

Conservation Through Enterprise

Africa's dazzling parks and game reserves simply don't harbor enough terrain to sustain the large herds of elephant, zebra, wildebeest and other migratory animals that comprise Africa's unique heritage. When animals roam outside parks and conservation areas they often wreck havoc on the communities surrounding these areas. As land surrounding protected areas becomes increasingly populated with farms and villages, wildlife competes with people, their livestock and crops for land and water resources.



If natural habitats are to be conserved, the people who depend on them must also survive. AWF believes that through conservation enterprise, conservation can be developed as a commercially viable land use that can leverage space for wildlife while improving the livelihoods of local people. By assisting rural communities with few other resources to establish conservation enterprises, the presence of wild animals becomes a potentially profitable opportunity rather than a costly nuisance.

AWF is providing enterprise services in and around the African Heartlands to assist communities in developing alternative and sustainable enterprises as a source of income while helping to conserve natural habitats. In major hubs of the wildlife and tourism industries in eastern and southern Africa, AWF has established **Conservation Centers** staffed by uniquely qualified teams with expertise in business planning, law, ecology, and community development. Through this enterprise model, local people are empowered to become real partners and owners of wildlife enterprises rather than recipients of 'assistance' from businesses owned by someone else.

Conservation-related enterprises in Africa have included concessions for wildlife safaris, ecotourism camps, walking safaris, honey production and local crafts. AWF provides local communities with technical advice, training, seed capital, marketing assistance and brokering with private sector partners to help make these conservation-related businesses successful.

Specific examples of these enterprises include:

Samburu Heartland: Ecotourism Lodges. AWF provided assistance to the local Namunyak community to become an equity shareholder in a permanent tented camp that had been built on land originally leased from them. The community has gone on to purchase the camp from the original owner who continues to manage the facility. At another community nearby, AWF has provided capital for a group to develop their own 'star beds' luxury camp along the banks of the Ewaso Ngiro. Both of these communities have set aside large areas of their land for conservation and tourism.

Kilimanjaro Heartland: Honey Production. Kenya's potential market for bee products is estimated to be 80,000 metric tons of honey and 80,000 to 100,000 metric tons of beeswax each year. Yet current production falls short at only 20,000 metric tons for honey and 10,000 for beeswax. AWF is assisting three group ranches in the Amboseli Heartland to create a community beekeeping enterprise. This important project will provide an important source of income to a community with an exceptionally high rate of unemployment. The bee hives also protect important forest and leopard habitat along a stream running off of Mount Kilimanjaro.

Four Corners Heartland: Fishing Camps. AWF has assisted the Makwa Community in Zimbabwe to develop a sport fishing camp at a popular site in their village. Community members have been trained by AWF staff to manage the camp. AWF and the community have created a conservation management plan for the Zambezi and Matetsi rivers at the point where the camp has been placed.

Limpopo Heartland: Kruger Concessions. AWF has acted as an adviser and liaison between Imbali Safari Lodge and the local community to develop ways for the community to support the needs of the lodge. The community now provides a range of business services to the lodge including security, transportation, sales of crafts, laundry services and provides a supply of fresh produce. AWF is assisting other communities around Kruger to clarify their rights to land and to participate in the huge economic potential of this great wildlife attraction.