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Support from the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation, Artemis Investment Management and the Safaricom Marathon has given the Maasailand Preservation Trust in the Chyulu Hills, Kenya, a huge boost in the form of a Super Cub aircraft.

## Flying high

**I**t was exactly twenty years ago when our fledgling trust employed the first community game scouts in the Chyulu Hills. Well, actually, they were three barefoot Maasai warriors, untrained and without equipment or support, sent into the hills to look for and retrieve poaching snares.

These men were so effective that over the years the game scout team on Mbirikani Group Ranch has grown to fifty-five uniformed men, trained, armed and supported by two vehicles, two motorbikes, two donkeys, two tracker dogs, and a Super Cub! Thanks to our donors, the two-seater aeroplane is the jewel in the crown to date of all Tusk donations to the Maasailand Preservation Trust.

The Super Cub has come at a very crucial time for we have expanded

operations from the 300,000-acre Mbirikani Group Ranch to include areas as far away as the Tanzanian border where our scouts undertake cross-border operations with their Tanzanian counterparts. The plane will be used for supporting game scout ground operations in general; aerial surveillance for the Chyulu Rhino Project to help protect Kenya's only remaining wild population of black rhino; tracking radio-collared lions; conducting game counts and facilitating all-important liaison with KWS and the communities who live here with wildlife. For it is these communities that will surely have the final say so as to whether the Amboseli-Tsavu ecosystem will survive.

In 2007 Tusk agreed to support the running costs of *Bosco* and *Judy*,

(alias *Snort* and *Sniff*) two bloodhounds that were donated by Ol Jogi Ltd. *Judy* and *Bosco* have been extremely successful. In their first six months, they have been responsible for eleven arrests directly attributable to their sniffing skills. Their most successful track-up to date involved a group of cattle rustlers. The bloodhounds got on to the tracks at about 2.00 pm and followed the rustlers until sunset, slept on the trail, and continued at first light, eventually catching the thieves around 11.00 am the next day. On another occasion the Trust was informed that a well-known poacher had killed an eland. The scouts searched his house and found nothing, then called the dogs in who tracked back to where he had come from and found an eland, neatly butchered and

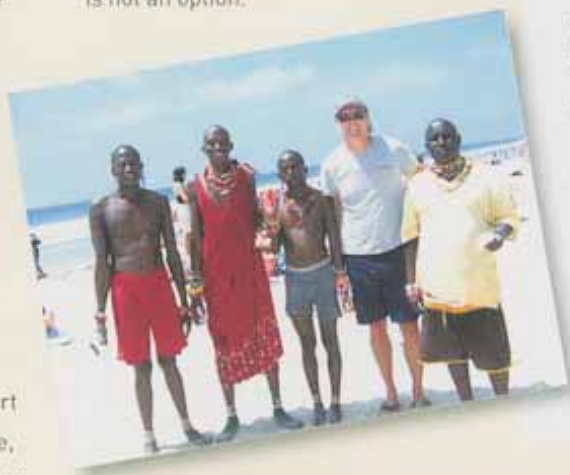


hanging in a tree, awaiting transport to market.

Tusk has become such a pillar of support for the Trust, whether it be ranger boots, radios, tracker dogs (including the all important sausage that is the reward after every training session), fuel, salaries, construction of ranger camps, and much, much more of the nitty-gritty that makes conservation work possible.

In what looks like the most challenging year to date this support is needed more than ever. As I write, Kenya is suffering from a devastating humanitarian crisis with huge economic implications, including the virtual collapse of tourism. This meltdown, in turn, means that tourism-based income sources for conservation will fall well below budgeted expectations for national parks and private conservancies alike. The management of these wildlife habitats will become even more tenuous and the ongoing support of

Tusk and other like-minded conservation organisations will determine whether we succeed or fail – the latter of which is not an option.



## Maasai Surfers!

Nine Maasai warriors could not have been further from their native savannah plains when they took part in a surfing event in California to raise money for the Maasailand Preservation Trust in Kenya.

Organised by Tyler Reed, a professional surfer, in conjunction with Tusk USA, the warriors took to the rolling seas of the Pacific Ocean in their full regalia – a first for them and for many sunbathers on the beach!

The group had been invited to the States by the San Diego Zoological Society to celebrate Maasai culture and help raise awareness of the plight of the African lion.

### TUSK FACTS

#### Some of the game scouts achievements in 2007

Game meat poacher arrests	29
Charcoal burner/stolen timber arrests	34
Vehicles impounded with illegal goods	3
Snares recovered	560
Poisoned arrows recovered	14
Elephants treated for spear wounds	2
People evacuated with wildlife injuries	2
Elephant tusks recovered	4
Stolen livestock recovered	63

