mother all day and then joined a large herd of Grevy's zebra that was walking to water that night. She has since been seen by our Grevy's Zebra Scouts in the presence of an adult male. ♦

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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 km².

GZT REVIVES TRADITIONAL STORY-TELLING



As much-needed development arrives in our partner communities, such as healthcare and education facilities, the culture has necessarily had to adapt. One of the major changes is that more pastoral children are being educated using western education models, which has led to a breakdown in the relationship of school-going children to their traditional belief system. Whilst recognizing the importance of school-based education for individual and collective progress, the elders also lament the loss of respect for cultural traditions.

With the wisdom of the elders being passed down orally through the generations, traditional knowledge is gradually disappearing because the custom of story-telling is no longer practiced. Because indigenous knowledge plays such a critical role in the management of natural resources, GZT set out to document this wisdom for future generations. We visited 15 communities across our work regions that revived their traditional story-telling nights so we could record their stories. Although the younger generation knew their elders had this

knowledge, they had not heard it before through the stories, and had not realized how rich the details were. It was a heartwarming experience because it was an opportunity to bring everyone together which they had not done for many years and the laughter and love it generated created the long-lost atmosphere of a close community.

We are now in the process of editing the footage to produce a short film and book showcasing the best stories from the Samburu, Rendille and Turkana. Our aim is to develop this as a conservation education tool for use in schools that will strengthen the link between children in school and their cultural heritage. We also intend to show this film during community film nights and link themes from the stories to our Grevy's zebra conservation work.

This is a genuinely novel approach to conservation education in northern Kenya because the majority of conservation education programs use a western school-based model. Here, we are using traditional knowledge and the inherent connection to

wildlife that is in the pastoralist culture as a basis for conservation education programming. We are very grateful to the communities who participated in this project and to the Saint Louis Zoo for funding it. ♦

REID PARK ZOO DONATES EQUIPMENT

We are extremely grateful to the Reid Park Zoo team who recently visited Kenya and generously donated much-needed equipment to the Trust, including camping gear, cameras, school outreach supplies and binoculars! In particular we thank Vivian VanPeneen and her colleagues at the zoo for mobilising donations of these supplies.



CAMERA-TRAP TRAINING

We were fortunate to benefit this year from the Wildlife Conservation Network's (WCN) Cross-Partner Internship Program. Dr Jim Sanderson from the Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation came to Kenya in July for 10 days to help us out with our camera-trap monitoring methodology and analysis for Laisamis. A veteran in camera-trapping, Jim has written software for processing and analysing the images from camera trap data, making it a fast and efficient process and enabling accurate and timely results.

In Laisamis, we use camera traps to monitor Grevy's zebra when they come to drink at the Laisamis River, the most important dry season water

source in the region. Our aim is to capture the stripe pattern on their right flank as that information enables us to identify individuals, giving us both important population information, and informing us on the nature of how different Grevy's zebra classes utilise this critical water source. Jim and the team headed north and spent four days experimenting with the best placement for the cameras to maximise the capture of Grevy's zebra stripe patterns. We then had a two-day training workshop during which the team learnt how to use Jim's software to process and analyse the data set.



It was a unique context for Jim to work in with the diffuse human/livestock-wildlife interface of northern Kenya. He also learnt about our community conservation work and met some of our Grevy's Zebra

Warriors. Thanks to his visit, we now have an effective monitoring system in place for the current dry season, which will be replicated annually. We are extremely grateful to WCN for providing funding for this invaluable opportunity and look forward to future work with Jim as we continually improve our methodology and analysis. ♦

INTRODUCING DR JULIET KING!

GZT is delighted to introduce our newest board member, Dr Juliet King. Juliet was born and raised in Kenya and has worked primarily in northern Kenya since 1998 after gaining her PhD in Zoology at the University of Western Australia. Juliet's early experience in Kenya included applied research and conservation of elephants and primates, with extensive experience in aerial surveys, translocations and community-based monitoring. In 2005 Juliet joined the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) and pioneered a system

called the Conservancy Management Monitoring System (CoMMS), training over 400 community rangers in wildlife monitoring and establishing the system in 19 community conservancies in Northern Kenya. She worked closely with the Kenya Wildlife Service as a member of various National Species Task Forces including Grevy's Zebra, Giraffe and Hirola. Juliet continues to work part-time with NRT and is a consultant on community conservation and ecological monitoring. Juliet's practical conservation experience, excellent relationship with local communities, and strong technical skills in research, monitoring and scientific writing will be a huge asset to GZT.



THE DROUGHT BITES

Northern Kenya has been experiencing a bad drought since July which has negatively impacted Grevy's zebra. Forage has been scarce and one population of Grevy's zebra in Meibae Conservancy has been particularly vulnerable where 3 foals, 2 lactating females, and 2 adult males have died due to suspected starvation and disease. The body condition of the Grevy's zebra in Meibae was also observed to be dropping so we recommended to the Grevy's Zebra Technical Committee (GZTC) that supplementary feeding be implemented.



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)
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

Connect with us on Facebook 

Photo credits: Daniel Letoiye, Grevy's Zebra Trust, Juliet King

The go ahead was given and thanks to funding from Marwell Wildlife, we have been able to establish two main feeding sites which we are monitoring using camera traps. The project is being implemented by Meibae Conservancy and GZT and we are working closely with the community to ensure their full participation and support, with the GZTC monitoring project progress. Although we have had a brief respite from the drought with recent unseasonal rain, we expect to continue the feeding program into October when we hope the short rains arrive. ♦

ELBARTA CONSERVATION COUNCIL

The El Barta plains were historically a Grevy's zebra hotspot. Hunting still remains a threat from migrating pastoralists to the region and by livestock raiding parties. In addition, inter-ethnic tension arises when many groups converge to use the plains. In response to this, in 2014, GZT established and trained an umbrella Conservation Council representing one elder and one warrior from 11 communities. The 22-member Elbarta Conservation Council (ECC) is responsible for reaching out to migrating communities and warriors to discourage illegal hunting and address resource use, as well as to foster peace.



The ECC's first outreach assignment, reaching 258 community members, took place in August 2014 and was extremely powerful and effective, calming down rising ethnic tension, and addressing recent poaching incidents. We were joined by partners from the District Commissioner's Office, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), the Police and Administration Police, the General Service Unit and the Peace Warriors of Bendera.

Our meetings were crucial in dispelling false rumours of pending livestock raids which had unfortunately been circulated through social media, creating fear and mistrust. During one meeting, nearby shots were heard, and the KWS Senior Warden and Kenya Police Reservists on our team exchanged fire with some poachers who had killed an ostrich. Our presence in the area was timely and the ensuing follow up will serve as a deterrent to further poaching. There is still much work to be done and, with support, we anticipate our ECC being very active during 2015. We are very grateful to the Northern Rangelands Trust for assisting with the ECC's training and to the Saint Louis Zoo for funding the activities of the ECC. ♦