



AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION®

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## The African Heartlands Program

**T**he African Wildlife Foundation's mission is to ensure the wildlife and wild lands of Africa will endure forever. AWF believes that the best way to do this is to practice conservation in large landscapes that are both ecologically and economically viable. We call this the African Heartlands Program.

### Where We Work - The African Heartlands

All of Africa's lands sustain life. But, certain key landscapes are essential to conservation due to their unmatched concentrations of wildlife and their potential to sustain viable populations for many years to come.

AWF has identified eight of these key landscapes – they are the African Heartlands. Far larger than any park or reserve, African Heartlands combine national parks and local villages, government-owned and privately owned lands into large, cohesive conservation landscapes that often span international borders. These Heartlands, located throughout central, eastern and southern Africa, are where all of AWF's work begins and ends.

### Our Eight African Heartlands:

- **Congo Heartland.** Located in the center of the Congo Basin, this Heartland is a globally significant area of intact rainforest and home to the highly endangered bonobo.
- **Kazungula Heartland.** World-famous Victoria Falls is the crown jewel in this vast landscape where river systems and wetlands give way to a mosaic of woodland and grassland with vital wildlife migration corridors.
- **Kilimanjaro Heartland.** Africa's highest peak and most famous landmark rises in the center of this scenic Heartland. This Heartland is all home to varied ecosystems from wetlands to semi-arid savannah and several key national parks, including Kenya's Amboseli, and Tanzania's Kilimanjaro and Arusha, as well as vast community lands tended by Maasai people.
- **Limpopo Heartland.** Centered on the Limpopo River, this Heartland includes world-famous Kruger National Park and covers areas of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe.
- **Maasai Steppe Heartland.** With two of Tanzania's most frequented parks, this Heartland is one of the world's richest refuges for wildlife.
- **Samburu Heartland.** Located just north of the equator in the rain - shadow of Mt. Kenya, this Heartland marks the northernmost point of AWF's work - and is home to intact wet montane forests, dry cedar forests, plateau grasslands and the Eswao Nyiro River - along with parts of Mt. Kenya National Park, Samburu National Reserve and extensive ranch and communal lands.
- **Virunga Heartland.** The Virunga Heartland, which spans parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, hosts volcanic highlands and the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park and incredible biodiversity including the mountain gorillas.
- **Zambezi Heartland.** This transboundary, three-country region offers some of the most breathtaking landscapes in southern Africa, including the mighty Zambezi River and its surrounding tributaries, wetlands and flood plains.





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## Our Landscape-Level Approach

A continent as unique as Africa requires an equally unique approach to conservation. It is not enough to develop initiatives to protect single species or conserve isolated pieces of land. One must look at the whole picture from how people and wildlife interact to how the well-being of local people will be affected by conservation efforts.

AWF approaches all of its work at this “landscape level.” Through this approach, AWF implements a variety of well-planned and research-supported conservation initiatives that encompass five key strategies:

- 1) Land and Habitat Conservation.** AWF works to bring land under conservation ownership, management or use by establishing land trusts, engaging local communities in land-use planning, identifying and protecting wildlife corridors and promoting transboundary cooperation.
- 2) Species Conservation and Applied Research.** AWF supports applied research and conservation programs for priority species such as lions, rhinos and elephants.
- 3) Conservation Enterprise.** AWF fosters enterprises that produce income for local communities while supporting conservation efforts. These include conservation tourism, culture-based tourism, livestock and fisheries management, traditional craft-making, non-timber forest products and shipping ventures.
- 4) Capacity Building and Leadership Development.** AWF works with local community leaders to improve their capacity to manage land and promote conservation enterprises. AWF also funds the Charlotte Conservation Fellowship Program to support Africans pursuing advanced degrees in conservation-related fields.
- 5) Policy Support.** AWF works with government partners to create a policy and legal environment that is conducive to sustainable conservation.

### Keeping Our Work in Check

AWF uses its Heartland Conservation Process (HCP) – a science-based approach adapted from The Nature Conservancy’s Site Conservation Planning methodology - to plan, implement and measure the performance and impact of its conservation programs in the African Heartlands.



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