



CONSERVING AFRICA'S NATURAL HERITAGE

2021 Conservation Progress Report



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Conserving Africa’s Wildlife and Wildland, and Empowering Local Communities

Africa is undergoing rapid economic growth, infrastructure development, new international investment, and increasing democratization and urbanization. Population growth on the continent may have the most far-reaching impact on development, as the number of people in Africa is expected to double to 2.5 billion by 2050. This reality necessitates a strategy that empowers Africans to steward the continent’s development, focusing on thriving wildlife and wildlands as a cultural and economic asset for Africa’s future generations. As a result, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) is working across critical landscapes in Africa to empower communities adjacent to wildlife corridors and the next generation of conservation heroes to preserve biodiversity and protect Africa’s most threatened species.

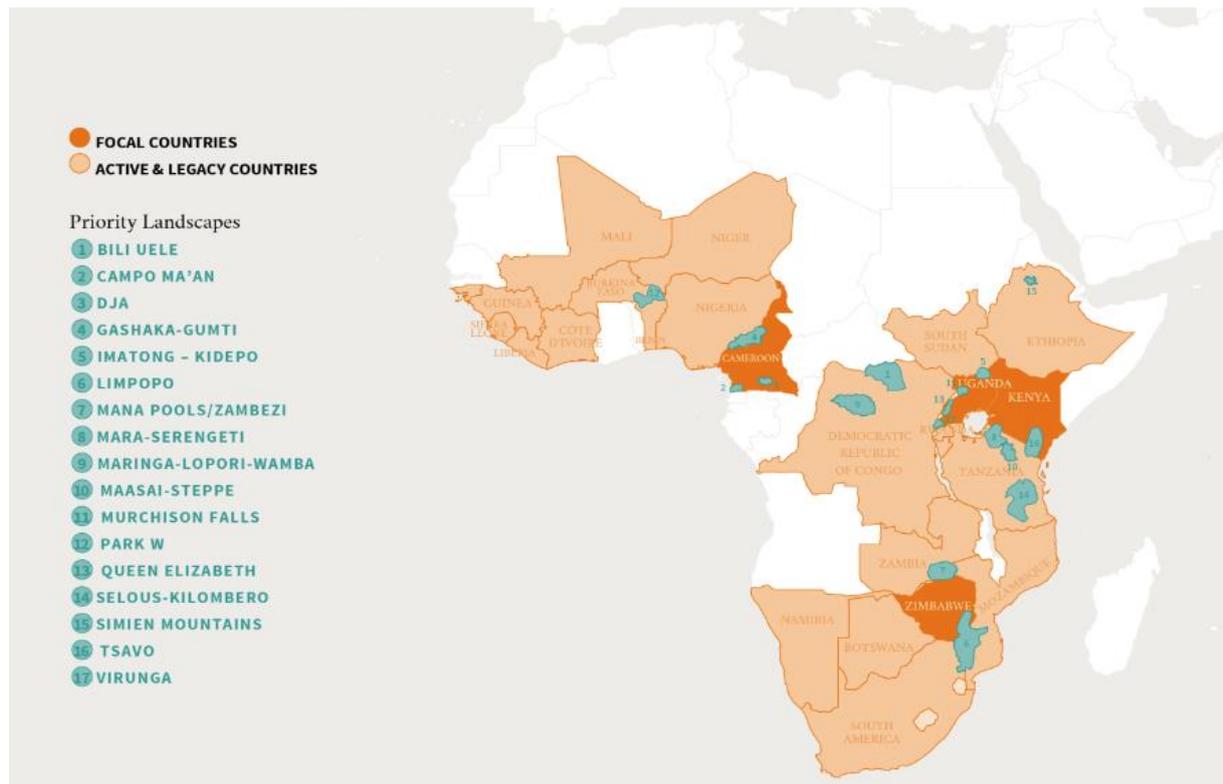


Image 1: AWF Landscape and Program Presence

Despite the challenges presented last year by the COVID-19 pandemic, AWF remains committed to ensuring Africa’s wildlife and wildland thrive. Although travel restrictions due to COVID-19 affected the implementation of some activities and resulted in the loss of tourism revenue – which supports conservation efforts – in many landscapes, AWF is thankful to have continued this critical work in Africa.

AWF Trustees and staff extend their sincere gratitude to the organization’s partners for their generous contribution towards protecting wildlife and wildlands in Africa over the last year. AWF is grateful for the generous support of our partners, particularly in these unprecedented times, and is pleased to provide this conservation report highlighting some of the organization’s key achievements over the past year and future objectives as the organization continues to prioritize this critical work.

Protecting Species

AWF works to preserve wildlife in its natural habitats through its three-pronged strategy to stop the killing, trafficking, and demand for wildlife and wildlife products. To achieve this, AWF works with local partners and communities adjacent to wildlife areas to implement human-wildlife conflict mitigations, train rangers, law enforcement, and intelligence officers, facilitate land-use plans and empower these communities through education, skills acquisition programs, and investment opportunities.

Stop the Killing: Across sub-Saharan Africa and critical ecological landscapes, AWF continues to invest in protecting Africa’s remarkable wildlife and wildlands by providing essential tools and facilitating training in surveillance tracking, wilderness survival, and other basic skills. In the Tsavo-Mkomazi Landscape (TML) in Kenya and Tanzania, a critical transboundary landscape, AWF trained 150 scouts in human-wildlife conflict mitigation, the countries’ Wildlife Act, and wilderness survival, and paramilitary skills. AWF also trained 53 scouts on SMART and CyberTracker tools for effective wildlife monitoring and data collection. Additionally, to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts in TML, AWF trained 50 beekeepers and 240 chili farmers on effective conflict mitigation strategies and provided the participants with the necessary tools to implement the strategies. AWF also trained 21 Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) data managers and 120 data collectors on SMART and CyberTracker’s use. In Zimbabwe, AWF established a River Patrol Unit to patrol the Zambezi River during the day and night. This year alone, with the support of AWF, the team has conducted 1,730 extended patrols, 648 mobile patrols, 1,435 strategic patrols, 400 hours of boat patrols, and 11,671 hours of foot patrols.

As planned, AWF supported the development of the species action and recovery plans for white rhinos, lions, and hyenas in Kenya and is currently working on implementing these plans. AWF is also supporting the implementation of The Pangolin Project (TPP) in Maasai Mara and Tsavo in Kenya to protect pangolins – the most illegally trafficked mammal globally. To date, TPP has conducted 41 training sessions for 595 rangers, intelligence and investigation officers. The training focused on ensuring that all rangers are well acquainted with pangolin behavior, ecology, status, and wildlife laws. The training resulted in a 65% increase in rangers’ knowledge and the arrest of nine suspects.



Image 2: ZIMPARKS’ vehicle hand-over ceremony

Additionally, in June 2021, AWF donated three Toyota Landcruiser hardtop vehicles to the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZIMPARKS) to be deployed in Mid Zambezi Valley to support anti-poaching activities and aid data collection, and increase ranger response time.

To help protect local communities from conflict with wildlife in Tanzania’s Manyara Ranch, AWF developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

to aid the monitoring and recording of livestock lost to predation and improve livestock breeds. AWF also purchased 25 predator-proof bomas to protect community livestock from wildlife and wildlife from retaliatory killings. Additionally, AWF engaged 26 community members in a cash-for-work program that involved hay cutting and baling for livestock feed. Further, the Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) and Lake Manyara and Tarangire National Parks rangers conducted joint patrols quarterly, creating significant opportunities for solid collaborations and intelligence-sharing among the teams.

Stop the Trafficking: To tackle the trafficking of wildlife and wildlife products, AWF's Canines for Conservation Program (C4CP) works with national wildlife authorities in various countries to develop and deploy canine teams to find wildlife and wildlife products at strategic ports or borders of entry and exit. This past year, AWF launched mobile searches across primary entries and exist points in Maun and Kasane, Botswana; completed the construction of and outfitted two canine facilities in Tanzania and Uganda; and equipped a canine unit vehicle in Mozambique with air conditioning and safe dog transport boxes. With the support of AWF and partners, the canine teams deployed four detection dogs and four newly trained handlers to Naivasha, Kenya, apprehending 47 wildlife crime suspects in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, and recovering 238 kg of raw ivory.

Since the inception of C4CP, AWF has trained and deployed over 70 dog handlers and 48 dogs to transit points in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique, and Botswana, with expansion plans to Cameroon and Ethiopia. Currently, in total AWF supports nine detection dog units in five African countries and four-tracker dog units in three African countries and is determined to expand the capacity of wildlife authorities across the continent to detect and stop illegal wildlife trafficking. Teams have searched over nearly 2 million cargo containers and nearly 850,000 pieces of luggage.



Image 3: Canine teams at the newly constructed unit in Karuma, Murchison Falls

Stop the Demand: Despite the challenges and delays caused by the pandemic, AWF has continued to prioritize its China program over the past year, strengthening Africa-China relationships, particularly among youth, and advocating for zero demands for wildlife and wildlife products. In October 2020, AWF hosted an exhibition with Shanghai Zoo, themed 'A Shared Future for You and Me: Safeguarding Africa's Threatened Biodiversity.' The exhibition's goal was to create awareness of the role of the Chinese public in securing the future of African wildlife, including critical species like African elephants. The exhibition's theme was strongly linked to the theme of the CBD-CoP15, where the leading agenda for biodiversity in the next ten years will be set.

Since April 2020, AWF and Friends of Nature (FoN) have held three virtual dialogues between African and Chinese youth to recognize and amplify youth voices from the global south in the CBD process. This year, AWF hosted a webinar where the role of tourism in protecting wildlife was explored. The Africa-China youth dialogues provide a platform to connect young conservationists in Africa, China, and the world for mutual awareness, capacity building, and collaboration.

Furthermore, as the secretariat for African civil society organizations and the African Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA), AWF facilitates and continues to support ACBA's partnership with the Chinese Civil Society Alliance for Biodiversity Conservation (CSABC) to foster meaningful collaboration between Chinese and African civil society on and beyond the CoP15. ACBA and CSABC convened their first consultative

dialogue in July 2020, with 70 participants from across Africa and China. In April 2021, ACBA and CSABC hosted a webinar, attracting approximately 250 African and Chinese participants. Discussing Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM), the workshop recognized the fundamental role of communities in sustainable conservation projects, the successful protection of African and Chinese wildlife, and CBNRM tools that support elephant conservation.

Next Steps:

- In the Tsavo-Mkomazi Landscape, AWF will continue supporting transboundary collaboration and enhance scout networks by introducing more wildlife monitoring units in critical areas. Plans are also underway to improve the governance and leadership of the ranches through land use planning, development of management plans, and capacity building training.
- AWF will continue to work to establish detection canine units in Ethiopia and procure and customize canine vehicles to support operations. Currently, AWF has procured four working dogs that are in training and will be deployed to Ethiopia when the canine facility is operational. AWF is also working on deploying dogs to Yaoundé, Cameroon to kickstart the program (which was delayed due to COVID-related restrictions), and to re-deploy experienced dogs to Naivasha and new dogs to Nairobi to create a good balance of experienced and new dogs in both teams.
- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to prohibit in-person engagements with the Chinese public. As a result, AWF will continue to promote wildlife conservation through virtual meetings with youth, civil society organizations in China, and Chinese digital networks such as WeChat, Weibo, and the AWF Mandarin website. AWF also aims to host a zoo exhibition in 2022 pending the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions in China.

Land and Habitat Protection

In tandem with anti-poaching, advocacy, and community development efforts, AWF focuses on land and habitat protection to mitigate against habitat losses and encourage biodiversity conservation at the landscape and macro-scale through sustainable development. The Bili-Mbomu Protected Area Complex in the northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has numerous conservation challenges, including poaching, poisoned water from illegal fishing, artisanal gold mining, and slash-and-burn agriculture. In 2018, with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development, AWF launched a community development program focusing on enhancing community resilience while improving biodiversity protection. The program currently focuses on developing sustainable agriculture, participatory mapping as part of community land-use planning, and revitalizing a local committee for conservation and development. AWF has trained households in sustainable agriculture, seeking to boost farming productivity to improve the living conditions of communities. In 2020, AWF sensitized 60 households (540 people) and aims to reach over triple that number in 2021. The participatory mapping process empowers community members to make the best decisions about their resources. It allows for the identifying and delimiting of cultivation areas, monitoring community land-use patterns, and consensus-building to arrive at a formal land-use plan. To help identify zones for a draft plan, AWF educates fishers, hunters, and farmers on the benefits of rational land use, visiting villages to identify participants and train them in the use of GPS and data collection.

On Tuesday, April 20th, AWF signed a five-year agreement with Rwanda's Ministry of Environment, strengthening ties and reaffirming a partnership to preserve wildlife, promote biodiversity in sustainable development, address climate change challenges, and more. Rwanda serves as a model for other countries on the continent, having built a legacy at the forefront of African conservation, and has also stepped up to serve as the host country for 2022's African Protected Areas Congress. AWF has a storied past working alongside Rwandan partners, most recently to expand Volcanoes National Park for the first time in over 30 years, increasing habitat for mountain gorillas. The new agreement will allow AWF to not

only maintain conservation gains made over the past few decades but expand its impact to protect new areas and support green-growth initiatives. Speaking on integrating biodiversity into the country’s future development plans, AWF CEO Kaddu Sebunya said, “We want to see biodiversity conservation creating jobs for citizens of Rwanda, that a good number of citizens that live near natural resources, their economies, their households’ income are connected to natural assets.”

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) is an important advisory group to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which provides initial feedback on the details and aims of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). As parties have gathered in February 2021 to debate and discuss the GBF targets, AWF has provided an advisory role for partners and participants from the continent to advocate for strong positions on Africa’s biodiversity. While nothing from these discussions is permanent, the feedback gathered in these sessions will be influential as parties decide on the final goals and targets of the GBF at the CBD’s COP 15 in May. Through the African Civil Society Organizations Biodiversity Alliance, AWF has supported the African Group of Negotiators as they develop positions on goals for the GBF, particularly the target to conserve 30% of the planet’s lands and oceans by 2030 (30X30).

Next Steps:

- AWF will continue to advise on post-2020 biodiversity targets.
- AWF is working to increase funding for biodiversity protection from both international and domestic sources through the African Protected Areas Congress (APAC), which includes an innovative proposed formation of a Pan-African Conservation Trust.

Community Empowerment

Classroom Africa is AWF’s education program that seeks to improve educational outcomes for children in schools based in communities within or adjacent to critical wildlife habitats. By improving access to quality education, AWF promotes more significant participation in, and support for, conservation efforts among surrounding



Image 4: Classroom Africa’s footprint

communities and nurtures Africa’s future conservation leaders. Since its inception in 2013, Classroom Africa has focused on investing in primary schools in rural areas and has achieved remarkable success in six primary schools in Zambia, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Ethiopia.

As a result of the pandemic, students lost about eight months of learning, as all schools closed from March 2020 to September 2020, with some schools in Uganda re-opening later in March 2021. Nevertheless, AWF is pleased to report that none of the students repeated a grade during the 2020-2021 academic year, and a semblance of normalcy is returning to Classroom Africa schools. Additionally, AWF continues to build on its work to incorporate conservation education into the beneficiary schools' day-to-day affairs and raise awareness about the importance of conservation among the next generation.

AWF partnered with various stakeholders to implement conservation education programs in multiple schools. AWF is working with the MaliHai Clubs of Tanzania in three primary schools around Manyara Ranch, with the Cottar’s Wildlife Conservation Trust for six primary schools in Maasai Mara, and with Amara Conservation to support activities in eight primary schools in the Tsavo.

Youth Leadership: Through the youth programs, AWF aims to build a movement of youth who are informed, resilient, and connected to nature and positioned to influence decisions towards conservation and sustainable development. This year, AWF, in partnership with the Africa Alliance of the Young Men Christian Association, World Scouts Movement, and World Wildlife Fund, awarded 100 under-35 African conservation leaders a one-year leadership development program. The program will mentor and train young professionals to contribute to Africa’s 2063 Agenda and conservation goals.

AWF is also partnering with the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) to promote African youth participation in national consultation meetings in preparation for the 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference in Kunming, China, in May 2021. This is the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) designed to review the CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity



Image 5: A snapshot of youth conservationists during a virtual workshop in Zimbabwe

2011-2020 and a forum during which the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be decided. GYBN is an international network of youth organizations and individuals worldwide whose common goal is to prevent biodiversity loss by integrating the opinions of young people into national and global biodiversity policy processes. AWF plays an integral role by facilitating fundraising for the organization and delivering technical advisory support. Specifically, AWF raises funds to underwrite the cost of convening the National Consultative Meetings of each African chapter of the GYBN, offering a space for regional workshops, sponsoring delegations to attend international forums, providing technical advisory support through AWF staff and network of experts, and amplifying youth voices through AWF channels. Over the past year, AWF, in partnership with GYBN, empowered young Africans to proffer solutions to biodiversity conservation and amplify country-specific needs at the upcoming COP 15.

AWF and the African Leadership University School of Wildlife Conservation mentor upcoming conservation students. AWF will provide internship opportunities and curate ideas for MBA capstone projects and annual collaborative research around wildlife economies through this partnership. The interns will be posted to AWF landscapes and country programs, policy and leadership programs, Classroom Africa and youth programs, conservation science and species programs, business and wildlife economies programs, and other regional and global programs as appropriate. Additionally, AWF will advertise upcoming job opportunities with the ALU careers department and facilitate secondments within AWF, partner organizations, and similar platforms.

Enterprise: AWF advocates for and promotes investing in local communities to ensure they are self-reliant in sustainable livelihoods. In partnership with local and international stakeholders, AWF is working on a community empowerment program that involves business mentorship and microgrants to create microenterprises in the Lomako Wildlife Reserve in the Democratic Republic of Congo. AWF conducted a socio-economic survey of 1,061 households to determine who is the most in need and best suited for the microgrants. 270 households were selected to receive seed capital grants following literacy, financial, and business skills training. With this project, AWF seeks to provide sustainable alternatives for the local community – including reformed poachers, reduce the dependency on natural resources, and tackle extreme poverty in the landscape by increasing household income.



Image 6: During the launch of the livelihood program

Next Steps

- AWF will continue to support trips to national parks for children participating in wildlife clubs, train teachers on integrating conservation into the schools' curricula, facilitate tree planting, and provide the needed materials for the effective running of the schools.
- AWF, with the support of various partners, is working on establishing the Africa Youth Networks, Conservation Colleges, and a Young Policy Fellow program to engage African youth in conservation and create more work and mentorship opportunities for budding African conservationists.
- Moving forward, AWF will support GYBN in producing a national youth position paper for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework using the inputs collated in the convenings of youth over the past year. This position paper will be submitted to partners and presented to the national biodiversity focal point at the Ministry of Environment in Kenya, Uganda, Cameroon, and Zimbabwe to engage decision-makers to undertake sustainable policies. AWF will continue to engage youth in different countries on matters related to elevating their commitment, voice, and participation in shaping Africa's conservation agenda.

Policy and Advocacy

AWF continues to build relationships with key legislators and stakeholders to ensure they have the necessary information to make informed decisions that affect wildlife and wildlife. This year, AWF engaged and contributed to several pandemic prevention bills



Image 7: AWF's Edwin Tambara during the COB

focusing on addressing issues around zoonotic diseases, future pandemics, wildlife health, and wildlife

trade. These bills include the Global Wildlife Health and Future Pandemics Bill, Preventing Future Pandemics Bill, and the Global Wildlife Trade Biosecurity Act of 2020. With many of the bills proposing broad bans on wildlife markets, AWF provided insights through feedback, roundtable discussions, and briefs on how these measures would impact conservation and communities around wildlife corridors. AWF also offered insights and African perspectives at the Convention on Biological Diversity (COB) and guidance for bills related to food security for vulnerable and indigenous communities and sanctions for non-complying countries. Furthermore, AWF and International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF) co-hosted African Ambassadors and embassy representatives from Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Rwanda, and Zambia in a virtual dialogue with Kaddu Sebunya, AWF’s CEO, to develop a united conservation plan for the continent.

Special Initiatives

The Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC)

will be the first-ever continent-wide gathering of African leaders and stakeholders to discuss the role of protected areas in conserving iconic wildlife and wildlands, promoting sustainable development, and preserving Africa’s cultural heritage and traditions. In partnership with the International



Image 8: During the APAD Conference

Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), AWF seeks to ensure that Africa’s protected areas are integrated into the continent’s economic development and community well-being agenda. In August 2020, AWF, in partnership with IUCN and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), convened the second African Protected Area’s Directors’ (APAD) Conference. The conference allowed protected area directors and conservation experts to review the outcomes of an online survey focused on the gaps and challenges brought about by COVID-19 from a landscape level and deliberate on their role in the 2022 APAC Conference, which would hold in Kigali, Rwanda.

The Value of your Support

This critical work would not be possible without the generosity support of our partners. Thank you for your continued support to AWF and a keen interest in AWF’s mission and vision to see an Africa where sustainable development includes thriving wildlife populations and wildlands as a cultural and economic asset for Africa’s future generation.

Thank you for your unwavering support and for making a difference for wildlife, wildlands, and communities across Africa.