

Day 7, Friday, 14 Dec 2001

Foal Patrol

Today we were hoping to locate and photograph 14 GZ foals that had been previously reported by us or by the park rangers (*escari*). We began on Bosnia Burn and spent 2 1/2 hours before locating our foal. We did manage to follow and photograph the female foal, her mom and a territorial male who was with them. The female was in estrous and the male made his call and attempted to mount her - it looked as if there was no penetration, although the mare did stand.

Next, we traveled up to Simba Ridge. We didn't find the 4 who are usually close to the road, but we spotted them in the distance. We decided to try for photos another time. We carried on further down the loop and located 2 foals we had seen earlier in the week. The small group had been enlarged by one more female (quite pregnant). Again, we photographed the females, male and foals, both of which appeared to be female.

By this time, we had looked so long, that we decided to go to the other areas on another day. It was encouraging to see large gatherings of GZ on the higher pastures and water sources in the Isiolo valley. Our first large sighting was of over 60 GZ, but higher up we saw groups of 90 or more. Truly a reassuring sight since previous "large" groups had been 8 or so GZ.

On our way back, we stopped at headquarters to pick up a package for Bel - turned out to be flowers from her boy friend, Jeremy, who is in England. She was quite pleased!

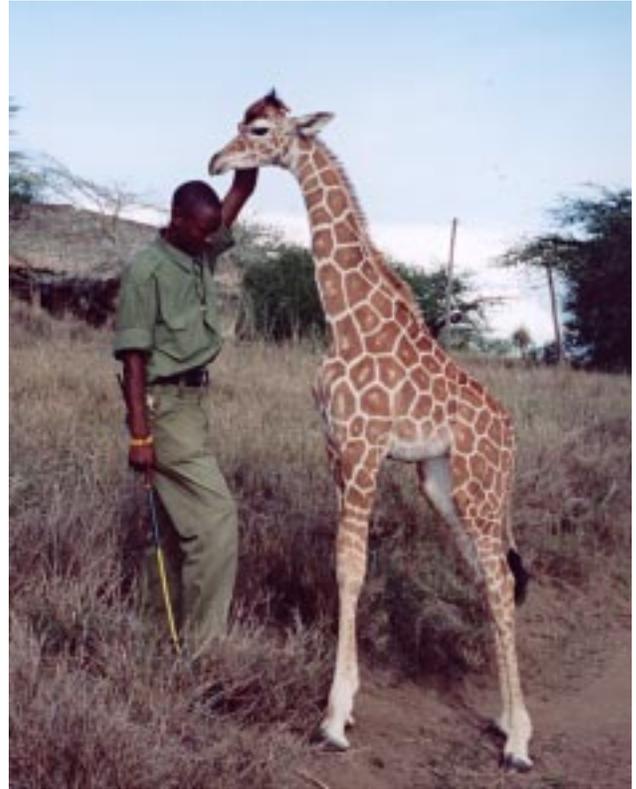
Omni and Digby



We went on to visit "Omni" and Digby." They are being raised in the orphan compound near Ian Craig's house. Digby was off somewhere, but Omni, a 2 year old black rhino male, was outside with 2 keepers. We got lots of photos and even got to touch him as he went past the truck. He was brought into captivity because his mother is blind and the *escari* feared the other black rhino males would kill him. Plans are being made to transfer him to Il ngwasi and eventually to return him to the wild. We had hoped that his pal Digby could go with him, but apparently Omni is already getting a little rough for the little wart hog.

Sera

We also met Sera who is somewhere around 4 to 6 weeks old. She's a lovely reticulated giraffe foal who is quite sure of herself. She nibbled Alison's hair and let me touch her, but retreated into the compound when too many people gathered round. One of the escari brought her out again so we could photograph her. When she had had enough, she reared, kicked with her front and hind feet, and otherwise let it be known that she was going in! She is named after the place from where she was rescued. It seems that giraffes are notoriously inattentive mothers and leave their babies for long periods of time. Sera was apparently feeling a little lonely and when a herd of cattle were driven past her, she simply joined them and followed them home. The tribesmen didn't know what to do with her, so they called Lewa for help.



Other sightings of the day: rock hyrax and a greater kudu (lactating female). We assume that she had a very young calf hidden nearby since that is reported to be the only time they are found alone.

In the evening, we had a bar-b-que with Alex - an English zoologist who works with James in Community Relations. He tells a wonderful story of a lost baby elephant that he and Ian Craig found in a well and rescued despite having only a super cub airplane as transportation. Alex also talked with us about a proposal he has to reestablish an elephant migration corridor from Mt. Kenya to Lewa and hopefully beyond. We were all so entranced with his stories and ideas, that we stayed up way past our usual fall into bed time of 17:00.