Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association
Living nature, Living people

10 YEARS OF LOCAL CONSERVATION

KWCA at 10: A decade stewarding locally-led conservation



Message from our CEO

Our 10-year journey to building a strong network



When I assumed the role of founding CEO in 2013, the mission ahead was crystal clear: establish a reputable conservation organisation and build a strong network for conservancies. It sounds simple enough, yet the challenges – like the achievements – have been formidable.

Reflecting back on my 10-year tenure at KWCA, I feel indebted to the individuals and organisations that have enriched this decade-long journey and made it all worthwhile: people who believed in KWCA's vision, organisations who invested in our programmes, and partners who strove to share our story in national and global platforms. Your contributions have been invaluable to our growth thus far.

KWCA's mission has been informed by one overarching goal: to secure habitat for wildlife through a network of conservancies owned and managed by local communities and landowners, who are able to benefit from their stewardship of natural land. Our key objectives have been to build a strong membership organisation that has the interests of conservancies at its core; to push for policies that recognise conservancies as both an effective land management tool and a strategy to redress the calamitous decline of many wildlife species; and to mobilise Kenyans ,particularly those living in biodiversity hotspots, to establish wildlife conservancies and include conservation in their land management practices.

The deeply gratifying milestones summarised in this report are a testament to the achievements realised by KWCA's National Conservancies Council (NCC) and our dedicated team. We have helped to entrench conservancies within wildlife policies, laws, and government conservation plans, paving the way for increased financial and technical support for conservancies from governmental, private sector, and development partners alike. We have enhanced knowledge and public awareness of conservancies among the Kenyan populace, policymakers, and tourism investors, fostering a deeper understanding that conservation in Kenya cannot succeed without the active involvement of local communities. We have served as a central repository for conservancy information, amplifying the voices of local communities, and genuinely representing our members. We have established a democratic and inclusive governance structure, where conservancies at the grassroot level, regional associations at the landscape level, and KWCA at the national level are all in regular dialogue and participating in decision making. As a result of these determined efforts, our network of conservancies has flourished over the decade, rising from just two in 2013 to an impressive 195 by 2023; Bolstered by support from diverse quarters, this network has also secured millions of acres of land for wildlife conservation.

This is crucial work—it's the work KWCA has been doing for a decade now and will continue to do long into the future. It takes energy and resources, but the Kenyan conservancy model is a powerful model to which we are passionately committed.

I'm happy to invite you now to learn more about our work through this report and by visiting our newly redesigned website, www.kwcakenya.com.

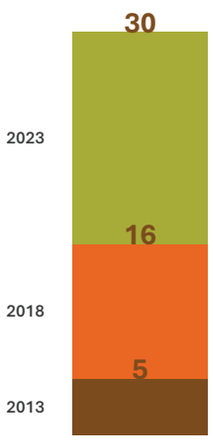
Happy reading!

Dickson Kaelo, founding CEO of KWCA

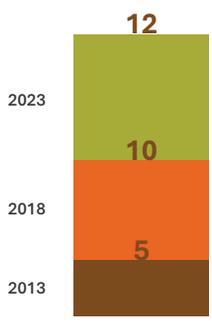
Our decade in numbers

Over the past ten years there have been important milestones across our focus areas, priorities and projects, with important progress made towards our institutional objectives.

Growth in strategic partners (2013-2023)



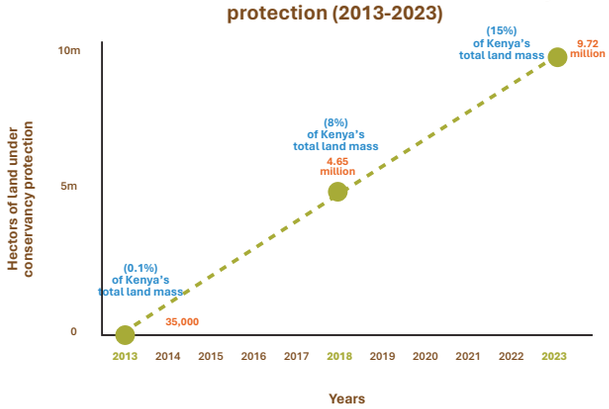
Growth in landscape associations (2013-2023)



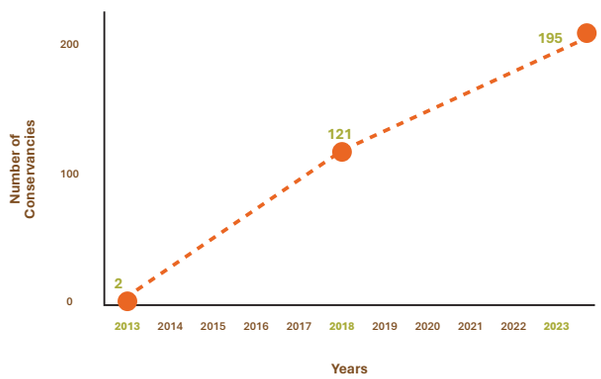


KWCA staff celebrates the Africa Conservation Award 2022 for Best Conservation Supporter

Growth in hectares of land under conservancy protection (2013-2023)



Growth in member conservancies (2013-2023)



Our impact

Over the past decade we have:

42
projects implemented

18
national conservancy platforms convened

23
national policy memoranda submitted

9
strategic national policy and legal frameworks influenced

19
new conservancy tools/guidelines published

20
new staff enrolled

24
new institutional policies and strategies developed

Part 1: From Vision to Reality:
The journey to locally-led conservation

> *Ultimately conservation is about people. If you don't have sustainable development around wildlife parks, the people will have no interest in them and the parks will not survive.*
>
> — Nelson Mandela

Kenya is a mega-diverse nation, and one of the most important countries in the world for wildlife conservation. It is home to some of the planet's largest populations of elephants, rhinos and big cats, and one of the last habitats for thousands of rare, threatened and endangered species, including eastern black rhinos, hirolas and Grevy's zebras. The Government of Kenya has designated conservation areas, which stretch over 16% of Kenya's landmass[1] and almost a thousand square kilometres of sea[2], and include seven World Heritage sites, six Biosphere Reserves; six Ramsar wetland sites and 68 Important Bird Areas (IBAs).

Here, as elsewhere, wildlife does not exist in isolation, and Kenya – like conservation partners across the continent and beyond – is struggling with the complex interrelated issues of poverty, unsustainable tourism, habitat degradation, resource-related conflict, climate change, biodiversity loss and the marginalisation of indigenous people. Kenya though, has found a distinct model to help address these issues – a model that has gained increasing recognition on the global stage in recent years, with international and national partners keen to know what we have done and how we have done it. We share these lessons – of our institutional development as much as our conservancy expansion – in the hope that our local strategies may offer replicable lessons to other partners seeking to tackle tough interlocking challenges using a locally-led conservation model.

Kenya's lessons

Since 1945, Kenya's wildlife strategy has largely followed a colonial model of 'fortress conservation'. Through this, here as elsewhere, protected land is enclosed with the dual purpose of keeping wild animals in, and local people – the traditional custodians of the land – out. Fortress conservation has brought some important benefits for our nation (conserving habitats, creating jobs, growing tourism, increasing GDP) but has also cut off animals from ancient migratory routes and dispersal areas, and fuelled conflicts with local populations excluded from their ancient and ancestral lands.

Most importantly, fortress conservation in Kenya has not prevented a calamitous loss of wildlife (more than two thirds of the nation's wild animals were lost between 1977 and 2016), nor helped improve the livelihoods of local people, with communities living around the borders of national parks and reserves some of the poorest in the nation.

From the early 1990s, Kenya began experimenting with new conservation models that could concurrently conserve habitats, protect biodiversity and benefit local communities. Between 1992 and 1996, four community-led conservancies were successfully established, allowing landowners to directly benefit from wildlife for the first time. The success of these experiments catalysed the growth of the movement and – soon after – to the Government adopting community conservation as a formal national strategy.

[1] State-protected areas include 23 national parks, 28 national reserves, 4 national sanctuaries, 4 marine national parks, 6 marine national reserves. These together cover 4.8 million hectares of land (8% of Kenya's landmass). National state protected forests add a further 5.2 million hectares, bringing the total to 10,048, 274 hectares.

[2] 941.09km² or 0.67% of sea. See here

The missing link for conservancies – KWCA

Between 1992 and 2012, conservancies expanded both in number and scale, Despite that, critical barriers prevented the movement growing, developing and fully scaling up. Conservancies, for example, lacked definition and recognition in law, community land ownership was insecure, there was no policy guidance for conservancies, no incentives, and no national coordinating body, little networking between conversances and limited community engagement in conservation processes. Since 1995, there had been 8 previous attempts to create convergence among landowners and communities through a national platform.

In 2012, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the Kenyan Wildlife Service (KWS), backed by conservation partners, decided to form a national institution that would address these issues, create an enabling policy and legislative environment for conservancies, engage communities more fully, and help expand the conservancy model across the country. In April 2013 the Kenyan Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) was formally registered as the national platform tasked with these important roles and with charting the way forward for locally-led conservation.

About KWCA

KWCA is a landowner-led membership organisation. We represent the interests of community and private conservancies and push for their recognition and inclusion in the national conservation and development plans.

Our Vision

Across Kenya, connected and equitably governed landscapes conserve wildlife and benefit people and communities.

Our Mission

To accelerate the growth of effectively managed conservancies to impact local communities and wildlife positively.

Our Values

Co-existence: We believe people, wildlife, and nature can live together for mutual benefit.

One Voice: We provide a platform for a united voice to champion conservancies' interests.

Resilience: We are focused on ensuring the sustainability of all conservancies in Kenya.

Partnerships: We recognise the value of long-term solid partnerships to accomplish our goals.

Teamwork: We are a robust and passionate team committed to the success of conservancies.

Convene – Inform – Connect – Represent

Conservancies: in law and in practice

The Wildlife Conservation and Management Act of 2013 defines a conservancy as an area of land set aside by an individual landowner, a group of owners, a corporate body, or a community for the purpose of wildlife conservation. The current legal definition, however, does not yet fully represent the diverse roles that conservancies play in Kenya. In practice, locally-led conservancies are engaged in managing habitats, conserving wildlife, and creating benefits for people living in wildlife areas. They help to:



Why do we support locally-led conservation?

Locally-led conservation is a natural resource management approach based on the principle that communities and private landowners are best placed to understand, address and make decisions on conservation issues affecting their land. The approach supports democratic, free, self-determined and sustainable conservation, in which interventions are governed and managed by local communities, aligned with local interests and priorities, and make good use of community knowledge, ecological experience and land-use practices. Benefits generated through the approach can be reinvested to support community development and well-being and nurture the next generation of land stewards. External partners may offer technical support for local landowners including raising awareness of new research, identifying strategic actions, and helping measure progress and impacts.

Before KWCA: How it all began

From 1975:

The Wildlife Policy of 1975 states that communities should be involved in conservation. Despite this, landowners have no practical guidance on how to conserve community or private land, and operate in a legal and policy vacuum.

1992 to 1996:

Four community-based conservancies are successfully established, allowing landowners to directly benefit from wildlife for the first time. This catalyses the growth of the movement and the Government adopts community conservation as a formal national strategy.

1995 to 2011:

There are 8 attempts by conservation partners to unite and align landowners through a national coordinating platform. For various reasons, none of them succeed.

February 2012:

A delegation (KWS, TNC, WWF and NRT) travels to Namibia to learn about the conservancy model there. This emboldens Kenya's conservation partners to push again to create a national platform for landowners living with wildlife.

August 2012:

A forum of 140 workshop participants (landowners, conservation NGOs, government officials) unanimously endorse the concept of KWCA and task a technical working group (KWS, TNC, WWF and KWT) with establishing it.

November 2012:

> 600 wildlife conservation delegates (representing landowners, the private sector and government) participate in regional workshops across the country to discuss and agreed a suitable shape and form for the new association.

December 2012:

An interim board of 12 is nominated; they work with the technical working group to design, plan and deliver the nascent Association.

January 2013:

TNC contracts corporate lawyers to help register the new association and establish its charter and constitution.

April 2013

KWCA is legally registered under Section 10 of the Societies Act 1968, receiving certificate No. 40020; our office opens and our first two staff – the CEO and Policy Coordinator – are recruited with seed funding from TNC. Policy and legal changes become one of our founding aims.

OUR CHAIRPERSONS



Tom Lalampaa
(2014-2019)



Francis Nkoitoi
(2019-2022)



Jackson Mwato
(2022 up to date

"From its inception in 2013, KWCA has emerged as a monumental force in Kenya's conservation, a grassroots institution tirelessly advocating for community-led wildlife stewardship and fostering a culture of trust and collaboration with stakeholders. TNC's partnership with KWCA stands as a testament to our shared commitment to improving the social and economic well-being of communities living with wildlife."

Munira Bashir, Kenya Country Director, The Nature Conservancy

After KWCA: 10 years of Impact

2014

KWCA influences the Wildlife Conservation & Management Act of 2013, one of the most progressive pieces of wildlife legislation in the region. The new law recognises for the very first time: conservation as a designated land use, the existence of conservancies, and their national coordinating body (KWCA.)

2015

KWCA convenes its first National Conservancy Leaders Policy Conference and AGM. USAID awards TNC and KWCA a grant to strengthen community engagement in land and environment policies.

2016

KWCA publishes 'Establishing a Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya' — a guide to support community and private landowners.

KWCA influences the Community Land Act of 2016 and its subsequent Regulations (2018); these open a new chapter for conservancies, by conferring secure rights over community lands.

2017

KWCA launches its first national State of Conservancies report and map.

2018

KWCA's CEO, Dickson Kaelo, is nominated for a prestigious Tusk Conservation Award, and is awarded first runner up, in recognition of his outstanding leadership.

KWCA wins the trust of Government and increasingly takes on an advisory role. Our appointment to government-appointed task forces, committees and boards help us better influence conservation issues.

KWCA's inputs and ideas help inform the National Wildlife Strategy 2030, which provides a roadmap for transforming wildlife conservation in Kenya.

2019

KWCA starts to issue sub-grants to nascent landscape associations to strengthen their institutional capacity.

2020

KWCA is one of four RISE Challenge Award winners (out of 201 applications from 66 countries). RISE funding allows us to mainstream and integrate gender into our internal and external work.

KWCA influences the new Wildlife Policy, which now explicitly supports the growth of conservancies, and provides a framework for incentives and benefit sharing.

2021

COVID-19 lockdowns cripple Kenya's tourism industry and brings many conservancies close to collapses. KWCA helps manage and mitigate pandemic impacts, unlocking emergency funding for critical staff and services, including the Government first direct allocation to conservancies: $10 million.

2022

KWCA wins the Best Conservation Supporter at the Africa Conservation Awards for its support in establishing the Association of Wildlife Conservancy Rangers in Kenya.

2023

KWCA celebrates its tenth birthday.

KWCA's ongoing advocacy for fiscal support for conservancies helps influence the Government's allocation of KSh 475 million to support infrastructure development in 20 conservancies: a landmark decision that will impact community development

Part 2: From concept to creation: KWCA steps onto the scene

1 Building a Strong Institution

Over the past 10 years, KWCA has grown from a tentative start-up to a lean, efficient, strategic organisation, able to influence government and assume a national leadership role. Trust in KWCA has grown at all levels, as demonstrated by our increased membership (see next section), and our appointment to high-level Government taskforces and committees. Our organisational capacity has expanded within the context of three strategic plans (2015–18, 2019–23 and 2024–2032) and – following enhanced management, governance, and oversight structures – external assessments have ranked KWCA a low-risk organisation for investment. In short, after a decade in our role, KWCA is now in a stronger position than ever, with better capacity to support, sustain and strengthen our members, influence national policy, and drive the conservancy movement in Kenya and beyond.

Our Innovative, Democratic and Inclusive Governance Structure

KWCA has a unique governance structure. Our key governance platforms (including KWCA's Executive Committee and the National Conservancies Council) are independent yet interlinked, so that conservancies at the grassroot level, regional associations at the landscape level, and KWCA at the national level are in constant dialogue, with all levels participating in decision making. See our new website for more details.

Our Secretariat: A Passionate and Committed Team

KWCA has grown from a small office with two staff and a donated Suzuki, to a 20-strong team (53% women), constantly on the move and currently fund-raising for a new $10 million conservancy hub. Our strong performance is the result of:

- Focused, strategic and gender-equitable recruitment and retention;
- A dedicated, lean, multi-skilled Kenyan team;
- A fit-for purpose secretariat, bolstered by capacity-building mentorship and training;
- A senior management team strengthened by ACLN leadership training;
- Fully defining our organisational policies (15) and strategies (9) through 24 documents;
- Earning the trust of partners (incl. through our reputation, our awards and third-party audits);
- Regularly evaluating our progress, lessons learnt, successes and challenges;
- Finding partners able to support our institutional growth through multi-year grants;
- Ensuring women are well represented in our team, governance structure and convenings;
- Adhering to a constitution that promotes transparency and accountability.

Evidence of our Performance:

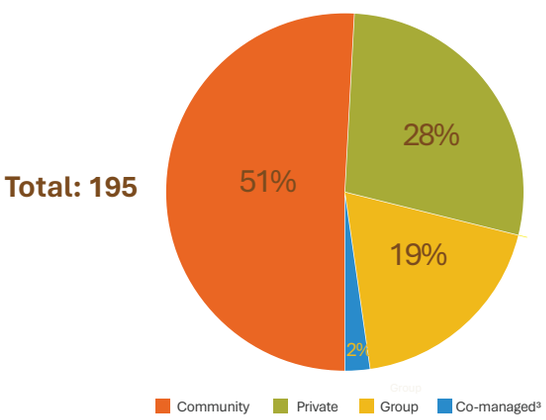
- KWCA was rated a low-risk organisation by Deloitte in 2019 (our next assessment is in 2024).
- KWCA was awarded 3 marks out of 4 for its organisational capacity (assessed by USAID, 2020).
- Our team has won an Africa Conservation Award, and our CEO been recognised by Tusk.
- We have retained 95% of all our recruited team members.
- We have retained >95% of our funding partners since 2022.

2 Convening for Change

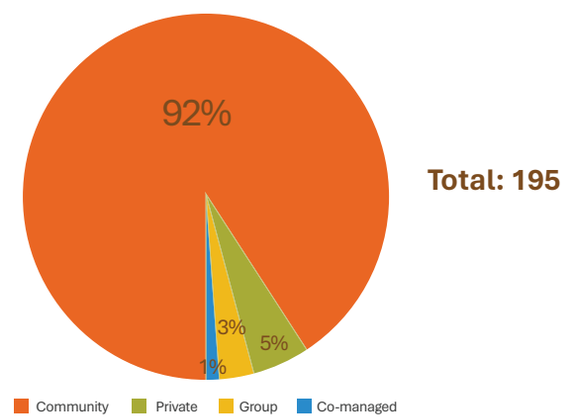
KWCA represents 195 conservancies scattered across 28 counties. Local members live in diverse situations, landscapes and ecosystems, and thus have different challenges, experiences and opportunities. As the designated representative of so many different communities, we must ensure that we regularly visit and bring together our members to dialogue and understand one another. This is a costly and complex undertaking, but one we take very seriously.

We are proud of our success in fully hearing, understanding, and representing such diverse members. To date, we have attracted an average of 19 new members each year and have 64 newly proposed conservancies to connect to and support. We believe these figures demonstrate that local communities are seeing the conservancy model as a way to address interlocking developmental challenges, and have confidence in KWCA as the organisation best able to represent them.

Our members (by land ownership type), 2023



Percentage of total conservancy land managed by different land owners, 2023



Key Facts

- Conservancies may be classified as 'proposed', 'emerging', 'early operational' or 'mature operational'.[4]
- The majority are found within biologically-sensitive areas.
- They are distributed across **28** of Kenya's 47 counties.
- Together they protect and manage **9.72 million** hectares of conservation land.
- **64** proposed new conservancies could expand the conservation landscape to 20% of Kenya's total landmass by 2030.



[3] An arrangement between a government agency/authority and community or private person/persons to conserve specific public land.

[4] Determinants of growth include: land tenure, community cohesiveness, governance and management structures, and technical / financial support received from external or internal actors.

Engaging members:

At the helm of decision-making are convenings for the board and the annual assembly. In addition, KWCA convenes nine s strategic platforms (see below). These help members to share information, experiences and best practices, network, dialogue, strategise, cross-learn, explore opportunities, and set key priorities that enhance support, resilience and financial sustainability for locally-led conservation. We facilitate the following key fora:



These fora allow KWCA to:

- Engage conservancy leaders in national policy and legal review processes;
- Create awareness on new policies and laws;
- Guide conservancies through required legal and management processes;
- Launch, disseminate and train participants on key support tools;
- Up-skill and build capacity through tools and training;
- Discuss how to advance inclusion, and better integrate / mainstream women and youth;
- Link, align and create synergies between KWCA, conservancies and regional associations to improve coordination and planning.

To date KWCA has convened:

8 National Conservancies Leaders Conferences

3 National Conservancies Managers Fora

5 National Conservancies Women Fora

2 National Conservancies Youth Fora

> “KWCA has grown over the past decade into one of Africa’s foremost networks supporting community-led conservation. With 195 member conservancies spanning a tremendous diversity of communities and landowners from all across the country, *with a wide range of locally adapted governance and management systems for different types of conservancies, KWCA plays a central role in this growing national movement.*”
>
> Fred Nelson, CEO, Maliasili

3 Creating an Enabling Policy Environment

KWCA's lobbying, advocacy and networking efforts have helped transform Kenya's policy and legislative environment over the past decade to create a more enabling environment for conservancies: one that recognises their rights, facilitates their growth and enhances land tenure. KWCA has advocated for the legal recognition of conservancies in policies and laws; for the formal inclusion of conservancies in government plans and strategies; for improved incentives and equitable benefit-sharing for those managing community lands; and for Government funding for conservancies. Critical to these efforts, have been the support of TNC and USAID, which provided multi-year grants (first to our Community Conservancy Policy Support programme, then to our Kenya Conservation Policy, Local Works Programme) which enabled many of the achievements outlined below.

Our Policy /Advocacy Strategy and Approach

KWCA has become a trusted partner in Kenya over the past decade, working closely with a wide range of conservation actors on a range of critical issues. We continue to engage communities in policy-making processes, as per our Advocacy, Strategy and Engagement Plan, and sit on government-appointed task forces, committees and boards to help influence conservation outside state-protected areas. Through high-level engagement and strategic networking, we have been able to amplify conservancies' voices, promote their interests in high level fora, successfully influence policy, legal and regulatory interventions, and scale up positive impacts for conservancies.

Our Influence on National Laws and Policies

The Wildlife Policy of 1975 stated that communities should be involved in conservation. Despite this, prior to 2013 landowners had no practical guidance on how to conserve community or private land and operated in a legal and policy vacuum. One of KWCA's foundational roles was to address these issues, and to support a conceptual shift from the old model of conservation in Kenya (focusing on law enforcement, high fines for wildlife crimes and conservation education) to a new model (focused on locally-led conservation on community lands, with the generation and sharing of incentives and benefits). Over the past decade, our interventions have helped create a more enabling legal and policy environment for conservancies to thrive. Our highlights include:



2013: KWCA influences the passing of the Wildlife Conservation & Management Act of 2013, one of the most progressive pieces of wildlife legislation in the region. It replaces the 1975 law, defines and recognises conservancies, articulates how to establish them, and demands equitable benefit-sharing.



2016: KWCA influences the Community Land Act of 2016 and later its associated Regulations (2018) which open a new chapter for conservancies, conferring landowners' rights over community lands. KWCA is the only wildlife organisation to make oral submissions to the Parliamentary Committee on Lands during the review and development of the new Act and plays a central role in drafting the law and its supportive regulations, with 12 of our recommendations adopted.



2018: KWCA's inputs and ideas help inform the first National Wildlife Strategy 2030, which establishes an implementation framework to enhance communication, coordination and collaboration, to inspire engagement and participation, and to catalyse conservation actions among all stakeholders.



2020: KWCA influences the new Wildlife Policy of 2020, Sessional Paper No. 1, which now explicitly supports conservation on community and private lands, and provides a framework for incentives and benefit sharing.

Unlocking Government funding for conservancies



2020: COVID-19 lockdowns cripple Kenya's tourism industry and bring many conservancies close to collapses. KWCA helps manage and mitigate pandemic impacts, unlocking emergency funding (through the COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Programme) for conservancy rangers. This is the Government first direct allocation to private conservation entities and a landmark **$10 million[5].**



2023: Increasing human-wildlife conflict, water scarcity and changing land use patterns put conservancies at risk. Our continuing advocacy for Government support for conservancies helps unlocks the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife's allocation of **KES 475 million** for infrastructure development (water points and roads) in over 20 vulnerable conservancies: a watershed decision that will transform life for thousands of community conservancy members.

Our Influence on Regional and International Policy Frameworks

Through high-level engagement and strategic networking, we have been able to amplify conservancies' voices, promote their interests in high- level fora, successfully influence policy, legal and regulatory interventions, and scale up positive impacts for conservancies. please click here for more info).

> *"The work that KWCA and conservancies are doing complements the work of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and contributes to the attainment of KWS conservation strategies. I am proud of the achievements realised thus far."*
>
> Dr Erustus Kanga, Director General, Kenya Wildlife Service.

Our policy achievements in figures

Between 2013 and 2023, we:

- Facilitated over 350 policy meetings at national and grassroots level, including nine countrywide conferences;
- Served on 17 government-appointed task forces, committees, and boards;
- Engaged in 45 policy processes;
- Submitted memoranda on 23 national policies and five county bills;
- Successfully influenced 9 national strategic legal and policy frameworks[6]/ documents, as well as county bills and global conventions;
- Helped generate the Government's first direct allocation to conservancies: $10 million;
- Helped generate KES 475 million of Government funding to support conservancy infrastructure;
- Supported five former group ranches to register their community land, and three conservancies to develop land-use plans.

> *"KWCA is a force to be reckoned. In the last 10 years, the lean team has demonstrated national leadership in community-led conservation. They have built a reputable brand that should be replicated as a best practice across Africa. We should rally behind them to make the conservancy network unstoppable."*
>
> Tom Lalampaa, CEO of the Northern Rangelands Trust and founding chairperson of KWCA

[5] This funding paid partial salaries for 3,500 conservancy rangers for one year.

[6] Wildlife Act; Wildlife Policy; Wildlife Strategy; Wildlife Trust regulations; Community Land Act; Community Land Regulations; TRA Principles and Standards; Human-Wildlife Co-Existence Strategy and Plan; Climate Change Amendment Act, Natural Resources (Benefit Sharing) Bill;, CITES;, Narok, Baringo, Kajiado County Conservancy Bills;, Nakuru Land Valuation Bill.

4 Building the Case for Conservancies

The *State of Conservancies in Kenya* report and map (2016) was a landmark publication and remains one of KWCA's most important policy works to date. By amassing detailed profiles of each conservancy and landscape association in Kenya, the report filled critical information gaps and provided baseline measurements against which future progress can be measured. Furthermore by consolidating data (on wildlife, tourism and community developments) from conservancies across Kenya for the very first time, the report made clear that conservancies were not only providing critical habitats for millions of animals – including rhinos, lions, elephants, hirolas, Grévy's zebras – but also had the potential to generate thousands of green jobs, including in remote areas where employment opportunities are scarce.

The report increased the visibility of conservancies and soon became a critical source of information for partners, who have widely used and referenced it (see below). Evidence of the impact of conservancies on local, regional and national economies also enhanced political support for community, private and group land-owning, and improved understanding of the custodian role such lands can play in protecting wildlife corridors and buffer zones, and safeguarding the 60% of Kenyan wildlife that lives outside national parks and reserves. Over the years, the report's findings have informed county and national-level policies, strategies and plans, and – by showcasing conservancies' contributions to social, economic and ecological development targets – helped unlock Government support and funding for conservancies at critical periods, including during the pandemic.

The *State of Conservancies* report has helped grow KWCA's reputation as a trusted information hub and repository of data and continues to support the conservation sector to respond to rapidly changing circumstances with evidence-based decisions. The upcoming 2024 report is expected to be equally impactful.

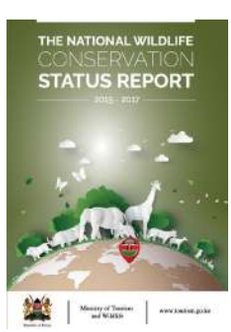
A well-used and widely-referenced report

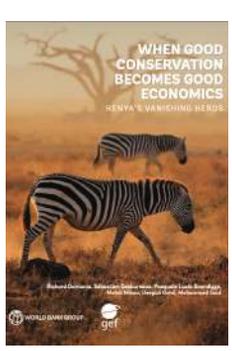
The SoC report has informed and benefited five other important reports.



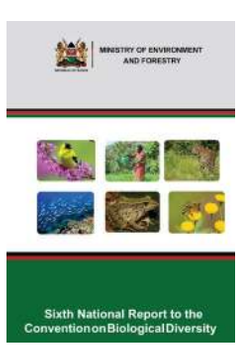












5 Communicating on Conservancies

Over the past ten years, we have worked to promote the KWCA brand, raise public awareness of conservancies, and foster more strategic engagement on wildlife and conservation.[7] That has involved developing our website and social media presence; building awareness through traditional multi-media; participating in conservation events, special days and campaigns; networking through public events (lectures, presentations, dialogue fora etc.); and disseminating key publications. These activities have been instrumental to building public awareness (regional, national, global), and reinforcing Kenya's position as a community-led conservation leader in Africa and beyond.

Information, education and media

Over the past decade, we have worked at both the national and international level, with:

19 publications created and 15,314 hard copies disseminated

38 major events, conferences, expos and launches attended

51 short videos/ documentaries produced

30+ high-level webinars or presentations participated in

82 articles/blogs/ radio/ TVs shows published/ broadcast

Our followers, subscribers and friends:

27,260 downloads from our website

34,079 views of our videos on YouTube

12,600 befriending us on Facebook

5,000+ following us on X

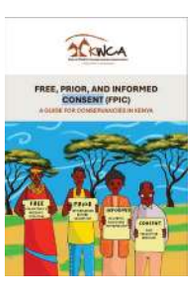
4,500+ following us on Instagram

2,300+ Connecting with us on LinkedIn

Tools for conservancies: Our major publications (2014-2023)

KWCA supports conservancies with a plethora of new publications, including guidelines, handbooks and factsheets. These are intended to create community awareness, promote safeguards and respect for human rights, harmonise standards and ensure that conservancies have the requisite skills to manage and govern effectively.

















[7] As per our communication strategy, developed in 2017, and reviewed/ refined in 2023.

6 Collective Action at the Landscape Level

Landscape associations play a key role in the conservancy network, helping establish new conservancies, strengthen existing ones, coordinate ecosystem planning, and enhance county government engagement. They also provide a critical bridge between individual conservancies and KWCA, allowing us to scale up our coordination efforts and connect more meaningfully with our members at the ecosystem level. For these reasons, supporting the growth and development of landscape associations continues to be one of KWCA's institutional priorities.

How KWCA supports Landscape Associations

KWCA is linked with its member conservancies through 12 affiliate landscape associations. We work with these associations, and support them by:

- Recruiting, establishing and developing conservancies
- Gathering data & information on the status of conservancies
- Providing legal, contractual and advocacy support
- Providing grants
- Supporting strategic planning & capacity assessments
- Creating linkages with national / county government, donors etc. Promoting conservancy networking opportunities
- Enhancing communications & fundraising efforts
- Arbitrating disputes & resolving conflicts
- Building governance and management capacity
- Training boards, reviewing constitutions & developing organisational policies
- Providing guidance on ecosystem planning & coordination
- Documenting best practices and experiences on conservancy development

Our support for Landscape Associations in numbers

- 6 provided with sub grants worth KES 86,925,695 ($675,760)
- 12 provided with technical, advisory and communications support
- 30 governance trainings conducted
- 10 provided with conflict mediation
- 8 supported to develop internal institutional policies, strategies and capacity assessments
- 24 organisations facilitated with peer/cross learning visits in 9 landscapes
- 5 landscape CEOs forums held

About our landscape associations

- 4 landscape associations existed prior to the founding of KWCA.
- 8 landscape associations have been founded, established and registered since 2013.
- The majority of conservancies are now coordinated through a landscape association.
- 2 associations (AET & MMWCA) have developed ecosystem plans, and TTWCA is leading a similar process in Tsavo.
- NRT has established the world's largest soil carbon removal project.
- MMWCA has mobilized > 15,000 landowners to establish lease agreements with private sector partners.
- AET has supported group ranches to secure 70% of conservation/rangeland in Amboseli.
- TTWCA mobilised 10 out 35 ranches to adopt the conservancy model.
- LCA had increased its members from 9 to 30 and enhanced trust and network collaboration.



7 Advancing the Conservancy Rangers Network

Rangers are the backbone of community conservation and key to the success of each and every conservancy. They operate at the interface between people and wildlife, managing and mitigating conflict and providing security. They are also the eye and ears of conservancies – observing, monitoring and reporting back on diverse issues including legal and illegal activities, wildlife numbers, and livestock grazing patterns. Over the past decade, KWCA has worked to mobilise and coordinate the voices of conservancy rangers, improve their skills, capacities and working conditions, and to strengthen provisions and protections for the men and women who carry out this vital work.

Key milestones

KWCA supported the operationalisation of AWCRK, with funding from WWF, and has supported rangers through the following landmark steps:

2016

- KWCA develops and publishes the Standard Operating Procedures for Wildlife Scouts

2017

- KWCA hosts the first National Conservancies Rangers Forum and commemorates first World Rangers Day.
- KWCA facilitates the establishment of the Association of Wildlife Conservancies Rangers in Kenya (AWCRK) which aims to build the capacity of conservancy rangers to conserve wildlife and engage with local communities.
- KWCA carries out regional and national sensitisation meetings for the newly-registered association. KWCA is adopted as a regular member of AWCRK with voting rights.
- KWCA is adopted by the International Rangers Federation (IRF) as an associate member.

2018

- AWRCK is officially established; KWCA supports its registration with funding from the International Rangers Federation (IRF).
- KWCA partners with KWS to review the Law Enforcement Academy's wildlife scouts training curriculum.

2019

- AWCRK becomes a member of the IRF.

2020

- AWCRK becomes a member of the Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA).
- KWCA develops a national database of 3,500 conservancy rangers and submits the register to KWS (in compliance with the requirements of the Wildlife Act of 2013).
- KWCA's advocacy unlocks US$7.5 million of government funding to support rangers with partial salaries for one year during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring no ranger loses their job.

2022

- KWCA sponsors five rangers to participate in IUCN's Africa Protected Areas Conference Congress (APAC).
- KWCA wins the Best Conservation Supporter (Africa Conservation Awards 2022, Botswana) for its support in establishing AWCRK and coordinating Kenya's network of community rangers.

2023

- KWCA continues to support the operationalisation of AWCRK, facilitating training of the board and of female rangers, as well as the development of its strategic plan (2023-2025.
- AWCRK launches its landmark Women's Forum.
- In partnership with WWF, KWCA initiates a nationwide survey of conservancy rangers to assess their well-being.

8 Championing Women and Youth Inclusion

Kenya's Constitution envisages a democratic society where women and other marginalised groups are equitably included in the country's development. KWCA works to progress this vision by fostering the inclusion of women and young people in the governance, management and leadership of conservancies. Over the past decade, we have enhanced our capacity to mainstream gender in our operations and programmes, built conservancy women's leadership capacity, facilitated their participation, and promoted equitable benefit-sharing. We have also coordinated a network of women able to champion gender equity and end gender-based violence in conservancies.

Gender progress and timeline

2019

- KWCA develops and rolls out its gender strategy.
- KWCA establishes the National Conservancies Women Forum.
- KWCA carries out an assessment of how the inclusion of women in conservancy management impacts conservation outcomes.[8]

2020

- KWCA conducts its first peer-to-peer gender audit[9] with support from the International Land Coalition.
- KWCA wins the competitive RISE grant challenge award ($124,98) to advance gender equity, and address patriarchal power structures / laws, and harmful social norms in community conservancies.

2021

- KWCA partners with two gender organisations to implement the RISE project.
- KWCA engages a full-time Gender Officer, and our team and board are trained as gender champions.

2022

- KWCA sponsors 26 local and indigenous women from community-led conservancies in Kenya to participate in IUCN's inaugural Africa Protected Areas Congress.

2023

- KWCA supports the formation of two landscape-level women's fora in Taita Taveta and Amboseli.
- KWCA supports AWRCK to launch its inaugural forum for women rangers.
- KWCA wins its second RISE grant challenge award and is able to expand gender interventions.
- The RISE project continues to engage men as conservancy gender champions and to support economic empowerment initiatives for women that can reduce gender-based violence.
- KWCA publishes two handbooks to promote gender equity and end gender-based violence in conservancies.[10]

Strengthening our Internal Capacity on Women and Youth Inclusion

Over the past decade we have:

- Generated US$ 830,763 funding for gender work in conservancies;
- Attained internal gender parity on our team (51% women);
- Partnered with five[11] organisations to advance and accelerate action on gender;
- Developed our internal safeguarding policy and supported two landscape associations to do the same;
- Revised KWCA's constitution and other key documents into more gender-sensitive language;
- Established the National Youth Conservancies Forum (2022);
- Developed the Youth Engagement Strategy (2023);
- Facilitated six #WildAbout Life social media campaigns to increase youth awareness about conservancies.



KWCA and USAID supported 26 local and indigenous women from Kenya's community-led conservancies to participate in IUCN's inaugural Africa Protected Areas Congress held in Kigali in 2022.

> *"By establishing women's forums we have notably shifted attitudes towards women's inclusion in conservancies."*
> Josephine Ekiru, Founding Women Representative National Conservancies Council.

[8] In partnership with the University College of London and Fauna & Flora International.
[9] With the Cameroonian organisation, Centre pour l'Environnement et Développement, and with the support of the International Land Coalition.
[10] *Towards Achieving Gender Equity in Conservancies and Ending Gender-Based Violence in Conservancies.*
[11] CARE International Kenya, ILC, CREAWKenya, FFI and IFAW.

9 Partnering for results

Raising awareness of KWCA's work at both the national and international level (see page 23) has been a crucial part of forging new, strategic and funding partnerships. Diversifying our donors boosts our internal resilience and is critical to enabling and sustaining the work of our member conservancies.

Institutional support and funding

The Nature Conservancy has been a steadfast and committed partner throughout the first ten years of our journey, providing KWCA with an annual grant of $100,000 to enhance our operations. This has allowed us to build and strengthen our team, formulate robust policies and strategies to guide our work, and establish organisational safeguards and controls. TNC's funding has been bolstered by generous support from other multi-year funding partners including USAID, IUCN, Maliasili, LGT, WWF and FFI. Such sustained support and reliable financial disbursements have been vital to our work and programmes and helped yield the incredible results outlined in the previous pages. We are also grateful to our new partners – UBS, IIED and UNDP GEF – whose partnership in the years ahead will be critical to advance conservancy sustainability and effectiveness.

Institutional support and funding

developed a financial sustainability plan in 2018 to diversify and optimise its revenue stream, including through multi-year grants, membership fees and philanthropic contributions. The success of this is shown in KWCA's annual budget, which has grown 16.5-fold in the past decade, rising from KES 17 million (US$168,957) in 2015, to KES 47 million (US$404,188) in 2019, and to KES 282 million (US$2,011,114) in 2023.



2015
$168,957

2019
$404,188

2023
$2,011,114

Our Projects and Programmes

Over the past decade, KWCA programmes have been supported by 15 funding partners, to implement 42 projects in 8 core thematic areas, intended to advance policy advocacy work, improve conservancy governance, promote gender inclusion and progress other key priorities.

Sustainable Funding for Conservancies

Finding new fundings partners, revenue streams, and modalities – both for ourselves and our member conservancies – will be essential to sustaining ourselves and our members over the course of our new strategic plan (2024-2030) and beyond. Please see page 23 for more details.

Our decade in figures

15
funding partners

42
projects

8
core implementation thematic areas

10 Scaling out Community Led Conservation

The Global Biodiversity Framework adopted in Montreal in 2022 sets an ambitious new goal to conserve at least 30% of all the earth's land and sea by 2030. Kenya's conservancy network presents an exciting opportunity to expand the land under conservation, with KWCA and its partners aiming to expand the total amount of land protected by conservancies to 20% of Kenya's total surface area – an ambitious yet achievable target that will benefit, communities and biodiversity.

Tackling the root causes of biodiversity loss – including connecting spaces through well-managed conservation areas – requires enhanced partnerships, networks, connections and communications. Over the past decade, we have broadened and deepened our engagement with partners, generating greater investments to support our work, extending our community conservation partnership across the continent and well beyond it. Such partnerships and scaling out initiatives will be more vital than ever as we gather momentum to push forward towards the CBD's 30 x 30 targets.

At home: KWCA continues to explore innovative ways to expand the conservancy network into new counties and landscapes, and in 2023 contributed to the Southern Kenya Landscape Project. This aims to open up conservation areas / wildlife corridors and establish a tourism circuit linking the Maasai Mara and Amboseli ecosystems – an outcome that could significantly enhance wildlife connectivity within the southern landscape. This project has already helped identify 34 potential new conservation areas/conservancies within the landscape; we are now focused on developing these and expanding into three new landscapes (the north-east, the coast and the fragmented forests of western Kenya).

Beyond our borders: KWCA has hosted delegations from Namibia (2016), Tanzania (2017), Zambia (2018), Uganda (2023), and Zimbabwe (2024), and helped send delegations – including landscape CEOs – to visit our peers in Uganda and Tanzania (2022 and 2023). Connecting with other organisations – such as the nascent Umoja Wildlife Conservancies of Uganda, Community Wildlife Management Areas Consortium in Tanzania, and Honey Guide – allows us to share experiences, lessons and best practices, as well as enhance collaboration, monitoring and information sharing across the border. KWCA also engages with similar partners across the continent (including Mozambique, Madagascar, Zimbabwe and South Africa) through its active membership of the Africa Conservation Leadership network.

Replicating our model across the globe: Kenya's conservancy model has gained increasing recognition on the global stage in recent years, with international and national partners keen to know what we have done, why, and how we have done it. We endeavour to share Kenya's experiences and lessons – through social and traditional media, webinars, publications, high-level networking and international fora – in the hope that our local strategies may offer replicable lessons to global partners seeking to tackle complex interlocking challenges using a locally-led conservation model. We also seek to influence and impact change through international platforms such as the IUCN, the International Land Coalition, the International Land Conservation Network and the Africa CSOs Biodiversity Alliance. Such efforts and activities aim to build public awareness, catalyse growth in the conservancy moment (regional, nationally, globally), and maintain Kenya's position as a community-led conservation leader both in Africa and beyond.

Path forward

We are emboldened by the strong foundation we have laid over the past ten years, and keen to advance into our next ten. Our priorities will continue to be shaped by our mandate, by our niche role as the leader of the conservancy network in Kenya, and by the pressing needs identified by communities. As we look forward, our eyes are focused on interventions that can reduce and halt biodiversity loss, whilst simultaneously benefiting the indigenous peoples and local communities who continue to carry most of the costs of conservation. There is important work ahead in progressing carbon trading, climate adaptation and mitigation, sustainable tourism, effective governance and management, human-wildlife conflict, benefit sharing, and green incentives. Partnerships will be more important than ever as we work to advance these pressing and urgent issues and push forward to fulfil our national and international commitments (see below).

Our New Strategic Plan (2024-2030)

2023 was the final year of our second strategic plan and it was rewarding as we assessed our progress towards its goals to see that we had successfully delivered our strategic objectives and plans. The lessons learnt from the past years have allowed us to refine our priorities and goals, and to create a tighter, more focused strategy to guide us through the next eight years (you can read our 2024–2030 strategy on our website here).

Unlocking Fair Incentives and Benefit-Sharing Provisions for Conservancies

To date, conservancies have been largely funded by tourism. However, the government's recent two allocations of funding – first to support rangers through the pandemic (2020/21), then to build water points and roads (2023) – recognise that conservancies make a critical contribution to the economic, social and ecological health of our nation. Moving forward, we will work to expand incentives, benefit-sharing provisions, strategic partnerships and mechanisms that can diversity financial support and enable / sustain the work of conservancies.

Moving toward Sustainable Financing Modalities

Achieving financial stability – for KWCA and its conservancies – will be a major push of the years ahead. That will entail diversifying and increasing KWCA's funding base, unlocking private sector and tourism investments in conservancies, and establishing/operationalising conservancy funds, facilities and foundations.[8] We will also be setting up the Kenya Community Conservation Hub – an innovative future home of community-led conservation. We also recognise efforts by the Kenyan government and our long-term partner The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to initiate a Sustainable Finance Mechanismwhich if achieved could provide a fantastic opportunity for national partners – including KWCA – to mitigate Kenya's biodiversity loss and climate change impacts, accelerate sustainable conservation financing, and lead Africa in sustainable conservation financing solutions.

[8] The Kenya Conservation Catalyst (a subsidiary of KWCA focused on sustainability); the Kenya Conservancies Fund; KWCA's Endowment Fund; and the innovative public-private Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund.

Our Contribution to National and International Development Goals

Over the past decade, KWCA has built and maintained strong partnerships with county governments and national ministries, working particularly closely with the KWS, the MoTW and the MECCF. Our work is aligned with Government strategies and planning processes – including the Constitution, the Vision 2030, the Wildlife Policy of 2020, the Wildlife Strategy of 2030, and the Bottom Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) plan. It also contributes to regional and international development frameworks, supporting (among others) the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) targets, and the UNFCCC Paris Climate Change Agreements.

Our gratitude

Thank you for reading our report. We hope that by presenting these impacts, explaining how they were achieved, and unpacking our strategic thinking and planning, we can inspire and guide other organisations hoping to establish a similar institution and make real community conservation impacts.

Thanks to all our members, partners and networks for supporting us through the ups and downs of the past decade. We look forward to consolidating our gains, seizing new opportunities and pushing forward with our work in the decade ahead to further catalyse and create an enabling environment for the growth of conservancies.

Our partners

Our Founding Partners

Our Funding Partners

Our Implementing Partners

Our Networking Partners

KWCA Member Conservancies

Amboseli Landscape

1. Kilitome
2. Motikanju
3. Kanzi
4. Kitirua
5. Selenkay
6. Elerai
7. Olpusare
8. Kitenden
9. Nalarami
10. Nailepu
11. Oltiyani
12. Olepolos
13. Osupuko
14. Nasaru Olosho
15. Rombo
16. Olgulului Ranch

Athi Kapiti Landscape

1. Lisa Ranch
2. Naretunoi
3. Rimpa Estates
4. Swara Plains
5. Maanzoni Owner's
6. Lukenya Hills
7. ILRI Kapiti
8. Lukenya
9. Africa Fund For Endangered Wildlife

Baringo Landscape

1. Ruko
2. Irong
3. Kabarion
4. Kiborgoch
5. Ng'enyin
6. Kaptuya
7. Sinibo Geopark
8. Kiborit
9. Chuine
10. Kiplombe
11. Tuiyarus
12. Mangar

Laikipia Landscape

1. Ol Jogi Wildlife
2. Borana
3. Ol Pejeta
4. Sangare
5. Sossian -Samburumburu
6. Mukutan
7. Loisaba
8. Lewa
9. Mugie
10. Segera
11. Ol Maisor
12. El Karama
13. Nareto
14. Suyian
15. Morani
16. Lolldaiga
17. Tumaren
18. Enasoit
19. Mpala Research Centre
20. The Ark Limited

Marsabit Landscape

1. Ele-Dimtu
2. Darathe
3. Dukana Buluk
4. Dabel

Maasai Mara Landscape

1. Olderkesi
2. Motorogi
3. Enonkishu
4. Mara Lemek
5. Mara North
6. Ol Kinyei
7. Olare Orok
8. Ol Choro Oirouwa
9. Mara Ripoi
10. Oloisukut
11. Nashulai
12. Pardamat
13. Mount Suswa
14. Isaaten
15. Olerai
16. Loita Hills Community Wildlife Conservancy

North Eastern Landscape

1. Ishaqbini
2. Chachabole
3. Sabuli
4. Bura East
5. Bora'Ana
6. Kamuthe
7. Kontomas
8. Tacaba South
9. Gurufu
10. Lorian Swamp

Northern Rangelands Landscape

1. Biliqo-Bulesa
2. Il Ngwesi
3. Jaldesa
4. Lekurruki
5. Leparua
6. Ltungai
7. Meibae
8. Melako
9. Nasuulu
10. Kalama
11. Nakuprat-Gotu
12. Ngare Ndare
13. Sera
14. Shurr
15. Songa
16. Westgate
17. Nannapa
18. Naapu
19. Nannapisho
20. Masol
21. Nkoteiya
22. Namunyak - Nalowouon
23. Kirimon
24. Naibunga
25. Sericho
26. Gabra Tulla
27. Kinna Ward
28. Cherab
29. Namunyak
30. Ngilai
31. Naibunga Upper
32. Naibunga Lower
33. Narupa
34. Pellow

Coast Landscape

1. Hanshak Nyongoro
2. Awer Community
3. Kiunga Marine
4. Lower Tana Delta
5. Ndera Community
6. Pate Marine
7. Amu
8. Malkahalaku
9. Golini Mwaluganje
10. Galana
11. Witu
12. Vipingo Ridge
13. Shakako
14. Dokata
15. Bora Bora
16. Shakabobo

Rift Lakes Landscape

1. Soysambu
2. Sanctuary Farm
3. Lentolia Farm
4. Mundui
5. Loldia
6. Oserengoni
7. Kigio
8. Crater Lake
9. Marula Estate
10. Solai Sanctuary
11. Lake Solai Wetlands

South Rift Landscape

1. Olerai
2. Shompole
3. Olkiramatian
4. Empaash Ooloirienito
5. Kisapuk Community
6. Olorgesailie Land Owners
7. Lorbetera
8. Noosikitok
9. Parsilet
10. Kikesen River

Taita Taveta Landscape

1. Bura Ranch
2. Mgeno
3. Kamungi
4. Kasigau
5. Lumo
6. Rukinga
7. Lake Jipe
8. Maungu
9. Oza
10. Wangala
11. Kambanga
12. Dawida
13. Wushumbu
14. Izera
15. Amaka
16. Mramba
17. Taita Hills
18. Ndara
19. Lualenyi
20. Choke
21. Mbulia
22. Shirango
23. Chalongo
24. Mbale
25. Marungu Hill
26. Jora
27. Teita Estate
28. Taita Ranch

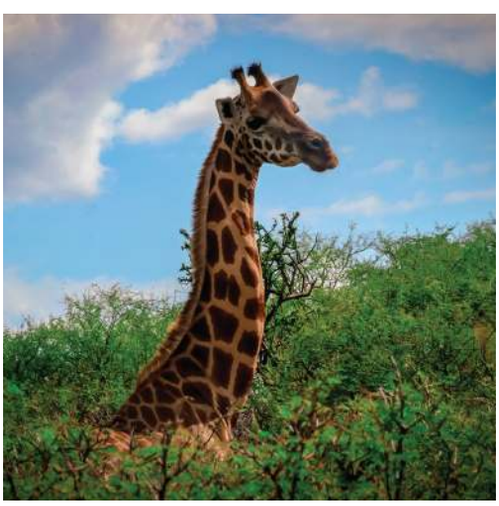
Western

1. Kaimosi
2. Kitale Nature
3. Kibargoi
4. Mukhondo
5. Kapkurmoi
6. Kibirong
7. Kingwal
8. Utonga Nature








Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association
Living nature, Living people

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Writing, editing and design team:
Joyce Mbataru, Louise Hoole, Karim Salkim

Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association
Magadi Tenting Centre
Seminary Road, off Magadi Road
P.O. Box 1038-00517, Nairobi, Kenya

www.kwcakenya.com
info@kwcakenya.com
+254 708 418 522