

# Amara Conservation News

The Newsletter Of Amara Conservation, Ltd.  
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## Still Reeling

### Well, It's actually VHS...

The Amara Mobile Film Unit did two short reconnaissance tours in August and October 2003. We visited 21 schools and communities and showed the film to approximately 3,000 people, mostly at primary and secondary schools near the Maasai Mara and the town of Voi on the border of Tsavo National Park.



Lori with the UK Minister of the Environment, Elliott Morley, and Ian Saunders of the AEFF

We worked with Peter Kimau and Evanson Kariuki of the Anne K Taylor Desnaring Team in the Mara, and with Isaac Maina and Jacob Dadi who work for the Sheldrick Trust (Isaac is the leader the Bura Desnaring Team in and around Tsavo). It was inspiring to see the sense of hope that Isaac and other young native Kenyans seem to have since the presidential elections of a year ago. The message Amara is bringing, that the wildlife of Kenya must be preserved not only because this is the environmentally correct thing to do, but because it is vital to Kenya's economy, really seems to hit home when the message is

being conveyed by both Amara staff and native Kenyans. It's easy for us to forget in the states that we've wiped out most of the native carnivores of North America. Imagine if the same were to happen in Kenya. The mistakes we've made are a sad but powerful lesson to the young people of Kenya who can make a difference.



Quite a Turnout!

At one of the film showings at the very remote Leparua School on Il Ngwesi Group Ranch in Northern Kenya, we were graced by a visit from the U.K. Minister of the Environment, Elliot Morley, and the (more on page 3)

## Fueling the Effort

### An Update on Tsavo North

We have assisted the Kenya Wildlife Service in Tsavo North by providing them with diesel fuel for anti-poaching work. They were informed that there was a serious poaching campaign planned for the rainy season (which is typically late October-November), a time when there is water everywhere for the poachers to use, the animals are (More on page 2)

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## Litter-ally Brilliant

### A clever use for all those snares

Isaac Maina of the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust has come up with a clever way to re-purpose some of the thousands of snares collected through the de-snaring work. Litter is a significant problem near settlements throughout much of Kenya (see photo).



Isaac had the clever idea of straightening the snares, bending one end into a handle, and sharpening the other end, making a perfect poker for cleaning up litter.



Isaac demonstrates the repurposed snares

He's begun organizing groups of people to pick up the litter, after which they get into the KWS bus and get to go on a game drive in the Park. It's a brilliant idea. When we were in Voi showing films in October, we got to see some of his cleanup crews in action. A very clever way of putting some previously brutal pieces of metal to

positive use. Poachers use anything available - all manner of cable, barbed wire, and other miscellaneous pieces of metal that can be fashioned into the snares that sometimes capture, and just as often only maim, the wildlife of Kenya. A brilliantly practical form of environmentalism.

## Baby Burra Update

### Do Elephants Forget?

You may recall Baby Burra, who was rescued in January 2002 with a snare wound tightly around his head and neck and taken to the Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage in Nairobi. He is now in the Sheldrick Elephant Stockades in Tsavo with the other older orphans. He is over 2 1/2 years old, has little tusks growing, and while he DOES bear the scars of his trauma with a distinctively damaged ear (see photo), he is thriving. Amara paid



for the first six months of his care, at \$750/month through a donation specified for this purpose by a single generous donor. He is a rare survivor of the terror that snaring wreaks on wild animal populations. We saw him in October 2003, happily munching away in the stockades in the evening. We were delighted to see that he seemed to remember Lori from her visits

**"...We need to raise \$27,000 to assist Tsavo North by building a remote ranger base...This will provide a permanent ranger presence in the area, in well-constructed barracks that will be bullet resistant in case of attack..."**

when he was much smaller, evidence that elephants truly never forget. He was and continues to be a real inspiration for all of us.

## Tsavo North Update

### (Continued from page1)

quite dispersed, and the mud makes it easier to hide tracks. They have the manpower and a few vehicles but lacked the fuel they needed to patrol. We need to raise \$27,000 to assist Tsavo North by building a remote ranger base in the Ndiandaza area on the Tiva River. This location is crucial to the security of the Tiva River elephant populations, as well as the Rhino sector as it acts as a cut off for the Northeastern corridor, which is used by bandits. This will provide a permanent ranger presence in the area, in well-constructed barracks that will be bullet resistant in case of attack. It is something that we have been discussing for some time, working out the details and making the plans to be most efficient.

## Lend a Hand

### To those who lend a hand

We are ever grateful for the support we receive from our private donors, and can never thank you all enough. As we enter our fourth year, we are more actively pursuing corporate and foundation support. Lori has not yet taken a salary for all the work she has done thus far, and although we are very proud of the low-overhead approach Amara has taken, it is evident that to continue to be successful with our work, we need to continue to grow. To that end, we are happy to announce that we have very committed group of volunteers that will be assisting with the many administrative tasks that need attention:

**Jason Magee** continues to provide timely and informed help with fundraising and promotional activities.

**Lauren Bigelow** has always helped Amara with printing and administrative functions and does more all the time!

**Katie Van Bemmelen** will be helping with grant-writing duties, as well as taking on responsibilities for the "dirty work" of addressing, folding, and stuffing the mailings that are crucial to any non-profit.

**Marty Betts**, a supporter of Amara since its inception, will continue to donate her design skills to promotional materials, assist us in organizing, as well as helping with merchandising e.g.; t-shirts and other possible revenue generators.

**Donna Ryen** has committed to helping with various organizational

needs, specifically, the organization of the Earle fundraiser auction. We are also forming a steering committee to help guide our ongoing activities. Ann Annis and Candis Stern are the founding members of this committee. Many of our existing supporters have considerable experience with the ins and outs of fundraising for charitable activities. We know that just a few hours a month of your time would be a great asset and help tremendously in guiding our ongoing fundraising activities. If you are interested in helping, please contact us in the U.S. at 734.662.0454, or via the web at: [www.amaraconservation.org](http://www.amaraconservation.org).

## Film Unit

### (Continued from page1)

Permanent Attaché from the British High Commission. We discussed at some length the environmental issues of Kenya and he was inspired by some of the projects he'd seen on his whirlwind trip around the country. He was very enthusiastic in support of our project and Lori enjoyed sharing some of her experiences with him. Interestingly, in addition to seeing firsthand some of the best conservation works in Kenya, he regarded his trip as a testimony to the fact that Kenya is a wonderful and safe place to visit - pursuant to the recent UK drop of a travel advisory and the US Government's maintenance of it's own advisory against travel. Also in attendance was Ian Saunders of the AEFF. A special visit, as in spite of the fact that the AEFF produces the films

“...in addition to seeing firsthand some of the best conservation works in Kenya, he regarded his trip as a testimony to the fact that Kenya is a wonderful and safe place to visit....”

Amara is showing with the Mobile Film Unit, this was the first time anyone from the AEFF had had the opportunity to see our film unit in action.

We plan to do another tour in mid January/February, showing the films for over a month in a comprehensive effort in communities bordering Tsavo. On this tour we'll be doing more intensive survey work utilizing materials created specifically for the project by Kenyan PhD students in the Michigan State University School of Education. With the results of these surveys, we intend to move forward with plans to add another unit, as well as designing supplemental educational materials to enhance the reach of the project.

To learn more about the mobile film unit, visit our web site at: [www.amaraconservation.org](http://www.amaraconservation.org)

To learn more about the African Environmental Film Foundation, visit: [www.aeffonline.org](http://www.aeffonline.org)

## New Donor Levels

### Where the funds are going

We've defined some new donation levels to give our friends and supporters a better picture of how funds will be applied to specific projects:

**Patron Level** (Donation of \$5,000 or more) will allow us to show films to over 20,000 people, and 5 Patron Level supporters will enable us to build the Ranger Base, which will save countless lives.

**Sponsor Level** (Donation of \$1,000-\$5,000) will go toward the \$5,000 needed for printing the educational materials the AEFF have designed to accompany the films. This includes posters and further reading materials. The benefits will be long lasting.

**Donor Level** (Donation of \$100-\$1,000) will help with the final rehabilitation to the wild of the two leopard cubs, Mtito and Nani, or provide salaries for field staff for the Mobile Film Unit.

**Member Level** (Donation of \$25-\$100) will go toward the purchase of pens for rural schoolchildren, or help considerably with operating costs for our Land Rover (which are about .85/kilometer)

## Specific Project Needs

### And what donor funds can do

#### **\$27,000**

Remote Ranger Base in Tsavo East National Park

#### **\$25,000**

Operating costs for full time desnaring team for one year

#### **\$10,000**

Completely equips a new Mobile Film Unit (excluding vehicle)

#### **\$5,000**

Print all educational materials to distribute with film showings

#### **\$2,500**

Sponsor an environmental education tour, reaching 5,000+ people

#### **\$2,000**

Sponsor one month's operating costs for a full time desnaring team

#### **\$1,000**

Fund the completion of the rehabilitation of the orphaned leopard cubs Mtito and Nani to the wild

#### **\$100**

Cover the educational film costs for one whole rural community

#### **\$75**

Buy pens for 1,000 rural schoolchildren

## A Few Words From Lori About...

Greetings from Kenya! I hope you had a warm and happy holiday season. What we have been able to do here in this short time has been fantastic... and this is only because of each and every one of you. I thank you heartily. We are sending you this newsletter because we want you to know what we have achieved of late. It is YOUR commitment to Amara that has enabled all of this to occur. We can and will do more. It is deeply gratifying to me to be able to do this work for you, for all of us. To empower people by providing information in a clear fashion that was often previously unavailable can enable them to make choices that will benefit everyone. At the same time, bushmeat and other poaching is a very serious immediate problem. Amara is addressing both the long-term issues through our education projects, and the short term through our support of anti-poaching efforts. What we are doing is simple and direct and very important. We are small but focused and growing all the time.

With Fondest Wishes,



LORI BERGEMANN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AMARA CONSERVATION