

# African Heartland News

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A NEWSLETTER FOR PARTNERS OF THE AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

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### CAPACITY BUILDING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

At the root of AWF's mission are the people of Africa. AWF understands the need to support capacity building at various levels.

## The African Wildlife Foundation's Heartlands Programme

The African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) has been working in wildlife conservation exclusively in Africa for over 40 years. During this time, AWF has played a major role in ensuring that some of the continent's most valued species – including the elephant, rhinoceros, mountain gorilla and cheetah – endure. Decades of research and fieldwork together with our partners have helped AWF gain a deeper understanding of Africa's ecosystems and of the critical need to develop conservation initiatives that improve the livelihoods of local people who live with wildlife.

In 1999, AWF marked a new era by establishing the African Heartlands Programme – an innovative, science-based, landscape level approach to conservation that includes both conservation and development goals.

Heartlands are AWF's approach to designating large, cohesive conservation landscapes as priority areas for AWF's work. Heartlands are biologically important areas and have the scope to maintain healthy populations of wild species and natural processes well into the future. Each Heartland is made up of varied land units, including government lands (like national parks), community-owned lands, privately-owned lands (either owned by individuals or the private sector) and both protected and unprotected land. Each Heartland is a sizeable economic unit in which tourism or other natural resource-



based activities can contribute significantly to the livelihoods of people living in the area. Currently the African Heartlands range in size from 800,000 to 9 million hectares and can fall within a single country, or span two or three countries.

*"Heartlands form a sizeable economic unit in which tourism or other natural resource-based activities can contribute to the livelihoods of people living in the areas."*

AWF has developed the Heartland Conservation Process (HCP) as our approach to setting conservation targets, identifying critical opportunities and threats and for planning, implementing, monitoring and learning from our intervention activities. HCP is a participatory, consultative approach, whenever possible involving partners, communities and other stakeholders in each landscape.

In order to achieve conservation impact in the African Heartlands, AWF is committed to working in each landscape over a minimum period of 10-15 years. ■



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## From the Desk of the Vice President for Programme

I am pleased to introduce the first issue of *African Heartland News* – a newsletter to our partners and friends working with us on the ground in Africa to help fulfill our mission of ensuring the wildlife and wild lands of Africa endure forever.

At AWF we recognize that Africa's incomparable wildlife phenomena can only be conserved in large, cohesive conservation landscapes where governments and landowners agree to make conservation a priority. We call these the **African Heartlands**. This first issue of *African Heartland News* introduces our Heartlands Programme to you.

Our current Heartlands vary from national to transboundary sites and cover habitats from tropical and montane forests, miombo woodlands, important rivers systems and extensive savanna grasslands. In many of the sites challenges to conservation include high human populations, high poverty levels, land fragmentation and conversion for agriculture and other uses, poaching and increased competition for resources shared between people and wildlife. The African Heartlands Programme allows us to apply large landscape conservation approaches to address the key threats to ecological viability of these systems on the one hand and to enable safeguarding and development of local livelihoods on the other.

To realize conservation impact at scale, AWF has selected a suite of intervention strategies. These include improved land and habitat conservation, support for conservation business ventures, undertaking applied

research and species conservation, support for training and capacity building and, where necessary, policy and legislation work. Examples of our priority interventions include the development of national and community land trusts in Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia; support for tourism and agricultural conservation business ventures across all priority landscapes; support for improved management of protected areas, including the construction of visitor centres; strengthening of national and local level institutions for natural resource management particularly in transboundary areas in central and southern Africa; and species research in Chobe, Tarangire and Kilimanjaro.

As many of you know, people play a crucial part in AWF's mission. For the last four decades we have worked with government agencies, business leaders, and literally hundreds of local leaders and landowners across eleven countries. We believe that when people, who are the custodians of wildlife and wild lands, come together, we can create ecologically and economically viable landscapes where habitat for Africa's magnificent array of wildlife is protected, but where the economic opportunities and benefits for people living on these lands are also improved.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have worked with us in years past and look forward to many more years of strong partnerships. ■

- Helen Gichohi, Ph.D.

## AWF AFRICAN HEARTLANDS

Currently, AWF Heartlands, which total more than 396,000 square kilometers, are located in eastern, central and southern Africa (see *African Heartland Map* on page 3).

AWF determines the size of a Heartland by looking at a combination of factors, including the ranging patterns of keystone species, size of watersheds and span of important habitats. Ultimately, both the borders and size of a Heartland are dictated by conservation needs – a Heartland needs to be big enough to sustain the majority of conservation targets in the area, while small enough to be manageable. ■

AFRICAN HEARTLAND	AREA
Kazungula	90,905 km <sup>2</sup>
Kilimanjaro	24,663 km <sup>2</sup>
Limpopo	95,624 km <sup>2</sup>
Lopori-Wamba	81,748 km <sup>2</sup>
Maasai Steppe	22,233 km <sup>2</sup>
Samburu	26,134 km <sup>2</sup>
Virunga	7,655 km <sup>2</sup>
Zambezi	47,721 km <sup>2</sup>



Helen Gichohi, Ph.D.

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# How Are African Heartlands Selected?

When selecting Heartlands, AWF works carefully to identify landscapes which have the most conservation potential. Typically, this analysis considers both regional and global biodiversity conservation priorities and draws from conservation work conducted in Africa by other conservation organizations such as World Wide Fund for Nature's Eco-region and Conservation International's Hotspots.

After the identification of potential target landscapes, AWF conducts a detailed analysis to identify whether or not an area should be designated as a Heartland. This analysis looks at the biological, ecological, social and economic opportunities in the landscape to determine the scope for effective sustainable long-term practical conservation programmes.

- Key questions asked in this process include:
- Is there an ecologically intact core?
  - Is there high potential that ecological functions can be enhanced by restoring or maintaining connectivity?
  - Is there high biological value based on species diversity and endemism?

- Are there endangered and/or declining species currently or historically present in the landscape?
- Is there an appropriate niche for AWF and are there appropriate partners with whom to work?
- Can conservation, social and economic and/or commercial benefits be generated that will abate threats in the Heartland in a cost-effective manner?
- Can AWF and partners raise the funds required to implement programmes?
- Are there insurmountable political barriers to success?
- Will conservation actions offer scope for innovative solutions and methodologies?
- Can expertise that has been accumulated by AWF in abating certain multi-site threats be replicated in this Heartland or in others?

Once a Heartland is selected, AWF conducts an initial scoping of the landscape in order to develop a profile. This profile broadly includes the ecological, socio-economic, institutional attributes of the area, the key threats and potential conservation programs that can be implemented. The area is then declared a Heartland when resources needed to implement an effective programme become available. ■



## THE AFRICAN HEARTLANDS

**KAZUNGULA HEARTLAND**  
BOTSWANA, NAMIBIA, ZAMBIA, ZIMBABWE  
*Wilderness area surrounding Victoria Falls and the largest African elephant population in Chobe*

**KILIMANJARO HEARTLAND**  
KENYA, TANZANIA  
*Elephants and Africa's highest peak*

**LIMPOPO HEARTLAND**  
MOZAMBIQUE, SOUTH AFRICA, ZIMBABWE  
*Largest rhino population and vast tri-national park*

**LOPORI WAMBA LANDSCAPE**  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO  
*Dense equatorial forests neighboring Africa's greatest river*

**MAASAI STEPPE HEARTLAND**  
TANZANIA  
*Wildlife among baobabs and grasslands*

**SAMBURU HEARTLAND**  
KENYA  
*The heart of Kenya*

**VIRUNGA HEARTLAND**  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, RWANDA, UGANDA  
*Mountain gorillas at risk*

**ZAMBEZI HEARTLAND**  
MOZAMBIQUE, ZAMBIA, ZIMBABWE  
*The mighty river of southern Africa*

*AWF African Heartlands are located in eastern, central and southern Africa.*



## LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION PLANNING

AWF's Heartland Conservation Process (HCP) is the framework AWF uses to plan, implement and measure our conservation programs in the African Heartlands. AWF has developed this well articulated, science-based approach for work in Heartlands through adaptation of The Nature Conservancy's Site Conservation Planning methodology. The HCP has been designed as AWF's tool to ensure consistent landscape level planning and implementation across our Heartlands. The HCP framework continues to be refined based on the needs of AWF staff working in Heartlands, along with inputs from the wider conservation community.

AWF's Heartland Conservation Process is an iterative process that is now being applied

and further developed across all AWF Heartlands. The process is not necessarily undertaken in a step-wise manner but is applied adaptively depending on AWF's management presence in a landscape, site context, funding availability, and the level of stakeholder involvement at a site. Various refinements across the program are ongoing with regards to strengthening key pieces of the HCP, e.g., more complete integration of socio-economics into the HCP, focus on priority interventions, and refinement of AWF's Performance and Impact Assessment (PIMA) system.

In sum, the Heartland Conservation Process provides a useful framework for effective conservation in AWF's African Heartlands. ■

### What Does AWF Do in Heartlands?

In each Heartland AWF works closely with a wide range of partners, including national and local governments, communities, research organizations, other non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to implement priority interventions in the following strategic areas:

1. Land and habitat conservation
2. Species conservation and applied research
3. Conservation enterprise
4. Capacity building and leadership development

#### 1) Land and Habitat Conservation

AWF uses a variety of approaches to bring different land categories under conservation. AWF works with landowners to design participatory land use plans which zone lands for various uses including grazing, wildlife, and other economic activities such as tourism. In some cases, agreements are signed with landowners to ensure sustainable management of areas of land for conservation. In other cases, AWF helps landowners to form land trusts to secure land for long-term conservation. For example, in the Maasai Steppe Heartland, AWF and partners have secured Manyara Ranch, a critical

wildlife corridor between Tarangire and Lake Manyara National Parks, by incorporating it as the first land areas to be managed by the new Tanzania Land Conservation Trust.

AWF also works with national park and other protected area authorities to support planning, management, law enforcement and monitoring, as well as transboundary collaboration. Activities have included development of general management plans, construction of infrastructure such as staff housing and water facilities, and improvements to visitor services. Examples of protected areas that AWF has supported include Samburu National Reserve (Kenya), Tarangire and Lake Manyara National Parks (Tanzania) and Chobe National Park (Botswana).

Along with its partners, AWF works to secure wildlife movement corridors, habitat linkages, dry season refuges and dispersal areas that are critical for the conservation of wildlife and their key habitats. GIS-based mapping by the AWF Spatial Analysis Laboratory in Nairobi has proved to be a powerful tool in improving identification of critical areas. In Kilimanjaro Heartland, for example, AWF is working with local communities and district authorities to safeguard the Kitendeni Corridor to allow elephants and other species to move between Kilimanjaro and Amboseli National Parks in Tanzania and Kenya, respectively. ■



*The Visitor Centre in Tarangire National Park, Tanzania which AWF helped to build with funds from USAID*

## 2) Species Conservation & Applied Research

AWF conducts research on the status of conservation targets (typically species or species assemblages) and the scale of threats to conservation in each Heartland, which is then used to inform conservation priorities in the landscape. AWF also conducts socio-economic research, including baseline and monitoring surveys, as well as studies to identify economic opportunities and inform the choice of interventions. Research is conducted in a collaborative manner between AWF researchers and a variety of partners consisting of individual researchers, institutions, landowners, government agencies and other NGOs.

Examples of applied species research projects include:

- **Elephants.** AWF supports important elephant research and conservation in many of the savanna Heartlands where elephants live and roam. Recent research has focused on the use of transboundary landscapes and corridors by elephants.
- **Fisheries.** Working through the Aquatic Resources Working Group, which is made up of government fisheries officials from Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, AWF has supported fisheries surveys along the Upper Zambezi River system. Through these surveys, the key species in the system and the threats that face them have been identified. Fisheries monitoring protocols for improved fisheries management have been developed and AWF is working with fisheries departments of the four countries to implement them.
- **Rhino Conservation.** Recently AWF has provided support for rhino conservation in Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Priority has been given to testing different management strategies and technologies such as sanctuaries and radio collars for protecting and increasing the numbers of this highly endangered animal.
- **Predators.** AWF provides support to a number of projects for the protection of endangered predators including the cheetah, the African wild dog and the Ethiopian wolf. We also support several studies that take a unique approach to understanding how communities of predators such as lion, leopard and hyena co-exist in the same ecosystems.

## 3) Conservation Enterprise

Fostering enterprise development to support the livelihoods of local people and to create incentives for sustainable land management is a priority conservation strategy for AWF. Over the past six years our enterprise teams have supported the development of more than 40 new enterprises in the African Heartlands, with significant positive local impacts. Based in Heartlands, the AWF enterprise support teams work with communities and the private sector to identify and develop business opportunities, support public-private sector partnerships, build the capacity of communities to manage and market their enterprises, and improve governance of community assets including enterprise benefits.

Most of AWF's enterprise work has involved development of tourism facilities such as eco-lodges, tented camps, community campsites, fishing lodges, cultural bandas and handicrafts. Specific examples of enterprise success include the Koiya Starbeds in Kenya, Ololosokwan's Kleins Camp in Tanzania and Santawani Lodge in Botswana. Increasingly AWF also supports non-tourism enterprise development with current initiatives including beekeeping and honey products.



*Starbeds Eco-lodge in the Samburu Heartland*

*A collared lion in Chobe National Park, Botswana – part of AWF's species research in Kazungula Heartland*

## 4) Capacity Building and Leadership Development

One of AWF's priorities is to champion African leadership of conservation.

At the local level, AWF works with community leaders to improve their skills and experience needed to manage land and promote conservation enterprises. Community skills are improved mostly through workshops, exchange visits and study tours to other community groups involved in natural resource management.

AWF also works with staff from protected areas to improve their management skills. For example, in Tanzania AWF has established a partnership with the U.S. Department of Interior for the training of staff at Tarangire and Lake Manyara National Parks in law enforcement, visitor services and park planning. AWF also enables the adoption of Ranger-Based Monitoring (RBM) systems such as those in Samburu and Kilimanjaro Heartlands, as first developed and used in the Virunga Heartland to protect mountain gorillas.

In 1996, AWF introduced the Charlotte Conservation Fellowship Programme to provide support for African nationals pursuing advanced degree studies in conservation-related fields, and many of today's leading African conservation professionals have benefited from this Programme. ■



*AWF trained the Naisho Women's Group in Tanzania to produce better bead-work for tourists visiting the area.*

## How Does AWF Measure Impact or Success In Heartlands?

AWF measures success in Heartlands using its Performance and Impact Assessment (PIMA) system.

For each Heartland, the PIMA system helps track the viability and status of conservation targets and threat abatement efforts, as well as the impact of our priority interventions, including conservation enterprises.

A suite of measures are used to track performance and impact, including capacity measures which evaluate financial and staff capacity; activity measures that assess implementation of the activities and processes; and conservation impact measures that capture the impact of AWF's species and land (habitat) conservation, human livelihoods, and threat abatement. The main measures that are currently used to monitor the AWF Heartland Programme are:

### I. Heartland Capacity Measures

1. Financial
2. Staff

### II. Heartland Activity Measures

3. Heartland Conservation Process (HCP) Progress
4. Priority Intervention Activities
5. Institutional Development and Capacity Building
6. Policy and Legislation

### III. Conservation Impact Measures

7. Land
8. Species
9. Human livelihoods
10. Threat Reduction Assessment

These measures are compiled annually and provide information on successes and failures. Most importantly, AWF feeds PIMA results back into the design of our intervention strategies in each Heartland. Although PIMA has been in use for several years, it is still evolving as an effective methodology and framework, and an internal project is currently underway to strengthen our measures of the impact of AWF priority interventions. ■



Ministerie van  
Buitenlandse Zaken

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