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Big Cats Expert: Laly Lichtenfeld

Location: Simanjiro district, Manyara region, Tanzania

Sister School: Loibor Siret Primary School



Photo credit: African People & Wildlife Fund

BACKGROUND INFO:

Laly Lichtenfeld is the cofounder of the African People & Wildlife Fund (APW), along with her husband Charles Trout. The organization is located in the Maasai Steppe, a globally important location for lions, cheetahs, and other carnivores spanning northern Tanzania and southern Kenya. APW, a community-focused conservation organization, is credited with developing living walls, or environmentally-friendly and predator-proof bomas, a livestock protection measure intertwining native plants with chain link fencing. Once installed, bomas effectively prevent livestock death to carnivores. APW also supports community initiatives including rangeland management and wildlife clubs.

When asked why she has decided to dedicate her life to lions, Laly says, “Looking a lion in the eye and seeing that wilderness which is disappearing from the world and wanting to prevent that irreversible, unfathomable loss... The nighttime sounds of the bush, the local people I work with, the great vistas of the Maasai Steppe, the excitement of success, and the desire to overcome tomorrow’s challenges: all of these things are under my skin and in my blood.”

LEARN MORE ABOUT LALY’S SISTER SCHOOL:

School name: Loibor Siret Primary School

School’s location: Loibor Siret in the Simanjiro District of Tanzania, close to Tarangire National Park (northern Tanzania)

Number of students attending the school: Approximately 600 students



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We asked Laly the questions below to learn a bit more about the Loibor Siret Primary School and students.

Q: What is a typical day like for students?

A: Students go to school Monday through Friday, from 9:00am until 4:00pm. In the morning, each student brings wood for the fire and a jug to water the food growing in the garden. Students eat lunch at 2:00pm, after they have returned from collecting water. Because there are limited numbers of teachers, many students will sit on the school lawn or play games while waiting for their classes to take place. At the end of the day, the students walk home.

On Saturdays, the school's wildlife club, the Noloholo Lion Club, holds their weekly meeting. Meetings consist of a lesson on various environmental topics and a discussion on how to address these challenges. The students then participate in an activity and help clean the village.

Q: How has your work contributed to the students' understanding of lions?

A: Our work at the African People & Wildlife Fund involves a conservation education program that supports after-school wildlife clubs. This program covers lessons on how to care for the environment so that the wildlife, particularly lions, can thrive there. Students enjoy participating in the clubs and interacting with our education program officers. Students also participate in extracurricular programs such as our Environmental Camp. This program takes top students to our Noloholo Environmental Center for a week of dynamic, in-depth learning about ecology, animal interactions, animal adaptations, and our methods of monitoring lions and other big cats. Students have even helped build bomas to learn how the enclosures prevent retaliatory killings of big cats. Towards the end of each year, we take the students on day trips to Tarangire National Park, which many students would otherwise never be able to visit. On those trips, they can see first-hand the animals and environment that they have learned about and develop an informed perspective on the lions that roam into their backyards at night.



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Explore the photos below of the Loibor Siret Primary School and its students:



Wildlife Club members of Loibor Siret Primary School create stone borders to protect the school's vegetation from trampling feet. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



A student makes a splash at Loibor Siret Primary School as she waters the wildlife club's vegetable garden. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



Caption: A student begins painting the white background of a classroom mural created with the help of visiting wildlife artist Alison Nicholls. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



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The chairman of the Loibor Siret Lion Club, one of eight Noloholo Wildlife Clubs in primary schools around the region, paints the wall of one of the classrooms at the Loibor Siret Primary School. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



Two standard 6 students decorate the walls with letters and numbers at the Loibor Siret Primary School, using stencils, paint, and instruction provided by visiting wildlife artist Alison Nicholls. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



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Standard 6 student dressed in a protective and paw-printed blue cover shirt paints at Loibor Siret Primary School. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Lewinata.



One talented standard 6 student proudly shows off the lion he has drawn to represent his school's wildlife club, the Noloholo Lion Club. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Lewinata.



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BCI Grantee Laly Lichtenfeld (right) stands in front of the newly painted Loibor Siret Primary School with Conservation Enterprise and Development program officer Joyce Ndakaru (left), and visiting wildlife artist Alison Nicholls (center). Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



Portrait of a Maasai student at Loibor Siret Primary School in Tanzania. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



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BCI Grantee Laly Lichtenfeld presents at a student assembly at the primary school in the town of Loibor Siret, Tanzania. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



A Loibor Siret Primary School student smiles at a school assembly. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



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Young students giggle in the schoolyard at Loibor Siret Primary School in Tanzania. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



Maasai students smile together at Loibor Siret Primary School. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



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A student poses for the camera at Loibor Siret Primary School during the town's first ever art gallery, presented by Noloholo Wildlife Club members, Noloholo Environmental Scholars, and visiting wildlife artist Alison Nicholls. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



Caption: BCI Grantee Laly Lichtenfeld talks wildlife with a group of students at Loibor Siret Primary School, surrounded by co-executive director Charles Trout, staff members, and Noloholo Environmental Scholars. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



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Caption: Student assembly at Loibor Siret Primary School in Tanzania. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



Caption: Students enjoy the view of their newly-painted school wall at Loibor Siret Primary School during a Noloholo Environmental Summer Camp. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



Caption: Students in the classroom at Loibor Siret Primary School. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



Caption: Portrait of Mr. Elemch Makere, a teacher at Loibor Siret Primary School. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



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Caption: An older student guides two younger students in front of Loibor Siret Primary School. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



Caption: Four students smile for the camera at Loibor Siret Primary School. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



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Caption: Community members gather to celebrate the new library at Loibor Siret Primary School, the first of its kind in all of Northern Tanzania. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.



Caption: Young students perform at an assembly celebrating the new library at Loibor Siret Primary School with students and leaders from Interconnections 21, a U.S. not-for-profit that partnered with the African People & Wildlife Fund to construct the new building. Photo courtesy of the African People & Wildlife Fund/Deirdre Leowinata.