

Our Approach: Living with Wildlife



AWF puts communities at the center of conservation, with strategies that emphasize coexistence for people and wildlife.

Wildlife doesn't recognize human boundaries. While protected areas play a critical role as anchors of conservation, wildlife survival in fact requires larger ecosystems made up of a patchwork of lands owned and managed by governments, the private sector, and communities. We link these lands through partnerships with government, land owners, and local communities, an approach called "large landscape conservation." We help governments and local authorities analyze and interpret data to manage these lands in ways that benefit people and contribute to sustainable development.

Our people-centric approach with local communities is evolving into exciting new models of community conservation that can scale across the continent, driving planning and green growth. One example is our work in Rwanda, where we are partnering with the Rwandan government to create space for people and wildlife in one of the most ambitious public/private conservation projects of its kind.

Defining Success by 2030

- ▶ **120 MILLION HECTARES***
secured for wildlife to thrive, increasing AWF's landscape work from 15 landscapes to 20
**An area roughly the size of Texas and California combined*
- ▶ **12 MILLION PEOPLE**
directly benefiting from nature-based economies in AWF landscapes

What We Do

- ▶ Identify and restore essential forests, wetlands, and savannas to increase resiliency for people and wildlife.
- ▶ Negotiate space for wildlife and people by planning how land is used for infrastructure, farming, and other activities, educating communities about conservation, and reducing conflict between people and wildlife.
- ▶ Build biodiversity-positive economies through micro to large enterprises and engage business and economic decision-makers in protecting biodiversity all along the value chain.

AWF in Action

▶ **Enabling a National Vision to Integrate Conservation and Development: Rwanda**

Starting with the donation of 28 hectares to the park in 2018, AWF is partnering with Rwanda's government to develop a "master plan" that will enhance community livelihoods and resilience while restoring the park to give gorillas more room to expand. We created a participatory land-use plan that engages community members in decision-making at every step, from purchasing land to planning and developing a modern green neighborhood that will provide access to healthcare, education, electricity, and sanitation. And we sat down with community members with the intention to build economic opportunities. The result is a comprehensive Livelihood Improvement Plan that introduces 17 new livelihood options designed to grow the economy around climate-resilient and conservation-compatible activities.



▶ **Supporting Nature-Based Livelihoods: Cameroon**

The Dja landscape in southeastern Cameroon includes the 526,000-hectare Dja Faunal Reserve (around the size of greater Washington, DC-Baltimore metro area). We've supported conservation-friendly agroforestry, agriculture, fish farming, and forest harvesting here, working in partnership with local communities. Participants have learned how to make household goods like soap and cosmetics from what they harvest from the forest. They can then use the products themselves or offer them for sale. Over the five-year, European Union-funded program, concluded in FY23, results for the community are impressive: local incomes have been increased by 78%, and poverty has been reduced by 83%.



Funded by
the European Union



▶ **Managing Human-Wildlife Conflict: Zimbabwe**

AWF in partnership with Zimparks (Zimbabwe's protected area authority) is helping to encourage collaboration between Zambia and Zimbabwe by organizing and funding cross-border programs to curb elephant poaching and developing strategies to improve community relations with protected area authorities to manage human-wildlife conflict. As part of this effort, AWF facilitated discussions between traditional leaders in the Middle Zambezi Valley to explore ways of reducing conflict and determine how to operationalize mitigation plans in the landscape. One outcome was the establishment of a regional human-wildlife conflict mitigation steering committee comprised of four chiefs from across the region and representatives from Zimparks, rural district councils, law enforcement, the private sector, and NGOs, including AWF.

