



AFRICAN WILDLIFE

News

FALL 2022

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YOUR SUPPORT AT WORK ACROSS AFRICA'S LANDSCAPES

Our mission is to ensure wildlife and wild lands thrive in modern Africa.

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GREAT STRIDES ON A GLOBALLY IMPORTANT ISSUE



Dear AWF Friends,

The African Wildlife Foundation was recently integral to an unprecedented achievement—the first-ever gathering of virtually all African countries to discuss the value of Africa’s 8,500+ protected and conserved areas, how to strengthen these vital landscapes, and the role of biodiversity in securing human and societal well-being.

The gathering in Kigali, Rwanda, of more than 2,400 in-person and 5,000 virtual participants—community members, business representatives, government officials, NGO staff, and more—yielded an official call to action and represented African nations speaking with one voice on conservation. Of course, there is an ongoing robust discussion about the best path forward and concern about repeating some of the conservation world’s past mistakes, particularly the lack of conversations and the top-down approaches that disenfranchise those most impacted by conservation. The Kigali Call to Action calls for greater public and private investment in conservation, recognizes and strengthens the rights of Indigenous people and local communities, and calls for greater pan-African collaboration in management and use of protected and conserved areas.

The Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) was a great accomplishment and represented a tremendous amount of planning and preparation. But now we move on to the even more challenging work of actualizing the commitments made at the Congress. We have already begun our efforts in support of African governments and are hoping to see African governments pick up APAC outcomes in more concrete ways. For example, we recently met with Uganda’s former prime minister, Rt. Hon. Amama Mbabazi, and the Rtd. Col. Tom Butime, cabinet minister of tourism, wildlife, and antiquities, to discuss how conservation goals can inform and shape Uganda’s development agenda.

We are also actively promoting the Pan-African Conservation Trust (A-PACT), a concept officially launched at the Congress. This African-led fund would address the considerable funding gap for Africa’s protected and conserved areas via a revolutionary new sustainable financing mechanism, empowering protected-area managers across the continent to effectively operate and maintain Africa’s protected and conserved areas.

Given the need to mitigate climate change impacts and move the world much closer to attaining global climate goals, conservation issues in Africa have become globally important. The world’s sustainable development and climate goals will not be met if Africa does not create a new model for development, one that reflects the aspirations of the people while advancing conservation.

It’s a challenging time but an exciting one. Thank you, as always, for being a part of our critical and global mission.

Sincerely,

Kaddu Sebunya
 Chief Executive Officer



African nations deliver formal call to action for protected and conserved areas

Over 2,400 participants from 80 countries, including 53 African countries, joined the government of Rwanda, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and AWF in Kigali in July for the first-ever Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC). This groundbreaking pan-African meeting was Africa’s first gathering aimed at developing a united stance on protected and conserved areas across the continent—a requirement if Africa is to meet the ambitious sustainable development goals set forth by the African Union’s Agenda 2063.

The Congress concluded with adoption of the Kigali Call to Action, which outlines the need for urgent action and financial support to mitigate climate change effects, improve the resiliency of Africa’s biodiversity, and emphasize the role of Indigenous peoples and local communities in conservation.

AWF CEO Kaddu Sebunya urged all to capitalize on the momentum the Congress generated:

“The Africa Protected Areas Congress has further exhibited that the importance of conservation is non-negotiable. Therefore, we call upon all African governments to actualize their commitments to safeguard nature and actively engage with all relevant stakeholders in the creation of A Pan-African Conservation Trust (See letter, left) that honors the strong statements within the Kigali Call to Action. Let us get to work.”

Throughout the Congress, AWF hosted a booth in the pavilion, featuring graphical displays about AWF’s dedication to promoting African conservation leadership, community engagement, landscape conservation, and species protection over 60 years.

Visit awf.org/awf-at-apac to learn more about AWF’s activities at the Congress.

NGULIA RHINO SANCTUARY: SAVING A VULNERABLE SPECIES FROM EXTINCTION

At the start of the 20th century, over 500,000 rhinos roamed the African continent. Decades of poaching, however, took a tremendous toll, leaving approximately 70,000 rhinos by 1970 and fewer than 28,000 rhinos today.

Kenya hosts about 1,700 rhinos, a considerable increase from a low of 350 rhinos in 1983. AWF’s conservation work in Kenya today centers on the Tsavo-Mkomazi cross-border landscape. AWF helped establish the Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary, which at first harbored only three rhinos in a 3-square-kilometer area (about 1.15 square miles) but was designed to serve as a breeding sanctuary that would grow the rhino population and even help repopulate other rhino ranges.

Over the past 30 years, AWF has provided varied support to Ngulia, which now covers approximately 90 square kilometers. In 2019, we helped the Kenya Wildlife Service upgrade

the sanctuary’s five-strand fence to a 10-strand one to keep out poachers as well as elephants that compete for food. We also funded the upgrade of the sanctuary’s diesel-powered water pump to a more efficient solar-powered one, allowing an uninterrupted water supply to the sanctuary’s five watering holes.

In addition, we provide ongoing support for patrol teams—food rations, fuel, desert boots, warm jackets, camping gear, and more.

The sanctuary today is a critical rhino stronghold, hosting over 100 individuals. However, as its rhino numbers increase, Ngulia must provide more space for new members. Black rhinos are territorial and will become stressed and even aggressive when populations become too dense. Therefore,



Ngulia releases adult rhinos into an Intensive Protection Zone at the Tsavo West National Park, creating room for new ones.

Ngulia has been a rhino-protection success story, with only one rhino poached in 2016 and zero rhinos poached after that.

A THREAT MORE DEADLY THAN POACHERS: CLIMATE CHANGE



Savanna elephants are massive creatures. They weigh 4,400 to 13,500 pounds and stand 7 to 13 feet tall. Each day, they consume 50 gallons of water and 4 to 6 percent of their body weight in food. But as temperatures rise and their habitats dry out, they're having trouble finding their needed food and water. Extreme climate variations, drought, and elevated temperatures are putting the savanna's most beloved creature in danger. Kenya's Wildlife and Tourism Ministry told the BBC the country has recorded 179 elephant deaths that were due to the ongoing drought between January and July. As the birthing season approaches, many elephants are expected to miscarry, and those calves that live have limited chances of survival.

It's not just elephants. Across the continent the story is repeating over and over with many different species. It's too hot and/or too wet and/or too dry. Food, quality drinking water, and livable temperatures are becoming harder to come by, and the wildlife is struggling to survive. The UN IPCC 2022 climate change report predicts that by 2100, climate change will lead to the loss of more than half of Africa's mammal and bird species.

Poachers and wildlife traffickers were and continue to be a threat to Africa's wildlife, but climate change is becoming a larger and more immediate threat. It's a harder enemy to take on—it's not an individual or even a singular organization. Rather, it's the prolonged increase in temperatures plus weather patterns that have been growing more extreme since the 1800s, the result of human activities such as burning fossil fuels.

Despite contributing the least to global carbon emissions, sub-Saharan Africa is disproportionately affected by climate change. Temperature averages across Africa are increasing faster than the global average. Droughts and floods were three and ten times as frequent between 2010-2019 as they were between 1970-1979.

Climate change is happening now. The effects are occurring and are only expected to get worse. Returning to what was previously known may no longer be possible.

THE IMPACT

In Zimbabwe, where it's estimated 100,000 elephants roam the country, climate change has led to both droughts and floods. The problem is not just the rain and lack of rain, though—it's also the temperatures, which are excruciatingly high. In an area not previously known for heat waves, they have now become a regular occurrence.

Food and water are scarce both for humans and wildlife, meaning wildlife is coming into closer contact with humans to try to get what they can. Human-wildlife conflict may seem inevitable in situations like these, but AWF is helping communities adapt.

To mitigate elephant crop raids, AWF is teaching farmers how to use chilis, which serve as a drought-tolerant source of additional income. We're also working with community members to invest in other enterprises that aren't as vulnerable to climate change—barber shops, detergent manufacturers, confectionaries, and more. And, to reduce the problem of wildlife intrusions, AWF supports local authorities and communities in providing water for

Despite contributing the least to global carbon emissions, sub-Saharan Africa is disproportionately affected by climate change.

wildlife, drilling boreholes and pumping the water into natural water pans.

The landscapes may never fully go back to what they were, but we can help the communities and wildlife adapt to conditions now, and maybe even make those conditions better.

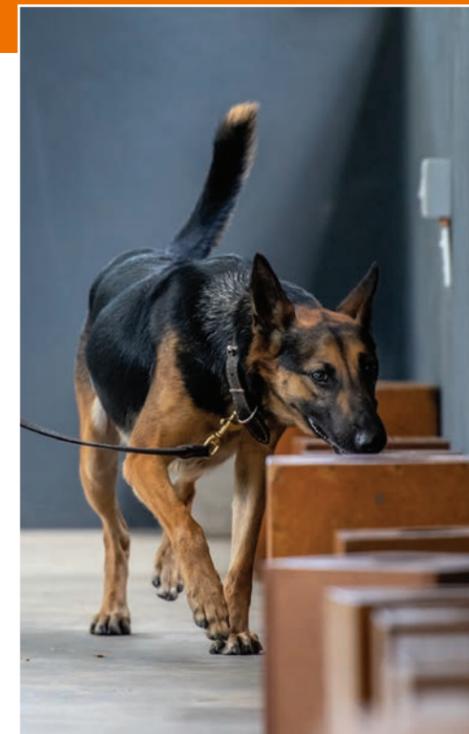
New tracker dog team in Mkomazi

AWF has officially opened a tracker dog facility at the Mkomazi National Park in Northern Tanzania. The canine unit has two tracker dogs—which help locate poachers in the field, as opposed to detection dogs, which are based at airports and other smuggling hotspots. The new facility includes kennels and accommodation for three canine handlers.

The protection of the Mkomazi National Park is vital because it is an important protected area for critical wildlife species, including endangered African wild dogs and a recovering rhino population.

AWF's canine units play a significant role in helping to deter poaching and illegal wildlife trade, which are significant threats to Africa's treasured wildlife. In April, detection dogs and their handlers in Uganda were involved in an intelligence operation that led to an arrest and the recovery of 24 kilograms of ivory. Amazingly, the dog unit made the bust within hours of its first deployment.

In the spring, Tanzania National Parks Authority Conservation Commissioner William Mwakilema and other park managers officiated the handing over of the new facility.



Wildlife Watch: SPRINGHARE

Its appearance resembles the punch line to a joke: What do you get when you cross a kangaroo with a rabbit? A springhare—a 4-kilogram nocturnal rodent with long back feet, a heavy bushy tail, and long, slender ears.

These kangaroo-style back legs propel the springhare on powerful hops when it is startled, launching the hares almost a meter. At all other times, however, springhares move on all four feet, reaching speeds of up to 8.5 kilometers per hour.

Springhares live alone or with their young in burrows they dig. They're skilled diggers and even have a tragus, a structure on the inside of the outer ear, which can fold back to seal the ear opening, protecting the inner ear while the animal digs. Once inside the burrow, the springhare will often block the entrance to its tunnel with loose soil to prevent predators like snakes from entering.

These burrows may be near other springhare tunnels, allowing the rodents to emerge together at nightfall and forage in groups. Springhares are herbivores and eat mostly bulbs and grasses but will occasionally reap from farmer's grain harvests before the farmers have a chance.

But the most surprising characteristic of the springhare isn't visible to humans under normal circumstances. Under an ultraviolet light the springhare's normally wheat-brown fur is painted in shades of red. Biofluorescence is more common in birds, fish, and amphibians. But a spate of mammals, including platypuses, opossums, and three



species of flying squirrels, were also recently discovered to share the quality. Scientists are not yet sure why this ability evolved, if it acts as a camouflage from predators or serves some other unknown function.

By protecting habitats in eastern and southern Africa where springhares are found, AWF ensures springhares stay plentiful and ultraviolet bright.

MAKING WAY FOR WILDLIFE:

The importance of wildlife corridors

In the 1700s and 1800s there was a brilliant migration in the South African Karoo now unknown to the landscape. Written accounts describe hundreds of thousands, possibly even millions of springbok periodically, but with no degree of regularity, crossing the landscape. Where they came from and where they went were mysteries to the Dutch and British colonists who reported on them. The volume at which the springbok traveled and the destruction of agricultural lands earned them much ill repute, and by the 1900s their migrations had ended.

The exact cause is still debated, even 100 years later, but it was likely due to anthropogenic factors: increases in livestock and fencing, drought, hunting, and the arrival of a rinderpest epizootic—a cattle plague transferred by livestock. Springbok remain, but their migrations are nothing like what they once were. Over 100 years later, none are left who remember the footsteps of the springbok's migration, the spectacular terror of the mighty herd's approach.

TO GREENER GRASSES

Animals are always on the move. Running, trotting, slithering, ambling, pouncing, fleeing. There is always somewhere else to be, to eat, to evade, to breed, to rest, some place where conditions are more favorable.

Though some of these movements may be on a grand scale—take the Great Migration of 1.3 million wildebeest from the Maasai Mara in Kenya to Serengeti National Park in Tanzania or the few thousand Burchell's zebras who travel more than 450 kilometers between Namibia and Botswana—not all of them are. Sometimes, wildlife simply move between one spot in a landscape to another nearby.

Across a large landscape, there may be several areas of habitat for wildlife, but these areas might not be linked. The routes that animals take between two or more habitats is called the wildlife corridor.

The protection of these corridors and the wildlife that use them is incredibly important. These corridors are often threatened by habitat degradation

and destruction, private lands, and infrastructure. Some of the most common examples of infrastructure—fences, roads, human settlements, and energy structures—sever routes, often with dire consequences.

At least 50,000 wildebeest died in Central Kalahari in 1983, their route to water blocked during drought by a fence erected to prevent wildlife-cattle cross-infections. In 2019, 380 lions became roadkill on the 58 kilometers of road that passes through Tanzania's Tarangire-Manyara Ecosystem. Over three days in 2021, three giraffes were electrocuted by sagging power lines in Kenya's Soysambu Conservancy, adding to the dozens of raptors that have been killed by these cables. Earlier this year three lionesses close to Queen Elizabeth National Park were found dead on an electric fence, in a suspected electrocution with two lions still stuck in the wires.

Wildlife doesn't know about park boundaries or areas where they might not be welcome. Wildlife wants only to get to the location where the food, water,

or whatever resource or condition they are seeking can be found. Oftentimes they're following mental maps, constructed from years of repeated travels. Routes that exist in the mind are not so easily rewritten—nor should they be. It is incredibly important that animals be able to access the variable habitats they need.

Animal movements are vital to the ecosystems they occupy. Trampling wildlife keeps the grasses short but productive and prevents woodlands from taking over grasslands. As animals excrete, they keep the soil fertilized and aid in seed dispersal. Along their routes, prey species offer critical food sources for predators. Plus, mobile wildlife means populations are less susceptible to the diseases and genetic isolation through inbreeding that they face when concentrated in smaller spaces.

CONNECTIONS IN KENYA

It is not a hopeless cause—wildlife and people can coexist. Solutions are possible. Amos Muthiuru, project officer, species conservation, who is based in Kenya's Tsavo landscape, speaks to some of these conservation efforts across the country. "Corridors have different management

depending on the threats, land use, and financial capacity," he said. In Amboseli, AWF leases the land that connects Amboseli to West Kilimanjaro to keep the corridor open for wildlife movement and avoid subdivision. In Tsavo, AWF is helping ranches register as fully operational conservancies with land dedicated to both wildlife conservation and livestock production—which are compatible practices.

AWF also supports the development of land-use plans so that the areas can be designated as wildlife conservation areas, Muthiuru said, ensuring habitats and key wildlife corridors are free from human settlements. Alongside this, AWF empowers ranchers, conservancies, and communities to mitigate human-wildlife conflict, fight poaching, and invest in tourism as a business venture.

In Tsavo, Muthiuru said, it's evident that more land is being dedicated to wildlife movement and conservation. "The essence is to make communities benefit from wildlife so that they can dedicate more land to conservation and protection of the existing linkage zones. We are witnessing decreased poaching of wildlife for bushmeat and trophy hunting

in the corridors. We have seen ranches increasing their security capacities to deter poaching and mitigate conflicts while deriving benefits from tourism." In short, it's working. "The wildlife populations have continued to increase within the Tsavo ecosystem, specifically elephants and giraffes."

African savanna elephants may move as little as 1.5 kilometers a day if resources are plentiful, but in times of scarcity, they'll travel up to 40 kilometers a day. Likewise, giraffe ranges differ in size from 65 to 654 km². As climate change decreases the availability of needed resources such as food, water, and shelter, wildlife movements grow in scale, increasing the need for protected corridors.

The trek of the springbok in its previous scale and grandeur may be over, but it's up to us to ensure wildlife is able to roam and wander and get from where they are to where they need to be.



Thomas Vijayan



Kim Wolhuter



SEVERE DROUGHT THREATENS EAST AFRICA

East Africa is facing its worst drought in 40 years. For the fourth year straight, the Horn of Africa's traditionally rainy season has been a failure, creating massive ripple effects through this region's diverse and vibrant ecosystems. AWF launched an advocacy campaign asking signers to pledge to be a supporter of a swift climate response that centers people and nature.

Sign the pledge at
[SECURE.AWF.ORG/DROUGHT-ADVOCACY/](https://secure.awf.org/drought-advocacy/)



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Walking for wildlife

Sixteen-year-old Cole Culver chose to raise awareness of the plight of African elephants by undertaking a walking journey.

Last year, Mike Culver encouraged his son Cole to find a way to give back. Some people suggested that Cole, who is autistic, should do something to benefit autism. Mike pushed him to think about others instead. Cole knew who he wanted to help—elephants, his favorite animal. After doing some research, he and his family found AWF.

In the spring of 2021, Cole set up a challenge, pledging to walk 75 miles over two months and asking others in his central Massachusetts community to donate toward African elephant conservation. Cole walked from April 1 to June 1, 2021 and ended up raising \$2,165. On reaching the 75-mile finish line in the rain, he sent out a video to thank his supporters, followed by letters he sent out that included his own handmade elephant drawing. "I would feel sad if all the elephants were extinct," said Cole in his letter. "I am so happy you wanted to help the elephants too."

