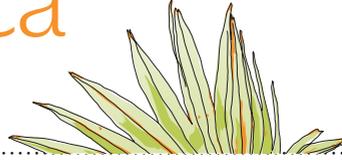


Defending lions in East Africa

people's
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species

Amy Dickman reports
direct from the field



Welcome to two new lion defenders!

The Ruaha Carnivore Project (RCP) recently welcomed two new Lion Defenders, Joseph and Alex. Joseph lives in the Maasai community of Namalok, an area of high conflict adjacent to community protected land. Conflict has increased so much in Namalok over the last year that the community has asked to join the Lion Defender programme.

Alex joins the team in Idodi village, another hotspot for conflict. We are extremely happy to have him on board as he's very influential in the local area, and was reputed to be particularly influential

with young hunters. However, he is now very committed to conservation, so we hope he can help spread that message amongst remaining hunters. We're excited to have these two new members as a part of our team! ●





Porridge Project makes kids happy and improves performance at school

A whole day of school on an empty stomach is more than can be expected of any young child. Even if they attend school (which does not always happen around Ruaha), their grumbling tummies affect their ability to learn. RCP has worked closely with schools and educational authorities to address this, by building a community 'porridge project' where we provide free school lunches to primary school children.

RCP funds school meals in two schools, helping to feed over 600 students every day. A nutritious porridge with wheat flour, milk plus a boiled egg boosts energy levels. It also increases the children's ability to learn as well as helping with

their development. Both schools are very happy with the positive changes they see in the children. They are especially pleased with the improved examination results and the fact that fewer children are skipping school. ●



Lion Defenders attend annual Lion Guardian Games

The Annual Lion Guardian games is a huge event, and a great opportunity for our Lion Defenders to meet up with Lion Guardians from Kenya and warriors from northern Tanzania. Gathering every year for the games is something our Lion Defenders really look forward to.

The Lion Guardians from Kenya provided training to the group on how to respond to poisoning events, something

which is unfortunately becoming more common across east Africa. Our team of Lion Defenders also shared their experience on how the RCP has dealt with poisoning in the past. At the end of the training they were presented with a poison response kit. We've returned back to work rejuvenated and full of knowledge to help us continue to address human-wildlife conflict. ●



LEFT: Lion Defender Darem Philipo has always been a champion runner and has won two years in a row - but had to settle for runner up this year!

Lion Defenders' dancing events grow more and more popular!

In Barabaig culture, men are awarded “dancing rights” after spearing a lion, which enables them to have fun and mingle with young women! RCP has worked with the Lion Defenders and community members to support this activity with a twist; instead of hosting an event for those who speared lions, we host an event for everyone in a community that has not killed a lion in the past month. These events are wildly popular with around 50 youth attending each month.

While it's intended to be an informal and fun event, RCP also uses the opportunity to explain our programmes and objectives. This is especially important as the Barabaig are highly mobile and often new Barabaig pastoralists arrive in the area with no knowledge of what we do. We have a broader Lion Defender programme which specifically engages young warriors in lion conservation, but this is a fun way of engaging and informing the wider community about our work. ●



ABOVE: Women gather at dancing events

LEFT: The men demonstrate their jumping skills

Camera trapping benefits used to help pastoralists after conflict

Lion attacks at bomas - traditional livestock enclosures - are a major challenge for the local pastoralists. Our team does all it can to reduce them, such as reinforcing bomas with wire and enabling RCP's Lion Defenders to guard the enclosures overnight.

After an unfortunate attack on a donkey recently, a pastoralist requested

assistance for veterinary medicine to help it recover. The donkey had several infected injuries. Families, especially women, depend on donkeys to transport water and firewood from distant locations. The loss of one animal and the resulting increase in workload can even prevent young girls from attending school. As part of RCP's Community Camera Trap programme, pastoralists are allocated a third of the "prize money" for veterinary medicine, so part of this was used to assist the affected pastoralist. Although it is difficult to suffer an attack, we hope the benefits can help pastoralists tolerate such incidents. ●



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