

# Amara Conservation News

The Newsletter Of Amara Conservation, Ltd.  
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## Amara Mobile Film Unit A New Twist on Drive-In Movies

One of our key projects over the past year has been the Mobile Film Unit. Thanks to proceeds from our 2002 fundraising events, we were able to acquire the necessary equipment - portable projector, video player, speakers and a portable generator - to show educational films to the rural people of Kenya. The films are produced by the African Environmental Film Foundation, and are geared to local audiences.



When a building or tree is not available, the screen is hung from the roof of the rover

They are presented either in English or Kiswahili, depending on the audience. We were able to show these films to over 7,000 people on our first tour, which took us through Naro Moru, Nanyuki and the Lewa Conservancy, Ol Malo, Kirimun and Loldogichek. The films were shown in schools, churches, outdoors, and in manyattas, by hanging the screen either inside a building, from a tree, or from the roof of our vehicle (see photos). Although we knew before we began the project that this would be an effective educational tool, we were

astounded by the enthusiasm wherever we presented the films. Audience turnouts at each venue were impressive - in many places we did multiple showings to enable everyone to view them. An amusing example of just how **(More on Page 3)**

## Tooling Up Outfitting The Park Workshop

Donor support last year also allowed us to outfit the Tsavo East National Park, Northern Area with some badly needed tools. The purchase included seemingly basic items like socket sets, jacks, and wrenches (see photo). This may sound relatively inconsequential, but the tools facilitated the repair of road graders and other vehicles that had been inoperable for some



Yes, they're armed now. With Tools!

time. In fact, getting these vehicles up and running helped open roads that had not been open in fifty years. As KWS Senior warden Danny Woodley pointed out, the workshop is a crucial component of keeping the park running, especially when many of the vehicles in use have logged over 500,000 KM.

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## **Mtito and Nani** **Nana Woodley's Work With** **Orphaned Leopard Cubs**

Some of you may remember the orphaned Leopard cub Mtito. We helped support his successful release into the wild in the able hands of Nana Woodley. This is not a particularly common accomplishment.



Some of you may remember Mtito as the cute orphaned cub.

To nurture a small cub to maturity without allowing it to become overly familiar with humans (which would in the long run imperil its existence) requires considerable knowledge and skill. The photo below is one of the last photos of Mtito before he went on his way.



One of the last photos of Mtito before he was successfully released into the wild

As a result of the success with Mtito, the Nairobi Animal Orphanage has entrusted the care (Cont.)

and release of Nani, a female cub that was accidentally live-trapped and separated from its mother. Amara would like to aid in the care of little Nani, a project which would take four to six months, at a maximum total cost of about \$3,000.00. This includes salaries for keepers, food, and various other expenses, and breaks down to as little as \$15.00/day. This is an excellent example of how even small contributions can be tremendously helpful when funds are applied directly.

## **Terrorism & Tourism** **Ironically, Visiting Kenya May Be** **Safer Now Than Ever**

Although Kenya's tourism industry suffered as much as that of any other country after the World Trade Center attacks, the Kenya Tourism Board has done an excellent job shoring up the potential loss of tourist trade. In a country where one of the top three sources of revenue is tourism (and half a million jobs depend on it), it's essential that this sector stays healthy.

In spite of a recent brief ban on British flights to and from Kenya, the country is probably safer to visit now than at any time in recent years. Ironically, dramatic events like terrorist acts actually heighten security, as well as engendering more personal courtesy amongst travelers. The fear of possibly losing business also drives hotel and travel operators to be even more hospitality-conscious, and in some cases offer enhanced or discounted services. (Cont.)

**“...In spite of a recent brief ban on British flights to and from Kenya, the country is probably safer to visit now than at any time in recent years ...”**

This concept is well understood in the travel industry, but unfortunately not so well understood by various countries' embassies and state departments, which routinely issue somewhat alarmist warnings to travelers and individuals living abroad. A good example of this positive backlash would be Egypt's tourism industry, which was devastated after 58 tourists were killed in Luxor in 1997. Egypt immediately cracked down on specific extremist groups and increased security nationwide, especially at airports and popular tourist spots. Today Egypt's tourism industry has rebounded to levels prior to the 1997 attack. Much the same response has taken place in Kenya, which has historically has been one of the more stable African countries. For more on this topic, you might visit the Kenya Tourist Board web site at [www.magicalkenya.com](http://www.magicalkenya.com).

**Amara Mobile Film Unit**  
**A New Twist on Drive-In Movies**  
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enthusiastic people were about these showings: Half way through a showing of "Wanted Dead or Alive" in an isolated village on the Il Ngwesi Group Ranch in Northern Kenya, some car lights approached in the dark. This is EXTREMELY unusual, as no one lives for miles and miles around, and those that do do not have vehicles. Some men got out of the car and greeted us with big smiles saying they had come to see the film. We apologised, explaining the film was nearly over, to which they replied that it didn't matter, they'd seen it when we were at Lewa Downs a few days earlier, and just wanted to see it again. They were employees of Lewa Conservancy and had driven from Lewa, which is at least 2 1/2 hours drive!



Lori Bergemann, non-union projectionist, plying her trade

Discussions following the films made it quite clear that people throughout Kenya are eager to have the opportunity to learn (Cont.)

more about conservation and environment, and to participate in solutions to local issues, be they water problems, poaching and snaring, deforestation... people need to have information, and these films are brilliant in what they convey. They are not only informative, but are also entertaining and very pertinent to the lives of rural people.



A rapt audience

**The Mara Count 2002**  
**The Count That Counts**

We were quite proud to take part in the massive wildlife count organised by Robin Reid of ILRI (International Livestock Research Institute) and Mike Rainy of Explore Mara Ltd. and Bush Homes. The Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem supports the most diverse migration of grazing mammals on earth, and surveys like this allow for the development of management and policy recommendations to manage these pastoral ecosystems more sustainably.

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**"...Discussions following the films made it quite clear that people throughout Kenya are eager to have the opportunity to learn more about conservation and environment...."**

**Bura Team Update**  
**The Ongoing De-Snaring\***



Lori looks at some of the thousands of snares gathered by the team.

The Bura desnaring team is hard at work, getting up to 300 snares a day. They just started in March, and have really built a solid working team - what they are doing is vital. Jill Woodley of the Sheldrick Trust and her husband JF coordinate and keep a close eye on the teams, and it's becoming evident that another team is sorely needed. The men are working together very well, and having found some informers, are being very effective. This is hard work in rough country. While we provided the vehicle, we would also like to be able to fund the ongoing costs of the team. At about \$15,000 a year to run the team, this is a very effective use of funds!

*\*This article originally appeared in our Dec. 2002 Newsletter*

## **The Mara Count 2002** **The Count That Counts** **(Continued from page 3)**

The Mara Count not only records 23 wild and 5 domestic animal species that are active during the day, it notes water sources, vegetation, shambas, fences, and burns, as well as infrastructure (such as buildings) and vehicles. This is done at an amazing spatial resolution of 333 x 333 metres, by utilising GPS and specialized software installed on PDA's carried by the teams.



This may look silly, but these people are taking part in a technologically sophisticated wildlife count.

Teams that don't have PDA units with them log the information on paper and the data is entered when the team can get to a computer & generator. Detailed results from the 2002 count can be found on the web at: [www.maasaimaracount.org](http://www.maasaimaracount.org)  
*\*This article originally appeared in our Dec. 2002 Newsletter*

## **A Few Words From Lori** **About Our First Two Years**

Amara is a small organization, but it's got a big heart and a lot of people supporting it! Our Board, Dr. John Mitani, Dr. David Foran, who works many hours that he doesn't (Cont.)

have for Amara; our UK Trust, Trustees Heidi Bergemann, Sir Brooks Richards, Roger Graef and Susan Richards. Our US Team: Ian Gray, who takes care of most everything; Jason Magee, without whom Amara wouldn't exist and who continues to do things most people couldn't; Janet Dillon who has given financial, business and ongoing support in invaluable ways, including coming to Kenya to work with us; Lauren Bigelow, who is always there when we really need her, often saving the day; Ted and Ann Annis, who were instrumental in our startup and whose continuing support and involvement mean everything; Dennis Webster and the entire staff of the Earle, and a number of other people who do a lot for Amara on a regular basis. We've developed partnerships/cooperative efforts with people in Kenya: the African Environmental Film Foundation - Simon Trevor, Tanya Trevor and Ian Saunders; the Sheldrick Trust - Daphne Sheldrick, Jill Woodley, Angela Sheldrick and the desnaring team - Isaac Maina, Jacob Dadi, and Mutua Koti; Senior Warden Daniel Woodley of Tsavo East National Park; The Bill Woodley Mt. Kenya Trust - Susie Weeks and Humphrey Munene; Richard Bonham of the Maasailand Preservation Trust; and a number of others too long to list! All of what we do is made possible by the financial support of a number of people, to whom we are most grateful. We heartily thank all of the wonderful people who have donated to our fundraiser dinners and silent auctions, what you give is very important to us. Amara (Cont.)

could never thank any of you enough, and unfortunately there simply isn't ROOM here to acknowledge all of you! Please know that the fruits of your contributions are making a difference each and every day of the year.

Amara has come a long way since it's inception in April of 2001. We are now known around Kenya and the impact of our efforts is becoming more apparent with each day. It's amazingly rewarding to be able to do this work, and it's through the support and encouragement of a lot of individual people that we have been able to achieve what we have! I am in awe of the support that all of you give, and we are committed to continue to grow and do this important work. When I was in Northern Kenya in April showing films, I wrote in my journal "...This place is in dire need of people's understanding that what they have is precious. I would go to the ends of the earth to be able to help in some small way". That is how it feels, that is how it is... together we are doing it.



**LORI BERGEMANN**  
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