

DIARY APRIL / MAY 2004

...freedom comes at a price...

So much has happened. Not all of it good. The greatest blow has been the demise of one of the cheetahs we have been helping to rehabilitate. Sambu, the larger of the two had been doing incredibly well, hunting efficiently and generally behaving the way a wild cheetah should. He and his brother Toki had been living a wild and free existence for over three months.



But with that freedom comes a price, and it is one that Sambu has paid. Despite his familiarity with the risks posed by lions, he was killed by a male lion in the night. I cannot begin to describe the sense of personal loss I have experienced. We had grown very close to both of these magnificent cats. The only consolation is that he was living as a wild cheetah should, and the end was very swift. His brother, Toki, continues to thrive, after a period of clearly missing his companion, and is continuing a life in the wild. We have seen a mother cheetah with 2 well grown cubs on Lewa, both of which are male. There is a chance that Toki may meet up with these two after they leave their mum, and form a coalition. I am in constant touch with the guys who are conducting observations on Toki, and will be helping to guide his future where I can.

## Bass Rock



On a more positive note, I have been spending the past couple of weeks on the Bass Rock off the East coast of Scotland. This small but precipitous island is home to over 80,000 Atlantic gannets and is the largest single rock colony of this bird in the world. I have always loved visiting seabird colonies and the Bass ranks in the top ten in the world. The noise, the frenzy of

activity and general atmosphere of wilderness is utterly captivating. From there I go on to watch one of my favourite of all birds, the peregrine falcon. Next week should be fun!