

MARCH 2008

# *Wild Earth*

WILDLIFE MAGAZINE

Kenya Safari

[www.wild-earth.eu](http://www.wild-earth.eu)



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## Supporting the Trust

Feeding the animals and ensuring they are properly looked after costs over £60,000 a year. Admission charges account for less than half this sum so we are heavily dependent on the generosity of you the public. There are numerous ways you can help the Trust:

If you're mad about meerkats, in love with the lemurs or potty about the parrots we have the answer. As an ideal gift our annual scheme allows you to adopt or sponsor any animal in the zoo and the income supports our ongoing animal care and conservation programmes.



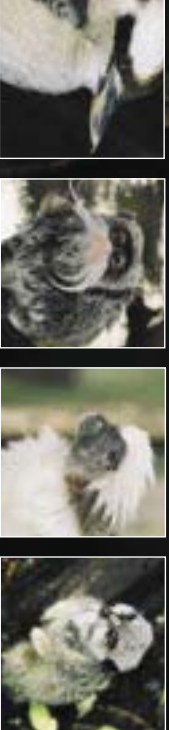
## Other ways you can help:

Become a Trust member and receive newsletters & free admission

Be a Keeper for a Day, a unique experience for yourself or as a gift

Get your company to sponsor a new exhibit

Consider making a legacy



## How to find us



**By Car:** we are situated on the

A379 Torquay to Teignmouth Road.

**By Bus:** Bus 85 to Ness Drive

**By Train:** The nearest Station is Teignmouth, then take the river ferry or local bus to zoo.

## Prices

For current prices please phone the Trust on 01 626 872234 or visit our website on [www.shaldonwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.shaldonwildlifetrust.org.uk)

## Opening times

Summer 10am to 6pm

Winter 11am to 4pm

Open every day except Christmas Day



Ness Drive, Shaldon,

Near Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 0HP

Telephone: 01 626 872234

[www.shaldonwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.shaldonwildlifetrust.org.uk)

[info@shaldonwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:info@shaldonwildlifetrust.org.uk)

# Shaldon Wildlife Trust

# is truly unique





*Set in an acre of woodland garden above the attractive coastal village of Shaldon, we look after, and help preserve, some of the rarest and most endangered animals in the world.*



**The Trust** took over its current site (which was then a children's zoo) in 1979 and in 1985 was granted charitable status. It is now home to a unique collection of endangered animals which are in need of dedicated care if they are not to become extinct, many of which are not found in larger zoos.

As the smallest member of the British and European Zoo Associations (BIAZA & EAZA) we have concentrated our energy and expertise on smaller animals which are just as interesting, if not more so, than their larger relatives.

On approaching the Trust you can count the beautiful species attracted by our butterfly garden and then enjoy the sight and smell of our lush semi-tropical gardens within the Trust.

See the colourful manes and striking features of our marmosets and tamarins from South America

including our family of pygmy marmosets, the smallest monkey in the world. Admire our beautiful ocelot cats, one of the smaller and rarer big cats. See close up our groups of lemurs, unique to the island of Madagascar: the teddy-bear resembling gentle lemur, the striking tails of the ring-tailed lemur and the very vocal ruffed lemur. Enjoy watching the escapades of our inquisitive meerkats and intelligent and mischievous yellow-breasted capuchins which through habitat destruction and heavy hunting are now one of the world's top 25 most endangered primates.

Our bug room houses our collection of poison-dart frogs and creepy crawlies. See if you can spot our free-roaming geckos. Here in our lovely woodland setting you will also find owls, agoutis and acouchis living in close proximity to kookaburras, gundis and the tiny mouse-deer.

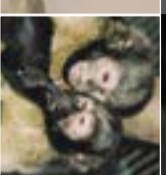
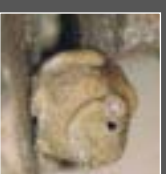


We work closely with other zoos, wildlife parks and conservation bodies to try and ensure the long-term survival of our animals. The majority of the animals kept at Shaldon are part of EEP and ESB breeding programmes. *(European endangered species programmes).*

We are especially proud of the in-situ projects we support in the wild. We help to fund ongoing field studies in the Atlantic Forest in Brazil for yellow-breasted capuchins, the Owston's palm civet conservation programme in Vietnam and projects for the critically endangered pied tamarin in Manaus, Brazil.

### Part of the local community

The Trust is very much part of the local community, as with only 2 paid staff, we rely on the skills and talents of a team of over 40 volunteers for all aspects of our work.



# Wild Earth

## Kenya Safari

An eight hour flight from Heathrow to Nairobi left us tired and ready for bed as we arrived at the Holiday Inn just outside the city it was now 6 o'clock am. The weather was good and already warming up. The roads were dusty and busy with traffic. After a good sleep we awoke to explore the hotels two pools a bar and gift shops.

After a day of leisure we were packed and ready to move onto our next base. The infamous Treetops- we arrived for lunch at the adjoining hotel Outspan with its beautiful gardens and colonial feel we were entertained by African dance with intermittent Christmas carols as today was Christmas eve which seemed hard to believe when the weather was well into the 70's. Food was buffet and rather nice - soups, salads, fruit and very fattening desserts!!

We then started our adventure into the reserves Treetops made especially famous by the queen as it was here she had entered as a princess and left a queen. The drive took fifty minutes, the scenery was green and lush, and the fields were full of Kenyan coffee fields scattered with scarecrows. We drove up into the dusty hills into the boundaries of Abedares Park towards Treetops. We immediately saw an elephant grazing (-something they do 16 hours a day!!!) - Which would turn out to be the first of many sightings that day. As we left the bus and started our walk to the hotel I couldn't help but feel very vulnerable as we walked the same grounds where the elephants and buffalos roamed but it was apparently safe, the feeling of apprehension however soon left as stood before what was a very surreal site. A hotel made of wood on stacks looking very rickety and shack like but



The place had a feeling of Alcatraz with its small windows with wooden criss-cross bars presumably to keep out the predators.

amazing In front there was a salt lick lake and behind stood a bathing lake for the four legged guests. The place had a feeling of Alcatraz with its small windows with wooden criss-cross bars presumably to keep out the predators. The entrance took us up into a spiral staircase into corridors with wooden panelled walls and the occasional branches that had grown up into building. The room and corridors reminded me of a boat without the rocking! The building had four levels with a rooftop viewing platform to view the animal visitors.

This evening the visitors would be elephants, lots of elephants, that would come and go with young calves, to eat drink, bathe, guard its territory and trumpet loudly. It was fascinating spectating the goings on especially when a calf fell into the water and was quickly rescued by its mother after a lot of panicking and bellowing. She hooked her trunk under juniors' bottom and lifted him out to safety. All wet and ashamed the calf walked away. Elephant watching that evening showed me how they were very family orientated. The interesting talks given by the Treetops guide also covered elephant and rhino behaviour.

We finally went to bed as the full moon shone down in our quirky and basic rooms, the hotel





destination this included crossing the equator here we were shown a demonstration north of the equator and south – the water really did flow opposite directions and on the equator the water flowed directly downwards and I always thought it had been a myth!

We arrived at Samburu after driving past many shanty villages with roaming dogs, men chatting huddled in circles, women carrying bundles of sticks, and water carrying donkeys. The entry into the Samburu lodge was very grand. The lodges were wooden with two single beds already kitted out with mosquito nets something very necessary as we were over looking Uaso Nyiro River (Brown River), here rested crocodiles and where elephants visited to take a drink. A cool refreshing passion juice greeted us at reception. Reception and restaurant were Samburu tribal themed with masks and spears and a few bits of tinsel scattered around. It was very hard to keep remembering it was Christmas day when it was so warm. The lodges had balconies and use of pool and sun beds but not much time for that now as we were off on our first game drive. During the drive we saw the most amazing animals birds and plants, more elephants, gazelles, dik diks, giraffes, velvet monkeys, baboons, water buck and sadly a dead elephant which we were told had died of old age but down wind phew what a smell,

had fifty rooms with its twin beds and communal toilets and showers knowing that should any interesting animals arrive, a optional buzzer in the bedroom would alert guests if something special were to show up. It was a strange feeling drawing the curtains and seeing elephants outside not a normal site I was accustomed to. The continuous barging and noisy munching of the elephants did not make for a very peaceful sleep. Awaking at six we were able to watch the water buffalo ambling down to the lake as the sun rose and Mount Kenya was visible through the breaking clouds. What a way to start the day. Elephants had come and gone through the night which had kept the other animals away so therefore no buzz in the night. It was now time to leave after a swift cup of tea and biscuit to return to Outspan for breakfast. I had enjoyed the stay here and could see why it was a popular honeymoon destination, and anyway if it was good enough for royalty it was certainly good enough for me.

Treetops was a totally different experience compared with the jeep safaris ahead- here the animals came to us and allowed us to watch them in their natural habitat we were able to sit and watch them all night if desired – but remember to bring a thick blanket. The nights get very chilly.

After breakfast we set off for our next



but this had attracted a lioness who didn't seem too impressed and wandered off. We also had the pleasure of seeing a cheetahs head poking up through the grasses and then two cheetahs walked across in front of us, at this stage there were nineteen other buses observing. We felt like paparazzi with our

cameras raised and clicking.

Thursday 27th December turned out to be a very important day and historical day we were later to discover for Kenya - voting day. Everyone had a day off from school and work. Kanyaatti our guide detoured off the planned route to his home village and we drove into a very out of the way area to a building where we patiently sat in the bus while many, many African faces peered back and whispered and laughed at us. How we felt like those cheetahs right now.

It was to turn out to be a very powerful, memorable day, as two days after the polling stations had closed the results were being read out over the radios. Tension and uneasiness was already filtering through the airwaves I was oblivious to what this was all meaning and what laid ahead. We

carried on our journey a 325 km journey that took about four and half hours. We drove through the Rift Valley, here the scenery



was amazing we could see for miles. We returned back to Nairobi and pressures were at boiling point we were dropped off back at the Holiday Inn and given very strict instructions not to leave the hotel grounds. People rushed around in a flurry, helicopters flew around overhead-they were the police scanning the areas for trouble.

After a few hours we were moved swiftly away out of central Nairobi to go to the airport, but we first had to drive through the nearly deserted streets-people were staying away from the predicted troubles.

Once home and watching the news we became fully aware of the extent that had been looming, we had obviously just avoided being in the middle of a massacre and felt shocked and very saddened that this beautiful country with so much to offer



Photo's by Lee Midgley

was destroying so much of its potential and more importantly itself.

It was my best outstanding holiday so far to see so many wonderful wild animals but sadly so marred by this human disaster.

**Nicola Adams**, Travel Writer



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# *Wild Earth* CAT'S



Cat Photo's



A Leopard resting in a Tree, Lake Nakaru, Kenya.

The leopard is an agile and graceful predator. Although smaller than the other members of *Panthera*, the leopard is still able to take large prey given a massive skull that well utilizes powerful jaw muscles. Its body is comparatively long for a cat and its legs are short. Males are considerably larger than females and weigh 37 to 90 kg compared to 28 to 60 kg for females.

Leopards have been reported to reach 21 years of age in captivity.



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