

# Protecting the Herd

SAN FRANCISCO NONPROFIT WILDAID KEEPS  
ENDANGERED SPECIES SAFE THROUGH EDUCATION

*By Marsala Rypka | Swahili translation courtesy of Fr. Sambya Zawadi*

The statistics are heartbreaking. In 1970, there were 1.5 million African elephants; now there are 400,000. There were 100,000 lions; now there are 20,000. There were 65,000 black rhinos; now there are 5,000.

Wildlife is in such peril that on March 19, 2018, global news outlets reported the death of 45-year-old Sudan, the last male northern white rhino on the planet at Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya. Only two females remain.

Imagine how tragic a world it would be if wild animals could only be viewed in captivity at zoos instead of roaming free in their natural habitat because they had been hunted to extinction.

Thanks to the efforts of people such as British-born Peter Knights, a former Greenpeace activist and undercover investigator of illegal wildlife trade, and his wife, Corie, endangered species have a chance of surviving.

When Peter co-founded WildAid, a San Francisco nonprofit in 2000, he took a different approach. Instead of focusing on protecting wildlife, he focused on educating consumers and reducing demand. WildAid's tagline is "When the Buying Stops, the Killing Can Too."

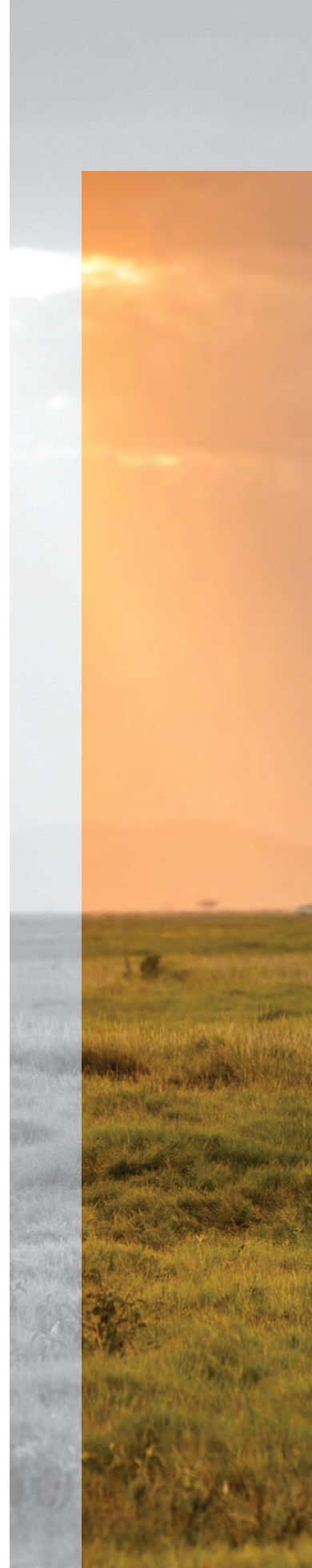
Nambari hizi ni za kutisha Mwaka 1970, kulikuwa na tembo za Afrika milioni 1.5; sasa kuna 400,000. Kulikuwa na simba elfu 100,000; sasa kuna 20,000. Kulikuwa na hinoceros nyeusi 65,000; sasa kuna 5,000.

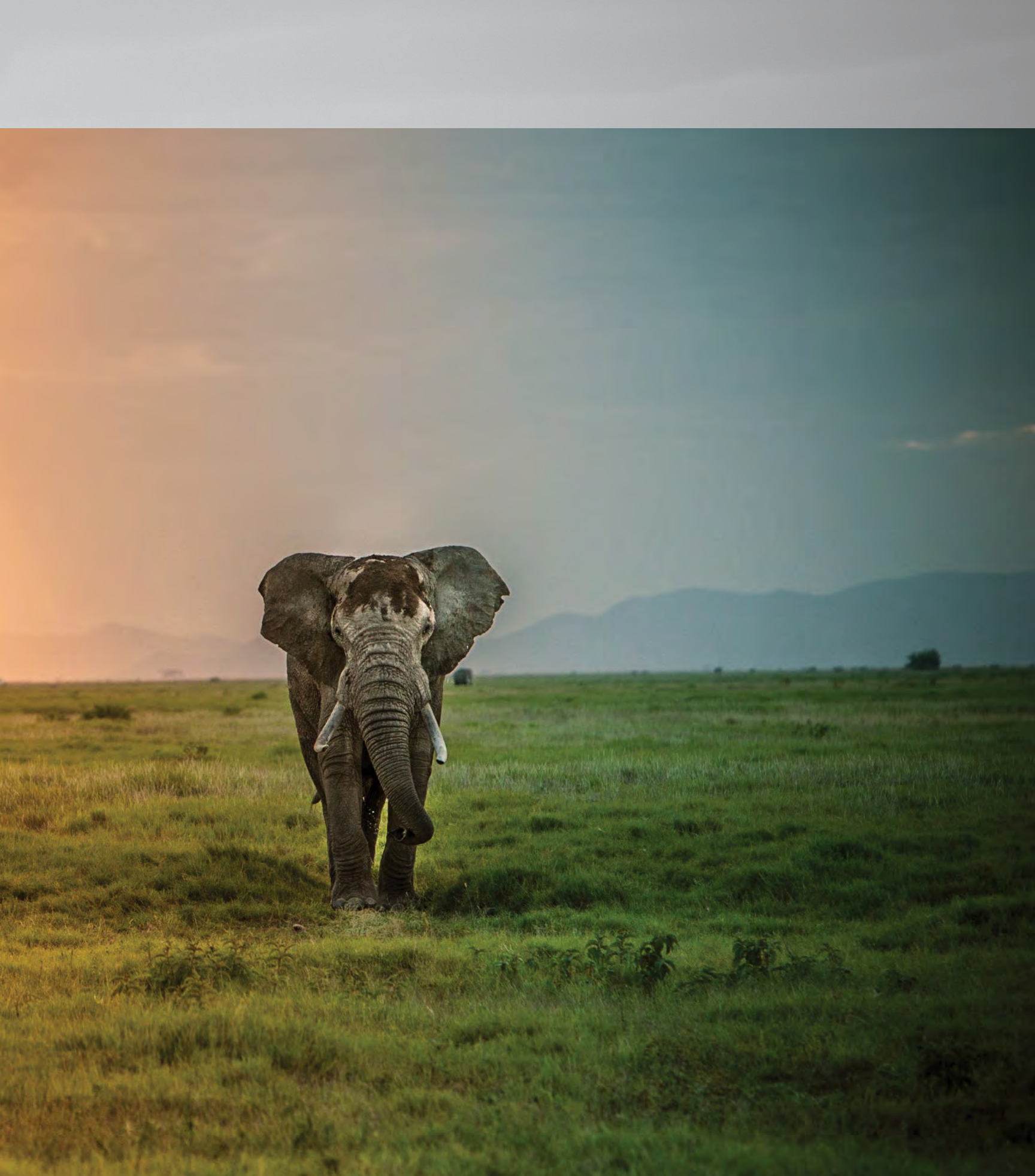
Wanyamapori walikuwa katika hatari kama hiyo mnamo Machi 19, 2018, vyombo vya habari vilivyoripoti ya kwamba Sudan mwenye umri wa miaka 45, mwanamume wa mwisho wa kaskazini mweupe, alikufa katika Ol Pejeta Conservancy nchini Kenya. Wanawake wawili tu waliobaki.

Dunia itakuwa mahali pa kusikitisha ikiwa wanyama wataweza kuonekana tu katika zoo na si katika mazingira yao ya asili kwa sababu wote wameuawa.

Shukrani kwa watu kama Peter Knights, mwanaharakati wa zamani wa Greenpeace na mke wake Corie, wanyama waliohatarishwa wana nafasi ya kuishi.

Petro alipoanza WildAid huko San Francisco mwaka 2002, alionyesha kweli. WildAid inasema "Acha ununuzi, uacha kuua."





*photo by Kristian Schmidt*



“When we began, most people thought ivory and rhino horn came from animals that died naturally. They didn’t know thousands were being slaughtered for their body parts,” says Peter.

WildAid gets its message out through campaigns like “Join the Herd” and \$300 million a year in donated media placement (mostly in China), along with help from 200 or so celebrity ambassadors and a small team of staff members, partners, supporters and contributors in the U.S., Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America.

In 2013, Peter met HRH Prince William at a Wildlife Crime Conference in London, where the prince agreed to do a public service announcement for WildAid and offered to enlist David Beckham to join him and Yao Ming.

“It was hard coordinating schedules, but we shot two PSAs at Wembley Stadium, and Prince William did the tagline in Vietnamese and Mandarin,” says Peter. “When he visited China, our PSA aired 75 times a day on Chinese state TV.”

WildAid’s campaigns raise public awareness and put pressure on the Chinese government. In the last three years, the consumption of shark fin soup declined 82 percent and the sale of ivory was banned starting Jan. 1, 2018, following a two-thirds reduction in price.

WildAid operates on grants from foundations and individual gifts. For the past six years, Charity Navigator has given WildAid a perfect 100 score for fiscal responsibility and good governance. One of the ways the nonprofit raises money is by bringing its donors on safaris to Africa.

“These aren’t your typical safari tours. They are immersive experiences with a conscience we call ‘Journeys With Heart,’ where people learn about conservation,” says Corie, who is in charge of major gift donations, planning WildAid’s annual November gala and donor trips to Africa, the Galapagos Islands and Mexico, where people swim with whale sharks and giant manta rays.

Their Africa adventure costs \$25,000, and each couple pledges a \$100,000 tax-deductible donation, half of which goes to WildAid’s five local partners, including The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, an orphanage for baby elephants and rhinos in Nairobi.

Oscar-winning actress Lupita Nyong’o recently visited the orphanage and says, “I’m proud of my Kenyan heritage and honored to be a WildAid global ambassador. I spent three transformative days at the Amboseli National Park and learned elephants each have unique features and a distinct character. A 1-year-old also named Lupita trumpeted loudly when her mom wouldn’t stop to breastfeed her. That made me proud. I like a girl who knows what she wants.”

Nyong’o says if it weren’t for humans, elephants would live 65 or 75 years. She explains that a live elephant creates jobs and brings in \$1 million in tourism in its lifetime. When poached, it only provides a few hundred dollars for a handful of people.

“Tulipoanza, watu wengi hawakujua tembo na rhinosarus waliuawa ili kupata pembe zao,” alisema Peter.

WildAid hutumia \$300 milioni kutangaza ujumbe huu (hasa nchini China), 200 celebrities na wafanyakazi wachache kutoka Marekani, Asia, Afrika, Ulaya, na Amerika Kusini.

Mwaka 2013, Peter alikutana na HRH Prince William huko London ambaye alifanya PSA kwa WildAid, David Beckham na Yao Ming.

“Tulifanya PSA mbili kwenye Wembley Stadium ambapo Prince William alizungumza Kivietinamu na Mandarin, “alisema Peter.” Alipokuja nchini China, PSA yetu ilionyeshwa kwenye Kichina TV mara 75 kwa siku.”

WildAid inaweka shinikizo kwa serikali ya Kichina. Katika miaka mitatu iliyopita, matumizi ya supu ya shark fin ilishuka 82% na uuzaji wa pembe ulipigwa marufuku kuanzia Januari 1, 2018.

WildAid inafanya kazi kwenye utuaji wa misaada. Kwa miaka sita Charity Navigator amewapa WildAid alama 100 kwa wajibu wa fedha. Njia moja wanayoiingiza fedha ni kuleta wafadhili Afrika.

“Hii si safari yao ya kawaida. Ni uzoefu ambapo unafunza juu ya wanyamapori,” alisema Corie, ambaye anapanga safari ya kila mwaka kwenda Afrika, Visiwa vya Galapagos, na Mexico, ambapo watu wanaogelea na papa za nyangumi.

Safari yao Afrika ilitoa \$ 25,000 na \$ 100,000 kwa maeneo ambayo yanahitaji msaada kama David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust kwa tembo huko Nairobi.

“Ninajivunia kuwa ni balozi wa Kenya WildAid. Nilikaa siku tatu katika Hifadhi ya Taifa ya Ambulance kujifunza juu ya tembo.” kasema Lupita Nyong’o.

Nyong’o alisema isingekuwa wanadamu, tembo angeishi miaka 65 au 75. Uzima wa kila tembo huleta dola milioni moja kwa utalii. Wanapouliwa kunakuwepo na upungufu wa mapato.



Peter Knights with actress Lupita Nyong'o in Kenya

Corie Knights and guides up close with an elephant in Kenya

*photos by Kristian Schmidt*











photo by Kristian Schmidt



Peter and Corie Knights swimming with a whale shark in Mexico, photo by Shawn Hendricks



“An elephant is poached every 15 minutes, which means \$96 million a day is lost,” says Nyong’o. “At that rate, elephants will soon be extinct. Fortunately, brave, dedicated people at organizations like Wildlife Direct, the African Wildlife Foundation, Save the Elephants Foundation and WildAid are combating poaching. But they need our help.”

Despite the atrocities they are trying to stop, Corie, who has been to Africa 20 times, says it’s the place she feels most at peace. “Being near these majestic animals is humbling.”

Peter proposed to Corie at the Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania and they got married in 2002. Each year they celebrate their anniversary with safari guests who become family at the Ol Jogi Lodge, a 58,000-square-foot privately owned wildlife conservancy ranch in Laikipia, Kenya, lauded by CNN and Forbes as one of the best places on earth to stay. This year, daughters Julia, 13, and Charlotte, 9, joined them.

“We stay in luxurious lodges and tents and feel so privileged eating delicious food and drinking a glass of wine, surrounded by a herd of elephants at dusk,” says Corie. “Africa is magical. Prince William proposed to Kate Middleton in Kenya, and Prince Harry and Meghan Markle fell in love in Botswana. High-profile people can relax on safari, which is refreshing. One of our guests, a big finance guy, didn’t use his phone for two weeks.”

Peter, who has been to Africa 50 times, recalls some incredible moments captured by renowned photographer Kristian Schmidt. “This year we were at Amboseli when a flock of flamingos took off in a blaze of pink with Mount Kilimanjaro in the background. Then Tolstoy, a giant bull elephant in musth, came within 10 feet of our vehicle and trumpeted loudly to let us know who was boss.

“We’ve drifted through the mist at sunrise in a hot air balloon 1,000 feet above the ground while a herd of wildebeest grazed below and a huge African sky stretched out before us. We also skimmed along the Mara River in a helicopter with hippos and crocodiles a few feet below, watching 13 lions that just killed a hippo standing at water’s edge feeding on their catch.”

Beyond the savanna, the Knights are also passionate about protecting marine life. They just returned from Mexico, where *National Geographic* photographer Shawn Heinrichs spent four days taking photos of their group swimming and snorkeling with 30-foot whale sharks and giant manta rays.

“It’s exhilarating to be 2 feet away,” says Corie. “We took Richard Branson, who said it was one of the most beautiful mornings of his life.”

“Fishermen who hunted them now protect them,” says Peter. “They realize they are worth more alive than slaughtering them.”

Remember: When the buying stops, the killing can too! ◇

“Kila Tembo moja anapouawa, ina maana \$ 96,000 kwa siku upotea kwani haipiti dakika 15,”kasema Nyong’o.” Watu wenye ujasiri katika mashirika kama Wildlife Direct, Foundation Wildlife, Wildlife Foundation, na WildAid wanahitaji msaada wetu ili kuokoa tembo.

Cory ametembelea Afrika mara 20. Kusafari na wanyama huleta amani.

Peter alimpendekeza Corie walipokuwa Crater Ngorongoro nchini Tanzania na kufunga ndoa mnamo mwaka 2002. Kila mwaka wanaadhimisha ndoa yao Ol Jogi Lodge, 60,000 Laikia, Kenya ambapo CNN na Forbes usema ni mojawapo ya maeneo bora zaidi duniani. Mwaka huu Julia (13) na Charlotte (9) walikuja.

“Tunashukuru kuwa na nyumba bora, chakula na vinywaji na pia kuwa karibu na tembo,” alisema Corie. “Afrika ni ya ajabu. Prince William alipempendekeza Kate Middleton nchini Kenya, naye Prince Harry kampendekeza Meghan Markle inchini Botswana.”

Peter amekuwa Afrika mara 50. Anakumbuka nyakati zingine za kutisha kutokana na picha za Kristian Schmidt.

“Tulikuwa Amboseli na flamingos Mlima Kilimanjaro wakati tembo aitwaye Tolstoy alipiga tarumbeta kutujulisha uwepo wao.

“Tulikuwa hewani na kundi la wildebeast chini yetu na pia uzuri wa anga ya Afrika. Tulikuwa kwenye helikopta hewani tulipowaona kiboko na mamba kwenye mto mbali kidogo na simba 13 waliokuwa wakimla kiboko.”

Peter na Corie Knights pia wanajali kuhusu maisha ya baharini. Wao tu walirudi kutoka Mexico ambapo mpiga picha wa *Taifa Geographic*, Shawn Heinrichs alichukua picha za kundi lao la snorkeling na papa kubwa nyangumi.

“Tulimchukua Richard Branson aliyesema ni moja ya siku bora zaidi ya maisha yake,” alisema Corie.

“Kwa Wavuvi wanaowalinda,” alisema Peter. “Wanajua kwamba wao ni thamani Zaidi wakiwa hai kuliko kuwaua na kuuza sehemu zao.

Ununuaji ukiisha, mauaji yanaweza pia! ◇