

Proposal to Conservation Force

Lion Conservation Education for African Pastoralists

**Dr. Laurence Frank, Director
LIVING WITH LIONS
-Laikipia Predator Project
-Kilimanjaro Lion Conservation Project**

**Museum of Vertebrate Zoology
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720
USA**

**and
Wildlife Conservation Society
Email: lgfrank@berkeley.edu**

25 March 2005

Amount Requested: \$10,000

To be administered by:

**Great Cats Program
Wildlife Conservation Society
Bronx Zoo
2300 Southern Blvd., Bronx, NY, 10460, USA
Tel: 718 220 5896, Fax: 718 364 4275**

Incorporated as a 501(c) (3) organization



Summary

Throughout Africa, lions are disappearing because people kill them to protect livestock. People are abandoning the ancient technologies that allowed coexistence between lions and livestock and are spearing and poisoning lions on a scale which threatens extinction outside the largest parks and managed areas. With generous grants from the Conservation Force, the Dallas Safari Club, the Dallas Ecological Foundation, and Arthur and Elena Court, we have produced a lion conservation video in the Maasai language that is being widely shown to traditional peoples in Kenya's main pastoralist areas. It has been extremely well received by rural audiences and has become the centerpiece of our existing community conservation efforts, as well as two new regional ones. In showing the film in Masai-speaking areas, we are frequently asked for a version in Swahili, the regional language which is understood by everyone in East Africa. We are also starting a new initiative with the Wildlife Conservation Society, putting on workshops for national conservation departments and conservation NGO's on lion conservation throughout eastern and southern Africa. The film will be the centerpiece of those workshops, and this will also need to be in Swahili.

Background

The African lion (*Panthera leo*) has been drastically reduced in range and population since European settlement of the continent. The best current scientific estimates is about 29,000 (IUCN, 2006), fully half of which are in one country, Tanzania. They are concentrated in six large protected or managed areas, three of which are in Tanzania. The others are scattered among small, isolated parks across eastern and southern Africa, most of which are too isolated from each other to provide long term population viability; small populations are threatened by disease, inbreeding, and political instability. If lions are to survive in the wild, it is critically important that viable populations persist among and between protected/managed areas.

Like all other large predators, lions are disappearing primarily because people kill them to protect livestock. In spite of sensational publicity, there is no credible evidence that either sport hunting or disease play any role in the process, but habitat destruction and bushmeat poaching no doubt have eliminated natural prey in many areas. The situation has reached a crisis for a number of reasons:

- Because lions do so well in parks, conservationists have largely ignored the collapse outside protected areas.
- Human and livestock populations are larger than ever, and there is little wilderness left without cattle and goats.
- African pastoralists are undergoing massive social and economic change, one result of which is loss of tolerance for wildlife.
- Lions are by far the easiest of all predators to kill, so depredation that was caused by other carnivores is often taken out on them. Additionally lion killing brings great prestige.
- African pastoralists now have access to cheap and effective poison.
- Young Masai men no are longer able to raid for livestock, leaving only lion spearing as a culturally familiar way to prove their manhood.
- In some areas such as Kenya, there is no sport hunting, so wildlife has no positive monetary value to offset the price of living with it.

The Conservation Projects

Living with Lions (the Laikipia Predator Project and the Kilimanjaro Lion Conservation Project) is working on both the biology of lions outside protected areas, and on ways to improve livestock husbandry so that pastoralists are less likely to indiscriminately kill predators (Ogada et al., 2003; Frank et al. 2005). Both projects are in Kenya, but all results are generic, widely applicable throughout eastern and southern Africa where most wildlife range is also livestock country.

In Kenya, traditional herding peoples have discovered that it is easier to poison predators indiscriminately rather than use the ancient methods of close herding and well-built bomas (thornbush corrals). Further, effective poison is now widely available and very cheap. Lastly, in Kenya predators have had no positive value outside of parks since sport hunting was shut down; we have seen a 70% decline in all wildlife, and collapse of lion populations since the hunting ban in 1977. Thus, we are working hard to convince the government that they must reinstate properly managed hunting if wildlife is to survive in this country. In 2006, Johan Banovich and LGF brought the Speaker of the Kenyan National Assembly to the DSC and SCI conventions. A March 1, 2007 draft of the new Parliamentary Review of the Wildlife Act strongly recommends giving communities and landowners rights to manage and benefit from wildlife, including hunting. It remains to be seen whether that document will survive the vast expenditure of influence money by foreign animal rights groups.

Our Laikipia Predator Project has shown that ancient methods of livestock husbandry are remarkably effective in protecting livestock from predators (Ogada et al; 2003; Frank et al, 2005); this should not be surprising, as people have kept cattle, sheep and goats in Africa for thousands of years, in the presence of far greater numbers of predators than exist today. However, these simple methods are being abandoned due to large-scale social and economic changes that have occurred within Maasailand in the past 20 years. However, it is critically important to remind people that they actually know very well how to protect their livestock with traditional simple techniques; where they have the economic incentive of income from tourism or hunting, building good bomas and carefully herding their livestock is worth the effort.

The Video Project

In order to reach a larger audience, both in Laikipia-Samburu (20,000 square miles) and in Kenyan and Tanzanian Masailand (nearly 40,000 square miles, the largest and most important wildlife habitat left in Africa), we have produced an educational video on predator conservation and livestock management, filmed in local settings and using local Masai-speaking people as narrators. This was supported by grants of \$5000 each from the Dallas Safari Club, the Dallas Ecological Foundation Elena and Arthur Court, and \$2250 from Conservation Force. A further donation in 2006, through John Banovich's PRIDE initiative, was used for KLCP operating expenses. The video is being shown widely in community meetings throughout Laikipia-Samburu by Steven Ekwanga, our community education officer, and throughout Kenyan Masailand through our new initiative, Lion Guardians. DVD projectors, DVD players and two generators have been purchased through a grant from the Denver Zoo. ***The great majority of pastoralists have never seen a TV, let alone a film, so this is a very powerful way to reach people with a conservation message.***



Community film show in Laikipia, Sept. 2006. Seventy people in a 15' x 20' one room schoolhouse.

The film has been beautifully produced by Kenyan film makers Jenny Sharman and Richard Jones, with wonderful footage of practical livestock management advice, wildlife, and local narrators in traditional settings, accompanied by a soundtrack by a local Masai musician. It covers the following issues, all featuring local people speaking Masai:

- The value of wildlife in general and lions in particular. Many people will have never actually seen lions and other wildlife, and this footage generates much excitement.
- A realistic appraisal of the costs of living with lions, featuring footage of cattle killed by predators and local people discussing their livestock losses.
- The efficacy of traditional measures in protecting livestock from predators.
- The circumstances under which predators turn to livestock, including:
 - faulty bomas
 - poor daytime herding
 - availability of livestock remains around settlements
 - absence of dogs
 - absence of natural prey species
- Detailed illustrations of methods that protect livestock, narrated by highly respected elders
- Extensive discussion of overgrazing and alternative approaches to a livestock-based economy, which is becoming increasingly difficult due to overgrazing.

Thus far, the video has been seen by over 1200 rural pastoralists, in 19 different showings, equally divided between Laikipia and Masailand. These initial showings were 'focus groups', in which we asked for extensive comments, criticisms and suggestions for improvements. For instance, we found that we may need two slightly different versions to accommodate differing

regional sensitivities in the two areas. The reactions have been overwhelmingly positive, and we are swamped with demands for reshowings, and requests from other areas. Further, other conservationists and tourism operators throughout the region are asking us to schedule showings in their areas. Most importantly, the film is remarkably effective, engendering long discussions after each showing, and palpable changes in attitude among the viewers, who initially are almost uniformly anti-lion. These discussions will remain a part of the program indefinitely and the results documented, allowing us to track changes in community attitudes over time. Part of a suite of related initiatives in our main study areas in Laikipia and on Mbirikani Group Ranch in Masailand, the film is producing remarkable changes in attitude and tolerance, in only a few months.

International Human-Lion Conflict Mitigation Initiative

We are starting a new program with the Wildlife Conservation Society that will involve travel to other eastern and southern African countries to educate local game departments and conservation NGO's on practical methods to reduce lion-human conflict; initially, we will be working in Tanzania, Mozambique, and Botswana. Because it so effectively deals with all the major conservation issues of predators, livestock, and landuse, we will design these workshops around the film.

Translation into Swahili

When showing the video on the edges of masai-speaking areas, we are frequently asked for a Swahili version, which would be understandable to virtually everyone in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. For use in the international initiative, Swahili will be essential, as we will be running workshops in non-Masai speaking areas. For use in Botswana and Zimbabwe, we will eventually need an English version, as well, but the first priority is a Swahili one.

Budget

The current version will need to be entirely re-edited, with a new voiceover and translation of all the speaking parts into Swahili. This is a big job, and True Nature Films estimates that it will cost \$10,000. We will eventually also need to do an English version for use in Southern Africa, and a ten minute version in English for use as an educational and fund-raising tool in the US. However, the first priority is the Swahili one, as it will be most widely used initially. Thus, we are asking Conservation Force for \$10,000 to produce that.

References

- Frank, L.G., Woodroffe, R.B., and Ogada, M. 2005. People and predators in Laikipia District, Kenya. In *The Conservation of Wildlife that Conflicts with Man* Ed. By R.B. Woodroffe, S. Thirgood & A. Rabinowitz. Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Frank, L.G., MacLennan, S.M., Hazzah, L, Bonham. R., and Hill, T. 2006. *Lion Killing in the Amboseli -Tsavo Ecosystem, 2001-2006, and its Implications for Kenya's Lion Population*. www.Lionconservation.org.
- Hazzah, L. 2007a. Living with Lions. *Wildlife Conservation*: March-April, 2007 6-9.

Hazzah, L. 2007b. *Living among lions: Coexistence or killing? Community attitudes towards conservation and the motivations behind lion killing in Kenyan Maasailand*. MS Thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Ogada, M., Woodroffe, R.B., Oguge, N.N. and Frank, L.G. 2003. Limiting depredation by African carnivores: the role of livestock husbandry. *Conservation Biology* 17: 1521-1530

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Frank, L.G., MacLennan, S.M., Hazzah, L., Bonham, R., and Hill, T. 2006. *Lion Killing in the Amboseli -Tsavo Ecosystem, 2001-2006, and its Implications for Kenya's Lion Population*. www.Lionconservation.org.

Attached. Note that this document was written in May, 2006. By the end of 2006, at least 12 more lions had been killed in and around Amboseli National Park. A drought-related invasion of Tsavo West National Park by Masai cattle herds resulted in the poisoning of most of the lions in that park.

APPENDIX II: LION GUARDIANS

Lion Guardians

On March 3, 2007, we witnessed an unprecedented conservation achievement: hundreds of young warriors of Mbirikani Group Ranch met to celebrate the end of lion-killing as a manhood ritual, and the beginning of lion conservation as a career for young men. The Lion Guardians initiative (Hazzah 2007; Appendix II) has come out of Leela Hazzah's anthropological work on changing Masai attitudes toward conservation and predators. It is turning young Masai men, the great majority of whom are uneducated and unemployable, from lion killers into conservationists and community educators (see accompanying proposal). They are responsible for monitoring and protecting lions in their areas, informing their neighbors of lions' presence, helping people find lost livestock before they can be taken by predators, and educating their communities about conservation in general, and livestock protection in particular. The video will be the centerpiece of this initiative, and we are seeking funds for a vehicle which will be outfitted as a mobile video theater, and will also be used by the coordinator of the Lion Guardian project as it expands throughout the region.

History

A result of synergy and synthesis between KLCP, the Mbirikani Predator Compensation Fund, and the Community Game Scouts, Lion Guardians seeks to extend and ultimately transform lion scouts into an organization of Maasai warriors not only responsible for conserving lions but also educating local communities in improved livestock management and the economic value of wildlife. The Lion Guardians program will encourage large-scale local community participation in the design and implementation of the program, incorporating key aspects of Maasai tradition and culture within a novel conservation-based structure. The resulting 'ownership' of conservation by the warrior age group within their respective local communities will result in increased tolerance towards carnivores, thereby enhancing the sustainable coexistence of humans and predators.



Chief Lion Guardian Mukoi ole Kanatia radio tracking a lioness he discovered, named and helped collar .

The Lion Guardian program is comprised of five elements intended to reduce conflict and increase tolerance toward lions and other predators: (1) employment for Maasai warriors -- in response to otherwise chronic unemployment -- with the attendant prestige and status associated with a job; (2) cash wages and a central community fund (equal to 20% of each employee's salary) to be used for small projects chosen by each local community; (3) continued monitoring of lions and other carnivores, using telemetry, GPS readings, and printed forms submitted weekly; (4) education and hands-on assistance at the local community-level to reduce depredation by (a) improving the quality of livestock enclosures and the methods employed in herding livestock; (b) alerting herders to the location of predators when they are nearby; and (c) finding lost livestock before they are depredated. (5) Lion Guardians will always look for guidance and leadership in terms of refinements and extensions of the program from the warrior age group of each local community served.

Status

The lion scouts presently employed on Mbirikani Group Ranch (all of them warriors) will become the first lion guardians, reporting to KLCP. Each lion scout is presently trained to record lion and other carnivore presence when encountered and cell phones and hand-held radios are employed to report back these sightings for follow-up actions as appropriate. Further training and expansion of duties as described here will be managed by the Lion Guardian coordinator of KLCP with support from the conservation team. The program has only been in operation for three months, but the is huge demand – the prestige associated with bin a lion scout is hard to overestimate. We currently have as many unpaid volunteers as paid scouts, and have to turn down applicants daily.

Goals

Lion Guardians is a complementary economics-based addition to the conservation model, targeted at a critically important segment of the population: young warriors; nevertheless,

adequate testing and refinement as well as clear proof of success and cost efficiency will be required before roll-out to the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem. The pilot-test phase on MGR is expected to last from one to two years. During this period, KLCP's program of screening educational conservation films in all local communities will continue under Lion Guardian leadership across the ecosystem. Subject matter of the film series will be expanded to include not only animal husbandry and human-wildlife conflict resolution, but also the sustainable management of natural resources and an educational film about environment and conservation.