


# DROUGHT RESPONSE

REPORT



GREVY'S ZEBRA  
TRUST





Due to the prolonged drought crisis in Kenya which started in late 2020, the survival of one of Samburu's largest populations of 1,000 Grevy's zebra in northern Kenya was severely threatened. Given the successful gains made over the last 15 years in Grevy's zebra conservation, where Kenya's population has been recorded as stable and, in some areas, increasing, the Grevy's Zebra Trust (GZT) worked to give as many Grevy's zebra within this population the best possible chance of survival and continue this positive trend of species recovery.



# FEEDING GREVY'S ZEBRA IN THE NATIONAL RESERVES

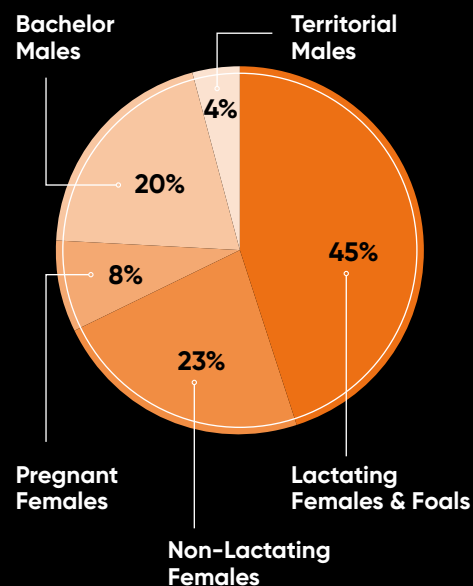
With permission from the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), GZT established feeding operations in Buffalo Springs, Samburu and Shaba national reserves, between 5th July and 18th November 2022. Local hay supplies had already run out, so hay was sourced from the Rift Valley and southern Kenya and was delivered by lorry, with 300 bales per lorry. Three mobile feeding teams were established, one for each reserve. Each team was made up of one university graduate, one community member from villages bordering the reserves, and one driver, and all were from northern Kenya.

The feeding teams worked from dawn until dusk; the work is physically challenging due to lifting of the 20 kg bales and the heat and dust. GZT was supported in this effort by the national reserve ranger teams, who zoned the parks to control the movement of livestock to ensure only Grevy's zebra and other wildlife had access to the hay.



Approximately 10% of the Grevy's zebra target population died of drought-related causes, which is low compared to other wildlife species in Kenya where no supplementary feeding intervention was implemented. We consider this an exceptional achievement, and it has been made possible thanks to the incredible support of donors, conservation partners, and the passion and commitment of our team.

The teams were able to feed an average of 500 Grevy's zebra daily.



## We distributed;

- 24,000 bales of hay,
- 600 bales of lucerne (alfalfa grass),
- 1,200 kgs of lucerne pellets, and
- 1,930 kgs of nutritional supplements.

Our teams drove a total of 34,000 kms to deliver feed to Grevy's zebra herds.

As a result, we were able to maintain a body condition score of 3 to 3.5 (1 = poor, 5 = excellent) for the majority of zebras.

During the process, we learnt a lot about how to maximize feed delivery to the Grevy's zebra by establishing separate feeding sites for these other species to reduce competition. We also ensured the hay was laid out in a long line to increase the area of access that animals had to the hay.



As the drought intensified in October 2022, our teams observed Grevy's zebra, and especially foals, collapsing. KWS seconded a vet intern, Dr. Meshack Kibiwot, to the North Kenya Vet Unit under Dr. Gathoni. Dr. Kibiwot was attached full time to GZT's feeding teams and was able to undertake autopsies and treat weak animals. This gave us a clearer insight into the morbidity factors affecting Grevy's zebra during drought, which included helminth infestations, gastric and colonic impaction and dehydration.



In addition, we were able to work with KWS and North Kenya Vet Services to do practical deworming of lactating females and foals. Together with KWS, we have updated the guidelines for future supplementary feeding interventions based on these valuable lessons learned.



Some of our Grevy's Zebra Scouts came to support the feeding efforts. John Lekishe, our Regional Coordinator for Wamba reported: "It was really a great moment of mixed feelings as our scouts participate in this noble exercise. Happiness at seeing Grevy's zebra again as they had left the scouts' home areas, and at participating in saving them from the devastating drought. And sadness that most foals are weak and in poor body condition. They witnessed a foal being treated by Dr. Kibiwot and participated in helping it to its feet, saw it walk again and finally join its family. It wound up the day on a note of joy."







## FEEDING GREVY'S ZEBRA IN COMMUNITY AREAS

In January 2023, our areas of operation further north in El Barta (Samburu North) and Laisamis (Marsabit County) became increasingly dry and we established two more feeding sites which were co-managed with the community residing in the area.

Here, hay was placed along corridors that Grevy's zebra use to access water during the night. This means that feeding can only be monitored using camera traps, which were placed at the feeding sites each evening when feed was put out and retrieved each morning before livestock and people started moving through the area.



“ I am so much humbled by the fact that the GZT has given me an opportunity to work with them in saving the northern endangered Grevy zebra. All the people who contributed to the success of the feeding program have made us feel the tranquility and resources that Northern Kenya holds. Am very much grateful for the experience I earned in this brief period working with this organization. This hard and challenging drought taught me that a balanced ecosystem provides us with plants that have life-giving properties. So, when ecosystems are not conserved and protected, our health can be affected too. That is why, when you contribute to the conservation efforts of endangered species, you are also contributing towards humans' well-being.

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~ Letirok Babylon, Supplementary Feeding Intern.



## LEMLANGO'S STORY

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The entire feeding exercise was reported on daily by all three teams on our GZT WhatsApp group. One of the highlights for our team were the reports of "Lemlango".

Lemlango was a territorial male Grevy's zebra in Samburu National Reserve who quickly learnt where the hay supply was based, which was at the entrance gate of the reserve in the courtyard of the rangers' accommodation. Lemlango means "of the gate" in Samburu and thus he was named because he would come and hang out by the rangers' accommodation waiting for his ration. He became a symbol of hope for the teams, and even stayed on after the rains arrived to continue receiving his daily treats. When he eventually left to feed on more nutritious forage, the team really missed him, even though we knew it would be much better for his health for him to be eating wild forage. This deep, emotional connection to the Grevy's zebra went beyond Lemlango, with grief expressed as deaths began increasing, and counter to that, joy at being able to save as many animals as possible. We are so grateful that we had the opportunity to make such a difference to the fate of this Grevy's zebra population, thanks to support from our donor community.





## SUPPORTING VULNERABLE FAMILIES DURING THE DROUGHT

Kenya's prolonged drought also caused huge losses of livelihood, especially within livestock production systems, leading to acute food insecurity in Northern Kenya. We began witnessing the unfolding of a humanitarian crisis across the pastoralist communities we work with. With our work being deeply centred on the wellbeing of people, we prioritized raising additional funds to support the most vulnerable families in the worst affected areas with relief food, and our teams ensured they always carried water in our vehicles to provide relief to herders in remote areas.

“ You cannot feel the impact of the drought until you interact with the herders and listen to the story they tell, we met young boys cooking tea under the tree trying to gain some energy, it seems people are just now purely mobile, the distance from the water to villages or foras (livestock enclosures) is 2-3 days journey! ”

~ Joel Loongonyo, Regional Coordinator El Bartar.







Between November and December 2022, GZT distributed relief food to 530 vulnerable families in Samburu and Isiolo counties.

Each family received 25kg maize meal, 25kg rice, 7kg beans, 3 litres cooking oil, 1kg salt, 2kg sugar, 12 litres milk and 12 kg soya uji mix. Items brought into school by the children were packaged into sacks. These quantities provide 75% of the minimum food basket for a family of five for one month in the "crisis" food security phase classification, based on guidelines published by the Kenya Cash Working Group.







# LEMALASIA'S STORY

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Lemalasia Ltieli is a resident of Nalepo boo village in Meibae conservancy. Lemalasia is the sole breadwinner of his family, and their only source of income was livestock keeping. As a result of the ongoing drought, he was only left with five skinny goats. His family was faced with the pain of starvation when the relief food support was supplied to him.

When his family received their food relief, they decided to share some of it with their neighbours so that each household would have a good meal that evening.

As a result of having the food, his family's health had improved and there was happiness and hope in life. To Lemalasia, it was a miracle how God touched other people to bring the food all the way to northern Kenya and save his family from starvation.

He is also committed to being at the forefront of land restoration in his village so that they can improve the health of their land. He also shared a story of a Grevy's zebra who was being chased by hyenas next to his manyatta the night before. He woke up very early to check if the zebra survived the attack and he was happy to see that the Grevy's zebra was unharmed.



Short-term emergency response interventions such as supporting communities with relief food and the large-scale supplementary feeding effort of Grevy's zebra are an essential part of supporting human wellbeing and Grevy's zebra survival, alongside our increasing investment into restoration and recovery of the landscape.

We are thrilled to report that our unwavering commitment to support restoration efforts by the four conservancies that we work with has paid off, and we are seeing an excellent response to the recent rainfall of March/April/May 2023.



# THANK YOU!

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**Our deepest gratitude goes to the hundreds of people who personally responded during our time of need and generously donated towards our drought response effort. Your support saved as many Grevy's zebra as possible, and provided relief food for the communities that we work with.**

We are extremely grateful to all the organisations and foundations that responded so quickly to support us. Special mention goes to Marwell Wildlife with whom we jointly fundraised for the drought response effort in Europe.

## **Supplementary Feeding of Grevy's Zebra**

- African Foundation for Endangered Wildlife
- AG Zoologischer Garten Köln
- Association Francophone des Soigneurs Animaliers
- Atua Enkop
- Bioparc Zoo de Doué-la-Fontaine
- Braeburn School
- Donald and Maureen Green Foundation
- Elephant Watch
- Ewaso Lions
- Fondazione Bioparco di Roma
- Foundation for International Aid to Animals
- Givskud Zoo – Zootopia
- Governors Camp
- International Fund for Animal Welfare
- Kolmården Foundation
- Kristan & Peter Norvig & the Silicon Valley Community Fund
- Leiden Conservation Foundation
- Maliasili
- Marwell Wildlife
- Mount Kenya Trust
- Musiara Ltd
- OASYS, Parque Temático del Desierto de Tabernas
- Ouwehand Zoo Foundation
- Parc Zoologique et Botanique de la Ville de Mulhouse
- Safari Collection

- Saint Louis Zoo
- Stichting Wildlife
- Terre de Félines
- Touroparc Zoo
- West Midland Safari Park Ltd
- Wild Elements
- Wildlife Conservation Network
- Wilhelma, Zoologisch-Botanischer Garten Stuttgart
- World Women Work
- Zoo de la Palmyre
- Zoo du Bassin d'Arcachon
- Zoo Dvůr Králové
- Zoo Frankfurt
- Zoo Leipzig
- Zoo Mulhouse
- Zoo Planckendael
- Zoological Society of London
- Zoologischer Garten Berlin AG

## **Relief Food and Water for Communities**

- Banda School
- I&M Foundation
- International Fund for Animal Welfare
- Maliasili
- Saint Louis Zoo
- Wildlife Conservation Network





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