

ifaw in action



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supported ifaw woman ranger takes on driving



Seven out of 10 of the fastest male marathon runners of all time are Kenyan athletes.

Five out of 10 of the fastest female marathon runners of all time are Kenyan athletes.

Names like Eliud Kipchoge, Brigid Kosgei and Mary Jepkosgei Keitany should ring a bell for athletics enthusiasts, particularly in the marathon category as they are among that elite group of the world's top athletes. Able to run 26.2 miles and earn their place as the world's top 10 fastest people over the distance.

One place in Kenya is common to all of them - Eldoret. A town on a plateau in the Rift Valley. At 2,100 meters altitude, this is where some of the world's most elite athletes train to win - the high altitude scientifically proven to improve athletic performance. Eldoret is where many more go to try to accomplish dreams of being amongst the fastest runners ever. It is where they learn the life skills of working hard, staying the course and never, ever giving up.

Growing up in Amboseli, 550 kilometers south and about 1,000 lower in altitude, Eunice Peneti was a great athlete. She was so

good at running that her high school education was supported by a government-sponsored scholarship.

On completing high school, Eunice moved to Eldoret, revered training ground for world-renowned Olympic athletes. It was a unique opportunity for the young woman and one that helped drill further tenacity into an already determined character.

Once there she participated and even won a few races before returning to Amboseli to apply, and succeed, in earning her position as a member of IFAW's Team Lioness.

Team Lioness are women community wildlife rangers - the first women in Amboseli to take up this physically, mentally and emotionally demanding job in the highly patriarchal Maa community. The lessons learned at Eldoret came in handy.

In July 2021, the 29-year-old achieved another milestone, becoming the first Team Lioness member to learn how to drive. She has also become the first-ever and only female community wildlife ranger in the Amboseli Ecosystem. There are four drivers amongst Eunice's colleagues - the Olgulului Community Wildlife Rangers (OCWR) - all of them are male.

We asked her why. Eunice recalled how, in July 2019, while on a cross border patrol with fellow rangers from Kenya and Tanzania, there was only one competent driver amongst the rangers and when he needed assistance with the vehicle, none of the rangers could drive. Though this incident spurred Eunice's interest, she did not do anything about it at the time.

Several months later, Eunice's boss the Director of the Olgulului Community Wildlife Rangers (OCWR) needed a vehicle moved from one of the seven OCWR bases to another. Once again, no one on duty was able to drive. This was the final push that Eunice needed! Soon after, she informed the Director of her desire to learn how to drive. He advised her to write a letter articulating her interest and just two days later, she handed over her written request.

This was quickly approved and there began her journey to learn not just basic driving but also defensive driving, a key skill in the rugged Amboseli terrain. IFAW catered financially for Eunice's training and upkeep including accommodation and meals throughout her seven weeks stay in Nairobi where she attended the courses. IFAW also catered for her transportation costs to and from Amboseli.


▲ Eunice Peneti next to a vehicle. Thanks to IFAW support she has become the first female community wildlife ranger in Amboseli to take a driving course.

inspiring women and girls

As a member of IFAW'S Team Lioness, Eunice is already a role model for young women in Kenya. Her new driving skills are rare among women in her community.

Eunice does not take her achievements lightly. While she is rightfully proud, Eunice is mostly hoping to inspire women and girls from her local community to take on previously male-dominated roles. She cites her own inspiration as a woman police officer whom she greatly admired as a girl at high school. Though she never knew her name or anything about her, Eunice who is also a mother to a seven-year-old daughter, looked up to the woman officer whom she says was pristine in her uniform as she drove herself to work daily at the police station close to her high school.

Read more about IFAW's work with women – we are committed to empowering women and girls to improve their lives and those of their families and communities even as they coexist with wildlife.



“my desire to learn how to drive began more than one year ago. I am glad I have finally accomplished this milestone of being the first and only woman driver amongst the community wildlife rangers in Amboseli.”

Eunice Peneti, Member of Team Lioness.



wildlife security enhanced through radio communication



radio network for olgulului community wildlife rangers

In the first half of the twentieth century, radio was the most popular form of communication. The popularity of radio may have shifted in the 21st century as has the technology used from analogue to digital. However, radio communication is relied on heavily in wildlife security. In vast areas where telephone and internet network connectivity are limited, radio is the primary mode of communication.

Up until November 2020, the IFAW-supported Olgulului Community Wildlife Rangers (OCWR) relied on mobile networks to communicate amongst themselves. These rangers are responsible for the security of wildlife in almost 150,000 hectares of community lands surrounding Amboseli National Park. Due to the vastness of the area, the mobile networks are not available in the whole ecosystem, and where available the costs of purchasing airtime are high, making effective communication a challenge.

▲ Evans Olais, of the IFAW-supported Olgulului Community Wildlife Rangers (OCWR) uses the digital radio communication unit.

ease of communication

Thanks to IFAW and with funding from the EU, a digital radio network was installed at the Kitenden Conservancy Headquarters, patrol vehicles and, ranger bases to ease communication. Additionally, rangers on foot patrol now have handheld sets that they use to relay information and updates from the field.

Previously, rangers would be sent out on patrol and no word was heard from them until they returned to their bases. If a patrol team encountered poachers or if one of them fell sick or was injured, there was no way of relaying this information for help to be sent their way.

The rangers would occasionally use their mobile phones but this would depend on network availability. Not only do rangers feel safer during patrols as a result of these radios, information is also relayed in real time for swift actions to be taken by management. This has resulted in rapid response during emergencies and saving lives of both wildlife and people.

The radio network has two communication masts at strategic locations within the community lands, which ensures strong signals and available mode of communication 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

technology essential in fighting wildlife crime



IFAW has donated six laptops to the Olgulului Community Wildlife Rangers (OCWR) in Amboseli, Kenya.

The laptops are a boost to the OCWR operations as they ease sharing of data collected during patrols such as wildlife sightings, time of sighting the wildlife and distance covered on patrol. Previously these would require one of the rangers to physically visit each of the six ranger bases using a motorbike to collect these important data.

Wildlife crime as well as information about human wildlife conflict incidences will now be collated and mapped more efficiently using geospatial technology aids.

This will in return enable better wildlife management through deployment of security personnel to help with problematic animals and better human wildlife conflict mitigation.

The laptops also present opportunities for OCWR members to learn and hone their skills in technology – expertise needed more so now that with the COVID-19 pandemic digital meetings and communication have increased exponentially.



◀ The telecommunication mast at Isiruai Community Ranger Base in Amboseli. The mast is one of two which supports a digital radio network unit used by community wildlife rangers in the almost 150,000 hectares Olgulului Ololarashi Group Ranch (OGR) and eases communication amongst the seven ranger bases.



combatting wildlife crime using digital forensic and analytics tools

In efforts to combat wildlife crime, IFAW continues to support Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) security officers. In March eleven officers - seven based in Amboseli and four from Nairobi, were trained on the use of digital forensic science to unravel wildlife crime and swiftly arrest criminals linked to the crimes.

The trainings which encompassed information security, intelligence analysis and presentation of digital evidence, focused on the officers' ability to confidently use the software to fast-track evidence collection in wildlife crime incidences. The skills and knowledge acquired by the officers are essential in successfully prosecuting and convicting wildlife criminals during the judicial process as well as in following the trail of those in the supply chain of wildlife trafficking.



supporting wildlife protection

IFAW donated equipment worth US\$ 20,000 to the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) the agency tasked with the safekeeping of wildlife in some of Africa's most iconic protected areas. The items, which include six motorbikes, five printers, five desktop computers and five Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) devices were, purchased with support from the US State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) and in collaboration with African Wildlife Foundation (AWF).

The equipment will support KWS operations in data collection and processing into actionable intelligence products that drive enforcement operations, preempt, and deter the illegal killing and trade of wildlife in the Amboseli – Kilimanjaro transboundary Conservation Area.

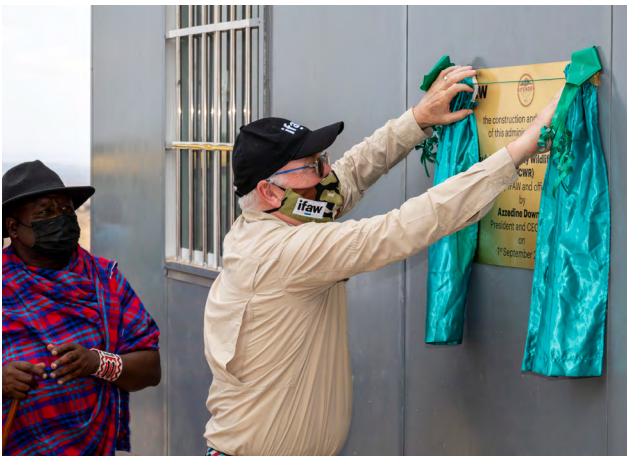
- ▲ Eunice Peneti next to a vehicle. Thanks to IFAW support she has become the first female community wildlife ranger in Amboseli to take a driving course.

IFAW Executive Visit to Amboseli – 1st and 2nd September 2021



📍 Amboseli

Azzedine Downes, President and CEO, IFAW, visited Amboseli, Kenya on 1st and 2nd September 2021. He welcomed the eight new members of IFAW's Team Lioness. The additional members grow the cadre of female rangers to 16 and the total number of the Olgulului Community Wildlife Rangers (OCWR) to 85. The OCWR patrol the community lands of the Olgulului-Ololarashi Group Ranch (OOGR) and provide security for both wildlife and people.



📍 Amboseli

Azzedine Downes also signed an agreement with Daniel Leturesh, Chairman of the Olgulului-Ololarashi Group Ranch (OOGR) to lease 29,035 acres of Ilaingarunyoni Conservancy. IFAW first leased 16,000 acres from landowners in 2013 and an additional 10,000 acres in 2017, to form the 26,000 acre Kitenden Community Wildlife Conservancy - a secure habitat for wildlife and a source of livelihood for the local community. In total the Kitenden and the Ilaingarunyoni Conservancies are 55,035 acres or 223 kilometers squared which is more than half the size of the Amboseli National Park.



📍 Amboseli

On 1st September 2021, Azzedine Downes, President and CEO, IFAW, officially opened an administration office block for the Olgulului Community Wildlife Rangers (OCWR). The office block which was constructed and furnished by IFAW, will host amongst others, a conference room, an office for the Director of OCWR, a radio room and, an office for the Kitenden Conservancy Trust (KCT). The administration block is part of IFAW's efforts to enhance KCT's and OCWR's capacity to self-governance and effective management.



▶ **see how at**
ifaw.org