



Saving the Endangered Grevy's Zebra

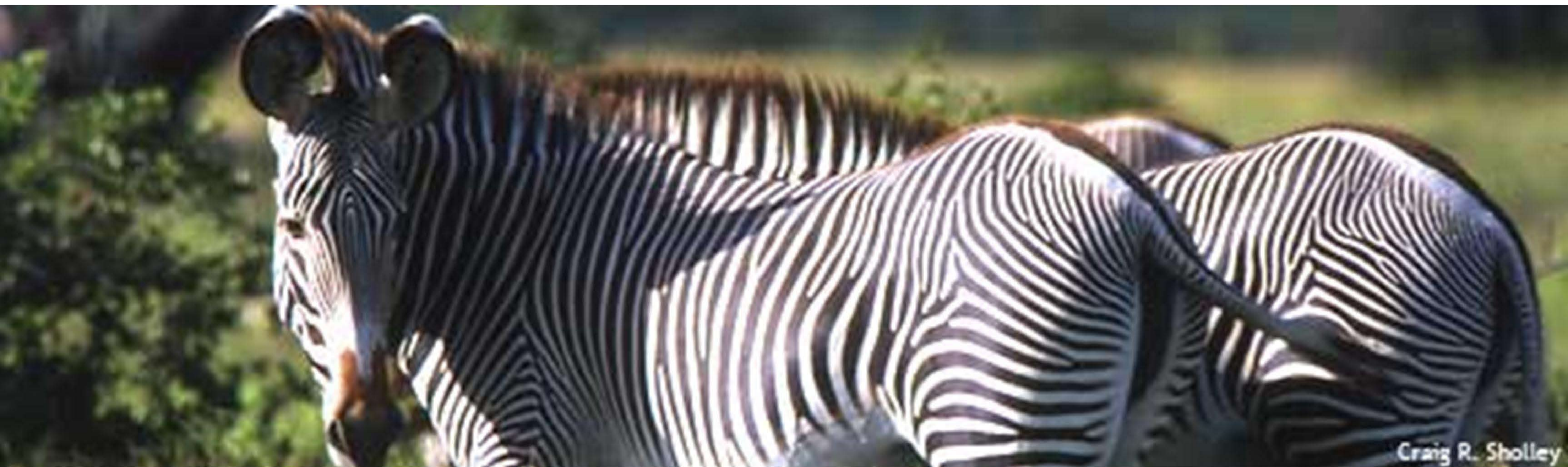
Grevy's Zebra

Equus grevyi

Description: The long-legged Grevy's zebra is the biggest of the wild equids. It is more closely related to the wild ass than the horse (whereas the plains zebra is more closely related to the horse). One can distinguish the Grevy's zebra from the plains zebra by its larger size, big rounded ears, white unmarked belly, and finer black stripes. **An endangered species, Grevy's zebras are only found in northern Kenya and south eastern Ethiopia.**

Zebra foals are born with a coat that is striped reddish-brown. This gradually darkens to black. Young zebras also have a dorsal mane extending all the way to the base of the tail, which can be raised when the animal is excited and lies flat when it is relaxed.

Diet: Grevy's zebra is a grazer and can digest many types and parts of plants that cattle cannot. However, it is water dependant and will migrate to grazing lands within daily reach of water.



Craig R. Sholley

Conservation: **Habitat loss in an already restricted range is a serious threat to the endangered Grevy's zebra.** Additionally, it **must compete with livestock for a limited water supply and is hunted by poachers for its striking hide.** In the Samburu Heartland, African Wildlife Federation (AFW) supports the Grevy's Zebra Project. Its goal is to gain a better understanding of this animal's population and distribution patterns to aid in the development of a viable conservation strategy.

Distribution and Habitat: Historically, the Grevy's zebra inhabited the semi-arid scrublands and plains of Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Kenya in East Africa. However, **due to a rapid decline in their population, they are now restricted to the northern parts of Kenya and a few pockets in southern Ethiopia.**

Behavior: The Grevy's zebra is a loosely social animal - herd composition varies daily as members come and go. A stallion's attachment to his land and a mare's attachment to her young are the most stable relationships in Grevy's zebra society. Within the herd, dominance is relatively non-existent, except for the right a territorial male has to a breeding female. If no females are around, the resident male will associate with bachelor males in a friendly manner (though always asserting dominance upon initiation of contact).

Grevy's mate throughout the year, but the peak birth and mating periods for the Grevy's zebra are usually July through August and October through November. Grevy's zebras breed in 2 year intervals starting at the age of 3 for females and age 6 for males. Newborn foals are russet-colored with a long hair crest down the back and belly. The mother keeps other zebras at a distance while the offspring imprints on her and they spend time playing, nuzzling and nursing. **Newborns can walk just 20 minutes after they are born, which is an important survival adaptation for this migrating species.** Young Grevy's are especially vulnerable to predators, and foal survival has been directly related to the extent to which their mothers move.