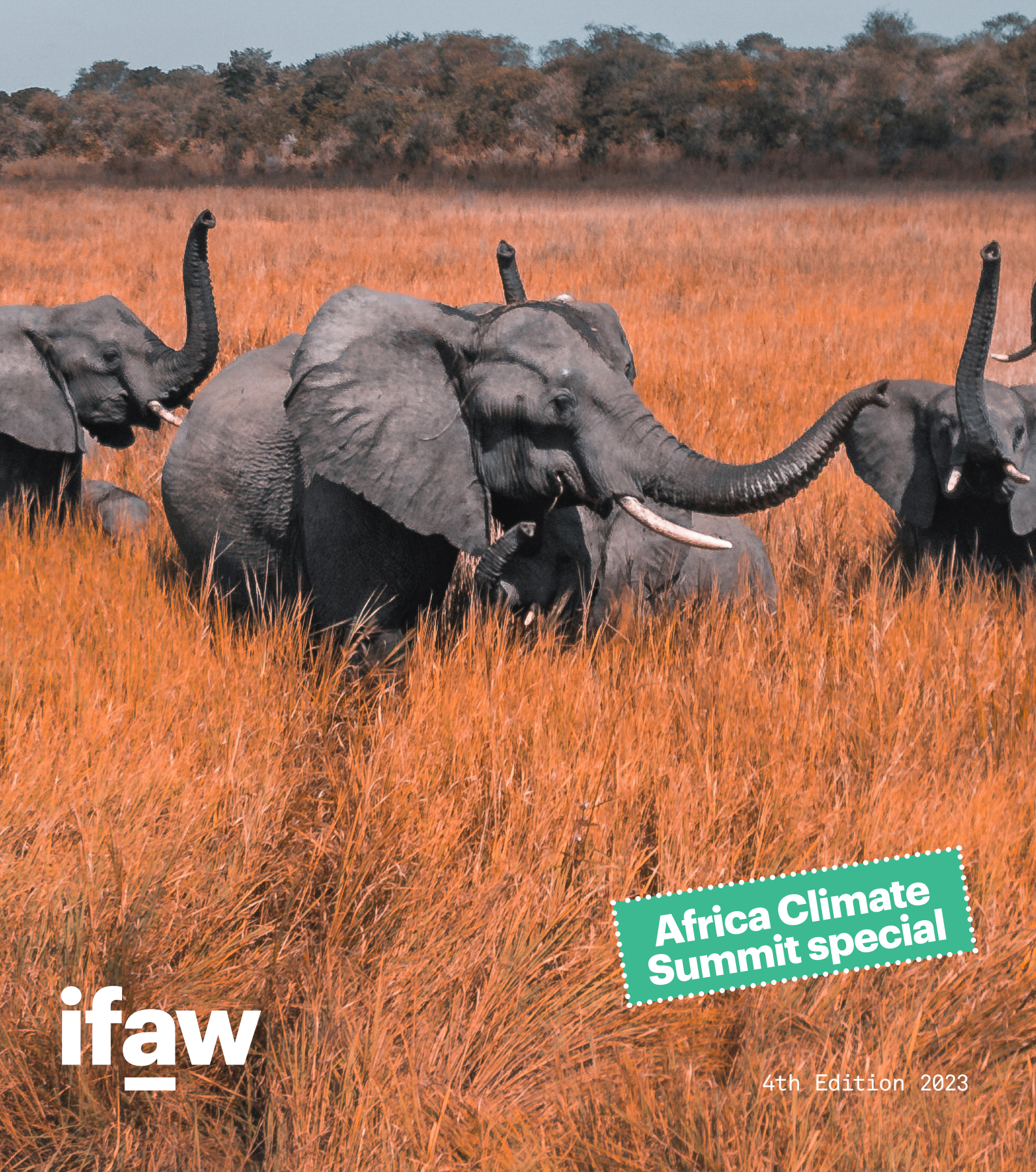


# Africa newsletter



**Africa Climate  
Summit special**

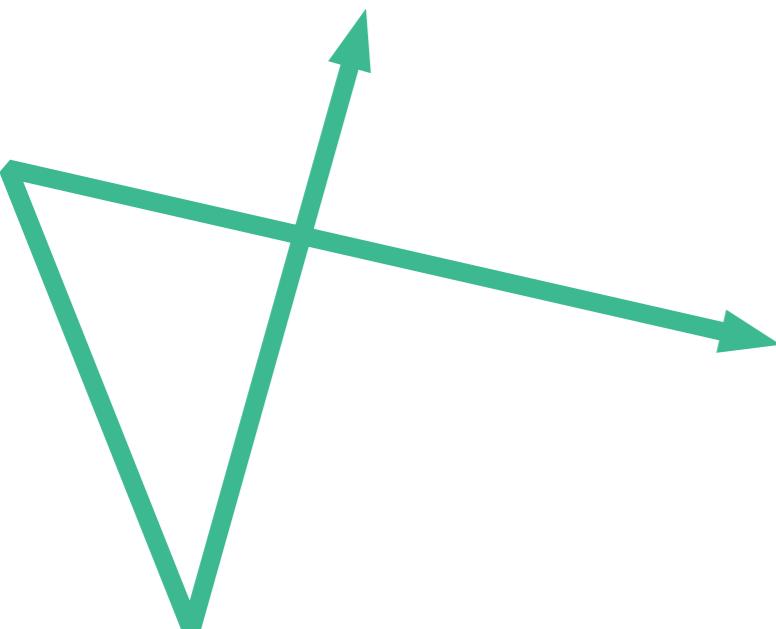
**ifaw**

4th Edition 2023





# How to protect elephants and communities in Africa?



**Create room to roam**

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**About IFAW** - IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) is a global non-profit helping animals and people thrive together. We are experts and everyday people, working across seas, oceans and in more than 40 countries around the world. We rescue, rehabilitate and release animals, and we restore and protect their natural habitats. The problems we're up against are urgent and complicated. To solve them, we match fresh thinking with bold action. We partner with local communities, governments, nongovernmental organisations and businesses. Together, we pioneer new and innovative ways to help all species flourish. See how at [ifaw.org](http://ifaw.org)

**Published by:** IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare), 2023

Cover photo: Luckmore Safuli / © IFAW  
Elephants at water's edge in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe.





Photo: Charles Mpaka / © IFAW

# New Chikomeni wildlife camp to enhance wildlife protection in Lukusuzi National Park

IFAW’s long-term vision to transform the Lukusuzi National Park in Eastern Zambia into a globally significant landscape, from its current state, to one of Africa’s most coveted nature-based safari destinations with a thriving wildlife population, has been greatly enhanced by the construction of the Chikomeni Wildlife Camp, which was officially opened during a colourful ceremony held in October 2023.

Over the past few years, gangs of poachers have turned, the 2,720 km<sup>2</sup> Lukusuzi National Park, with its lush and verdant miombo woodlands, into their playground,

decimating wildlife populations in one of Southern Africa’s most important landscapes.

The park provides a vital link between two critical biodiversity areas – Kasungu National Park and Luambe National Park, making it a key wildlife corridor and traditional route for a variety of species including herds of elephant, wildebeest, roan antelope, Zebra, warthog, buffalo, and common duiker.

This is, however, about to change owing to a key partnership between IFAW and

Zambia’s DNPW focusing on enhancing ranger welfare, strengthening law enforcement, and improving park infrastructure. The conservation partnership aims to transform the park into a proper wildlife paradise and secure a future for animals and people in the greater Lukusuzi ecosystem.

Zambia’s Tourism Minister, Honourable Rodney Sikumba, applauded the IFAW-DNPW partnership for contributing to the protection of vulnerable species.

“It is envisaged that the investment will undoubtedly enhance ranger welfare and well-being. Furthermore, this will help strengthen DNPW’s capacity to manage the park and the surrounding game management areas effectively and efficiently. Consequently, this will ensure that our wildlife resource is preserved for the benefit of present and future generations,” he said.

Chikomeni Wildlife Camp now boasts a modern administration block, radio equipment, a communication room, and stores for rations. It will also serve as an ideal base for wildlife rangers to respond to human-wildlife conflict incidences in Chikomeni and other villages surrounding the protected area. The commissioning event included handing over three 4x4 patrol vehicles, a house for the senior officer, four semi-detached houses for rangers, four motorbikes and 20 bicycles.

“The commissioning of the ranger houses marks an important milestone in the partnership we have with the government of Zambia through DNPW to secure the country’s wildlife heritage. This is testimony of our commitment to enhancing ranger welfare and conserving wildlife for current and future generations,” said James Isiche, IFAW Director for Africa.

Over the past five years, IFAW has supported field officers in the landscape with uniforms, patrol vehicles, equipment, training in law enforcement, food rations, and allowances—provisions that used to be hard to come by.

“We believe that there can never be proper conservation of natural resources without the participation of the local people. On behalf of the community, I would like to applaud IFAW for employing our local people to be part of the construction work,” said Chief Chikomeni.

## IFAW donated



4x4 patrol vehicles



houses



motorbikes



bicycles

▲ New quarters for rangers at Chikomeni base, Lukusuzi National Park, Zambia.





# Traditional leaders meet in Amboseli, Kenya, after the Africa Climate Summit

Traditional leaders from wildlife-rich areas in Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi gathered in September for a two-day meeting in Amboseli to share knowledge, ideas and experiences on conservation and the challenges facing communities who live with wildlife.

This meeting—the third of similar get-togethers organised by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) under the Room to Roam initiative—was held in the backdrop of the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, Kenya, a year after the severest drought in 40 years swept across Africa. This underlines the grave challenge that climate change and global warming pose for the survival of livestock, wildlife, their habitats and ecosystems, and the livelihoods of millions in Africa.

Room to Roam – an IFAW vision where healthy and critical ecosystems are secured and managed across large landscapes to enable elephants and other species to roam freely between Southern Africa and East Africa – seeks nature based and community led solutions towards mitigating the impacts of climate change.

The IFAW-managed Kitenden Conservancy, to whose handover ceremony the traditional leaders were invited as VIP guests, is one such initiative. Spearheaded 11 years ago by IFAW, the conservancy is an innovative initiative through which 3,000 members of the Olgulului-Olororashi Group Ranch in Amboseli dedicated 30,000 acres of their land to conservation to improve landscape connectivity between Amboseli National Park elephants to the Mount Kilimanjaro ecosystem in Tanzania, reduce human-wildlife conflict and improve climate resilience and community livelihoods.

Traditional leaders play a leading role in community development. Their involvement in wildlife conservation can go a long way in forging collaborative multi-stakeholder community led solutions to environmental challenges for the benefit of people and wildlife.



▲ James Isiche, Africa Director, IFAW and other guests are received by local leaders at Serena Amboseli.

▲ Senior Chief Felix Lukwa of Malawi and Chief Siphoso, Alphius Msindazi of Tsholotsho community in Zimbabwe at the meeting of traditional leaders at Serena Amboseli.

▲ Group photo at the traditional leaders meeting at Serena Amboseli.

Photo: Moses Matofu / © IFAW



# Roxy Danckwerts receives IFAW International Lifetime Achievement Award

Roxy Danckwerts, founder of Wild is Life (WIL) elephant sanctuary in Zimbabwe, was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award, from the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) at the BAFTA, London, for her work to rescue and rehabilitate orphan elephants and other wildlife.

Roxy, how hails from Harare, is a leader in the field of rescue and rehabilitation of African elephants and other wildlife. In the space of just 10 years, Roxy and her team have successfully rescued over 50 elephants at their sanctuary, in Zimbabwe.

Azzedine Downes, President and CEO of IFAW said: “What Roxy has done for elephants and other wild animals, is truly outstanding. She has frequently challenged the status quo and gone against the grain, defying what some said couldn’t be done – and done it. Her determination and devotion is inspirational on every level, and I’m delighted to see her receive the prestigious IFAW Lifetime Achievement Award.”

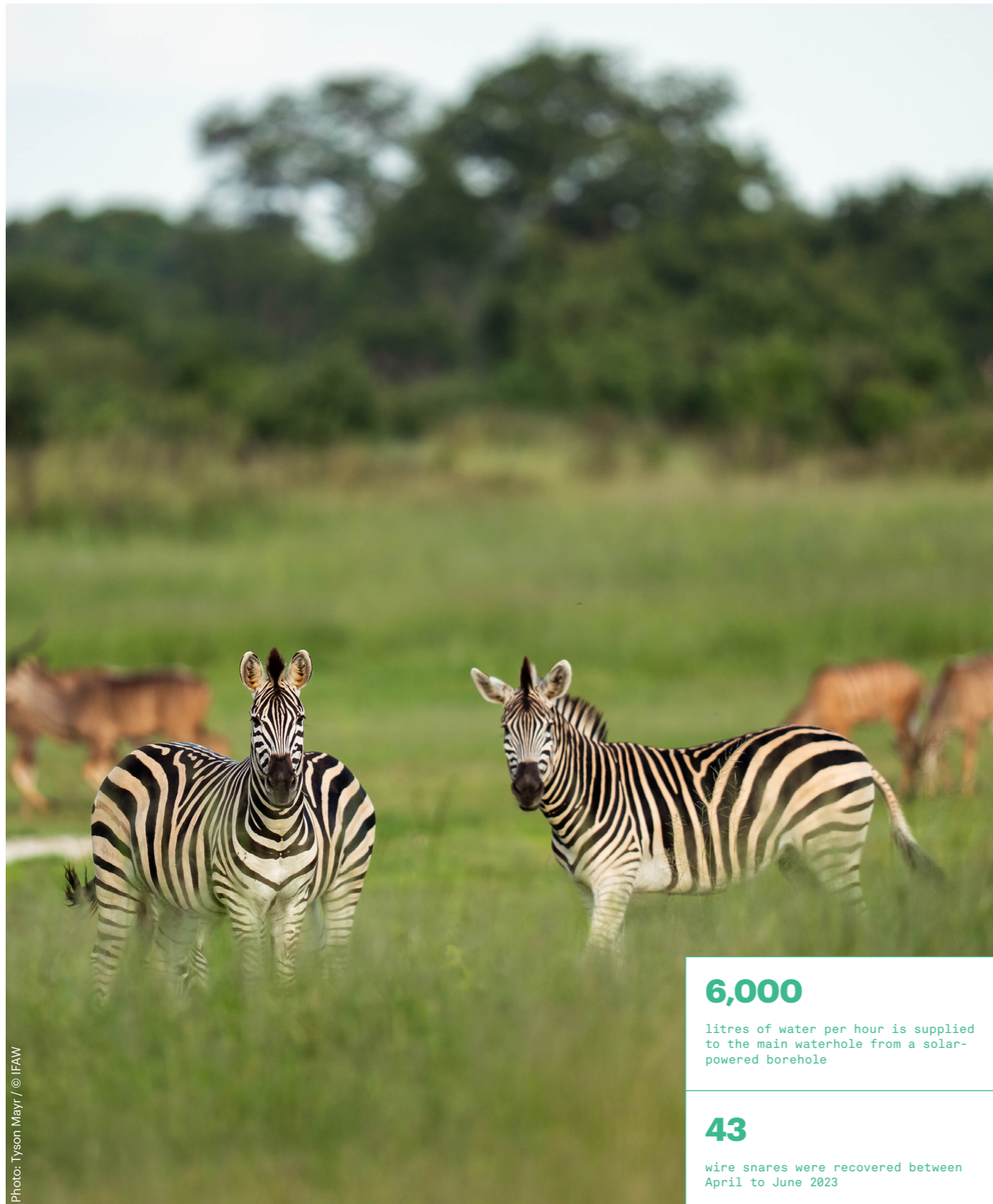
**50**  
elephants have been successfully rescued at the sanctuary in just 10 years

▲ From left: Hamza Yassin, Lifetime Achievement Award winner Roxy Danckwerts, and IFAW President & CEO Azzedine Downes at the Animal Action Awards, 17 October 2023.

Photo: Matt Veal / © IFAW



# De-snaring successes bringing wildlife back to Hwange National Park buffer area



**6,000**

litres of water per hour is supplied to the main waterhole from a solar-powered borehole

**43**

wire snares were recovered between April to June 2023

Photo: Tyson Mayr / © IFAW



Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Dete Animal Rescue Trust (DART), wildlife is returning to a critical wildlife buffer zone between the Dete communal area and the world-renowned 14,600 km<sup>2</sup> Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe.

DART has, for the last 20 years been the primary “First-Responder” called on by the Park Authorities and local Safari Operators to rescue snared or injured wild animals seen on the fringes of Hwange National Park. Established in response to the growing number of snared and injured animals in the area immediately around the park - home to 45,000 savannah elephants and other 100 mammalian species - the DART team has, over the years, turned a 20-kilometer stretch of the park boundary into a safe haven for wildlife.

A typical spring afternoon in this area, where the sun bakes the earth without mercy, means any watering hole becomes a great convergence point for animals that call it home. As part of its continued support of DART’s conservation work, IFAW recently sponsored the drilling of a solar-powered borehole that supplies 6,000 litres of water per hour to the main waterhole. The availability of adequate game water has further contributed to the return of wildlife to the buffer area.

DART Program Director, Paul de Montille said, “It is so encouraging to witness a gradual and much-needed rewilding of this buffer area. This space is now a safe zone with more and more animals taking up residence.

## Creating safe spaces for wildlife to thrive

de Montille cites the establishment of the permanent DART base, with the help of IFAW as a major deterrent to potential poachers.

Poaching incidents have been uncovered, and the number of deadly wire snares being set by poachers has declined dramatically. A total of 43 wire snares were recovered during the period April to June 2023, a huge decline from the 231 snares that were recovered during the period July to September 2022.

Led by senior wildlife rescuer Severino Ndlovu, the DART team, comprising four men and four women, conduct regular de-snaring patrols combing the bushes and the savannah grassland with the sole mission of freeing wildlife from the deadly snares.

Most wire snares are made from cheap and easy-to-get materials such as wire and brake cables. In the case of Dete, most of the snares are made from fallen telephone wire. In 2020, the team embarked on an extensive telephone wire removal exercise, and removed a staggering twenty-six tonnes of wire that could have been used by poachers to snare our treasured wildlife.

## Supporting tourism resurgence in Hwange

A few kilometers from the DART base is the famous Dete Vlei, bordering Hwange National Park. The vlei is a scenic landscape known for its sprawling grassy plains and is always teeming with wildlife – small and big. The vlei is home to many popular luxury lodges, which are strategically located along the grassy plains to provide guests an excellent game-viewing experience.

As wildlife continues to flourish in the buffer area of the giant Hwange National Park, thanks to ongoing efforts by DART and its partners to save precious wildlife from the indiscriminating wire snares, the biggest beneficiary has been tour operators, camp owners, and nature lovers.

Wildlife remains the major drawcard for thousands of safari enthusiasts who visit Hwange. Guests come here to see the animals. Creating safe spaces for wildlife is therefore critical.

Neil Greenwood, IFAW Wildlife Rescue Director said, “It is gratifying that our conservation efforts under the IFAW-DART partnership are contributing to the thriving wildlife populations in and around the Hwange National Park buffer area. Our long-term goal is to ensure that wildlife and people can thrive for years to come in one of Africa’s most beautiful landscapes.”



▲ Together with DART, IFAW is actively involved in de-snaring efforts to protect wildlife in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe.

◀ Zebras and antelopes in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe.





Photo: Paul Wambugu / © IFAW

# Beads, baskets and vocational skills

A three-day knowledge-sharing forum for women from the wildlife-rich Tsavo, Amboseli, and northern Kenya regions was a mosaic of colors and voices sewn into one shared purpose: women and youth striving to emerge from the shadows of culture and tradition and contribute to community and family growth and well-being.

Convened by IFAW, the Taita Taveta Wildlife Conservancies Association (TTWCA) and hosted by the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) in Isiolo, Kenya, women basket weavers from Tsavo and beaders from Amboseli learned how to improve the value of their products and acquire the skills to diversify and boost family incomes through business, improved livestock herds, and alternative livelihood projects.

NRT's Ujuzi Manyatani project takes the school to the village, enabling youth who missed out on formal schooling to acquire business skills through three-month technical and vocational training programs.

The youth, whose skills are certified by the National Industrial Training Authority before they graduate, are trained in hairdressing and beauty therapy, mobile phone, speedboat and motorcycle repair, masonry, welding, catering and accommodation, tailoring, and electricity and solar installation.

The project has so far graduated 458 young men and 324 women who are all currently employed or running businesses. This gives idle young men who would otherwise have been drawn to cattle rustling or banditry an opportunity to make an honest living and young women who would have been dependent housewives to earn incomes and proudly contribute to the well-being of their families.

The women include the inspirational Jane Marko, now a tailor. Although she never went to school, she can now afford private schooling for her daughter.

Florence Lolchuragi's story is even more intriguing. The 24-year-old single mother trained in mobile phone repair. Her deft tech skills are a marvel in the highly patriarchal Samburu community.

"Beyond my training, I have learned financial management. I pay fees for my son and save some of my income in the Sacco. This enabled me to borrow a loan and buy a motorcycle taxi. Training youth who never went to school has helped delinquent youth to reform," says Florence.

Other than reducing criminality by creating employment for idle youth, the project builds resilience to climate change because families have fallback income when livestock is decimated by drought. These women and youth can also afford to pay for their children's schooling. In the long term, education will enable them to access formal employment, reduce the community's dependence on natural resources and improve local stewardship of the environment.

The Northern Rangelands Trust Shanga Department works with 1,200 women in groups of 10-15 led by a star beader.

"Beading has earned women respect within households because they now help to pay the bills. Some of these women have taken loans and built stone houses for their families, loans that they repay with income from beading. Men now call to enquire whether their wives can be introduced to beadwork. Above all, these women walk into conservancy annual general meetings heads high, proud that they contribute an annual dividend to run the conservancy," says Karin Sepeika, NRT's beadworks production manager.

Star beader Nabiki Lesuper says without beadwork, she would be cutting trees to burn charcoal for a living.

"The women involved in beadwork are different from their peers within the community. They stand out. Some have bank accounts. They all want to educate their children and build nice stone houses. They are inspiring other women," says Lesuper.

Margaret Macharia and Moombi Kitosiso are among over 600 women that IFAW works with on an empowerment project in Amboseli and Loita. IFAW supports them by providing beading material and accessing

overseas markets. The women have supplied IFAW policy, direct marketing, fundraising and communications teams, earning Kes 11 million (US\$ 72,600). In addition, they have sold 1,210 bracelets to global premium chai brand, David Rio, a valued IFAW partner since 2011 and an investor in IFAW's Room to Roam initiative at a cost of Kes 847,000 (US\$5,600).

"After the 2022 drought, I gave my husband cash that I earned from beading to buy 40 goats. Watching those goats browse while I do my beadwork fills me with so much pride," says Moombi.

IFAW East Africa gender officer Daisy Ochiel believes investing in women boosts conservation and climate resilience and helps to reduce human-wildlife conflicts. Increased incomes enable women to invest in water harvesting tanks and alternative energy sources such as cooking gas which reduces their interactions with natural resources and exposure to wildlife while searching for water and firewood.

**782**

(458 young men and 324 women) have graduated from the project

**1,200**

women in groups of 10-15 are led by a star beader

**1,210**

bracelets have been sold to global premium chai brand, David Rio

◀ Margaret Macharia, one of the over 600 women that IFAW works with on an empowerment project in Amboseli and Loita.





Photo: Guvo Adhi / © IFAW

# Meet the Gen Z mother, ranger and leader protecting Amboseli's biodiversity!

## Profile of ranger Purity Lakara

While the environment and conservation do not rank as a high priority among Gen Zers in a recent survey by the Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media and Communications in Nairobi, there are those like 25-year-old Purity Lakara who are driving conservation in rural Kenya.

Generation Z has entered the workforce with a bang, breaking workplace traditions and seeking accountability from institutions

globally. In the first world, Gen-Zs are synonymous with climate justice, inter-generational equity and bold environmental advocacy. They are not afraid to stand up for what they believe in. Born in the digital era, they're well versed in the use of social media, and advocacy initiatives to drive their message home. Climate movements such as The Global Climate March, spearheaded by Gen-Z activist Greta Thunberg, thrive on the effervescent activism of this placard-waving generation.

**“My name is Purity Lakara, I’m 26 years old and I’ve been a ranger for five years. I am currently the Senior Sergeant at Lemomo base, and the leader of Team Lioness. I’m married and have a beautiful daughter!”**



Photo: Paolo Torchio / © IFAW

But these generalizations may not traverse this diverse demographic globally. What do Gen-Zs in rural Africa care about? What are their priorities in life? Do they really care about smashed avocado on toast or the veganism charge in the West? Recent research by the Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media and Communications in Nairobi showed that Gen Zers in Kenya are mainly concerned about the way they communicate, their dress code and family ties. The environment is nowhere near their top priority. However, the perception that Kenyan Gen Z do not care about conservation should be taken with a grain of salt.

In the Amboseli landscape, 25-year-old Purity Lakara is a conservation champion who is inspiring, educating and creating awareness about the importance of protecting nature, particularly among young girls and women in her community. Through mentorship programs in schools and community sensitization workshops in remote villages, the pioneer lady ranger is empowering Maasai women to be local stewards of biodiversity resources and challenging them to go beyond societal expectations.

Purity is a trailblazer. She’s the first woman in her family to secure meaningful employment. She is also the leader of East Africa’s first all-female ranger squad, Team Lioness. Like most Gen Zs, she is not afraid of disrupting conventional norms. The ranger workforce is a typically male dominated space. The mother of one says she became a ranger to prove a point. Like her Western counterparts, she is active on Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok which she uses to engage with her family and friends.

## What inspired you to become a ranger?

Growing up in Amboseli, I was always impressed by the work of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) rangers. They were not scared of lions or elephants. I wanted to be like them! But there was a problem. According to the traditional societal norms of the Maasai community, women cannot become rangers because it was considered a dangerous job. Women have always belonged in the households and were tasked with taking care of the children and cooking. They said women fear wild animals like lions. I really wanted to prove everyone wrong and show them that we can also make good rangers. And I think we’ve achieved that with Team Lioness.

I used to be when I started working as a ranger, but not anymore. I’ve got the right training in how to handle them.

## Tell us about your daily routine.

I wake up at 5.00 am and go for a morning jog with my team. We return to the camp, shower, dress up and have breakfast. The team leader briefs everyone on the day’s agenda – this will determine whether we’ll go for a routine patrol, attend a human wildlife conflict incident or a community sensitization workshop. Every day is different. During patrols, we remove snares, and watch out for suspicious tracks of poachers. We record and report any wildlife sightings and injured animals to the office. The GPS tracking devices help us to accurately pinpoint the location of any species we come across and that gets loaded onto our maps to inform our decision-making on where to patrol the next day or week.

## What’s the most challenging situation you’ve experienced as a ranger?

Just one week into the job, a buffalo charged at us during a foot patrol. It appeared out of nowhere, running at high speed and we had to run into the bushes. That was a frightening experience and some of us wanted to quit immediately because this job felt like an extreme sport. Cape buffaloes are known for their aggression and fearlessness as a defense mechanism. You see lions getting tossed into the air by angry buffaloes - and that could have been our fate. It was a rude welcome into the job that traumatized us!

Handling human wildlife conflict incidents is also challenging. When lions kill livestock, community members would get emotionally charged. Calming that situation is never easy. Getting a common understanding amidst such heated dialogue is no walk in the park! They will ask me “the lions are killing our livelihoods. How will I feed my children?”. As a mother from the local community, I feel their pain and totally relate to their predicament. I would be devastated if I cannot provide for my daughter.

## If a lioness showed up here, how would you handle it?

That has happened before. The most important thing is to take cover. You should never get into its space. No noise and speak in low tones, if you must. Another tactic is to climb up a tree.

## How do you balance the job of a ranger with being a mother?

It’s not easy because sometimes I’m needed at home when I’m at work.

Fortunately, I have a great support system thanks to my family. My daughter, Sintame, stays with my mother-in-law when I’m on duty. I usually get one week off every month. During my break, I must be strategic on how I use that time. I’m always intentional about spending time with her, playing with her and being there for her. Motherhood teaches you how to balance different priorities. The moment she sees me approaching home, she gets ecstatic, and comes running towards me! She even mimics how I march. I find it hilarious! Sintame’s favorite animal is the elephant. She tells me that after completing her schooling, she wants to go to Lemomo (my ranger base). Like every child, she’s super inquisitive and all her questions must be answered. My husband works as a teacher and gets to visit her on weekends. That’s how we balance parenting duties.

## What would OOCR be like without rangers?

To be brutally honest, there would be zero animals here and most of the trees would have all been cut down for firewood. The rangers have also been central to effective rangelands management, grazing patterns and educating people on the value of wildlife conservation.

## What’s the most fulfilling part of your job?

When we close the year with zero poaching, and the community is safe from predators, it’s a great feeling to know that I was part of that success! Conservation is also a noble cause that is close to my heart and I’m honored to have this opportunity to serve my community.

**“When we close the year with zero poaching, and the community is safe from predators, it’s a great feeling to know that I was part of that success!”**

◀ Team Lioness ranger Purity Lakara at work in Amboseli, Kenya. Purity Lakara is a pioneer lady ranger who’s inspiring young girls and women in her community to become local stewards of biodiversity resources.

◀ Team Lioness Ranger Purity Amselet Lakara prepares to leave Lemomo Camp.





Photo: © IFAW

# Elephant-proof silos creating economic benefits for Kasungu farmers

Communities living around Kasungu National Park in Malawi, who have endured raiding elephants decimating their harvests for as long as they can remember, have found an innovative solution to mitigate the damage and, in the process, have created an economic benefit for themselves.

For decades, elephants from Kasungu National Park have been raiding villages surrounding the park destroying crops and ransacking harvest stored in houses. Conflict between humans and wildlife is a perennial problem for these communities, made up largely of subsistence farmers.

While the marauding elephants account for some of the communities' hardships, years of unproductive farming practices have driven communities into poverty. Elephants looking for the treats from community harvests drives their bullish behaviour while, poverty drives people to invade the park for bushmeat and the extraction of natural resources to survive.

These developments have contributed significantly to the heightened human and wildlife conflict that occurs in this landscape, and so many others like it.

The situation in Kasungu is however improving as IFAW, in partnership with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), continues with the construction of the 130-kilometre perimeter fence. This is to protect communities living around the park from elephants that stray beyond its borders. With over half already built, elephant raids in the villages are declining and hope is growing of secure harvest in the coming farming seasons.

To prevent marauding elephants from accessing the harvest, which are usually stored in houses, IFAW is constructing community silos. Four have so far been completed and four more are on the cards. Each silo has a capacity of 30 metric tonnes of produce. The silos are sturdy, elephant-proof structures constructed using 80 bags of cement each.

Elephant-proof silos are tried and tested crop storage facilities impenetrable to rodents and, of course, elephants themselves, guaranteeing no post-harvest losses for the farmers.

As IFAW intensifies livelihood activities in the communities, it has organised farmers into producer groups that are championing productive farming methods. Traditionally, many of these farmers in Kasungu have been tobacco producers. However, heavy on investment and demanding large amounts of wood, tobacco production has been less profitable and has exacerbated damage to soils and the environment, leaving farmers destitute with poor quality farms.

Through the producer groups, IFAW has created hubs for climate-resilient and soil rehabilitation farming methods such as agroforestry, afforestation and manure-making and application. Additionally, sourcing seeds for groundnuts and sesame for the farmers to grow for cash this farming season in the demonstration plots.

In Malawi most smallholder farmers cultivate on less than a hectare of land and cannot therefore meet the minimum quantities required to benefit from bulk sales. The producer groups are intended to make the farmers competitive on the bulk market.

The elephant-proof granaries (silos) serve the community at large, encouraging farmers to cooperate and benefit from collective bargaining when taking product to market. The granaries promote the collection of produce for the bulk market.

Phillip Namagonya, IFAW's Community Engagement Officer in Kasungu, said "Groundnuts are nitrogen fixers. The aim is to improve people's lives by giving them crops that can earn them a significant income while helping them restore their soils. This results in a double profitability scenario."

Sesame Value Chain analyses in Malawi have found that while these alternate crops yield well in relatively poor climatic conditions and have an established high-demand local and regional market, production in Malawi is low. IFAW is rallying farmers to seize this business opportunity. Agri-dealers, for seeds, and potential buyers have already been approached. To ensure there is a circular economy in place to support the farmers.

**4**

community silos have been constructed and 4 more are planned

**130**

kilometre perimeter fence continues to be constructed to protect communities living around the park from elephants that stray beyond its borders

◀ Community members living around Kasungu National Park outside one of their new elephant-proof silos.





# Zimbabwe's largest national park gets tourism complex

An old, rickety boom gate creaks as a uniformed game ranger applies his full force to open it. The gate appears as if it could give out at any time, timeworn at the hinges and suffering from the countless movements it has been subjected to over the decades.

This is the eyesore that currently confronts visitors to the main gate at Zimbabwe's flagship wildlife sanctuary, the massive Hwange National Park.

A few yards from the entrance gate is a makeshift house for the wildlife rangers manning the gate. It stands alone, dwarfed by tall trees like an abandoned farmhouse which, just like the boom gate, is testimony to the passage of time.

This may give the impression that there is no life beyond the gate, but nay, Hwange has become a true wildlife paradise and a true tourist magnet whose only blemish is the old main entrance gate.

To improve security, unlock the tourism potential, and ensure that the iconic wildlife reserve has infrastructure that is befitting its status, the latest project in the IFAW-ZimParks 25-year conservation partnership, is the construction of a multi-purpose complex at Hwange National Park. A groundbreaking ceremony to kick-start the project was held in October and was graced by Zimbabwe's Minister for Environment,

Climate, and Wildlife, Hon. Mangaliso Ndllovu, traditional leaders, KAZA TFCA Secretariat officials, tourism stakeholders and villagers from Hwange.

With an expected completion date of June 2024, the new complex at Hwange National Park's main entrance point is a mixed-use development, including a visitor centre, tourism offices, an exhibition centre, a car park, housing for wildlife rangers, and a new gate. The facility will include a gift shop promoting and selling locally produced crafts, while a visitor centre allows the Hwange community to showcase their culture and encourage heritage tourism.

Sprawling over 14,600km<sup>2</sup> Hwange National Park is a unique wildlife paradise and one of Africa's ten largest national parks famous for an elephant experience. The globally significant landscape and authentically immersive park harbors some 45,000 elephants that call this landscape home.

With over 100 species of mammals and 400 bird species, Hwange National Park is a core part of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA)—the world's largest transfrontier conservation area—established to promote conservation and tourism development.

"IFAW's long-term partnership with ZimParks is to transform Hwange NP into a well-managed and well-protected park that

can serve as a haven for wildlife and an economic engine for Zimbabwe. As we forge ahead with this important mission of restoring Hwange NP to its former glory, we are excited about the journey ahead and remain optimistic that our interventions will contribute to the recovery and growth of Zimbabwe's tourism sector," said Alleta Nyahuye, IFAW's Director for Zimbabwe.



▲ Zimbabwe Environment, Climate and Wildlife Minister, the Honourable Mangaliso Ndllovu speaking at the Hwange Main Gate Complex groundbreaking ceremony.

▲ Hwange National Park gate opening event on 20 October 2023.

Photos: Timothy Manyange / © IFAW

# Enhancing climate change resilience through cross border collaboration

IFAW in collaboration with Zambia-based Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO) are implementing an innovative project to enhance climate resilience and cross-border collaborations in the Kasungu/Lukusuzi Trans-frontier Conservation Area (TFCA) by training farmers on either side of the border between Malawi and Zambia in Conservation Smart Agriculture (CSA).

In June, a group of three women and seven men, from four Traditional Authorities in the Kasungu district in Malawi traversed the Western boundary of the MAZALA to Lundazi, Zambia to undergo the Lead Farmer Training in Conservation Smart Agriculture. The project's main objective is to increase climate change resilience in the Kasungu/Lukusuzi TFCA by implementing strategies that enhance farmers' adoption of climate smart agriculture and unlocks benefits from non-carbon natural resource value chains.

The project is implemented in Mwasemphangwe and Chikomeni chiefdoms where 2,500 farmers have undergone training in Malawi. The projects will target a further 1,000 farmers from some of the 4 traditional authorities that border Kasungu National. The 10 lead farmers will bear the torch for transformation for the 1,000 farmers expected to be trained in Malawi.

The lead group travelled to learn how to champion their communities' adaptation drive to mitigate the impacts of climate change through Conservation Smart Agriculture from their Zambian neighbours. While in Lundazi, Zambia the team was warmly welcomed by the COMACO team comprising the Lead Trainer Mr. Timothy Phiri and three counterpart trainers. The four days of intensive training comprised both theory and practical work. The Lead farmers were taught the theory of Bee keeping and gained an in-depth understanding of the critical role of bees in Conservation Smart Agriculture (CSA). The focus was on bees as social animals that need care and proper management if farmers are to maximize honey yields.

The highlight of the training was when the group travelled to the field on the second day where they visited Mr. Joseph Lungu, an outstanding beekeeper and conservationist who has over 200 beehives under his management. The visibly happy veteran beekeeper was excited at the prospect of sharing his knowledge



**2,500**

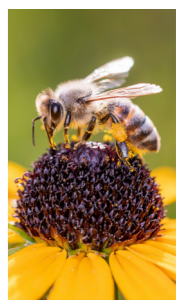
farmers have undergone training in Malawi. The projects will target a further 1,000 farmers

saying, "I am happy that you brothers and sisters have travelled all the way from Malawi to learn and share your experiences with me today. Beekeeping is a very profitable business; with the hives here I harvest drums of this gold nectar. All that is needed is perseverance and adherence to the advice by our trainers."

The team briefly visited Zumwanda village where they saw a cooperative owned sunflower oil processing plant, a maize mill and a tree management project benefitting from carbon funds.

The class also covered good practices for Conservation Agriculture land preparation, focusing on the relationship between crops from the legume family, maize and agroforestry. These crops are viewed as intertwined and complementary; with legumes fixing nitrogen into the soil and the others relying on this nitrogen for growth.

The training culminated in a hands-on session, led by a fellow well achieved Principal Lead farmer Mr. Mada Chipeta, in the practice of CSA manure making, agroforestry and land preparation for legumes and alternating crops.



▲ A western honey bee pollinates an orange coneflower blossom.

▲ Tackwell stands near one of his six bee hives, Mwase Mphangwe, Zambia.





Photo: Luckmore Safuli / @IFAW

# Simple, innovative solution to reducing livestock losses in Hwange

To help reduce cases of livestock predation, enhance food security, and promote peaceful coexistence between people and the mega carnivore species in Hwange and Tsholotshlo Districts in Zimbabwe, IFAW in partnership with the ZimParks and The Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU), are promoting the use of the predator-proof mobile bomas, a simple yet innovative conservation initiative to help curb human-lion conflicts.

Predator-proof mobile bomas are enclosures designed to protect livestock from predators such as lions, cheetahs, and hyenas.

“After over 20 years studying lions in southern Africa, we have discovered that lions are visual hunters. When they hunt, they have to visualize and select their prey before launching an attack. So, once you put a barrier in front of them, they simply do not know what to do,” said Liomba-Junior Mathe, Lion Guardians Manager for WildCRU’s Trans-Kalahari Predator Programme.

Originating in Kenya, where the Maasai community has long relied on livestock as their primary source of livelihood, predator-proof bomas have proven to be effective in preventing carnivore incursions and enhancing the economic status of buffer communities.

It is a departure from the traditional kraals made of poles and acacia thorny branches. The preventive physical barriers (bomas) are made of locally acquired opaque plastic sheets (PVC) 25 metres in length x 2 metres in height and are supported by poles around the perimeter of the pens.

The concept behind bomas is that predators do not have visual access to livestock when enclosed in the boma; hence, they cannot trigger stampeding of livestock out of the bomas. In Hangano village, a small rural community sharing the fragile frontier with Hwange National Park, five predator-proof bomas have been deployed, and the results have been encouraging.

“We can now sleep peacefully, knowing that our livestock are safe. The benefits are immense, and already we are witnessing a drastic reduction in livestock predation,” said Albert Moyo, Hangano village head.

According to WildCRU, there has been a 50-90% reduction in livestock predation in other parts of Hwange District where predator-proof mobile bomas have been deployed.

When placed in crop fields and with a carrying capacity of around 40-60 cattle, the predator-proof mobile bomas also help improve soil fertility. They are rotated between arable fields every 2-3 weeks to facilitate fertilization of crop fields resulting from the breaking down of the topsoil by cattle hooves and depositing of dung and urine in the fields.

The bomas are moved around to different fields, resulting in increased crop productivity as a result of improved soil fertility.

“It is my wish that project partners expand this initiative to cover all the other villages bordering the national park so they too benefit from this transformative concept,” said Moyo.

To date, the IFAW-ZimParks partnership has installed 18 predator-proof bomas in selected villages bordering Hwange National Park.

To mitigate human-wildlife conflict in the greater Hwange ecosystem, IFAW continues to explore innovative approaches and

co-create solutions with our communities. Predator-proof bomas are just one way of mitigating human-wildlife conflict and building resilient communities.

IFAW’s long-term vision for the Hwange-Matetsi-Zambezi landscape is to ensure communities have sustainable solutions to reduce human-wildlife conflict and promote coexistence.

Hwange is home to at least 500 lions tussling for every square inch of the park. Zimbabwe’s oldest and largest national park is studded with prey for the apex predators.

But this otherwise impressive habitat is fast shrinking; subjected to immense pressure from human activity and the consequences of climate change has increased contact between lions and communities, which usually results in the lions finding prey in livestock.

It is estimated that more than 150 head of cattle were killed by lions between 2020 and 2022 in Zimbabwe’s Hwange District.

In this human-carnivore conflict, both sides suffer, as disgruntled farmers often kill the lions in retaliation, thereby pushing the majestic cats closer to extinction.

## World’s apex predator is under siege

Across the world, lion populations are shrinking at an alarming rate, and it is estimated that only 20,000 lions remain in the wild, down from about 200,000 in 1975.

The catastrophic decline has prompted the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to classify lions as vulnerable.

While habitat loss remains a top risk to the continued existence of lions, one of the principal causes for the continued decline in lion populations has been direct persecution in retaliation for livestock predation.

Generally admired by conservationists for their significant ecological role in managing large herbivore populations, lions, regarded as the Kings of the Jungle, symbolize bravery and leadership in the African traditional and cultural belief systems.

However, in the eyes of the impoverished rural communities living adjacent to protected areas to whom livestock are highly valued livelihood assets, lions and other feline species are notorious pests. Cattle and goats are a significant safety net for the mixed agriculture smallholder farmers dotted around Hwange National Park.

The dilemma for many conservationists is how to create an environment where communities can safely share their land with the big cats and the predator-proof bomas are helping address this issue.



Photo: Luckmore Safuli / @IFAW

**50-90%**

reduction in livestock predation in other parts of Hwange District where predator-proof mobile bomas have been deployed

**500**

lions are tussling for every square inch at Hwange

**20,000**

lions remain in the wild, down from about 200,000 in 1975

◀ When placed in crop fields with a carrying capacity of around 40-60 cattle, predator-proof bomas also help improve soil fertility.

◀ Predator-proof boma construction to promote peaceful coexistence between people and wildlife.





Photo: Julia Gumbher / IFAW

# Alternative livelihoods taking the sting out of poaching

By Charles Mpaka

Across the villages along the Chipata-Lundazi road, which cuts through a landscape that stretches between Kasungu National Park in Malawi and Lukusuzi and Luambe National Parks in Eastern Province in Zambia, one feature is likely to catch the eye: impressive stands of natural forests among villages and smallholder farms.

In villages in Chikomeni chiefdom in Lundazi district, these indigenous forests are home to over 700 beehives belonging to more than 140 families.

The forest protection duty which the bees are providing is an unintended consequence of the beekeeping enterprise that is contributing to the livelihoods

of the community. Fundamentally, the communities are sucking money out of the honeycombs in these beehives through sales of both raw and processed honey some of which finds space in the shelves of Zambia's supermarkets.

It is one of the IFAW-supported livelihood activities within the broader wildlife conservation strategy in the Malawi-Zambia landscape. The project is addressing socio-economic problems that are often related to farming practices that degrade soils and drive deforestation and biodiversity loss.

Small-scale farmers are encouraged to adopt climate-smart agriculture approaches such as making and using organic fertilisers and agroecology to revitalise soils, so they

achieve maximum crop productivity. This also supports small farmers to add value to their produce and attractively brand the products, so they are competitive in the market.

With burgeoning carbon trading as another revenue stream, this wildlife economy is raking in promising sums for both individual members and their groups, communities say.

One such cooperative has used part of its revenue to purchase two trucks – which the group hires out for income. The money is invested in community projects such as building teachers' houses and hospital shelters.



Photo: Julia Gumbher / IFAW

These alternate livelihoods activities are making people less and less reliant on exploiting natural resources for a living. By adopting these farming practices, people are realising that if they destroy the forest, they also destroy the productivity of their land and their income will suffer.

Along the way, people are also learning to live with the animals.

Animals are able to move from one forest to another without disturbance. For the bigger ones, such as elephants, that would cause damage to crops, a rapid communication system through community scouts that work with government rangers is in place to deal with possible conflict situations.

One man who has learnt to manage the animals he once hunted is Andrew Mbewe. Former poacher, now turned beekeeper, Mbewe manages 18 hives that provide him with an income

A battle-scarred poacher for nearly a decade from the 1980's, he terrorised the 5,000-square-kilometres conservation area on poaching missions. From being a notorious poacher, he is now an ambassador of conservation as chairperson of the Community Forest Management Group in his area. The cooperative enforces wildlife conservation and sustainable land management practices.

"There are hardened attitudes to change and patience is required to teach.

Sometimes, the earnings from the livelihood activities are insufficient or irregular. For instance, you don't harvest honey every day or every month," he says.

Yet, he says, the prospects are good and the challenges he faces now rank nowhere near what he encountered when he was a poacher.

For over 30 years from the late 1970's, the Malawi-Zambia conservation area was a major source and transit route for ivory to markets in China and Southeast Asia.

Elephant poaching rocked the landscape resulting in the decline of the species. In Kasungu National Park, for example, according to data from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife in Malawi, elephant numbers dwindled from 1,200 in the 1970's to just 50 in 2015.

In 2017, IFAW launched a five-year Combating Wildlife Crime project whose aim was to see elephant populations stabilise and increase in the landscape through reduced poaching.

The project supported park management operations and constructed or rehabilitated requisite structures such as vehicle workshops and offices. Game rangers and judiciary officers were trained in wildlife crime investigation and prosecution. The programme provided game rangers with uniforms, decent housing, field allowances, patrol vehicles and equipment. It supported

community livelihood activities such as bee keeping and climate-friendly farming.

It also thrust communities to the center of planning wildlife conservation measures.

Now, IFAW is leveraging this community partnership through its flagship Room to Roam initiative, a broad, people-centred conservation strategy.

"This initiative that cuts across land use and planning, promotes climate-smart approaches to farming and ensures people and animals co-exist," said Patricio Ndadzela, IFAW Country Director for Zambia and Malawi.

The approach aims to deliver benefits for climate, nature and people through biodiversity protection and restoration.

**>700**

beehives belonging to more than 140 families are homed in the indigenous forests

▲ Elita and her family harvest peanuts on their farm, Chikomeni, Zambia.

◀ Rodrick and Justin take care of the Chikolongo Livelihood Project's apiary, bees and honey, Chikolongo, Malawi.





# IFAW hands over landmark community-owned elephant sanctuary to landowners in Kenya

IFAW officially handed over the lease for a groundbreaking 30,000-acre community-owned wildlife conservancy to landowners of the Olgulului-Ololorashi Group Ranch at a community ceremony in Amboseli, Kenya. The Kitenden Conservancy, which IFAW has managed for eleven years, is a critical wildlife dispersal and transboundary elephant migration corridor for Amboseli National Park which borders Tanzania.

The lease agreement was initiated by IFAW following concerns that sub-division of the group ranch was encouraging sale of land to agricultural investors to the detriment of elephant movement and dispersal, and biodiversity conservation in general.

Farming would have increased elephant-human conflict, and closed elephant access to dispersal areas and migratory corridors in Tsavo and Mt Kilimanjaro National Park in Tanzania which is crucial for sustaining the distribution, genetic diversity, and health of animal and plant populations within the ecosystem.

Following signing of the lease, IFAW spearheaded the rehabilitation of a

50-year-old dilapidated 90km pipeline for pumping water from a spring in Amboseli National Park for use by the community within the group ranch. It also set up management and governance systems and built the capacity of elected community leaders to manage the conservancy, established park infrastructure such as roads, offices, security equipment and housing for rangers, and trained, kitted and paid salaries for 87 game rangers drawn from the community.

As part of efforts to improve community livelihoods, IFAW also invested in bursaries for needy but bright students from the community, helped empower women and boost their resilience to droughts and climate change through income generating projects, and set up Team Lioness, an all-women ranger unit that is probably the first of its kind in the world. IFAW's 'Jenga Mama' initiative has become an iconic flagship project showcasing how empowerment of disadvantaged gender groups in wildlife-rich resource areas can lead to win-win outcomes for both people and wildlife.

## 30,000

acre community-owned wildlife conservancy lease was handed over to landowners of the Olgulului-Ololorashi Group Ranch in Amboseli, Kenya



▲ H.E. Joseph ole Lenku, Governor of Kajiado County, Azzedine Downes, President and CEO of IFAW and Chairman Daniel Leturesh of the Olgulului-Ololorashi Group Ranch (OOGR), lead a community procession.

▲ Azzedine Downes, IFAW CEO and President, and Community Leaders at an event to mark the return of the Kitenden Conservancy to community ownership.



# Wildlife guardians safeguard elephants from new, refurbished bases in Amboseli and the Mara

Two ranger bases have strengthened the connectivity between the two elephant-rich ecosystems of Amboseli and Maasai Mara and tremendously improved the welfare and capacity of community game rangers who protect people and wildlife.

The Mara Musiara Ranger base, which houses 17 rangers and 10 civilian operations support staff, was refurbished by IFAW. Standing at an entry/exit point of the iconic Maasai Mara Game Reserve, it is a formidable defense for wildlife migrating between Kenya and Tanzania from poachers and helps to manage human-wildlife conflict in the neighboring communities. In addition, rangers at the base work closely with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and Tanzania Wildlife authorities to fight bushmeat trade and cross-border wildlife tracking.

"This area was a route for poachers operating between Kenya and Tanzania. That is why the Mara Game Reserve set up a ranger base here. But with time, the houses became rundown. But thanks to IFAW, we now have clean water, solar lighting in our rooms, and comfortable accommodation. Refurbishing this base has boosted our morale because we are assured of resting in comfort when we get back to base after a long day in the field," says Mara ranger, Ezekiel Parsaloi.

Nestled atop a hill in Illaingarunyoni, Amboseli, the ten-man David Rio

Community ranger base is a critical look-out for wild animals migrating from the IFAW-supported Kitenden Conservancy into Amboseli and further afield into the Mara—and Tanzania by extension.

Illaingarunyoni is a 28,784-acre community-owned conservancy situated northwest of Amboseli National Park and secured by IFAW through a formal agreement with the landowners' of Olgulului Group Ranch. Other than curbing wildlife crime, the rangers are also involved in monitoring both habitat and wildlife species and responding to human-wildlife conflict incidents.

Jackson Sitonik who commands all Olgulului Group Ranch rangers says previously, rangers operated from makeshift tents. IFAW also kitted the rangers, provides patrol vehicles, and supplies the base with water using a water bowser from a borehole in Kitenden Conservancy.

"Investing in the welfare of rangers, who spend weeks away from their families, by providing comfortable housing capacitates them to protect precious wildlife and the communities who live alongside wildlife. They must be healthy and physically capable of enduring long days and nights. If they are not healthy, they cannot save wildlife from human threats," IFAW CEO and President Azzedine Downes said when he commissioned the two bases in September 2023.

The two ranger bases are part of an ambitious IFAW plan to secure room for East Africa's endangered elephants and other wildlife to safely roam across the two neighboring countries in the face of shrinking wildlife habitats arising from increasing land use changes and the impacts of climate change.

## 17

rangers and 10 civilian operations support staff are housed at the refurbished Mara Musiara Ranger base



▲ OGR rangers from the David Rio Community Ranger Base get a briefing from the team leader before their morning patrol.

▲ Musiara ranger base in Masai Mara, Kenya.





Photo: Guyo Adhi / © IFAW

# Ranger dangers: The perils facing wildlife protectors on the frontline

**87%**

of rangers in Africa have faced life-threatening situations at work according to a IUCN survey

**>66%**

of African rangers had been attacked by poachers

**82%**

of African rangers had a dangerous encounter with wildlife

**95**

rangers were killed in the line of duty between June 2021 and July 2022 in Africa



Photo: Guyo Adhi / © IFAW

In southern Kenya, Amboseli National Park is a spectacular landscape teeming with over 400 species of birdlife and big game like elephants, lions, and giraffes. Lilac-breasted rollers and starlings paint the sky with vibrant hues of color. Tourists flock here from around the world, drawn to the park's natural wonders.

But Amboseli's beauty conceals a darker side that confronts the unsung heroes who dedicate their lives to protecting this vital landscape. On paper, the job of a wildlife ranger seems idyllic. After all, who wouldn't want to patrol wide-open vistas brimming with wildlife?

But the reality is that rangers face sophisticated poaching syndicates and wildlife trafficking networks, harsh environments, occasional tension with local communities, and animals that could misjudge them as a threat. In an IUCN survey of rangers across the world, 88.6% of those in Africa said they had faced a life-threatening situation at work. Over 66% of African rangers had been attacked by poachers, and 82% had had a dangerous encounter with wildlife.

The job can even be deadly. According to the Game Rangers Association of Africa, 95 rangers were killed in the line of duty between June 2021 and July 2022 alone. The association announced: 'At least 565 African rangers have been killed in action since 2011. 295 of these rangers have been murdered by militia groups, terrorists and bandits in coordinated attacks or by poachers whilst protecting our wildlife and wild places.'

These risks and more are in Amboseli rangers' minds as they prepare for their day at the recently opened David Rio ranger base in the Ilaingarunyoni community conservancy. It's still pitch dark at 5:45 a.m., but six energetic rangers are already up, chanting while polishing their boots. They check their uniforms and gear, ensuring their GPS devices, torches,

mobile phones, and radio receivers are all in working order.

The rangers move between thickets of bushes with ease, weaving themselves through the thorny shrubs in unison. 'You must use all your senses to observe, listen, and smell what's happening around you. Remember, you are in the wild,' warns Unit Leader Emmanuel Leshinka.

The rangers stop and mull over some markings on the ground. Ranger Lenanu Kuresoi takes notes and GPS coordinates of the sighting. He quickly points out a cheetah footprint from two days ago, and a porcupine from earlier that morning.

As they vigilantly walk through the arid area, rangers are tasked with a wide array of activities beyond wildlife monitoring. 'During patrols, we remove snares, report injured animals to Kenya Wildlife Services vet teams and—if we see any footprints of poachers—we report and track them,' says team member Saitoti Lengesia.

'The local community wear shoes made from old car tires, so we know their footprints. If we see a track far from any road that belongs neither to the local herdsman nor a ranger, it raises a red flag,' he explains.

The local community's relationship with nature can, however, also be tenuous, as Saitoti points out. 'When lions kill cows, it's always a difficult time for us. Emotions are high. Cooling people down after these incidents requires an experienced ranger with a calm demeanor to control the situation and ensure people do not retaliate.'

Rangers from the local community play a critical role in mending that relationship between people and wildlife, coaxing everyone to understand that wildlife is not only part of their heritage but also has the potential to provide them with sustainable livelihoods.

The long trek back to the David Rio ranger base in the scorching afternoon sun leaves the rangers tired and dehydrated. The first thing Ranger Leonard Lekinyai does is pour some water in the trough for the birds. A pair of white bellied turacos announce their arrival with a distinct call before quietly quenching their thirst.

IFAW prioritizes ranger welfare in Amboseli by providing housing and training in skills such as crime-scene management. We also created an all-female ranger team—Team Lioness—and built family-friendly housing for them to ensure that rangers better reflect the communities they work with. By investing in ranger welfare, we are helping create a world where both wild animals and people can peacefully co-exist while giving endangered wildlife Room to Roam.



Photo: Guyo Adhi / © IFAW

▲ Rangers from the David Rio Community Ranger Base take notes during a routine morning patrol.

▲ A lone bull elephant walks along the dried lakebed in Amboseli National Park, Kenya.

◀ Rangers from the David Rio Community Ranger Base scour the landscape during a routine morning patrol in OGR.





Photo: Paolo Torchio / © IFAW

# African marine conservation could turn the tide on climate change

The upcoming COP28 presents a platform for global leadership to recalibrate our strategic approach to accelerate climate action by building a solid case for ocean conservation. The ocean contributes about US\$1.5 trillion to the global economy and provides livelihoods for 10–12% of the world's population.

But there's another reason to protect our blue planet. The ocean is a carbon-absorbing powerhouse. It harbors tremendous capacity to sequester carbon and regulate the climate. Since the end of the pre-industrial era, our ocean has absorbed a staggering 29% of the world's carbon emissions. It holds about 42 times more carbon than the atmosphere.

As a nature-based solution to the climate crisis, marine conservation offers the world an excellent opportunity to leapfrog the most pressing challenge of our time by harnessing the enormous carbon sequestration capacity of the ocean. With suitable investments, the sea can potentially deliver a third of the world's energy needs in a climate-compatible manner. Therefore, global climate action must deliberately elevate marine conservation as a natural solution to climate change by allocating more resources to this critical ecosystem.

Human activities pose an existential threat to the health of marine ecosystems around the world, and Africa is certainly no exception.

Along the Kenyan coastline for instance, the busy ports of Mombasa and Lamu disrupt the migratory routes of marine species, destroying critical foraging and breeding grounds of sea life. Marine megafauna, including sea turtles and marine mammals, are impacted by oil discharges and underwater noise pollution and die from ship strikes. In addition to threats posed by fishing activities, increasing plastic pollution alters seawater chemistry by making it more acidic, diminishing its carbon-absorbing capacity.

In-shore waters host about 90% of East Africa's marine biodiversity, including coral reefs, seagrass meadows, and mangrove forests. These habitats provide food security for coastal communities and act as a natural buffer against storms and floods.

Unfortunately, we're losing critical beaches to the ever-increasing infrastructural development along our coast. Protecting waters closer to the land is vital for human livelihoods and marine life.

That's not to underestimate the role of offshore protected areas. Humpback whales utilize the warmer offshore waters of East Africa for calving and need vast seascapes to thrive. The carbon capture capacity of whales is astonishing; one great whale sequesters around 33 tonnes of carbon dioxide on average while a tree absorbs only around 0.02 tonnes of carbon annually.

Sadly, many countries, especially those on the African continent, do not have the resources available to effectively protect offshore marine areas. Many such areas remain threatened by overfishing, mining and oil exploration, so conserving these marine ecosystems by gazetting them right now must be a priority for governments. The development of protected areas on the open ocean would also align with the global target to protect 30% of the planet by 2030.

Limited capacity to carry out marine research and disseminate information are significant obstacles to effective ocean management in the Global South. When research is done, as was the case earlier this year when Kenya conducted its first marine megafauna aerial survey in nearly three decades, it is critical that governments invest in the implementation of recommendations from that research. Policymakers and managers of ocean resources must be trained and equipped to develop national marine spatial plans to provide robust guidelines for permissible ocean activities.

Our ocean's colossal potential to mitigate climate change has remained relatively untapped. However, with a suitable strategic investment, marine ecosystem conservation and restoration in Africa and around the world can form the pivotal centerpiece to anchor global climate action.

12%

of the world's population is provided a livelihood from the ocean

US\$1.5 trillion

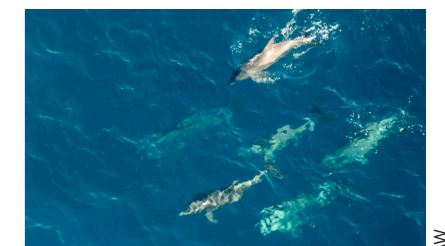
is contributed to the global economy from the ocean

29%

of the world's carbon emissions are absorbed by the ocean. 42 times more carbon than the atmosphere

90%

of East Africa's marine biodiversity is hosted by in-shore waters, including coral reefs, seagrass meadows, and mangrove forests



Photos: Paolo Torchio / © IFAW

▲ Fishing boat and nets seen during the aerial marine megafauna survey.

▲ Dolphins seen during the aerial marine megafauna survey.

▲ An aerial survey, the first-in-30-years, was conducted on marine species along the 600-kilometer Kenyan coastline to establish the level of conservation efforts for main marine species found in Kenyan territorial waters. The survey sought to identify threats, distribution and, areas of concentration of species from which appropriate conservation and management measures would be identified.





Special Feature

# Africa Climate Summit

"I proudly celebrate the courage and imagination with which the people of Africa and their leaders have converged with extraordinary focus and commitment on the climate agenda. Not as an additional or peripheral concern for public policy, but as the foremost priority and the defining intervention in our collective journey to shared prosperity."

We have an unprecedented opportunity to abandon the well-trodden yet unsustainable path of the past and forge a new route that aligns economic inclusion and shared prosperity with the climate commitments imperatives. Africa's low rates of greenhouse gas emissions must not relegate us to the margins and footnotes of the global climate agenda; Africa must step forward as the cornerstone for practical climate solutions."

Kenya President, William Ruto





Photo: © Donal Boyd

Africa Climate Summit

## Wildlife on the IFAW agenda for 1st ever Africa Climate Summit

More than 41 heads-of-state gathered in Nairobi, Kenya from 4-6 September 2023 for the first-ever Africa Climate Summit. This event served as a pivotal forum to address climate-related concerns across the African continent and highlight the role of nations as agents for positive change.

The Summit came at an important moment as the African continent is exposed to the serious impacts that climate change is already having on its people, ecosystems and economies, and as these leaders and communities face in an increasingly uncertain future.

IFAW placed wildlife and the innovative Room to Roam campaign high on the agenda, calling on leaders at the Africa Climate Summit to acknowledge and invest in nature-based solutions to the

climate crisis—solutions that lie within Africa's own natural assets and can successfully catalyse a new era of growth for the region.

The three major pillars of IFAW's focus at the Africa Climate Summit included mitigating climate change, adapting to it, and addressing the resulting loss and damage.

With the benefits that accrue from delivering climate-smart conservation, landscape restoration, nature-based adaptation, animal rescue and disaster risk reduction in a holistic programme, IFAW's Room to Roam initiative aims to deliver co-benefits that address the climate crisis and support low-carbon sustainable development for vulnerable communities.

IFAW's presence at the Africa Climate Summit reaffirms its dedication to fostering partnerships, sharing expertise, and driving effective solutions that address the intricate relationship between climate change, wildlife, and communities. By aligning efforts and joining hands with stakeholders from across the continent, IFAW is poised to play a transformative role in shaping the trajectory of climate action in Africa.

▲ A herd of elephants in Amboseli National Park, Kenya.

Africa Climate Summit

## Nairobi Declaration - nature and biodiversity are solutions to climate change

The Africa Climate Summit (ACS) in Nairobi ended with nations acknowledging the value of nature and biodiversity for African development and as being vital for the fight against climate change.

IFAW was among the few conservation organisations represented at the ACS, where side events paid limited attention to the role of nature and biodiversity in relieving the impacts of climate change; and believes the first-ever ACS was largely a success for nature and biodiversity.

Azzedine Downes, President and CEO of IFAW, said the Nairobi Declaration underscored biodiversity's significance to arresting climate change.

He pointed out that the ACS decision is important as it commits members to strengthen their actions to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, deforestation, and desertification and restore degraded land. Recognising the importance of these efforts is a vital step in the right direction.

While IFAW believes that the value of nature-based solutions as one of the ways to mitigate the climate crisis cannot be underestimated, we were disappointed by the limited reference to biodiversity and nature in the Declaration's Call to Action.

"We cannot afford to lament what has been lost; we must prioritise protecting what remains and actively seek ways to rectify the environmental damage so far inflicted upon our planet", said Downes.

Simon Addison, IFAW Climate Change Advisor, said IFAW was pleased with the firm demand by African leaders that the global community must reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the Paris Agreement as a first priority.



Photo: Shaun McMinn / © IFAW

"Nations also continue to acknowledge the need for rich countries to implement the Loss and Damage Facility – these are both critical actions that rich countries need to take to safeguard nature and biodiversity and protect vulnerable communities from the worst impacts of climate change," said Addison.

"While African leaders have set expectations high for the reform of the international financial systems that restrict their ability to raise funds to support climate-resilient development, the Declaration was light on specifics when it came to the question of how to address the nature finance gap – which currently stands at \$700 billion per year," he said.

Addison pointed out that, "Nations were also silent on how they intend to honour their commitments to implement the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which they signed in December 2022. Achieving GBF targets like the need to protect and restore at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems, and to minimise the impact of climate change on biodiversity and increasing its resilience will only help African nations to deliver their ambitions laid out in this Declaration."

IFAW remains committed to its partnerships with countries in East and Southern Africa in helping them meet their conservation goals.

▲ Two Southern yellow-billed hornbills perched on a branch in Hwange National Park.



# Room to Roam is a critical climate solution

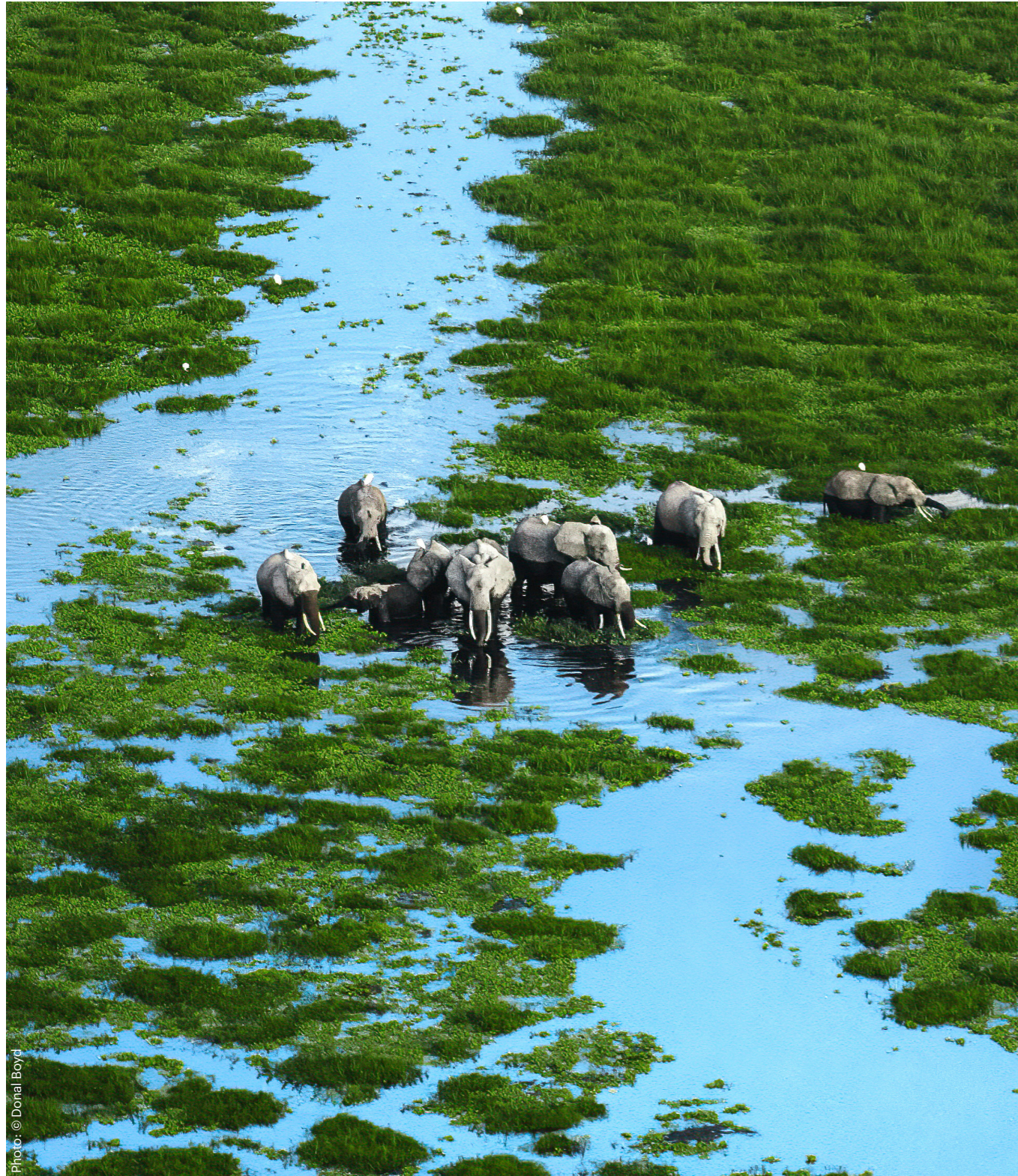


Photo: © Donal Boyd



Photo: © Donal Boyd

While Africa is undoubtedly vulnerable to climate change, it also holds many solutions to the climate crisis—solutions that can catalyze a new era of growth for the continent.

As a wildlife conservation organization that has been working in Africa for over 20 years, IFAW has a deep understanding of the impact that climate change is having on African ecosystems and communities and is committed to addressing those risks in the landscapes in which it works. IFAW believes Africa's biodiversity and the communities who steward it are critical for tackling the climate crisis successfully.

Not only does climate change increase the risk of drought, flooding, tropical storms, sea level rise, and desertification on the continent, but the poverty of many countries and communities means they may not have the resources they need to cope and adapt to these changes.

Africa is also not receiving its fair share of the international finance that it needs to protect biodiversity, build climate resilience, and transition to a path of low-carbon green economic development.

Africa's vast landscapes, unparalleled biodiversity, and existing carbon sinks are natural assets that deliver enormous benefits to the planet and humanity as a whole—they essentially provide a planetary safety net.

African leaders viewed the Africa Climate Summit as an opportunity to show how these natural assets are a global public good that international actors—especially the industrialized countries that have contributed most to the climate crisis—must help protect, restore, and effectively manage. They are also hoping to harness these natural assets, using carbon and biodiversity markets, to generate the finance that their countries need to tackle climate risks while achieving sustainable development for the long term.

IFAW's Climate Change Advisor, Simon Addison attended the Summit, making the case for the profound role of wild animals and their habitats in tackling the climate crisis and calling on governments—both African and others—to invest in the long-term protection, restoration, and effective management of their habitats.

He advocates for IFAW's holistic, landscape-based approach to biodiversity conservation, in which wildlife conservation acts as the anchor for the creation of climate-resilient landscapes where animals and people can thrive together. This is where Room to Roam provides a functional solution.

Based on more than 20 years of scientific evidence on healthy elephant populations, Room to Roam aims to strengthen the climate resilience of biodiverse landscapes all the way from the Zimbabwe-Angola border to the Tsavo-Amboseli ecosystem in Kenya.

With the benefits that accrue from delivering climate-smart conservation, landscape restoration, nature-based adaptation, animal rescue, and disaster risk reduction in a holistic programme, Room to Roam aims to deliver co-benefits for climate, nature, and people at scale. This work simultaneously addresses the climate crisis and supports low-carbon sustainable development for vulnerable communities.

Through long-term partnerships with the governments and national conservation agencies of East and southern Africa, Room to Roam also highlights the critical importance of addressing the climate crisis and biodiversity risks across borders through multistakeholder collaboration.

Room to Roam presents an important example of the value that biodiversity conservation offers for tackling the climate crisis, for Africa's communities and the world, and shows how this can be achieved in practical terms.

▲ Christopher, a local farmer between Tsavo West and Tsavo East national parks who is part of the climate-smart agriculture project, with some of his crops.

◀ Elephants in the swamp at the border of Amboseli National Park, Kenya.



# Africans not victims of climate change but the resource to address it



**“Prescription to address the conflict between man and wildlife for resources”**

Dr Michael Usi, Malawi Minister for Natural Resources and Climate Change

Photo: © IFAW



Photo: © IFAW

Day two of the African Climate Summit (ACS) saw impassioned appeals by African presidents for governments to take their pledges for climate financing seriously and for the West to honour the decisions that developing nations will make in combatting climate change.

These voices and sentiments were echoed at an official side event of the ACS hosted by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). The Ministerial Dialogue, a plenary session that featured Kenya’s Tourism and Wildlife Cabinet Secretary Minister Peninah Malonza, Malawi Minister for Natural Resources and Climate Change Dr Michael Usi, Zimbabwe’s National Coordinator and Chief Director Climate & Environment, Professor Prosper Matondi of Zimbabwe, and IFAW President and CEO Azzedine Downes discussed the significance of investing in nature-based and community-led initiatives to counter the global climate crisis.

Kenya’s former Tourism and Wildlife Cabinet Secretary Minister Peninah Malonza said Kenya is proactively addressing the root causes of climate change by securing land titles for national parks, mapping wildlife dispersal and migration corridors to reclaim encroached spaces, and mitigating the impacts of climate through landscape restoration, water harvesting and storage and ecosystem monitoring.

IFAW CEO and President Azzedine Downes urged delegates to resist the urge to view Africans as ‘victims of climate change’, saying they are a critical resource that should be harnessed to address the challenges of climate change. This can only be done by ensuring that protecting nature and biodiversity is embedded in climate negotiations.

“At IFAW, we are working through our Room to Roam initiative to create climate-resistant landscapes for people and wildlife by seeking connectivity between conservation areas so that elephants have freedom of movement across African countries. Community lands are essential for this connectivity, making them a critical partner in securing space for wildlife,” said Downes.

Malawi Minister for Natural Resources and Climate Change Dr Michael Usi described IFAW’s Room to Roam as a “prescription to address the conflict between man and wildlife for resources,” which has intensified due to global warming and climate change.

“People must be part of the process to secure room for elephants to roam. This is the only way our decisions will be supported, especially by the indigenous communities who host vast wildlife and biodiversity resources on their lands,” said Usi.

Prof Collins Nzovu, Zambia’s Minister for Green Economy, underlined the need to restore degraded landscapes, saying this was not being paid sufficient attention in global climate finance discussions despite African ecosystems’ role in carbon sequestration.



Photo: © IFAW

▲ (Left to right) George Wamukoya, Team Lead at Africa Group of Negotiators Experts Support (AGNES), IFAW Climate Change Advisor, Simon Addison, IFAW President and CEO Azzedine Downes, Kenya’s Tourism and Wildlife Cabinet Secretary Minister Peninah Malonza, Malawi Minister for Natural Resources and Climate Change Dr. Michael Usi, Zambia Minister for Green Economy Prof Collins Nzovu pictured at the IFAW hosted Ministerial Dialogue at the Africa Climate Summit 2023.

▲ Ministers from Kenya, Malawi and Zambia discussed the significance of investing in nature-based and community-led initiatives to counter the global climate crisis.

◀ IFAW CEO and President Azzedine Downes hosted a Ministerial Dialogue as an official side event at the African Climate Summit 2023, hosted in Nairobi, Kenya.



# In Memorium



In Memorium

## Honouring elephant conservation visionary Rudi van Aarde

IFAW mourns the death of long-time partner and friend Professor Rudi van Aarde, a visionary conservation ecologist who passed away at his home in South Africa on 21 July 2023.

Van Aarde was director of the Conservation Ecology Research Unit (CERU) at the University of Pretoria, with whom IFAW has had a more than 20-year partnership. Under his guidance, this partnership spawned IFAW's Room to Roam initiative, which aims to ensure elephant populations are stable and thrive alongside people throughout East and southern Africa well into the future.

The overarching goal of van Aarde's research was simple: To understand the drivers of elephant population dynamics across southern Africa, which is home to 80% of Africa's elephants. To that end, he led the most comprehensive elephant population-level research program ever conducted. His pioneering work, which sought to use science to inform conservation decisions, helped create the blueprint for the regional approach to elephant population management being implemented in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia, and Malawi that we now know as Room to Roam.

Notably, van Aarde and IFAW shaped a conservation model based on spatial management of water, which, after adoption by South African National Parks, stabilised the elephant population, eliminating the need for culling.

IFAW will continue to honour Rudi's legacy through our ongoing commitment to the science behind Room to Roam and our dedication to protecting elephants worldwide.

▲ Dr. Rudi van Aarde with elephants.





Photo: © IFAW

In Memorium

## Professor Zheng Guangmei

Professor Zheng Guangmei, a member of the Chinese Academy of Science, eminent ornithologist, and professor at the Life Science Institute at Beijing Normal University (BNU), sadly passed away on 3 October 2023. Professor Zheng devoted his life to ornithological research and ecological education, making a huge impact on wildlife conservation in China.

Professor Zheng was a long-time friend to IFAW. Over two decades ago, his support enabled IFAW to establish the Beijing Raptor Rescue Center (BRRC) on the BNU campus in the heart of Beijing. Over the years, we at IFAW have always been able to count on Professor Zheng's astute guidance and staunch support, even in the face of difficult challenges. In the field of wildlife conservation and

animal welfare in China, a bright light has been dimmed by the loss of Professor Zheng Guangmei, but his legacy lives on.

We at IFAW express our deepest condolences to Professor Zheng's family, friends, and colleagues.

▲ A peregrine falcon just released from IFAW BRRC flies away.

# Animals and people



Photo: Scott Ansell / © IFAW

# thriving together



International Fund  
for Animal Welfare

Africa Newsletter  
4th Edition 2023

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