As 2017 moves into the last quarter, the Grevy’s Zebra Trust team is working tirelessly to save as many Grevy’s zebra as possible. The situation is dire. The effects of the prolonged drought, coupled with severe overgrazing of remaining forage by domestic livestock, have taken their toll on the endangered Grevy’s zebra population. Over 100 Grevy’s zebra have died thus far in 2017, of which more than 60% are attributed to drought-related deaths. Distressingly, this represents more than 4% of Kenya’s total population.

With backing from the Grevy’s Zebra Technical Committee (GZTC), GZT started a feeding program across all areas of Grevy’s zebra range where it was shown that the animals were losing condition, following the GZTC’s supplementary feeding guidelines. Early feeding helps to prevent starvation and to maintain body condition so that Grevy’s zebra can withstand the effects of drought and disease.

GZT established sixteen feeding sites in the El Barta, Laisamis and Wamba regions, which were operational from January through May 2017. Following sporadic rainfall in May 2017, feeding of Grevy’s zebra...
WEATHERING THE STORM

We have recently seen an increasing number of natural disasters around the world. While Northern Kenya has been affected by a devastating drought, the U.S. has endured several hurricanes, wreaking havoc and devastation where they’ve made landfall. Our thoughts have been with all those affected by these disasters, especially our friends and colleagues who’ve lost homes or businesses, as they work to rebuild their lives.

GZT therefore started feeding the Grevy’s zebra in Buffalo Springs and Samburu National Reserves in July 2017. Thanks to support and cooperation from the reserve teams and our tourism and conservation partners, this has been very successful; however, Grevy’s zebra mothers with foals, who have higher energy requirements due to the lactation burden, are rapidly losing condition, putting their young foals at risk of starvation. In addition, we observed that many of the Grevy’s zebra have diarrhoea due to poor nutrition and high parasite loads. We have been working closely with KWS vet Dr Matthew Mutinda to assess the condition of the animals and take post mortem samples where necessary.

In light of their deteriorating health, we have increased the amount of hay and the frequency of feeding to ensure that we reach as many Grevy’s zebra as possible and maintain their condition, and this has been made possible thanks to funding received from Holloman Price Foundation, the Houston Zoo Crisis Fund, the Equid Specialist Group/EcoHealth Alliance, Elephant Watch Camp, Elephant Bedroom Camp and Kelvin Lentamaan. GZT has a dedicated vehicle and team putting out hay daily and monitoring the animals, and has also received invaluable logistical support from the wardens and rangers of the two reserves.

Not only are we reaching over 200 Grevy’s zebra, but we are also feeding many other species, including oryx, elephant, Grant’s gazelle and water buck.

It is thanks to our incredible teams on the ground who are our eyes and ears for the wildlife, that we were able to respond quickly and target vulnerable populations. These dedicated Scouts, Warriors and Ambassadors know where the Grevy’s zebra are, what their condition is, how they are responding to the feeding, and where there are problems. As we move into 2018, we plan to invest significantly in rangeland restoration. At the same time, it is absolutely critical for the survival of the Grevy’s zebra that we maintain the operations of our field teams on the ground. This will ensure that we can implement the most effective management strategies to help restore their populations, and offer the zebra the best possible care, especially during times of environmental stress. But we urgently need your help to do this. We have to raise much-needed funds for our Grevy’s Zebra Ambassador, Warrior and Scout Programs so these teams can continue their efforts to save the endangered Grevy’s zebra. Please consider donating to Grevy’s Zebra Trust to support this vital work.
MAMA GREVY – A DISNEY CONSERVATION HERO

We were recently thrilled to hear that one of the pioneers of the Grevy’s Zebra Scout program, Ngeeti Lemate, was the recipient of the Disney Conservation Hero Award!

Ngeeti joined the Grevy’s Zebra Scout Program in 2003 when the initiative was first started. She is soft-spoken and gentle, but her passion and commitment to her work is obvious to all who interact with her, earning her the name of ‘Mama Grevy’. Ngeeti was Grevy’s Zebra Trust’s first female scout – a pioneer, for other women in her community, as she gave them a voice amongst the elders and warriors. And she uses that voice wisely, calling meetings of her own accord to rally support for conservation, not only for Grevy’s zebra but other wildlife that shares the land with the local community. She speaks to schoolchildren about the importance of protecting their natural environment, telling stories of how the landscape used to look when she was a girl and making them realise this is possible again with proper grazing planning.

In the field, Ngeeti’s actions as a Scout show her dedication to her job. She worked tirelessly under difficult conditions during the droughts of 2005 and 2009, and the current drought of 2017, to make sure the Grevy’s zebra had enough water by digging shallow wells in the riverbed for them. And critically, the data she and other scouts collected on Grevy’s zebra demographics and distribution, was the basis for starting Westgate Community Conservancy, which has become a model of community-based conservation in Kenya today.

Ngeeti says she has gained wildlife and environmental conservation knowledge since she joined the Grevy’s Zebra Scout Program, and being illiterate when she started the program, she has taught herself how to write numbers and letters. In addition, from her Grevy’s Zebra Scout salary she is currently supporting three of her children through school, as well as five other households of her extended family.

Today, after 14 years as a Scout, she reflects back on her work with GZT. “This job has changed my life completely. It has given me confidence within my community and a voice as a woman. My community giving me a listening ear is the greatest motivation I ever had in my life.”

Ngeeti is a true champion for Grevy’s zebra conservation and a worthy recipient of the Disney Conservation Hero award.
OUR HOUSTON ZOO WILDLIFE WARRIOR

This quarter we’re celebrating not just one, but two conservation champions at GZT! Not only was the dedication of our longest-serving female Scout rewarded, but the achievements of our Wamba Regional Coordinator, Andrew Letura, were also recognised when he received the Houston Zoo Wildlife Warrior Award! Wildlife Warriors are chosen from the staff of the Houston Zoo’s wildlife conservation partners working with many species all over the world.

Andrew Letura is from Samburu, northern Kenya. Growing up next to Samburu National Reserve, he was always interested in wildlife. After completing a guiding course, Andrew studied wildlife management but couldn’t complete the degree because of financial difficulties. He was working as a tour guide when he jumped at the chance to volunteer with GZT on a Master’s project. In November 2011, Andrew was formally employed by GZT as Research Assistant. In this role, Andrew tirelessly sought out Grevy’s zebra on his motorbike to photograph their stripe patterns. This was incredibly demanding, and often we wouldn’t recognize him covered head to toe in dust! Through this project, Andrew developed a passion for Grevy’s zebra, resulting in his promotion to GZT Wamba Regional Coordinator, running the Scout Program.

Andrew oversees 29 scouts (19 women and 10 men), training and supporting them in monitoring, data collection, and conservation outreach. Andrew is proud that this program empowers local women. “The Scout Program is the conservation voice of pastoral women. These women no longer feel side-lined during decision-making, and their status as scouts means they are involved in community meetings.”

Andrew engages local communities and schools in conservation outreach activities. He says this is one of the best parts of his job, as he sees people’s attitudes changing as their understanding improves.

Andrew also follows up on any injured Grevy’s zebra found in Wamba, sometimes pitching camp and staying with the animal for days until veterinary assistance arrives. These experiences have deepened his bond with Grevy’s zebra.

Andrew’s positivity, commitment and passion for conservation make him a true champion for Grevy’s zebra and a deserved winner of the Wildlife Warrior Award.

Asante means thank you in Kiswahili.

We greatly appreciate the generous support of all our donors. Please click here for a list of our Partners.

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

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