

K W S wild

M A G A Z I N E



A CONSERVATION RENAISSANCE: KENYA'S BOLD PATH



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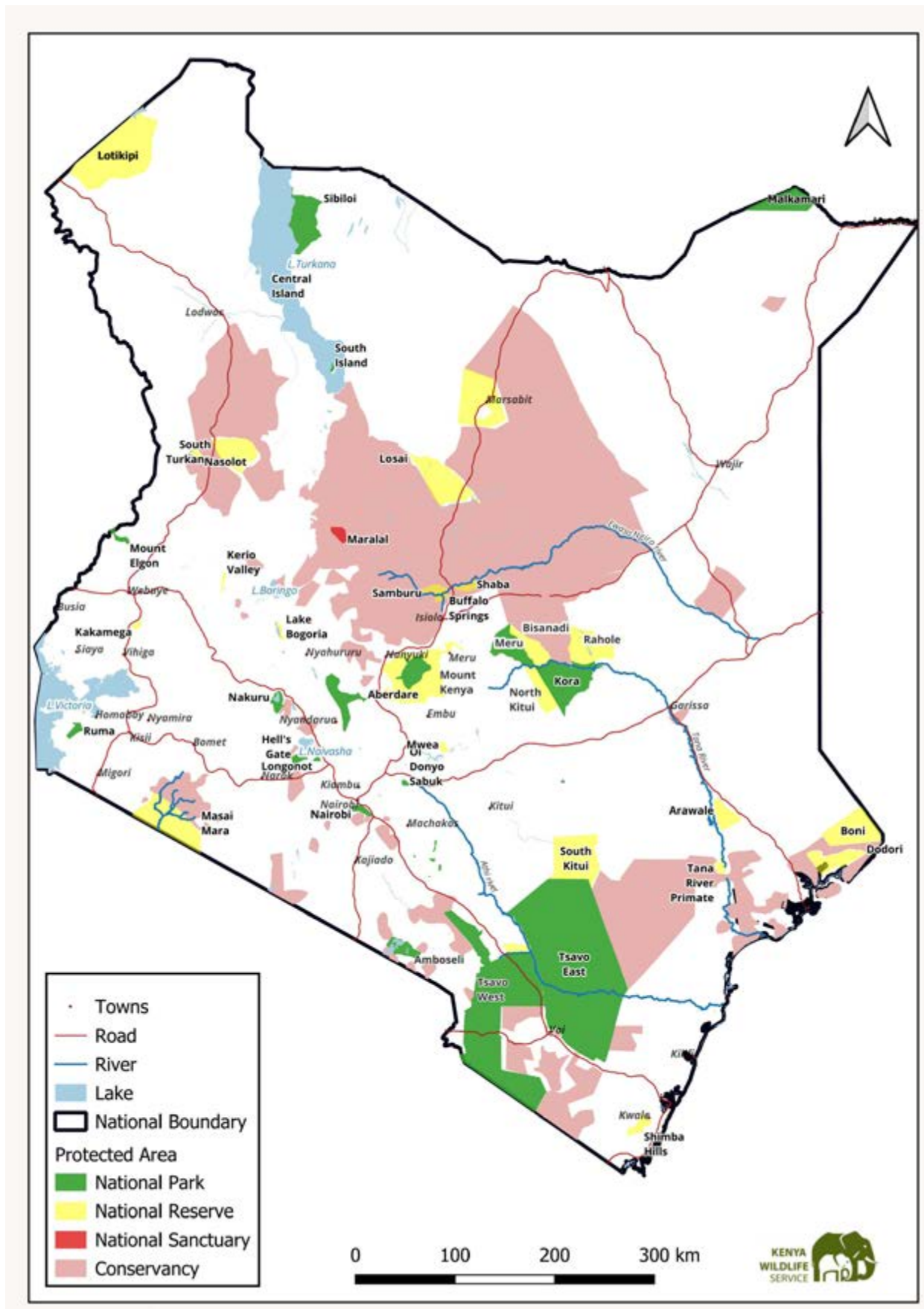
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Prof. Erustus Kanga, PhD, EBS.



The stories within these pages build a conservation revolution in progress – one built on scientific rigour, unprecedented collaboration and an unshakable commitment to biodiversity protection.”

FOREWORD

Kenya is undergoing a transformation and conservation renaissance that redefines how we protect, value, and live with nature. This fourth edition of KWS Wild Magazine captures that journey: one where conservation is no longer viewed as preservation alone, but as a catalyst for transformation, innovation, and shared prosperity.

At the heart of this change is a bold vision that builds a thriving wildlife economy that uplifts communities while securing our biodiversity. Through scientific excellence, strategic partnerships, and community empowerment, we are proving that nature and development are not opposing forces, but mutually reinforcing pillars of national development.

Our Species Recovery and Endangered Wildlife Protection programmes demonstrate this transformation in action. From the extraordinary rebound of Kenya's rhino population to the successful repatriation of the mountain bongo and the protection of the pancake tortoise, these milestones show what is possible when science, policy, and people converge around a common purpose.

Meanwhile, our anti-trafficking and wildlife security operations continue to position Kenya as a continental leader in combating wildlife crime. Initiatives such as the Partners Forum reaffirm our global stance against illegal trade while paving the way for legal, sustainable wildlife-based enterprises that fuel livelihoods and national growth.

Equally transformative are our innovations in conservation finance that include green bonds, biodiversity credits and tourism fee reforms. These new funding models is turning conservation into an engine of inclusive, long-term prosperity.

We are also investing in the next generation of conservation leaders. Through outreach programs that have reached over 50,000 students, we are cultivating young minds to see wildlife not only as heritage, but as the foundation of Kenya's ecological and economic future.

From the mountain forests in Elgon to the coral reefs along our coast, our ecosystem restoration and transboundary cooperation efforts reflect a simple truth: sustainable conservation is built on collaboration across landscapes, communities, and borders.

As Kenya asserts its global leadership in biodiversity policy, we are shifting global perspectives to view wildlife not as a cost to be managed, but as capital to be invested in for the benefit of people, planet, and prosperity.

This is the essence of our transformation: science-driven, community-led, and innovation-powered conservation that delivers both ecological resilience and human well-being.

With this edition, we invite all Kenyans and the world to join us in shaping a future where wildlife and people not only coexist, but thrive together.

Director General, Kenya Wildlife Service





KENYA RHINO RANGE EXPANSION AS CATALYSTS OF A WILDLIFE ECONOMY

In the heart of East Africa, a quiet yet determined revolution is transforming the fate of one of the world's most iconic and endangered species – the rhinoceros. As of the end of 2024, Kenya's rhino population stands at 2,102, a remarkable increase from just 384 individuals in 1987.

This resurgence is no accident. It is the result of decades of unwavering commitment, rigorous protection and a bold, forward-looking vision by KWS and its partners. Today, this success is no longer measured by survival alone, but by how rhinos and their habitats can anchor a broader wildlife economy that benefits local communities.

At the centre of this progress is the Kenya Rhino Range Expansion (KRRE) initiative – a groundbreaking, coordinated effort to restore, connect and safeguard rhino habitats across the country. Registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee, KRRE unites private, community and government sanctuaries in a strategic partnership model to address a central challenge

of conservation success: where to place the growing number of rhinos in Kenya. This model exemplifies how conservation can double as economic development — creating jobs, tourism ventures and value chains that flow back to surrounding communities.

KRRE's strength lies in its collaborative governance structure, involving:

- A Board of Directors composed of KWS, the Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI) and members of the Association of Private and Community Land Rhino Sanctuaries (APLRS)
- An Advisory Board of donors, diplomats and technical experts
- A dedicated core operational team and landscape-based teams

Key implementation partners include 51 Degrees, The Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, Safari Collection, and Footprint Foundation, among others. These actors provide technical expertise, logistical support and sustainable financing for KRRE's high-impact projects. This governance model not only secures rhinos but also builds a strong institutional base for Kenya's wildlife economy — aligning conservation finance, private investment, and community benefit-sharing into one system.

Kenya is home to three rhino species:

1,059

Eastern black rhinos (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*)

1,041

Southern white rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum simum*)

2

Northern white rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*) – now functionally extinct.

While the numbers reflect great progress, they also point to an emerging issue: existing sanctuaries, particularly for black rhinos, are nearing or have exceeded their ecological carrying capacity. Overcrowding increases

the risk of territorial conflicts, limits breeding success and heightens the potential for disease outbreaks. This is where the KRRE plays a pivotal role.

Guided by the National Black Rhino Recovery and Action Plan (2022–2026) and the broader KWS Strategic Plan (2024–2028), the KRRE aims to expand the available rhino range in a way that is ecologically viable, community-inclusive and strategically aligned with Kenya's Vision 2030 national development blueprint. It also directly links to Kenya's emerging wildlife economy agenda — ensuring that every new rhino range not only conserves biodiversity but catalyzes green jobs, revenue-sharing schemes and inclusive development.

A recent milestone in this expansion agenda is the successful translocation of 21 black rhinos to Segera Conservancy in Laikipia. This marks a key step in creating a large, interconnected sanctuary system in the Laikipia landscape – one of KRRE's flagship projects. Segera's inclusion increases protected space for rhinos while unlocking socio-economic benefits for local communities through conservation tourism, conservation-linked enterprises and support services.

The Segera translocation was executed with military precision under the stewardship of KWS, supported by veterinary, capture, surveillance and tracking teams. As part of the operation, the rhinos were:

- Carefully immobilized by trained KWS veterinary personnel
- Ear-notched using unique coded patterns for identification
- Fitted with solar-powered transmitters for real-time, non-invasive monitoring.

This effort not only adds to Kenya's rhino range but also exemplifies best practice in wildlife management – prioritizing safety, discipline and teamwork. Equally, it demonstrates how conservation science and technology can underpin a thriving wildlife economy, with data driving both ecological resilience and economic opportunity.

The Kenya Rhino Range Expansion initiative is currently operationalizing several transformative projects, including:

1. Tsavo West Ngulia Sanctuary Expansion

This ambitious project aims to expand the rhino sanctuary in Tsavo West National Park from 92 km² to a massive 3,000 km². The goal is to create a secure space for black rhino population growth, easing pressure on other overcrowded sanctuaries while anchoring conservation-led economic development in the region — from eco-lodges to nature-based enterprises.

2. Laikipia Central Project

The Laikipia region already hosts several high-performing rhino conservancies. The KRRE aims to merge and connect these through a collaborative management framework involving government, private and community actors. This approach will facilitate genetic diversity, reduce territorial pressure and deliver a cohesive conservation strategy that also unlocks inclusive revenue streams through joint ventures, guiding services and conservation-linked supply chains.

Managing rhinos in shared ecosystems like the Maasai Mara–Serengeti transboundary landscape demands coordinated policy alignment, intelligence sharing and cross-jurisdictional species management. KRRE

complements these regional efforts by consolidating conservation gains within Kenya's national landscape while helping to prevent the displacement of threats across borders. Such alignment ensures that the benefits of the wildlife economy are not constrained by political boundaries but flow across landscapes and communities.

KWS continues to pioneer the use of ear-notching and telemetry to support real-time monitoring, enhance anti-poaching efforts and strengthen individual-based rhino management. In 2024 alone:

46

Rhinos were notched across Lewa and Borana conservancies, with 4 fitted with transmitters.

13

Black rhinos were successfully notched in the Maasai Mara despite the difficult terrain.

This data-rich approach supports health management, movement tracking, behavioural studies and informed translocations, forming the backbone of Kenya's adaptive conservation strategy. As this science is embedded into Kenya's wildlife economy vision, it ensures that thriving rhino populations also translate into thriving communities.

Kenya's rhino recovery journey stands as a beacon of hope. From near collapse in the late 20th century to a steadily growing population today, the progress is both tangible and symbolic. Yet the work is far from complete. Guided by a bold vision – Thriving wildlife and healthy habitats for all, forever – KWS and its partners, through KRRE, are reshaping the future of conservation. By expanding rhino habitats, empowering local communities and integrating science and innovation, Kenya is proving that extinction is not inevitable.

Every rhino counts. Every partner matters. Together, we are expanding not just rhino ranges – but the possibilities for a better, biodiverse future. And in doing so, Kenya is also expanding the frontiers of a wildlife economy that places prosperity and biodiversity on the same path.

**Every rhino counts.
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biodiverse future.**







Model embryo of a Northern White Rhino

THE IVF QUEST TO SAVE THE NORTHERN WHITE RHINO

To many, the number two may seem insignificant. But for the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), it carries the weight of an entire species' survival. It represents the last two remaining Northern white rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*) on Earth—both living under 24-hour armed protection in Kenya.

This is no longer just a conservation story; it is a race against time to rescue a species on the brink of extinction. It also stands as a testament to how cutting-edge science and international collaboration can unlock new frontiers in conservation and the wildlife economy.

The two rhinos, Najin and Fatu, both females, reside at Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Laikipia County, central Kenya. Once roaming across Uganda, Chad, Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the

Northern white rhino population was decimated by relentless poaching and habitat loss. The death of Sudan, the last known male, in March 2018 marked a heartbreaking turning point—natural reproduction was no longer possible.

Yet, despite the odds, KWS and its international partners refused to concede defeat. They launched an ambitious and unprecedented scientific mission to revive the species through advanced reproductive technologies. This frontier research goes beyond saving one subspecies—it

pioneers techniques that could safeguard many others, positioning Kenya as a leader in conservation biotechnology, with potential benefits extending into medicine, genetics, and sustainable innovation.

Ol Pejeta, home also to Kenya's largest population of Eastern black rhinos, has become a vital hub for conservation and scientific advancement. In September 2023, a historic milestone was achieved when a viable Northern white rhino embryo—created through in-vitro fertilization (IVF)—was successfully transferred into a

Southern white rhino surrogate named Curra. Although the surrogate tragically passed away before the pregnancy could progress, the attempt marked a watershed moment in global wildlife science.

Undeterred, KWS and the BioRescue Consortium—led by reproductive specialists Dr. Susanne Holtze and Prof. Thomas Hildebrandt—advanced their work in early 2025 with a direct artificial fertilization procedure on Najin. The intricate process was conducted with utmost precision and international oversight. Najin remains under close veterinary observation as scientists monitor

for signs of success. Around the world, hope remains alive.

This mission transcends technology. It is a story of human determination, global solidarity, and shared responsibility for the planet's biodiversity. KWS's leadership and coordination in this effort affirm Kenya's place at the forefront of conservation innovation. At the same time, the partnerships and investments driving this science showcase how conservation can power a new wildlife economy—one rooted in biotechnology, research, and sustainable collaboration.

Governments, scientists, NGOs, and local communities from across

the world have rallied around a single goal: to give this iconic species a second chance at life. In doing so, they are helping build an enduring platform for innovation and knowledge exchange—one that strengthens Kenya's reputation not just as a destination for wildlife tourism, but as a global center for conservation science and green investment.

The survival of the Northern white rhino rests on just two individuals. Yet behind them stands a world that refuses to give up—a world proving that extinction need not be inevitable, but can be rewritten through courage, science, and hope.



KENYA WELCOMES HOME 10 MOUNTAIN BONGOS FROM FLORIDA

In a historic step toward reviving one of Kenya's most endangered species, 17 mountain bongos (*Tragelaphus eurycerus isaaci*) have been successfully repatriated from the Rare Species Conservatory Foundation (RSCF) in Florida, USA, to Mt. Kenya National Park. This milestone marks the beginning of a long-term mission to re-establish a self-sustaining wild population within the Mt. Kenya ecosystem—and showcases how bold conservation action can ignite new opportunities in eco-tourism, local enterprise, and Kenya's growing wildlife economy.



Once numbering more than 500 individuals in the 1970s, the mountain bongo population has plummeted to fewer than 100 in the wild due to habitat loss, poaching, disease, and fragmentation. The largest remaining group survives in Aberdare National Park, with scattered individuals in the

Maasai Mau and South Western Mau forests. The species has likely disappeared from former strongholds such as Ragati/Chehe (Mt. Kenya) and Eburru Forest, where no recent sightings have been confirmed.

Kenya's National Recovery and Action Plan for the Mountain

Bongo (2019–2023), currently under review, sets an ambitious vision—to rebuild the population to 750 individuals within 50 years. The strategy combines in-situ conservation in Kenyan forests with insights from ex-situ breeding programs in the United States and Europe. By aligning bongo recovery with the Sustainable

Development Goals, the plan ensures that restoring the species also rejuvenates ecosystems, protects water catchments, and unlocks eco-tourism benefits for surrounding communities.

The 2025 repatriation was the culmination of years of coordination among multiple partners, including:

- Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS)
- Meru County Government
- Lewa Wildlife Conservancy
- Kamulu and Ntimaka Community Forest Associations (CFAs)

Together, these partners established a Black Rhino and Mountain Bongo Sanctuary in the Marania and Mucheene forest blocks of Mt. Kenya. Preparations since April 2020 involved ecological assessments, health screenings, and community capacity-building. Local

participation has been central—ensuring that the sanctuary is not just a conservation site, but also a source of livelihoods and pride through jobs in guiding, habitat management, and eco-enterprises.

The 17 bongos—12 females and 5 males forming the founding population for rewilding—were transported aboard a DHL cargo aircraft in specialized crates. Upon arrival at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), the animals were swiftly cleared through customs with the facilitation of KWS, the Directorate of Veterinary Services (DVS), and the Kenya Airports Authority (KAA). Secure ground transport then delivered them to the Meru sanctuary, where they entered a three-month acclimatization period under close veterinary and behavioral monitoring, supported by RSCF experts.

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) granted a 250-acre user license for the sanctuary's holding and breeding facilities, paving the

way for a structured progressive rewilding program. This land-use model reflects an emerging conservation economy—where natural forest resources contribute not only to biodiversity protection, but also to sustainable income opportunities for host communities.

This initiative is a critical milestone for the mountain bongo and a blueprint for future species recovery programs in Kenya and beyond. It embodies strong leadership, science-driven collaboration, and community stewardship. More importantly, it reaffirms a powerful truth: that saving species and empowering people are two sides of the same conservation story.

Through this homecoming, Kenya is once again proving that conservation is not just about preventing extinction—it's about creating life, livelihoods, and lasting hope.





KENYA LAUNCHES 2025-2035 PANCAKE TORTOISE NATIONAL RECOVERY AND CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN

In a landmark move, Kenya has launched the 2025–2035 National Recovery and Conservation Action Plan for the Pancake Tortoise (*Malacochersus tornieri*), reinforcing its dedication to protecting one of the world’s most unique and endangered reptiles.

The launch, held in Tharaka-Nithi County on World Endangered Species Day, positions Kenya as the first range country to implement a targeted ten-year strategy for the species.

The Pancake Tortoise, distinguished by its flat, flexible shell and remarkable ability to wedge itself into rocky crevices, faces severe threats from illegal collection for the exotic pet trade and habitat destruction. With a slow reproductive rate—females

lay just one egg annually—the species struggles to recover naturally. Classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN and protected under CITES Appendix I, urgent intervention is critical to its survival.

The action plan unites government agencies, local communities, private landowners, scientists, and conservation NGOs in a coordinated effort to prevent extinction.

Key Pillars of the Plan

- **Habitat Restoration & Protection** – Targeting priority counties: Tharaka-Nithi, Kitui, Samburu, Isiolo, Meru, Laikipia, Marsabit, Tana River, and Embu.
- **Community Engagement** – Promoting conservation-based livelihoods, eco-tourism, and local stewardship.

- **Enhanced Law Enforcement**
– Strengthening anti-poaching operations to combat illegal wildlife trafficking.
- **Research & Monitoring**
– Conducting Kenya's first national census and deploying real-time habitat tracking.
- **Public Awareness** – Educating landowners, youth, and rural communities on coexistence and conservation.

Speaking at the launch, Prof. Patrick Kanga emphasized:

“We will not stand idly by as extinction claims our natural

heritage. Through collaborative enforcement, community engagement, and habitat restoration, we can secure a future for this species.”

The plan aligns with Kenya's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), linking conservation to sustainable development through eco-tourism and responsible land use. With over 95% of Pancake Tortoise populations found outside protected areas, partnerships with landowners and county governments will be pivotal to success.

Kenya's leadership in adopting this strategy underscores a broader principle: protecting endangered species is both a moral imperative and a driver of community resilience. As implementation begins, all stakeholders—citizens, conservationists, investors, and visitors—are urged to support this national effort.

The Pancake Tortoise's survival now stands as a measure of Kenya's commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development for generations to come.



RESTOCKING SHIMBA HILLS NATIONAL RESERVE



A convoy of wildlife trucks winding through Kenya's coastal hills recently marked more than just a physical relocation but symbolized the restoration of balance, biodiversity, and opportunity.

In a well planned and expertly executed operation, KWS successfully translocated 167 zebras, 84 impalas, and 10 Coke's hartebeests from Tsavo West National Park to Shimba Hills National Reserve.

This large-scale herbivore restocking represents a major step in restoring ecological function in Shimba Hills—a protected area whose biodiversity and ecological processes had been degraded over decades due to the

sharp decline of large mammal populations.

"We're not just moving wildlife—we're reviving a landscape," said Dr. Isaac Lekool, Senior Assistant Director at KWS, who led the operation alongside a skilled team of veterinarians, rangers, and capture specialists.

Reviving an Ecosystem, Hoofbeat by Hoofbeat

Healthy herbivore populations are vital to grassland dynamics,

seed dispersal, and predator-prey balance. The absence of grazers in Shimba Hills had led to overgrown grasslands, reduced plant diversity, and disrupted food chains. Reintroducing key herbivores helps reactivate these natural systems, restoring resilience and functionality.

In one particularly symbolic moment, a Coke's hartebeest—sedated and prepped for relocation—embodied the broader mission: reviving Shimba Hills one hoofbeat at a time.



“We’re not just moving wildlife – we’re reviving a landscape,”

Shimba Hills: Beauty Under Pressure

Established in 1968, Shimba Hills National Reserve is renowned for its dramatic forested terrain and as home to Kenya’s only population of the endangered sable antelope. Yet despite its ecological and aesthetic richness, the reserve has faced persistent challenges:

- Declining wildlife populations
- Low species diversity
- Pressures from land use, poaching, and conflict in Lunga Lunga, Kinango, and Samburu sub-counties

The restocking program tackles these ecological gaps while unlocking socio-economic opportunity.

Conservation as a Driver of Local Economies

The return of zebras, impalas, and hartebeests is expected to boost Shimba Hills’ appeal as a tourism destination, stimulating local economies through:

- Increased tourist visitation
- Job creation in hospitality and conservation
- Growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in surrounding communities
- Strengthened conservation infrastructure

This is where protection evolves into prosperity: conservation becomes a pillar of Kenya’s wildlife economy, benefiting both ecosystems and people.

Phase Two and Beyond

Plans are already underway for Phase Two, which will introduce giraffes, elands, and buffaloes. This next wave will:

- Further enrich the ecosystem
- Improve utilization of undergrazed forage
- Reduce human-wildlife conflict in dispersal areas
- Relieve ecological pressure on congested parks
- Strengthen landscape-level conservation connectivity

Global Leadership, Local Benefits

This initiative reflects the ambitions of the KWS Strategic Plan 2024–2028, emphasizing habitat restoration, species recovery,

and sustainable conservation outcomes. It also aligns with global frameworks:

- **CITES** – Promoting sustainable species use and protection
- **SDG 15: Life on Land** – Enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem health
- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth** – Leveraging tourism for livelihoods
- **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities** – Integrating conservation into regional development

As the sun sets over Tsavo West and rises again over the misty hills of Shimba, one thing is clear: Shimba Hills is reclaiming its ecological identity. With strategic leadership, scientific precision, and community collaboration, this effort marks a defining chapter in Kenya’s conservation journey.

“This is not just about moving animals. It’s about giving ecosystems, communities, and conservation itself a second chance,” noted a KWS field officer.

The journey to rewild Shimba Hills is far from over, but each returning hoofprint brings it closer to becoming once again a thriving symbol of harmony between wildlife, people, and place.





BIO-PIRACY UNDER WATCH: KENYA'S BOLD STAND AGAINST EXOTIC ANTS TRADE

In a precedent-setting ruling, a Nairobi court has convicted four individuals for attempting to smuggle over 5,000 live queen ants out of Kenya, reinforcing the country's zero-tolerance stance against illegal wildlife trade.

The defendants—two Belgian nationals, a Vietnamese citizen, and a Kenyan accomplice—received one-year prison sentences or a KSh 1 million fine each after pleading guilty to wildlife trafficking charges.

An Unlikely Target: Ants on the Black Market

The case drew international attention because of its unusual subject: giant African harvester ants (*Dorylus* spp.), increasingly coveted by exotic pet collectors in Europe and Asia.

- The ants were packed in 2,000+ test tubes with cotton wool to sustain them during transit.
- Valued at up to \$220 per specimen, the shipment was worth over \$1.1 million on the black market.

- The Belgian nationals, Lornoy David and Seppe Lodewijckx (both 19), claimed to be amateur collectors unaware of Kenyan laws.
- David, an active member of a Facebook group called “Ant Gang,” admitted to maintaining 10 ant colonies in Belgium and having previously purchased Kenyan queen ants for \$200 each.
- The Vietnamese national and Kenyan accomplice coordinated logistics for the smuggling attempt.

The Court’s Message: All Species Matter

In delivering the ruling, Magistrate Thuku underscored the case’s significance:

“This court will do what it can to protect all creatures great and small. Illegal wildlife trade and potential bio-piracy cannot be excused.”

KWS hailed the ruling as a critical victory. Prof. Erustus Kanga emphasized:

“Traffickers often overlook the ecological importance of smaller species, but their role in maintaining soil health and food chains is irreplaceable. This verdict sends a clear message—Kenya will prosecute wildlife crimes, no matter the species.”

Why Ants Matter to Ecosystems

Giant African harvester ants are vital to:

- Soil aeration – improving fertility and water penetration.
- Seed dispersal – supporting plant regeneration.
- Nutrient cycling – sustaining ecosystem balance.

Removing them destabilizes habitats and undermines ecological resilience.

A New Precedent in Wildlife Crime

This ruling sets a legal precedent for prosecuting crimes involving lesser-known but ecologically critical species. Under CITES, trade in these ants is strictly regulated, but enforcement remains difficult due to rising demand in niche pet markets.

KWS warns that insect trafficking is an underreported but growing threat to Kenya’s biodiversity.

Key lessons:

- ➔ Stricter surveillance at ports and borders
- ➔ Stronger public awareness campaigns
- ➔ Enhanced international cooperation to disrupt smuggling networks

Next Steps

- Ramp up anti-trafficking operations targeting illegal insect trade
- Expand collaboration with international agencies to track online and cross-border markets
- Launch public education campaigns to reduce demand and deter trafficking

Kenya’s Stand: No Species Too Small to Protect

This case underscores Kenya’s commitment to protecting all wildlife—big and small. It proves that conservation is not just about rhinos and elephants, but also about the tiny yet indispensable creatures that keep ecosystems alive.

As Kenya strengthens its legal and enforcement frameworks, this landmark ruling stands as a global reminder:

- Conservation justice extends to every species.



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: KENYA'S LANDMARK CONSERVATION FEE REVIEW



Early this year, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) embarked on one of the most significant undertakings in its history — a comprehensive review of conservation fees across all national parks, reserves, and sanctuaries. This was the first such exercise in nearly two decades, marking a bold step toward ensuring the sustainability of Kenya's globally admired wildlife heritage.

For a country whose name is synonymous with safari, the move went far beyond numbers and tariffs. It sought to redefine how Kenyans and the world value, sustain, and invest in the ecosystems that shape the nation's identity.

The previous conservation fee structure had remained unchanged since 2007 — a period during which both Kenya and the global conservation landscape

had shifted dramatically. Inflation, climate change, habitat loss, and escalating costs of protecting endangered species had increased the financial burden on KWS.

"Over 90 percent of our internally generated revenue comes from conservation fees," explained KWS Director General Prof. Erustus Kanga during a media roundtable with editors in Nairobi. "These fees fund over 70 percent of our total budget, yet only 28 percent goes

directly to conservation work. This is not sustainable."

Currently, KWS manages 154 stations nationwide. However, five flagship parks — Amboseli, Nakuru, Nairobi, Tsavo East, and Tsavo West — generate nearly three-quarters of its total revenue. The imbalance, coupled with declining government subventions and stagnating tourism revenues, created an urgent need for reform.

In the 2024/2025 financial year, KWS raised KES 7.9 billion against a requirement of KES 19.7 billion, leaving a deficit of more than KES 12 billion. The fee review was therefore not a luxury — it was a necessity.

The process began in January with a high-level consultative meeting held at Nairobi National Park. The forum brought together representatives from the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, county governments, private sector players, conservation NGOs, and community representatives to deliberate on sustainable funding strategies.

Opening the session, Prof. Kanga emphasized the shared responsibility of all stakeholders: “Conservation fees are not merely costs but strategic investments in the preservation of Kenya’s unparalleled wildlife heritage,” he said.

The dialogue set the tone for a nationwide public participation process that saw forums held in 20 counties. Written memoranda and submissions were received

from tour operators, researchers, youth groups, and conservation scientists, ensuring that every voice was heard.

Participants acknowledged the need for fee adjustments, urging KWS to channel proceeds toward enhancing visitor experiences, modernizing park infrastructure, and ensuring communities benefit more directly from conservation.

Before drafting the new Wildlife Conservation and Management (Access and Conservation) (Fees) Regulations, 2025, KWS commissioned a comprehensive pricing study and Regulatory Impact Assessment. The study benchmarked Kenya’s model against global peers and analyzed visitor trends, willingness to pay, and conservation cost drivers.

Findings revealed that Kenya offers a world-class wildlife experience but charges relatively low park entry fees. For instance, Rwanda’s gorilla permits cost \$1,500, while Tanzania’s Serengeti entry ranges from \$80–\$100. In contrast, Kenya’s top-tier parks charge between \$60–\$80, with subsidized

rates for citizens and residents starting from as low as KES 600.

The proposed fee review was anchored on four guiding pillars:

1. Financial Sustainability – aligning fees with the real cost of conservation;
2. Conservation Imperatives – prioritizing habitat restoration and species management;
3. Equity and Inclusion – ensuring affordable access for Kenyans and vulnerable groups;
4. Global Benchmarking – positioning Kenya competitively in the global tourism market.

Under this framework, KWS projects an increase in internally generated revenue from KES 7.9 billion in 2024 to KES 16.5 billion by 2028. The additional income will fund ranger welfare, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, habitat restoration, infrastructure upgrades, and community benefit-sharing programmes.



True to its inclusive spirit, the new framework protects vulnerable groups. Children under five, senior citizens over seventy, and Persons with Disabilities will continue to enjoy free access to all KWS-managed parks and reserves. Accredited guides, drivers, and porters will also enter free of charge, recognizing their essential role in the tourism value chain.

In addition, KWS is diversifying tourism products — from biking trails and cultural exhibitions to marine adventures and community-based experiences — designed to extend visitor stays, create local jobs, and stimulate regional economies.

A digital payment system, already piloted in 15 parks, is being rolled out to streamline transactions, improve transparency, and enhance visitor convenience.

Throughout the consultations, the message from KWS remained consistent: this was not about raising prices, but about sustaining

value. It is an invitation to both Kenyans and the international community to invest in a shared future where wildlife and people coexist in harmony.

“Paying a little more today ensures that our children will still see elephants roam freely, lions roar across the plains, and turtles return to Watamu’s shores,” said Prof. Kanga. “This review is not a burden — it is an act of collective courage and foresight.”

As the process moved into its final stages, it became clear that KWS had done more than adjust a tariff schedule. It had reignited a national conversation on the true cost of conservation — and the shared responsibility of ensuring that Kenya’s majestic wildlife endures for generations to come.

Key Highlights of the 2025 Conservation Fee Review:

- First comprehensive review in 18 years (last done in 2007)

- Revenue target: KES 7.9B (2024) >> KES 16.5B (2028)
- Four guiding pillars: Sustainability, Conservation, Equity, Benchmarking
- 20 counties engaged in nationwide stakeholder consultations
- Free access maintained for children under 5, seniors over 70, Persons with Disabilities, and accredited tourism industry workers, including porters, guides and drivers
 - Digital payment system piloted in 15 parks for seamless bookings and transparency
- Revenue priorities: Ranger welfare, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, habitat restoration, tourism infrastructure upgrades, and community benefit-sharing



SCALING UP COMPENSATION FOR HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

In Kenya's rich and diverse landscapes, wildlife is both a national treasure and a source of economic and social tension. Human-wildlife conflict remains a pressing issue for communities living in proximity to protected areas.

Recognizing the need for fairness and justice, the Government of Kenya – through the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and in line with the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, 2013 – has made significant strides in compensating individuals and families affected by wildlife-related losses.

In 2025, this effort reached new heights, with the government disbursing over Ksh 847 million in compensation to affected communities, reflecting a deepening national commitment to both conservation and human welfare.



The turning point came in 2013, with the reintroduction of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, which restored the legal framework for wildlife compensation. The Act established fixed compensation thresholds, including:

Ksh 5 million
for human death

Ksh 3 million
for permanent disability.

Additionally, the Act created Community Wildlife Compensation Committees (CWCCs) at the county level, ensuring that claims are processed locally, efficiently and with community involvement. Working closely with KWS, these committees assess incidents, verify documentation and recommend valid claims for final approval by the Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife.

How the Compensation Process Works

The compensation system is designed to ensure transparency, accountability and responsiveness. The steps in compensation are:

1. Incident reporting

The victim or next of kin reports the incident to the nearest KWS station –whether it is a human injury, death, crop damage or livestock loss.

2. Verification and assessment

KWS, in collaboration with other government officers, confirms the cause, nature and extent of the damage.

3. Filing and documentation

The claimant completes a detailed compensation form, submitting evidence and official documentation.

4. CWCC review

The Community Wildlife Compensation Committee validates the claim and forwards it to the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife.

5. Ministerial review and approval

The Ministerial Wildlife Conservation and Compensation Committee reviews all submissions and approves eligible payments.

6. Disbursement of funds

Upon approval, the National Treasury releases funds to the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, which in turn disburses compensation to the affected individuals.

7. Returns and accountability

KWS submits payment returns to both the Cabinet Secretary and the CWCC to ensure full transparency and tracking.

2025 Compensation Highlights by County

In 2025, the government paid out compensation to 427 claimants across multiple counties. Key highlights include:

9.17m

Laikipia County: across 36 claims – the highest payout in the year, reflecting ongoing wildlife pressures in the region.

66.28m

Kajiado County: disbursed to 38 claimants affected by livestock loss and human injuries.

60.38m

Kilifi County: allocated for 24 claims, largely from crop destruction incidents.

31.27m

Baringo County: paid to 18 claimants for human injuries, deaths and crop losses.

In a powerful demonstration of national leadership, President William Ruto presented a Ksh 950 million cheque to the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife for the 2025–26 financial year disbursement. During a high-level event at Meru National Park, the President also

handed over symbolic cheques to 11 compensation beneficiaries from Meru County.

“Compensation is justice, but prevention is progress,” President Ruto stated.



Through the Conservation Card, fencing and community-led tourism, we are transforming conflict into opportunity.”

His remarks signaled a shift from reactive measures to proactive, sustainable solutions that reduce conflict while enhancing community benefits from wildlife conservation.

Cabinet Secretary Hon. Rebecca Miano reinforced the government’s resolve to eliminate compensation delays and ensure that communities are supported in a timely and dignified manner. Speaking at a compensation event in Taita Taveta, she noted:

“We’re fast-tracking compensation and securing funding to resolve delays. President Ruto’s leadership ensures no community is left behind.”

She emphasized that compensation is only one pillar of a broader vision. Real transformation requires investment in long-term co-existence strategies, such as:

- Conservation Cards to ensure revenue-sharing and financial benefits for local communities

- Fencing of high-conflict areas to reduce encounters between wildlife and people
- Community-led tourism to generate livelihoods and deepen community stewardship of conservation efforts.

As Kenya continues to lead on the African conservation stage, its human-wildlife compensation programme demonstrates a commitment to equity, accountability and innovation. More than payouts, the system

reflects a belief that human lives and livelihoods matter and that the future of conservation depends on the goodwill and resilience of the people who live alongside wildlife every day.

In the words of Hon. Miano:



It's not just about compensation. It's about co-existence - where both our communities and our wildlife thrive."





COASTAL TOUR GUIDES TRAINED TO ELEVATE EXPERIENCE AND CONSERVATION

On the sun-drenched shores of Kenya's coast, a new chapter in tourism and conservation is being written. In May 2025, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) rolled out a two-phase intensive training programme for members of the KIMOSO (Kilifi, Mombasa, South Coast) Tour Driver Guides Association, sharpening the skills of 128 guides from Diani, Kwale, Tiwi, and surrounding areas.

Anchored in the KWS 2024–2028 Strategic Plan, the programme went beyond teaching logistics. It redefined the role of guides as frontline ambassadors of culture, conservation, and Kenya's global image.

"Driver guides are not just chauffeurs—they are storytellers, educators, and custodians of heritage," one facilitator remarked

as participants gathered in Mombasa and Ukunda. "When they speak, Kenya speaks."

Key Outcomes

Pollmans guide training highlights:

- ➔ Improved storytelling and customer engagement.
- ➔ Reinforced ethical tourism standards.
- ➔ Boosted morale and brand credibility.

- ➔ Strengthened guide knowledge on conservation and visitor safety.

South Coast training achievements:

- ➔ Elevated digital and soft skills for marketing and guest interaction.
- ➔ Promoted health and wellness practices for guide longevity.
- ➔ Fostered cooperation among KWS, local government and private sector.
- ➔ Expanded awareness of emerging attractions, easing pressure on crowded sites.

Tourism for a Changing World

The training was also forward-looking, tackling today's global tourism realities: post-COVID traveler expectations, climate change, and the rise of responsible travel. By equipping guides to adapt to these dynamics, KWS ensured they can lead—not just follow—the shift towards a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable tourism sector.

A Renewed Sense of Purpose

The programme culminated in a certificate ceremony that felt less like an ending and more like a new beginning. Pride and optimism filled the room as guides reflected on their role in shaping Kenya's coastal story.

By investing in professional development, KWS is not just training guides—it is transforming experiences. Visitors will leave Kenya's coast not only with memories of turquoise waters and swaying palms, but with a deeper connection to the land, its people, and its wildlife.

In the hands of these newly trained guides, every journey promises more than beauty and hospitality—it promises a story of culture, conservation, and shared heritage.





INSPIRING KENYA'S NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATIONISTS

On a crisp Nairobi morning, the chatter of schoolchildren filled the air as a group of eager students streamed into the Nairobi Safari Walk. Armed with notebooks, sketchpads, and a few borrowed cameras, they were not just visitors—they were young conservationists in the making..

This scene is part of the KWS School Activation Campaign, an innovative initiative launched in partnership with Urban Street Photography to bring conservation to life for Kenya's youth. By blending creative expression, hands-on learning, and immersive

park experiences, the campaign is nurturing a generation that will carry forward the mantle of protecting Kenya's rich biodiversity.

With 60% of Kenya's population under 25, engaging young people

in conservation is not a choice—it is a necessity.

Creative Pathways to Conservation

The campaign is designed to make wildlife protection fun,

relatable, and memorable through interactive modules:

- **Storytelling & Creative Arts** – Children craft stories, poems, and drawings that reimagine Kenya's wildlife and ecosystems.
- **Photography & Film** – In partnership with Urban Street Photography, students capture their encounters with nature through youthful eyes.
- **Conservation Quizzes** – Lively contests test knowledge while sparking curiosity about Kenya's landscapes and species.
- **Guided Nature Walks** – Parks and reserves become open-air classrooms, where theory meets lived experience.
- **Tree Planting & Litter Management** – Students roll up their sleeves to practice climate action firsthand.

One teacher observed, "Our students gained invaluable insights into wildlife conservation. The creativity unlocked in them was incredible—suddenly, they saw nature not as distant, but as part of their own story."

Breaking Barriers, Building Access

To ensure no child is left out, KWS has introduced discounted education packages—as little as Ksh 100 per child for marine parks and sanctuaries, and Ksh 200 for terrestrial parks. Transport costs are eased through subsidized bus rentals, and schools benefit from free entry for accompanying teachers.

This inclusivity has made it possible for children from diverse backgrounds—urban and rural, public and private schools—to access Kenya's wild treasures.

Planting Seeds for the Future

The campaign complements KWS's broader "Tunza Mali Yako" (Guard Your Wildlife) initiative, embedding conservation into the national identity. Its impact extends beyond classrooms:

- **Educational enrichment** – Students engage in experiential learning that deepens understanding.
- **Community connection** – Families and schools build stronger ties to parks and protected areas.
- **Sustainable stewardship** – Early engagement ensures

a generation that values, defends, and benefits from conservation.

Looking ahead, KWS plans to:

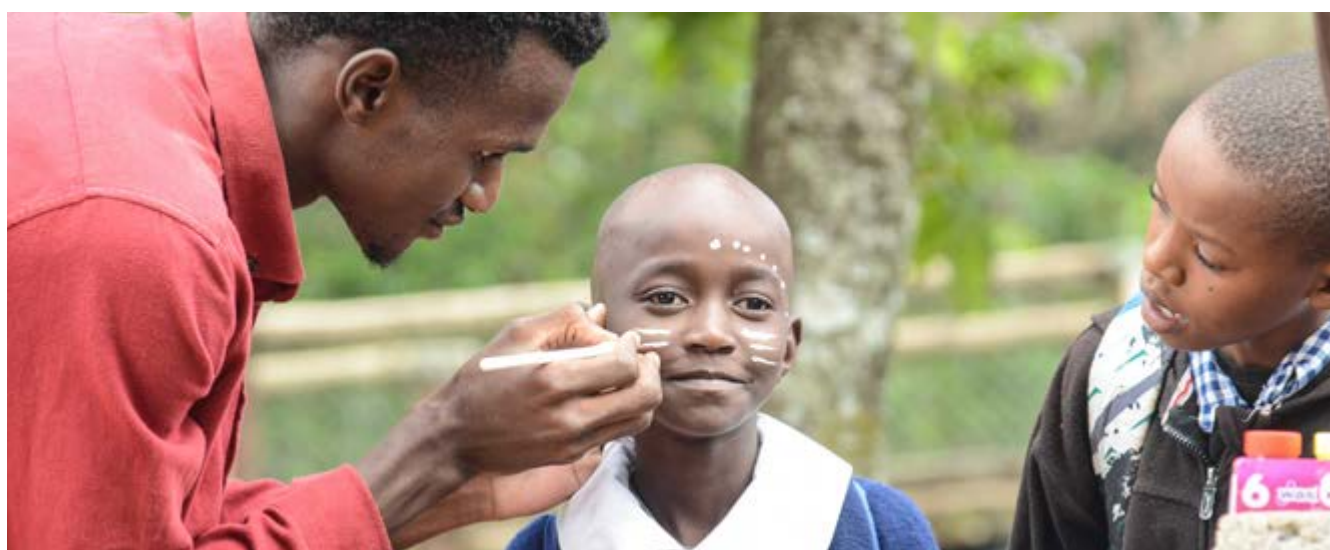
- Expand partnerships with schools nationwide.
- Enhance digital engagement with virtual conservation modules.
- Track long-term impact through student-led conservation projects.

A Movement, Not Just a Programme

The School Activation Campaign is more than a series of activities—it's the spark of a movement. Each story written, photograph taken, and tree planted becomes a stepping stone toward a future where Kenya's wildlife thrives under the guardianship of its youngest custodians.

As one student declared after her first nature walk: "When I grow up, I want to be a ranger. I want to protect the animals I saw today."

That is the legacy this campaign is building: hope, responsibility, and an unbreakable bond between Kenya's children and the natural heritage they inherit.





HELL'S GATE TAKES THE WORLD STAGE AS SAFARI RALLY 2025 ROARS THROUGH KENYA'S WILD HEART

From the bone-dry plains of Elementeita to the towering cliffs of Hell's Gate, the 2025 World Rally Championship (WRC) Safari Rally was more than a motorsport event — it was a journey through Kenya's untamed beauty and resilience.

Held between March 20–23, the rally spanned 1,403 kilometers across 21 punishing stages, testing drivers with a cocktail of dust, rain, mud, and the ever-present unpredictability of nature. True to its legend, the Safari Rally once again lived up to its reputation as the most grueling — and most breathtaking — event on the WRC calendar.

Elementeita's Dust Battleground

Locally known as Muteita ("dust place"), the Elementeita stage lived up to its fearsome name. Scorching heat baked the cracked earth, and every car's passage sent thick clouds of dust spiraling skyward, reducing visibility to mere meters.

For drivers, it was a battle of precision and endurance; for fans, a visceral reminder of Kenya's rugged beauty and the raw spirit of the Safari Rally.

Hell's Gate: The World's Most Watched Stage

The rally's most spectacular and globally celebrated moment

unfolded at Hell's Gate National Park, which became the most watched stage in the world during the 2025 Safari Rally.

Set against the dramatic backdrop of volcanic cliffs, soaring gorges, and open savannahs, rally cars thundered past herds of zebra, giraffe, and buffalo — a sight so surreal it felt cinematic. Gazelles occasionally darted across the track, blending the thrill of motorsport with the pulse of the wild.

Spectators described it as “a living postcard of Kenya” — where speed met serenity, and wilderness shared the stage with world-class competition. Global audiences watching from millions of screens experienced Kenya's natural grandeur like never before, positioning Hell's Gate as a defining symbol of how sport and conservation can coexist.

Nature's Unpredictable Hand

True to the Safari Rally's heritage, the elements were as fierce as the engines:

- Dry riverbeds turned into raging torrents after sudden downpours.
- Dust storms swallowed entire stages, turning daylight into dusk.
- Mud traps and slippery turns forced drivers to gamble everything on skill and instinct.

Each challenge reaffirmed the rally's identity — a contest not just between drivers, but between humanity and the wild forces that shape Kenya's landscapes.

Beyond the Finish Line: Conservation and Community

While engines roared and crowds cheered, the rally's legacy extended far beyond competition:

- Tourism Surge: Visitor numbers soared, with Hell's Gate National Park recording the highest footfall in its history, as rally fans combined adventure with wildlife exploration.
- Economic Boost: Hotels, restaurants, and small

enterprises flourished across Naivasha and neighboring towns, translating excitement into income.

- Global Showcase: Broadcast to millions across continents, the rally spotlighted Kenya as both a sporting powerhouse and a global leader in sustainable tourism and conservation.

A Rally Like No Other

The 2025 Safari Rally reaffirmed its place as a uniquely Kenyan spectacle — where tyres carve through history, and every roar of an engine echoes across ancient valleys. By merging competition, conservation, and community development, the rally strengthened Kenya's global brand while driving local growth and environmental stewardship.

In Kenya, the Safari Rally is more than a race.

It is a living story — where wilderness and motorsport share a heartbeat, and where every turn of the wheel celebrates the enduring power of the land and its people.



MAGICAL KENYA TRAIL SERIES SHOWCASES UNTAMED BEAUTY OF KAKAMEGA RESERVE AND RUMA NATIONAL PARK



The sun dipped low over the lush canopy of Kakamega Forest as more than 34 adventurers from around the world gathered for the Magical Kenya Trail Series – Magharibi Edition. Hikers, cyclists, bloggers, and media teams stood ready to embark on a transformative journey through two of Western Kenya’s ecological treasures: Kakamega Forest National Reserve and Ruma National Park.

More than an outdoor challenge, the event—spearheaded by the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB)—sought to position Western

Kenya as a premier eco-tourism destination. It married physical endurance with environmental consciousness, showcasing the

region’s rich biodiversity, dramatic landscapes, and vibrant culture.

Into the Heart of Kakamega Forest

Cyclists powered through winding trails of Kakamega, Kenya's last remaining tropical rainforest, while hikers soaked in the earthy scents and the orchestra of birdcalls. Colobus monkeys leapt between branches, and the spectacular Great Blue Turaco glided above—living proof of the forest's fragile importance.

Ruma's Rugged Challenge

Day two unfolded in the raw beauty of Ruma National Park, known for its endangered Rothschild's giraffes and rolling savannahs. Trekkers braved steep rocky hills under a searing sun, rewarded with sweeping valley views and the thrill of discovering one of Kenya's hidden gems.

Adventure with Purpose

The trail was more than a test of stamina—it was a celebration of adventure tourism as a tool for wellness, conservation, and community growth. Participants fueled local economies by staying in guesthouses, supporting craft vendors, and hiring local guides, reinforcing the value of sustainable travel.

Kakamega and Ruma also offered powerful lessons in conservation. Every photograph snapped, every climb conquered, and every connection made became a reminder of our shared responsibility to protect wild spaces.

The series closed with a spirited community celebration, where bonds formed between adventurers and locals highlighted the event's lasting impact. The Magharibi Edition was not just an event—it was a spark, igniting global appreciation for Western Kenya's eco-tourism potential.

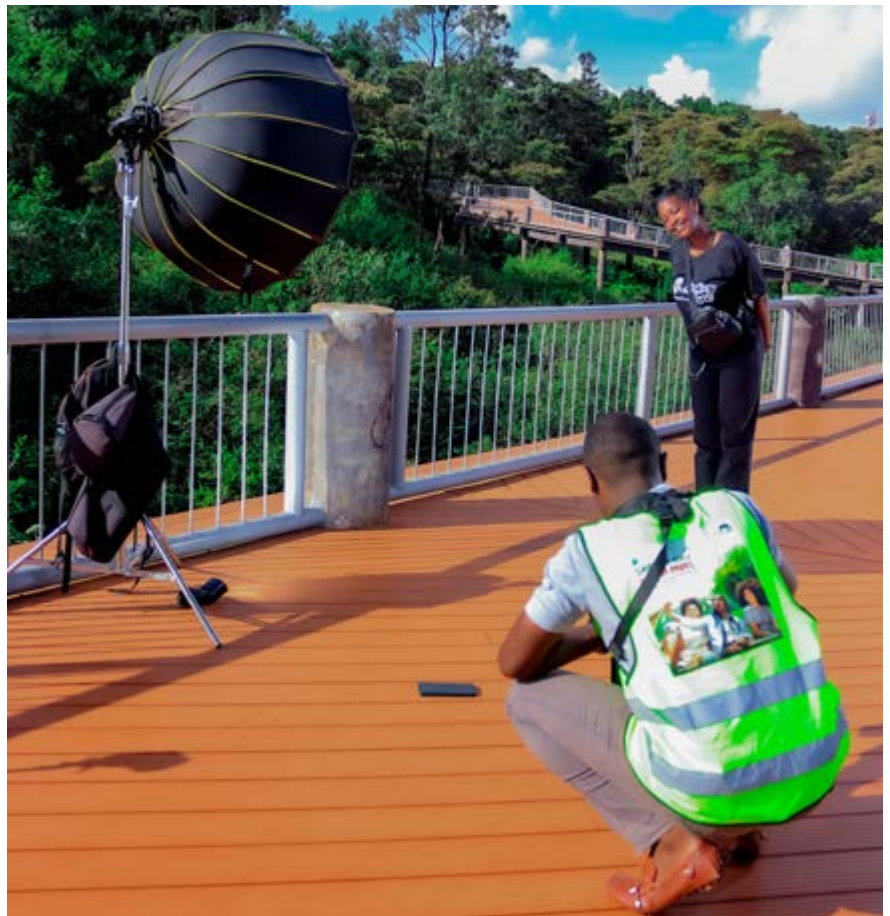
With strategic partnerships between KTB, conservation groups, and media, the trail series is set to grow into a flagship annual experience. As global travelers increasingly seek meaningful, sustainable adventures, Western Kenya is ready—with open trails, open arms, and untold stories etched into every landscape.



EMPOWERING THE YOUTH THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE WILD

In an inspired fusion of creativity and conservation, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) has launched a groundbreaking youth empowerment initiative in partnership with the Urban Street Photographers Association. The project invites young photographers to trade city streets for the wilderness — turning their lenses toward wildlife and transforming conservation into both an artistic pursuit and a sustainable livelihood.

This visionary programme is firmly anchored in the KWS Strategic Plan 2024–2028, which emphasizes youth empowerment, public engagement, and conservation education as key pillars for a resilient conservation future. It seeks to demonstrate that protecting wildlife is not only about science and patrols, but also about imagination, perspective, and storytelling.



On weekends, along the leafy trails of Nairobi Safari Walk and the Nairobi Animal Orphanage, visitors encounter more than the grace of giraffes or the roar of lions. They meet young photographers — poised, focused, and inspired — capturing fleeting moments of wonder: a lion cub framed in soft morning light, a family marveling at zebras, or a child's wide-eyed fascination at a cheetah's elegance.

Once confined to Nairobi's bustling streets, these photographers have found a new canvas in Kenya's protected spaces. Their images, shared on social media or exhibited during park events, are not mere snapshots. They are stories of coexistence, beauty, and hope — visual ambassadors that invite the world to see Kenya's wildlife through youthful eyes.

The initiative is already changing lives.

➔ Youth empowerment:

More than ten young photographers are now earning meaningful income from their craft — proving that conservation can offer viable livelihoods for creative talent.

➔ Enhanced visitor experience:

Tourists and local visitors alike can take home professionally captured memories of their encounters, deepening their personal connection to Kenya's parks.

➔ Increased conservation awareness:

Each photograph becomes a bridge between people and nature — sparking conversations about the value of wildlife and the urgency of its protection.

Since its rollout, the project has drawn increased foot traffic to Nairobi Safari Walk, particularly among youth, creative collectives, and school groups. Participating schools enjoy free group portraits, turning educational visits into personal and memorable

experiences that link learning with creativity.

For KWS, this initiative is part of a broader strategy to harness storytelling as a tool for conservation. By extending the power of the camera lens, KWS is expanding the definition of who a conservationist can be. No longer limited to field rangers, scientists, or ecologists — the movement now includes young artists shaping narratives that resonate across generations and platforms.

“Through the camera lens, these young photographers are not just taking pictures — they’re capturing the soul of our wildlife and telling Kenya’s conservation story in a new, powerful way. When the youth see value in nature, the future of conservation is secure.”

— *Lillian Nyabicha, Senior Warden, Nairobi Safari Walk & Animal Orphanage*

What began as an experiment in creative collaboration has evolved into a movement — one where art, technology, and environmental stewardship converge. These young photographers are learning that every image has power: to educate, to inspire, and to protect.

In their frames, conservation comes alive — not as a distant

policy or abstract ideal, but as a living, breathing experience. It is conservation captured up close: a movement where every click of the shutter helps ensure that Kenya’s wildlife will continue to be seen, celebrated, and remembered for generations to come.

“Before this opportunity, I couldn’t even afford my medication. When I joined the KWS youth empowerment programme, I started out with a borrowed camera — now I own my own gear, earn from my passion, and can finally take care of myself. KWS didn’t just give me a job; they gave me back my confidence and my future.”

— *Lissa, Beneficiary, KWS Youth Empowerment through Photography Initiative*

“My lens became my lifeline — turning a simple passion into a purpose that sustains both my family and Kenya’s wildlife. Every photo I take is a reminder that conservation begins with opportunity.”

— *Benjamin Mulatya, CEO of Summer Arts Photography, and Beneficiary, KWS Youth Empowerment through Photography Initiative*





KWS STRENGTHENS HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT INTERVENTIONS IN GANZE SUBCOUNTY – KILIFI COUNTY

Mitigating human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is never a one-size-fits-all solution. It involves a multifaceted, inclusive approach that puts local communities at the centre of conservation efforts. In line with our 2024–2028 Strategic Plan, we are intensifying initiatives aimed at reducing human-wildlife conflict while nurturing harmonious coexistence between people and wildlife. A recent example of this commitment is the series of interventions carried out in Ganze Sub-county, Kilifi County, a region that borders both Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks and is heavily impacted by elephant-related conflicts.

Ganze is no stranger to the challenges of living alongside wildlife. With a growing elephant population, a direct result of effective KWS led anti-poaching measures, the region has experienced increased wildlife movement beyond protected areas. As elephants roam into community lands in search of food and water, the results have included damaged crops, destruction of property, and, tragically, occasional injuries and loss of life.

KWS 2024-2028, identified one conservation issue as inadequate community participation, which is countered by Community participation and enhanced benefits from wildlife conservation. In response, KWS, in collaboration with the local government, convened a high-level community baraza in Midoina, bringing together community members, leaders, and conservation experts. This engagement created a platform for dialogue, allowing residents to voice their concerns, share local knowledge, and contribute ideas toward sustainable coexistence.

One of the root causes of elephant incursions into human settlements is the search for water during

dry seasons. To address this, in line with our Community Social Investment (CSI) we, donated twelve 10,000-litre water tanks to learning institutions in Ganze. The objective is twofold: to promote rainwater harvesting and reduce the need for residents, particularly children, to venture into elephant-prone areas in search of water. By securing access to water close to schools and homes, this initiative helps curb risky human-elephant encounters, especially during prolonged dry spells. Efforts aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change on both human and wildlife.

To complement short-term interventions, KWS is progressing with the construction of the Mackinnon-Sala Gate electric fence, a strategic infrastructure project aimed at keeping wildlife within park boundaries while reducing the frequency of human-wildlife encounters. The ongoing fencing project, part of a broader Voi-Mariakani mitigation strategy, is designed to cover known elephant migratory corridors that intersect community lands.

Additionally, the deployment of Problem Animal Management Units (PAMU) and the use of aerial elephant drives have proven

effective in dispersing elephants safely back into protected areas. Predator-deterrent lights have been installed in high-risk homesteads, and fencing around schools is also being prioritized to ensure the safety of children.

Part of our strategy is the empowerment of local communities through education and innovation. Residents are being trained to adopt eco-friendly deterrent methods such as bee-fencing and the use of chili-based barriers, both proven, low-cost strategies that discourage elephants from raiding farms. These methods, rooted in traditional knowledge and supported by modern science, are building resilience among local farmers.

By aligning conservation priorities with local development needs, we are not only reducing conflict but also creating a culture of stewardship among communities living alongside wildlife. As human populations grow and climate variability intensifies, such collaborative, context-specific interventions will be key to ensuring that Kenya's rich wildlife heritage continues to thrive alongside resilient, empowered communities.



HOW KWS VETERINARIANS KEEP KENYA'S LIONS ROARING

African lions, icons of strength, majesty, and pride — are today listed as endangered under the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (WCMA Cap 376). Every single lion matters. Each one plays a vital role in maintaining the delicate balance of Kenya's ecosystems — and every time a lion's roar echoes across the savannah, it tells a story of resilience, care, and teamwork.

In the vast Olchoro Oirouwa Conservancy, a fierce territorial fight recently left Kini, a magnificent male lion, critically injured. His wounds were grave — deep gashes on his right forelimb and a severely damaged tail. Without swift medical intervention, his chances of survival were slim.

But help was on the way. The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Mara Veterinary Team, supported by the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, raced against time to save Kini. Under the scorching sun and amid the watchful eyes of his pride, the dedicated vets carefully assessed the injuries. The decision was



made to amputate Kini's tail — a necessary step to prevent infection and give him a fighting chance.

The team meticulously cleaned the wounds, administered both topical and systemic antibiotics, and stayed by his side until he stabilized. Days later, Kini was back on his feet — a little lighter in tail, but full of spirit. His recovery is a testament to the tireless efforts of the men and women who dedicate

their lives to protecting Kenya's wildlife.

The Unsung Heroes

Behind every successful rescue story lies the quiet heroism of the KWS veterinary units. These teams operate across vast, often challenging landscapes, treating injured animals, conducting disease surveillance, and ensuring wildlife populations

remain healthy. Whether it's a snare wound on an elephant, an orphaned rhino calf, or a lion like Kini caught in a territorial clash — the vets are there, equipped with skill, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to conservation.

Their work not only saves individual animals but also strengthens entire ecosystems. Healthy predators, for instance, help regulate herbivore populations, keeping the savannah in balance — a natural harmony essential for biodiversity and sustainable tourism.

Lions and Livelihoods: The Economic Heartbeat of Conservation

Beyond their ecological role, lions bring life to the communities around Kenya's national parks and conservancies. Tourists from

around the world flock to see them — their golden manes glowing in the morning light, their roars echoing across the plains. Every photograph, every safari, every awe-struck visitor contributes to local economies through park fees, community-owned lodges, and employment opportunities.

In places like the Maasai Mara, this connection between conservation and community is tangible. The revenue generated from lion tourism helps build schools, improve healthcare, and support sustainable livelihoods. By protecting lions, we also safeguard the wellbeing and prosperity of the people who share the land with them.

You Are Part of the Story

When you visit Kenya's parks and reserves, you become part of this remarkable conservation

journey. Your park entry supports veterinary interventions, anti-poaching operations, and community conservation programs — ensuring that lions like Kini, and countless other species, continue to thrive for generations to come.

So, the next time you hear a lion's roar in the distance, remember: it's not just the voice of the wild — it's the echo of hope, care, and the enduring spirit of Kenya's guardians of the wild.





INVESTING IN THE WILD: NEW PATHS TO SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

In April 2025, KWS convened its Partners Engagement Forum and Documentary Launch, bringing together conservationists, donors, private sector leaders, government agencies, community representatives and philanthropists.

The day's theme — “Making Peace with Nature” was a call to action towards sustainable future for wildlife and people. The gathering not only provided an update on the progress made in implementing the KWS Strategic Plan 2024–

2028, but also highlighted critical areas where support for wildlife conservation remains urgently needed — a clear appeal to ensure thriving wildlife and healthy habitats for all, forever.

Progress in the First Two Years

In collaboration with its partners, KWS has made significant progress in implementing its Strategic Plan within the first two years:

Additional strategic milestones shared during the forum included:

1,274

Training of rangers

2,064 km

Construction of game-proof fencing

98

Vehicles added to the operational fleet

288 km

Park roads maintained

Ksh 50 million

Invested in corporate social initiatives in water, education, and health for communities around parks

290

Youth engaged through industrial attachments across various parks

89,000

Trees planted

Ksh 264 million

received as donations

2 drones

acquired and 2 officers trained in drone operations

540 acres

cleared of invasive species

challenges, including inadequate and substandard ranger housing, the need for modern tools for anti-poaching and wildlife monitoring, improvement of access roads, and enhancement of tourism facilities to boost revenue and community livelihoods.

A New Philosophy of Financing Conservation

For decades, wildlife conservation has largely relied on tourism revenues, government allocations, and traditional donor funding streams increasingly threatened by economic downturns and climate disruptions. Recognizing this, KWS has embraced a bold new financing philosophy anchored in sustainability, innovation, and shared responsibility.

This approach addresses the five strategic issues outlined in the strategic plan.

1. Institutional capacity challenges
2. Underexploited wildlife economy
3. Inadequate community participation

4. Degraded and fragmented habitats and ecosystems
5. Declining wildlife populations

Innovative Financing Models

To bridge existing resource gaps, KWS is exploring innovative financing mechanisms such as:

- **Blended Finance Mechanisms** – combining grants, public-private partnerships, philanthropy and individual donations.
- **Nature-Based Financing** – including carbon credit programmes and green bonds.
- **KWS Endowment Fund** – a vehicle to pool and manage funds dedicated to wildlife protection and community development.
- **KWS Foundation** – strengthening long-term partnerships and philanthropic engagement.

These approaches ensure that Kenya's biodiversity remains resilient even amid global



While celebrating these achievements, discussions at the Forum highlighted ongoing

shocks — a testament to KWS's commitment to financial sustainability and innovation.

Collective Stewardship

'KWS recognizes that securing Kenya's natural heritage requires a collective effort. The Service is actively opening new avenues of partnership with the private sector, philanthropic organizations, individuals, research institutions, and local communities to advance Kenya's conservation agenda'.

— Prof. Erustus Kanga.

Key Strategies for Resource Mobilization

To operationalize this vision, KWS has identified key strategies to strengthen resource mobilization:

1. Diversifying funding sources through adoption programmes (Adopt a Ranger, Park, Tourism Facility, Species Recovery Plan, or Symbolic Animal Adoption), events, individual donations, and grants.
2. Mobilizing non-financial resources through in-kind contributions, donations, and volunteerism.

3. Building strong partner and donor relationships to promote co-financing and joint implementation models.
4. Strengthening internal capacity for resource mobilization and financial management.
5. Empowering communities to ensure conservation generates direct social and economic benefits for those living adjacent to protected areas.

Our Call

Kenya's wildlife is a precious gift — not just for Kenyans, but for the world. Every organization, donor, and citizen has a role in building a sustainable future for wildlife. We invite you to walk with us by:

- Visiting Kenya's parks and supporting conservation tourism.
- Donating or investing in conservation infrastructure such as ranger housing, renewable energy systems, park facilities, and modern wildlife monitoring programmes.

- Supporting nature-based enterprises that link conservation with community livelihoods.
- Adopting a Ranger, Park, Tourism Facility, Species Recovery Plan, or an animal through symbolic adoption.
- Contributing to the Endowment Fund to scale up priority conservation projects.
- Advocating and championing conservation awareness campaigns — be a voice for wildlife in your networks.
- Volunteering through conservation or skills-based initiatives.

"The future of Kenya's wildlife will be written not by one institution, but by all who cherish the wild."

— Prof. Kanga

Your support can help secure a sustainable tomorrow for Kenya's wildlife and people. Join us to ensure thriving wildlife and healthy habitats for all, forever.





KWS WINS BIG AT 2025 ASK SHOWS



The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) recorded remarkable success during the 2025 Agricultural Society of Kenya (ASK) Shows held in Eldoret, Meru, Nanyuki, and Machakos, affirming its leadership in conservation, innovation, and public engagement.

Aligned with the national theme, “Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture and Trade Initiatives for Sustainable Economic Growth,” KWS showcased how wildlife conservation contributes directly to climate resilience, livelihoods, and Kenya’s economic transformation.

Conservation in Action

At each event, KWS exhibits combined science, education, and creativity — featuring taxidermy displays, predator-proof bomas,

hyena and baboon traps, and eco-enterprise models. The stands also promoted domestic tourism, human-wildlife coexistence, and the e-Citizen platform for park bookings.

These exhibits reflected the KWS Strategic Plan 2024–2028, advancing key goals under Community and Stakeholder Participation and the Wildlife Economy, while deepening public appreciation of Kenya’s wildlife heritage.

Awards and Recognition

KWS emerged as a top performer across multiple shows, earning:

- **1st Place – Best Stand in Tourism, Tours, and Travel (Eldoret, Meru & Machakos)**
- **1st Place – Best Interpretation of Show Theme (Meru)**
- **2nd Place – Best National Government Ministry Stand (Eldoret)**

- **2nd Place – Best Energy Service and Conservation Stand (Meru)**
- **3rd Place – Best Innovation and Invention Stand (Meru)**

These accolades celebrated KWS's professionalism, creativity, and its role in advancing sustainable tourism and conservation-driven economic growth.

Engaging Communities

Across the shows, over 10,000 visitors — including students,

families, and professionals — interacted with KWS officers and learned about wildlife conservation, climate adaptation, and conflict mitigation. The events also strengthened partnerships with key stakeholders such as Maasai Ostrich Farm, Mamba Village, and ANAW, highlighting conservation as a shared national mission.

A Proud Moment for Conservation

The 2025 ASK Show victories not only celebrated KWS's excellence

but also reinforced a powerful message — that conservation and development go hand in hand. By blending innovation, education, and community engagement, KWS continues to lead Kenya's journey toward a thriving wildlife economy and sustainable future.

"The wild is worth saving — every creature counts."





TECH-DRIVEN CORAL REEF PROTECTION

In a groundbreaking collaboration, Huawei, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) have unveiled the Tech4Nature initiative, set to revolutionize marine conservation at Kenya's Kisite-Mpunguti Marine Park and Reserve. This innovative project is part of the global Tech4All programme, which aims to create a more inclusive and sustainable digital world by using technology to address critical environmental challenges.

Kisite-Mpunguti Marine Park and Reserve, renowned for its biodiversity and recognized globally as a Blue Park, faces increasing threats, including illegal fishing, pollution and climate change. To combat these challenges, Tech4Nature leverages cutting-edge technologies such as underwater cameras, photogrammetry, acoustic loggers and artificial intelligence (AI). These

tools enable real-time monitoring of marine biodiversity, including coral reef health, fish populations and key species like parrot fish, green turtles and bottlenose dolphins. The integration of the EarthRanger system facilitates comprehensive data collection and analysis, supporting effective decision-making and adaptive park management.

"The technology we are introducing is a groundbreaking development for marine conservation in Kenya," noted Innocent Kabenga, IUCN's Country Representative. "This initiative aligns perfectly with global sustainability goals and the Kenya Wildlife Service's Strategic Plan 2024–2028."

Under Huawei's Tech4All initiative, the project introduces advanced connectivity solutions, enabling real-time species tracking, habitat monitoring and data sharing across departments. Smart Protected Area Solutions include high-definition dual-spectral cameras, acoustic monitors and IoT devices to capture and analyze biodiversity data.

"These tools will transform our ability to monitor and protect marine ecosystems," said Adan Kala, KWS Senior Assistant Director for the Coast Conservation Area. "With accurate, real-time data, we can make informed management decisions and extend the reach of our conservation efforts."

Tech4Nature prioritizes community engagement, recognizing that inclusive conservation is key to sustainability. Local communities are being integrated into the project through education programmes, employment opportunities and participatory management. The initiative also supports eco-tourism, offering virtual underwater tours to educate and engage global audiences while creating economic opportunities for locals.

"The partnership ensures communities are at the heart of conservation, aligning with our strategic values of inclusivity and resilience," Kala added.

A major objective of the initiative is to achieve IUCN Green List certification for Kisite-Mpunguti Marine Park and Reserve, a globally recognized standard for effective protected area management. The certification process involves addressing governance, ecological monitoring and management gaps to meet international standards, reinforcing Kenya's leadership in sustainable marine conservation.

From leveraging AI for species classification to enhancing marine ecosystem monitoring, Tech4Nature combines technological innovation with scientific rigour. Real-time data on coral health, fish biomass and seagrass cover will inform policies and contribute to the conservation of critical biodiversity.

The project also serves as a model for replication across other marine protected areas in Kenya and the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region under the Great Blue Wall initiative.

"This project reflects our commitment to leveraging innovation for a sustainable future," said Khadija Mohamed of Huawei Kenya.



By combining technology, conservation and community engagement, we aim to create a blueprint for global conservation efforts."

By bridging the gap between technology and ecology, Tech4Nature promises to safeguard Kenya's marine biodiversity while setting a new standard for conservation worldwide.



COMMUNITIES AT THE HEART OF KENYA'S CELEBRATION OF WORLD WILDLIFE DAY 2025



On the shores of Lake Bogoria, as thousands of flamingos shimmered against the pink waters, Kenya marked World Wildlife Day 2025 with a powerful message: conservation is not just a moral duty — it is an economic imperative.

The event, hosted at the Kiborgoch Community Conservancy in Baringo County, brought together government leaders, conservationists, and local communities in a celebration that underscored the link between thriving ecosystems and thriving livelihoods.

Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife, Hon. Rebecca Miano, called for a bold reimagining of how conservation is financed:

“Our natural heritage defines our identity and underpins our economy. To secure it, we must diversify our conservation financing.”

Her roadmap included expanding public-private partnerships, leveraging carbon credit markets, and scaling up eco-tourism ventures—ensuring conservation not only protects wildlife but also creates resilient economies.

Local leaders pointed to success stories in Baringo:

- Kiborgoch and Ruko Conservancies – restoring degraded lands, building water pans, and revitalizing eco-tourism.
- A 60 km rehabilitated road in Ruko – improving access for conservation and visitors.
- Aloe farming and wildlife breeding programs – linking biodiversity to business.

But challenges remain. Deputy Governor Eng. Felix Maiyo raised concerns over snakebite fatalities, urging better access to anti-venom and faster compensation—reminders that community safety is as central to conservation as wildlife protection.

In his remarks, Prof. Erustus Kanga, KWS Director General, reaffirmed KWS's support for over 265 community conservancies

nationwide, praising Baringo's people-led model while acknowledging persistent funding gaps.

The day concluded with the launch of Kenya's Recovery and Action Strategy for the Grey Crowned Crane, a symbol of national commitment to both biodiversity and community prosperity.





FY 2024/25 CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENTS IN NUMBERS



Management of Human-Wildlife Conflict Enhanced

10,548

Problem Animal Control (PAC) patrols conducted.

327

Community stakeholder meetings held in 8 hotspot counties.

9

Community conservancies registered in 5 counties (Taita Taveta, Narok, Kisumu, Kajiado, Marsabit).

3,960

Elephant drives conducted to respond to and mitigate human-wildlife conflict (HWC).

2,257

Predator deterrent lights distributed.

15

CSR projects implemented in 8 counties (water provision, education/classrooms, bursaries, sports equipment).

50

Elephants translocated from Mwea National Reserve to Aberdare National Park in a landmark operation.



Wildlife Barriers Established and Maintained

174 km

Game-proof fences constructed in collaboration with conservation partners and the Tourism Promotion Fund.

34 km

Game-proof fences rehabilitated in collaboration with conservation partners and the Tourism Promotion Fund.

2,038 km

Wildlife fences maintained in various parks and stations.



Conservation Education and Awareness Undertaken

124

Outreach education programmes conducted.

12

Radio programs done.

17

Conservation exhibitions held during wildlife days, ASK shows, and trade fairs.



Wildlife and Visitors Security Enhanced

22,110

Wildlife security patrols and arrest operations targeting poaching, trophy trafficking, illegal logging, and illegal fishing.

599 suspects

Arrested with 11,061.94 kgs of fish recovered.

175 suspects

Arrested with 2,470.18 kgs of elephant ivory recovered.

7 suspects

Arrested with 10.5 kgs of rhino horn recovered.

7 suspects

Arrested with 10.5 kgs of rhino horn recovered.

10

Targeted anti-bushmeat operations conducted in 7 counties to complement daily patrol efforts.

313 suspects

Arrested with 18,044.18 kgs of bushmeat recovered.

8

Major livestock drives conducted in Meru, Kora, Tsavo West, and Tsavo East.

238,230

Livestock driven out of protected areas.

Feasibility study

Drone feasibility study undertaken.

2

Drones acquired.

1,274

Rangers trained and deployed. Drones acquired.

0

No rhino death reported as a result of poaching.

Kenya Signature Parks Initiatives Developed



Identification of new investment sites for Leasing to uplift wildlife economy

13

Tourism sites awarded for development.

40

New investment sites approved and valued for leasing.

15

Guesthouses in nine national parks and reserves process of leasing commenced.



Wildlife Translocation

28

Translocations were undertaken for different species.



Tourism and Security Access Roads Maintained

820 km

Unclassified park circuit roads graded and 4 airstrips maintained.

2,256 km

Classified roads maintained in parks – Kenya Roads Board Fund.



Conduct Tourism Promotion and integrated Marketing activities

1

Travel Trade Engagements Conducted Travel Trade engagements.

10

Training for 333 Tour Operators and Community guides.

20

FAM Trips reaching 1050 youths.

3

Sales Blitz.

25

Sales Visits.

23

Integrated marketing campaigns.

10

Media engagements.

14

Content creation initiatives.

5

Sports and Culture events in parks (Biking festival in Hells Gate; Ura cultural festival in Meru; Fitflex Run in Elementaita; Saiwa Swamp Walk, Ride Africa cycling in Nakuru and Hells Gate).

Conservation Pricing Study

Conservation fee pricing study undertaken to guide conservation fees review.



Climate Change Resilience for Wildlife Enhanced

637 km

Firebreaks maintenance (Aberdare, Meru, L. Nakuru and Tsavo East).

8

Water pan (Tsavo West & Kora NP) established.

8

Boreholes (Tsavo West) established.

1

Wildlife Disaster Preparedness Management Plan developed.



Marine and Terrestrial Parks Conservation Initiatives Developed

450

Beach clean-up programmes undertaken and 75 tons of trash collected in Watamu and Mombasa Marine Parks.

10

Sensitization meetings for boats/beach operators and BMUs.

12

Joint patrols conducted with community scouts on mangrove protection.

Strategic Adaptive Management

Adoption of Strategic Adaptive Management Program in 4 marine parks for turtle nesting, sea grass, mangrove, fish biomass, and coral monitoring.

803 acres

Removal of invasive species in Aberdares and Tsavo National Parks and Kakamega National Reserve.



Endangered Species Recovery and Action Plans Developed and Implemented

2

Species recovery plans developed (Grey Crowned Crane and Pancake Tortoise).

1

Rhino sanctuary established in collaboration with conservation partners (Segera).

21

Rhinos translocated to a new locality (Segera Conservancy).

106

Rhinos ear notched and fitted with transmitters and Lora WAN for surveillance and monitoring.

2

National reports were prepared on Annual Elephant Ivory and Rhino Horn Stock pile management and contracting parties to RAMSAR Convention.

22 Elephants and 21 Lions

Fitted with satellite collars.

Shimba Hills Restocking

Restocked Shimba Hills N. Reserve with common Zebras, Impalas and Elands.

2,102

National total estimate of rhinos in Kenya as indicated in the Rhino Status Report.



Visitors

3,385,596

Visitors facilitated to KWS facilities
as at 30th June 2025.



A-I-A Generation

Ksh 7.969 Billion

Revenue as at 30th June 2025.



Fleet upgrade

98

Vehicles acquired and two drones to
boost conservation efforts



Wildlife Health Enhanced

1,047

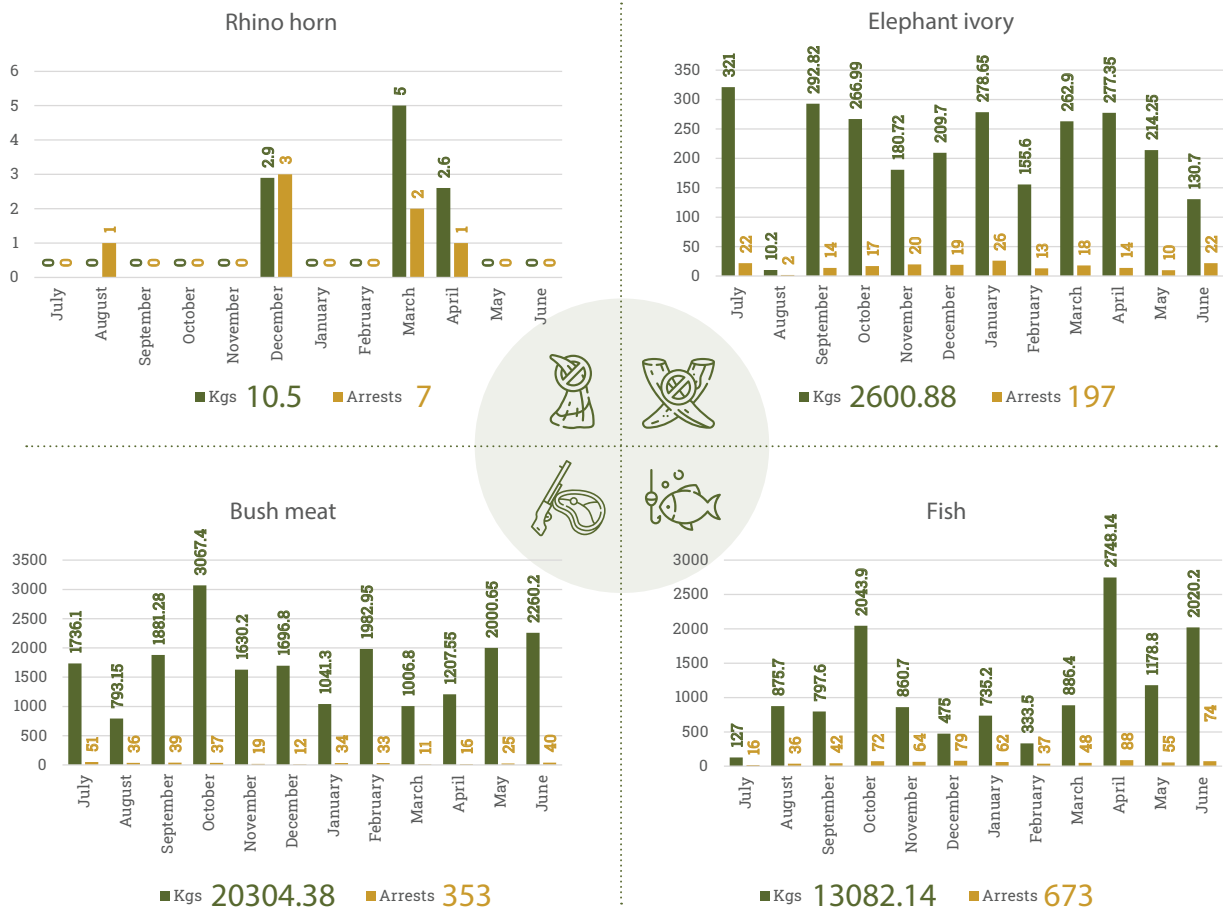
Veterinary interventions
undertaken.



1. Threats to wildlife conservation

Wildlife insecurity in Kenya is presently characterised by trophy and bush meat poaching, human- wildlife conflict, illicit wildlife trade, and loss and destruction of wildlife habitats.

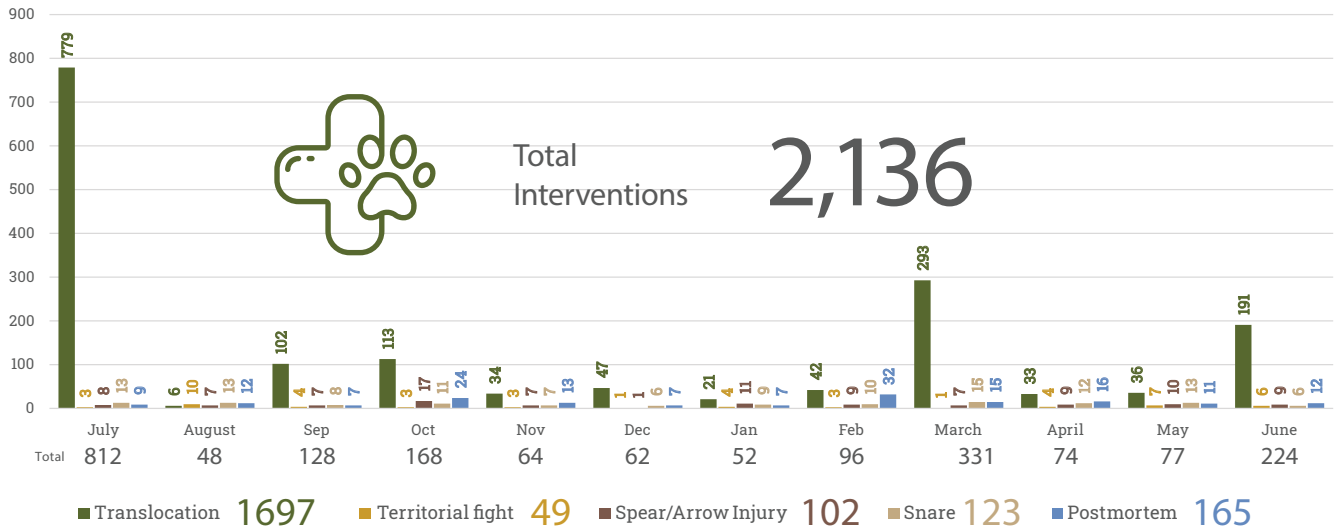
Figure 1. Major threats to wildlife conservation during the FY 2024/2025



2. Animal Welfare interventions for the FY 2024/2025

The veterinary interventions were done mainly to support wildlife species population increase and to reduce wildlife loss from injuries and diseases. In total 2136 animal welfare interventions were done with majority (1697) being wildlife translocations aimed at controlling human wildlife conflict.

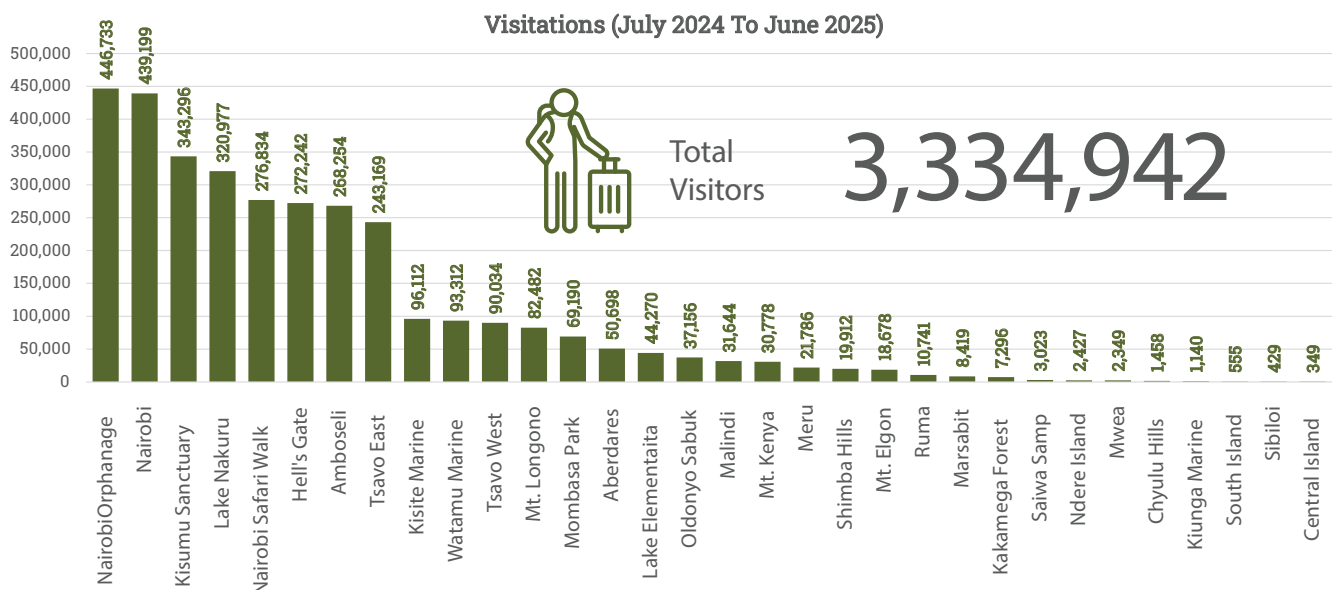
Figure 2. Veterinary interventions during the period



3. Visitors touring KWS managed national parks, reserves and sanctuaries

The period reported a total of 3,334,942 visitors touring KWS managed facilities. Nairobi Animal Orphanage had the highest number of visitors at 446,733.

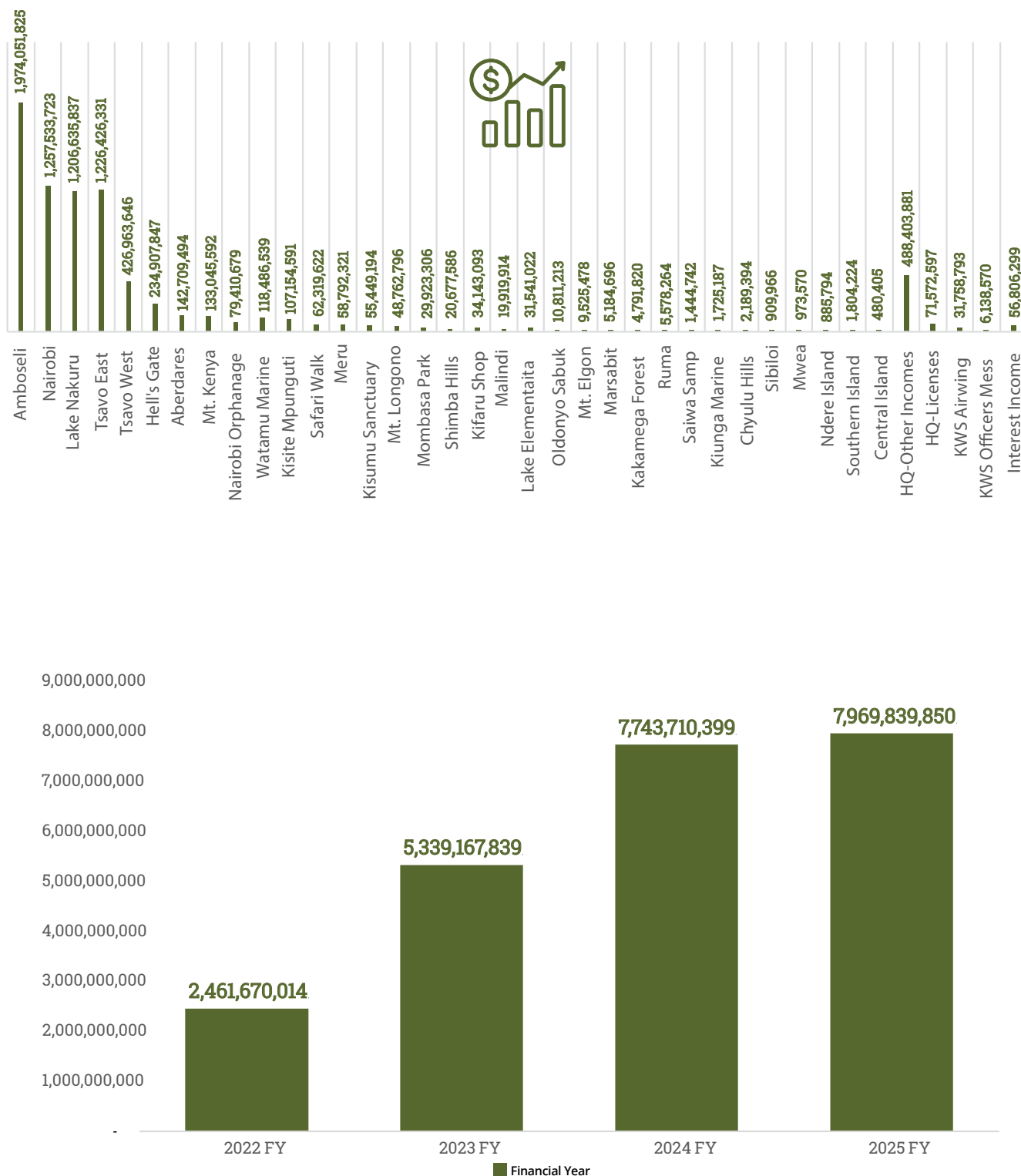
Figure 3. No of visitors touring KWS managed parks, sanctuaries and reserves FY 2024/2025



4. Revenue collected for the FY 2024/2025

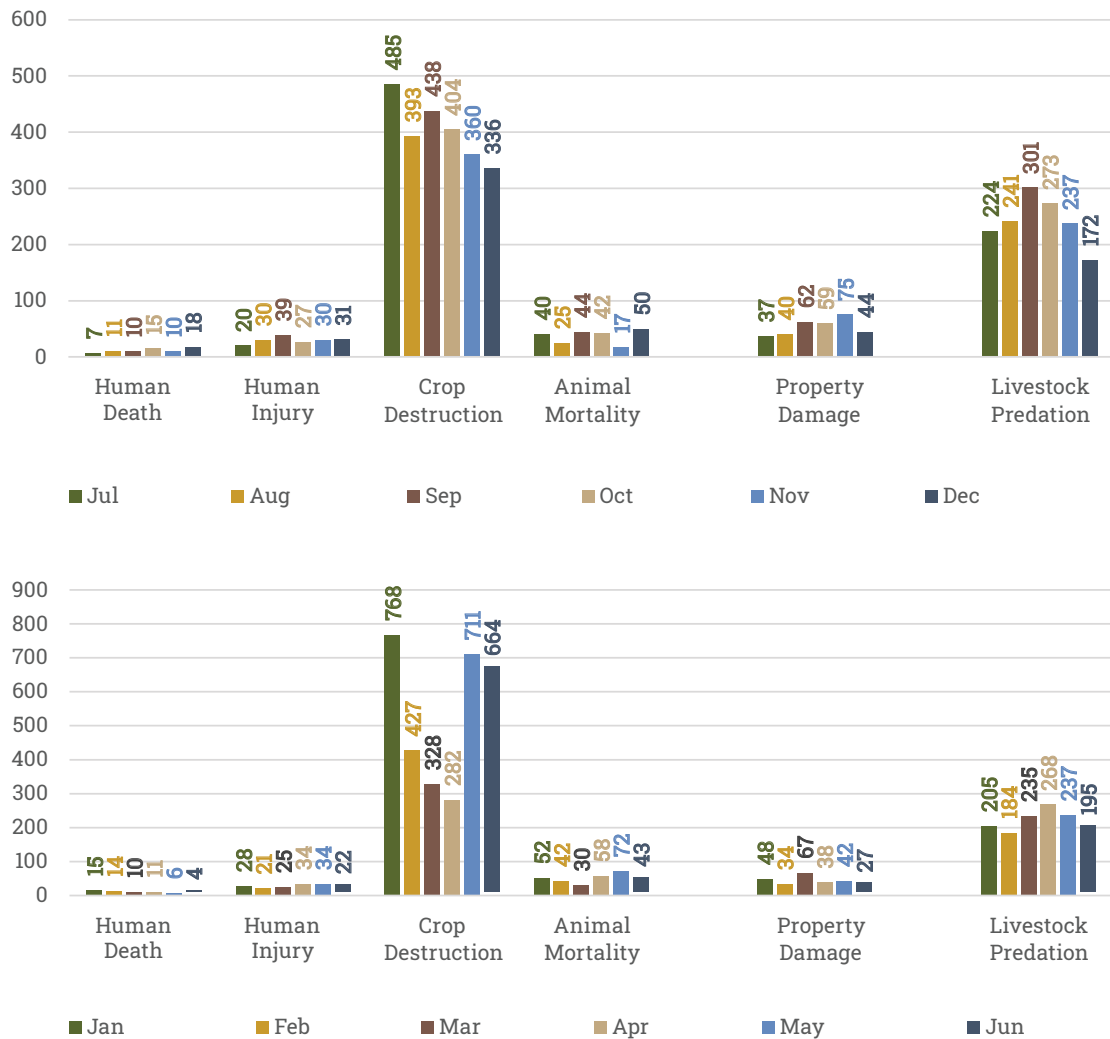
The revenue collected during the reporting period plateaued at Ksh. 7,969 billion with reduced donor funding and grants thereby affecting full implementation of the KWS Strategic plan 2024-2028 strategic objectives indicated for the FY 2024/2025.

Figure 4. Total Revenue collected from KWS managed parks and Reserves



6. Human Wildlife Conflict incidents FY 2024/2025 mitigation measures

Figure 5. Human Wildlife Conflict incidents during the period



Summery for the year

Human Death	Human Injury	Crop Destruction	Animal Mortality	Property Damage	Livestock Predation
131	341	5,596	515	573	2,772

Grand
Total HWC
Incidents

9,929



VALLEY OF RARITY: THE UNTOLD STORY OF RUMA NATIONAL PARK

Tucked in the quiet Lambwe River Valley in western Kenya, between the volcanic Ruri Hills and the rugged Kanyamwa Escarpment, lies Ruma National Park – a dramatic landscape of rolling savannahs, riverine woodlands and towering cliffs. Known as the **“Valley of the Roan antelope, rhino, Rothschild’s giraffe and Oribi,”** Ruma is more than a scenic wonder. It is a vital sanctuary for some of Kenya’s rarest wildlife.

As the only terrestrial national park in the Nyanza region – and Kenya’s last stronghold for the endangered Roan antelope – Ruma holds a unique place in the country’s conservation story. With just 11 Roan antelopes remaining in 2021, KWS moved swiftly to create a 5.4 km² protective enclosure. Today, that number has more than doubled to 24 – proof of effective and targeted species recovery efforts.

The park also shelters Africa’s second-largest population of Rothschild’s giraffe (also known as Nubian giraffe), with over 800 individuals descended from a group introduced in 1983. In addition, black and white rhinos – relocated from Mugie Sanctuary and Solio Ranch in 2012 – now roam the park, further enhancing its biodiversity and ecological importance.

Beyond its iconic species, Ruma boasts a rich array of wildlife:

- ➔ Rare antelopes such as Oribi and Bohor reedbuck
- ➔ Predators including leopards, hyenas and serval cats
- ➔ Plain game like topis, zebras, Jackson’s and Lelwel hartebeests, and buffaloes
- ➔ Over 400 bird species, including the rare migratory blue swallow, which visits from southern Tanzania between April and September.

Ruma's unspoiled landscapes offer peaceful and enriching outdoor experiences. Visitors can enjoy:

- ➔ Roan antelope walking safaris for intimate wildlife encounters
- ➔ Birdwatching, especially during the migratory season
- ➔ Camping under star-filled skies
- ➔ Guided nature walks, picnicking and hiking
- ➔ Cultural exchanges with Luo communities in the surrounding region.

Ruma is deeply rooted in the cultural and economic fabric of Homa Bay County. As H.E. Governor Gladys Wanga notes: "Ruma is Homa Bay's ecological crown jewel." Conservation and community engagement go hand in hand here.

Initiatives such as the annual Roan marathon blend sports tourism with wildlife awareness, while school outreach under the Tunza Mali Yako campaign is nurturing a conservation-conscious generation. Joint efforts between KWS and local stakeholders are actively co-creating and promoting Ruma's story, blending wildlife conservation with cultural tourism.

Through the Magharibi Magical Trail Series, in partnership with the Kenya Tourism Board, Ruma has gained visibility as part of Western Kenya's adventure and cultural tourism circuit.

Infrastructure development is ongoing to improve access and visitor comfort. Key upgrades include the re-carpeting of Lambwe Airstrip, now accommodating private charters from major tourism hubs such as Maasai Mara and Rusinga Island, and road grading and improved signage to facilitate easier park navigation.

These enhancements are integrating Ruma more fully into Kenya's national tourism network without compromising its serene, untamed character.

As domestic tourist Miriam Achieng from Kisumu shared: "Standing in the heart of Ruma, watching Roan antelopes graze beneath the hills, I felt like I had discovered a secret part of Kenya – untouched, unforgettable and deeply soulful."

Ruma is more than a national park. It is a symbol of Kenya's enduring commitment to protect its natural heritage while creating inclusive, sustainable economic

opportunities. It is a place of revival where the return of the Roan antelope, the thriving giraffe herds, and the call of the blue swallow speak to what is possible when conservation and community come together.

In an era when travellers seek authentic, meaningful and sustainable experiences, Ruma National Park offers a rare and powerful encounter with Kenya's wild west. Now is the time to take the road less travelled and discover the beauty, culture and conservation triumph that is Ruma.

Plan your Visit

Fly direct via Lambwe Airstrip (charters available from Maasai Mara and Rusinga Island).

Combine your trip with the Rusinga Festival for a rich cultural experience.

Follow **@RumaNationalPark** for conservation stories and visitor updates.





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