

A close-up, profile view of a lioness's face, looking towards the right. The fur is a mix of light and dark brown tones, with some darker spots on the muzzle. The eyes are a warm, golden-brown color. The background is a soft-focus natural setting with green foliage and brown earth.

Strategic Plan  
**2018 - 2020**

Lion Conservation in a  
Changing Landscape



EWASO  
LIONS

Created in northern Kenya 10 years ago, Ewaso Lions' mission was to promote human-wildlife co-existence, exploring the possibility of lions living alongside people. The results of the hard work through key programmes that we have set up over the last decade speak for themselves. Our lion population is stable, there are more lions living and breeding successfully in human-occupied landscapes, communities have accepted lion presence and my team have taken ownership over the lions, the stunning landscape and all its wildlife.

We have come a long way in this last decade with the support of the Kenya Wildlife Service, the County Governments, the Reserves and Conservancies, our conservation partners, and the local communities who inspire us every day.

When we began only 11 lions were known, all confined to protected areas. Now the ecosystem boasts over 50 lions. The key question now is: **What will the next few years bring for northern Kenya?** Although we have made great strides in lion conservation, lions still face an uncertain future. Threats to lions and challenges towards their conservation continue to rise. But I am still very hopeful and positive that with the work Ewaso Lions does, lions and people will continue to co-exist. I am especially hopeful as I watch my passionate team, who are from the local villages and are now in leadership positions in the project, make conservation a way of life and make decisions about lion conservation every day.

Today, I am proud to present you our 3-year strategy. We decided on a 3-year strategy instead of a 5-year or longer strategy due to the rapidly changing landscape within northern Kenya. I hope you will find our plans inspiring, effective and well-thought out. As ever, we value your support into turning our vision in to a reality.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Bhalla'.

**Dr Shivani Bhalla**  
FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Many thanks to the following individuals and advisors who have helped us tremendously with the strategic planning process:

Suzanne Offord-Woolley, Emma Knott, Steve Woolley, Lisa Baffi, Paul Thomson, Alayne Cotterill, Jeremy Lucas, Shalini Bhalla, Nilanga Jayasinghe and Nina Fascione.

Cover photo: Naisherua

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kenya's lions and other large carnivores face unprecedented threats, largely due to habitat loss and conflict with humans over livestock killing.

Populations of these species are becoming increasingly smaller and more isolated, and thus more vulnerable to extinction. Ewaso Lions is an independent wildlife conservation organisation whose mission is to conserve Kenya's lions and other large carnivores by promoting co-existence between people and wildlife. Since 2007, Ewaso Lions has used science, education, and local capacity building to guide and facilitate long-term carnivore conservation in northern Kenya.

## INTRODUCTION TO EWASO LIONS

The African lion population has declined by 43% in the last 20 years and lions now occupy only 8% of their historical range in Africa\*. The estimated number of lions across Africa is approximately 20,000. In Kenya, the national population now numbers less than 2,000 individuals.

At current rates of decline, the species could become extinct here within the next two decades. This reduction in lion numbers is primarily due to habitat loss and conflict with humans, typically when lions kill people's livestock. Lions and other large carnivores are wide-ranging species and designated protected areas are often not large enough to ensure their long-term survival. Therefore, it is crucial that conservation of these species, as well as their prey, is addressed throughout the landscape, which not only incorporates protected areas but also the surrounding areas where local people live.

Ewaso Lions community-based conservation programmes engage and build the capacity of all key demographic groups in the area (warriors, elders, women, and children) to reduce human-carnivore conflict by: raising awareness of ecological problems and solutions, developing strategies for reducing conflict with carnivores (particularly pertaining to livestock predation), and educational initiatives that illustrate the benefit of wildlife for local livelihoods.

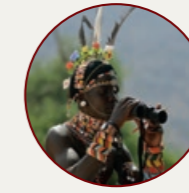
(\*Beyond Cecil: Africa's Lions in Crisis Report Produced by Panthera, WildAid and WildCru, 2016)

### Our community programmes are:



#### Mama Simba

Empowering Samburu women through education, conservation training, and environmental stewardship; providing alternative livelihood income through beaded handicrafts.



#### Warrior Watch

Engaging and training local warriors (young men in villages who provide security for their livestock and community) on all aspects of wildlife conservation, including conducting research on carnivore sightings and conflict mitigation strategies, and carrying out community outreach.



#### Wazee Watch

Training community elders to act as conservation ambassadors by educating them on carnivore issues and promoting solutions to reduce human-wildlife conflict.



#### Lion Watch

Utilising local safari guides and tourists to contribute to our research by sharing information regarding lion identification and monitoring.



#### Lion Kids Camp

Investing in a new generation of conservationists by providing local children with a 5-day wildlife education experience.

### This community-based conservation work is underpinned by research.

#### Our research programmes include:

##### Lion Dispersal

We deploy high-tech GPS collars on lions within our study area to monitor movements and activity patterns. The collar data provides vital insights in how lions are moving through community areas and enables our field team to alert herders of the lions' presence to avoid potential human-lion conflict.

##### Lion Population

We are working to complete a region-wide census and identify all lion prides and individuals in the Samburu-Isiolo ecosystem. Initial identification of lions, behavioural data, and lion associations will distinguish the number and structure of prides in the area.

##### Wildlife Monitoring

Conduct daily patrols within the conservancies to monitor lion movements, census wildlife populations, and keep local people and project personnel informed on wildlife issues with the aim of promoting human-lion co-existence.

##### Human-Carnivore Conflict

We conduct research on human-carnivore conflict in our study area in order to develop strategies for preventing carnivore attacks on livestock, which will then reduce retaliatory killing of carnivores. Understanding key factors that influence human tolerance of large carnivores will help us manage for co-existence, identify areas critical to maintaining connectivity between habitats to keep corridors for wildlife open, and focus conservation activities in areas most likely to remain viable for large carnivores in the long term.

##### Lion Habitat

We identify suitable habitat for lions in community areas through the use of habitat suitability modelling techniques. We are then able to work with communities on ensuring safe habitat for lions within the human-occupied landscape.

## OUR STORY 10-YEAR TIME-LINE

**2007**

Ewaso Lions was founded by Shivani Bhalla, who recognized that lions were in trouble and their survival in northern Kenya hinged on working with local communities.

**2009**

Our first sighting of a lion in a community area. Named Magilani, she eventually became an ambassador lioness in Westgate Community Conservancy, well known throughout the community.

**2011**

Magilani was killed. She ventured into unsafe areas with her cubs, and we lost her to a bullet. But her cubs survived, hunting successfully at the tender age of 1.5 years.

**2015**

After 7 years at a 'temporary' base with poor communications and security, we moved to our permanent hilltop headquarters. 400 community members came to celebrate with us, knowing it would enhance our conservation efforts.

**2017**

We lost 5 lions this year to human-lion conflict - our most challenging year in 10 years as a result of increasing threats towards lions and pressure on their habitat and prey.

**2008**

We moved to Westgate Community Conservancy - a human-occupied landscape - to learn whether lions can indeed live with people. Is co-existence possible?

**2010**

Warrior Watch was established to engage warriors, a new demographic in conservation - those most commonly implicated in retaliatory killings of lions.

**2012**

Evaluation study on Warrior Watch showed significant improvement of community attitudes towards carnivores and the programme contributed to the empowerment of the warrior demographic.

**2014**

Mama Simba, the first programme to empower Samburu women in lion conservation forged ahead. Ladies attended workshops, went on wildlife safaris and started their lion bead-work activities.

**2016**

Registered the highest lion numbers on community lands. On one occasion, 12 lions were recorded in Westgate Community Conservancy alone.

## WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED

Ewaso Lions is a permanent, growing project, which - for 10 years - has worked with warriors, elders, women, herders, and children to raise awareness of ecological problems/solutions, reduce human-wildlife conflict, and educate communities on the benefits of wildlife for local livelihoods.

We have observed the following results in our study area:



REDUCED NUMBERS OF LIONS AND OTHER CARNIVORES KILLED IN CONFLICT



IMPROVED LOCAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS LIONS AND OTHER CARNIVORES



STABLE OR INCREASING LION POPULATION SINCE 2008



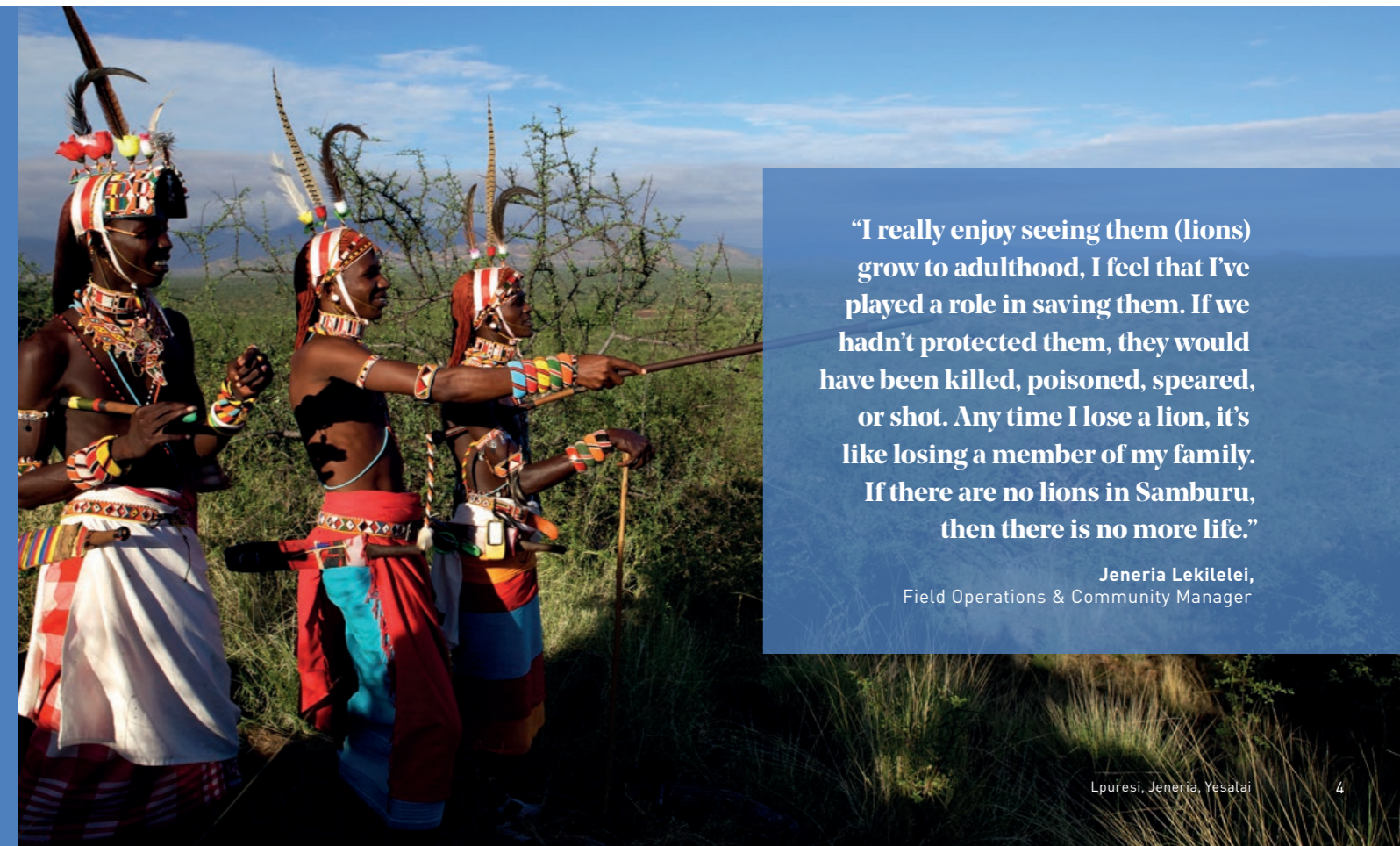
INCREASED OWNERSHIP OF LIONS AMONGST THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES



IMPROVED LIVESTOCK HUSBANDRY PRACTICES TO REDUCE LIVESTOCK LOSS TO CARNIVORES



INCREASED AWARENESS OF IMPORTANCE OF CARNIVORES



**“I really enjoy seeing them (lions) grow to adulthood, I feel that I’ve played a role in saving them. If we hadn’t protected them, they would have been killed, poisoned, speared, or shot. Any time I lose a lion, it’s like losing a member of my family. If there are no lions in Samburu, then there is no more life.”**

**Jeneria Lekilelei,**  
Field Operations & Community Manager

## KEY MILESTONES



19 Warriors actively engaged in conservation through flagship programme, Warrior Watch by 2017. Our Warriors work across 5 Conservancies that span a total area of 2724 km<sup>2</sup> (1693 mi<sup>2</sup>).



Suitable habitat for lions identified through modelling techniques within Westgate Community Conservancy.



Permanent Ewaso Lions Conservation Headquarters has been established in Westgate Community Conservancy.



Lions have now become resident in Community Conservancies - a change since 2010 when there was only temporary movement of lions through the human-occupied landscape.

6

Ewaso Lions expanded to operate across 6 Conservancies (Westgate, Nakuprat-Gotu, Mpus Kutuk, Nasuulu, Kalama and Meibae) between 2013 and 2017.

A cumulative total of over 800 lion sightings were submitted by 20 certified Lion Watch Guides between 2013 and 2016.



♀ 19

Samburu women have been empowered to speak for lions and engage in conservation through the Mama Simba programme.



Ewaso Lions team grown from 4 in 2008 to 58 in 2017.



12 students sponsored under the Jeremy Lucas Education Fund (formerly known as Ewaso Lions Scholarship Programme) for secondary and tertiary education.



Over 240 Kenyan children have been exposed to conservation education as a result of nine Lion Kids Camps held between 2013 and 2017.



Over the past 2 years, our team have been able to stop lions from being killed on 40 occasions.

80%

Of Warrior Watch warriors from Westgate Conservancy are now able to read and write as a direct result of our education initiative.



## 2018-2020 STRATEGY

This process, led by a team of advisors with experience in strategic planning, involved extensive discussions across the team. The resultant plan stemming from our now clearly articulated vision, mission, values, principles and core objectives, strategically places Ewaso Lions at the forefront of large carnivore conservation in northern Kenya.

### Vision

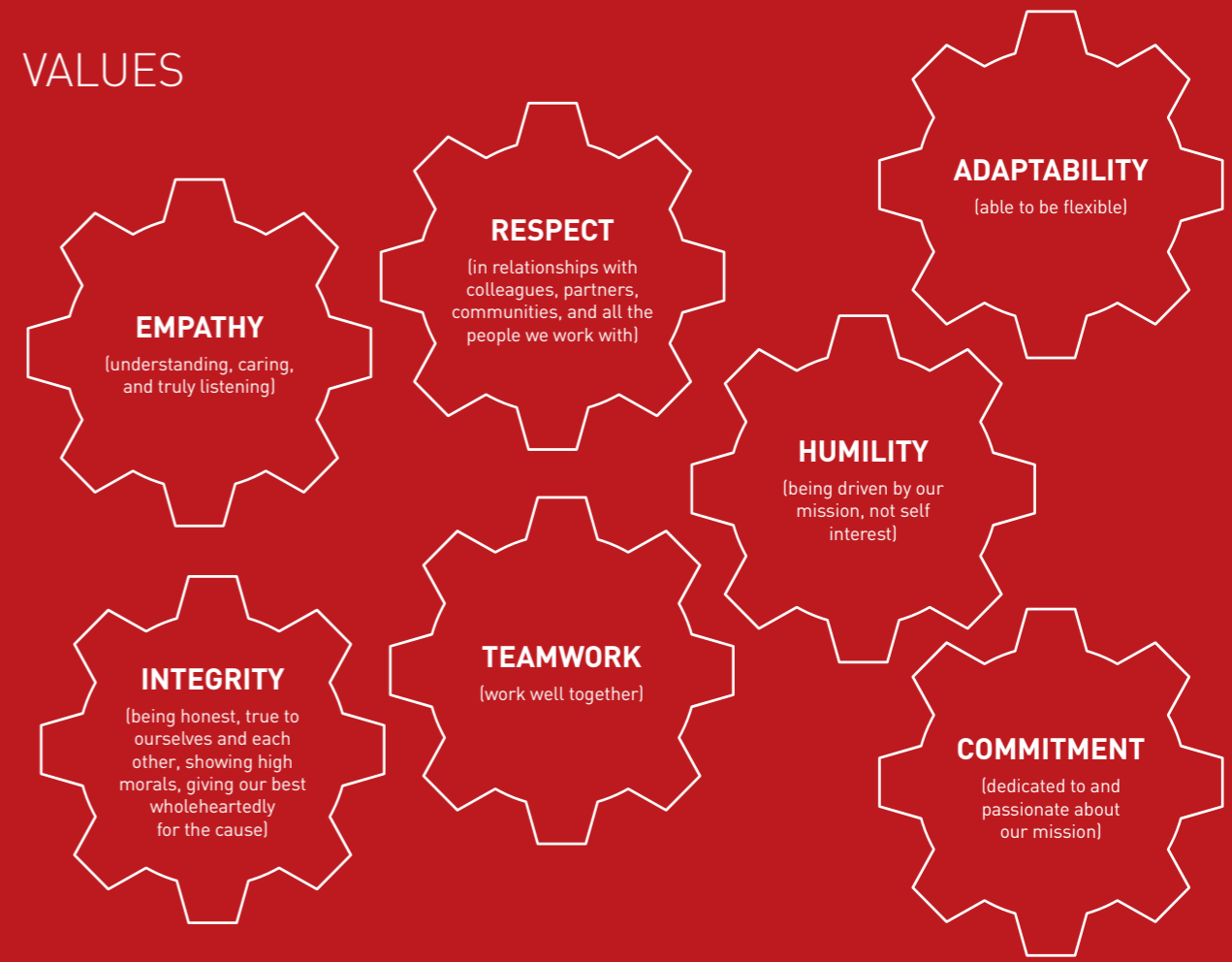
We see a future where Kenya's lions and other large carnivores are secure within their range where people live.

### Mission







Ewaso Lions is dedicated to conserving lions and other large carnivores by promoting co-existence between people and wildlife.



## VALUES



## PRINCIPLES

-  WE STRIVE TOWARDS COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP OF CONSERVATION PRACTICES
-  WE MAINTAIN AN ECOSYSTEM LEVEL APPROACH TO WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
-  WE BELIEVE THAT GOOD SCIENCE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF CONSERVATION
-  WE BELIEVE COLLABORATION IS KEY, SHARING BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED
-  WE INTEGRATE LOCAL EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE TO GUIDE OUR WORK
-  WE SUSTAIN OUR FOCUS ON CORE VALUES EVEN AS WE EXPAND OUR PROGRAMMES

## OBJECTIVES

### **Engage and empower communities, strengthening local ownership of conservation.**

Since its founding in 2007, Ewaso Lions has put local people at the centre of our conservation programmes.

To achieve sustainable co-existence with carnivores, people must feel an intrinsic desire to adopt conservation practices within their daily lives, and should have genuine ownership in the conservation decision-making process. Our strategy includes activities that create that sense of ownership by educating people about the benefits of conservation, incenting them to own the conservation process themselves - usually through innovative, non-monetary ways. Our work is founded on traditional values and the roles these different demographic groups play within their community in order to maximize community ownership and the sustainability of our programmes.

### **Enhance sustainable growth in the lion population across the conservation landscape.**

Our community-based conservation work is underpinned by research, including monitoring carnivore and prey populations, collaring and radio-tracking lions, and studying the occurrence and impact of human-carnivore conflict. This research is achieving an accurate estimate of carnivore numbers with the ultimate goal of ensuring there is a stable lion population within the region.

### **Ensure safe habitat and connectivity for lions.**

We strive to gain a better understanding of lion movements in and out of protected areas and the key factors that allow them to share the landscape with people and livestock. These key factors include ensuring there is safe habitat for lions in the form of safe refuges and conservation areas, and that connectivity between these refuges exists.



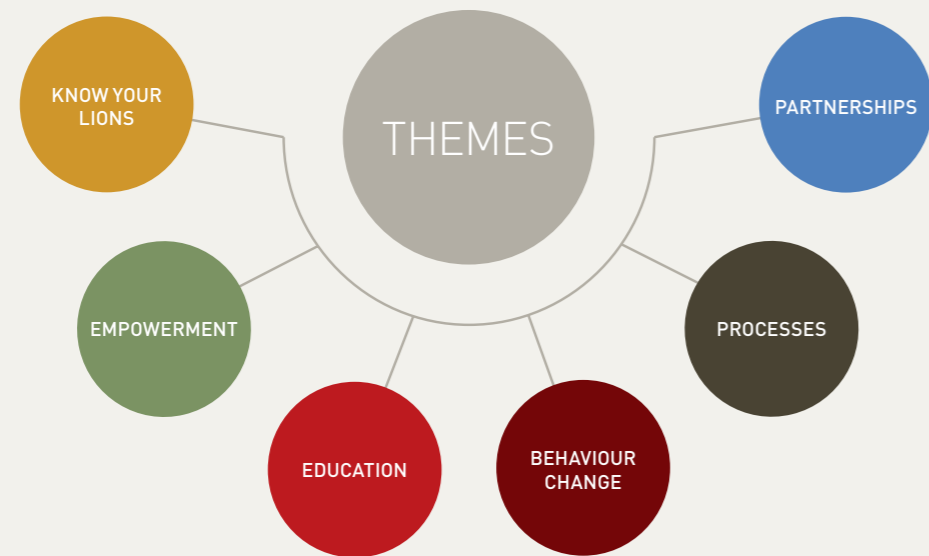
**Three**  
main objectives for achieving  
sustainable co-existence



## THEMES & ACTIVITIES

To develop our 3-year strategic plan, we identified six broad thematic areas of work and our desired outcomes under each theme.

We identified priority activities for achieving each outcome. The activities that make up our 3-year roadmap fall under one or more of the six themes. For the purposes of this document, a few example activities have been included for reference, with the full activity list transformed into an internal implementation plan.



### Empowerment

Ewaso Lions want to effectively contribute towards the political, social and economic empowerment of the local communities who live alongside lions. Empowerment to us means building pride in cultural traditions, traditional knowledge and shared natural resources. We desire to see a community whose voices, concerns and enhanced abilities guide the development of projects, increasing community cohesion.

By uplifting once marginalized communities, and within them elevating neglected demographics like women, warriors and children, our desired outcomes will be achieved through **58 activities** to implement over the 3-year period including:

- Arranging community exposure tours and wildlife safaris to stimulate original conservation ideas.
- Providing literacy school for Mama Simba and Warrior Watch.
- Facilitating workshops focusing on the benefits of culture to conservation.
- Developing mentoring activities between Wazee Watch and Warrior Watch.

### Know Your Lions

Knowing the behaviour, movement and demographics of the lions in Samburu will contribute directly to ensuring their protection. Our desired outcomes in this effort include developing effective mitigation methods for reducing human-carnivore conflict, identifying key areas for lions, conducting effective monitoring of the lions and understanding what factors affect their survival.

To achieve this, our team has **39 activities** to be implemented over the next three years including:

- Monitoring the lion population.
- Using modelling techniques to identify suitable habitat for lions and conducting socio-ecological surveys.
- Carrying out daily prey and livestock sightings patrols by scouts and warriors.







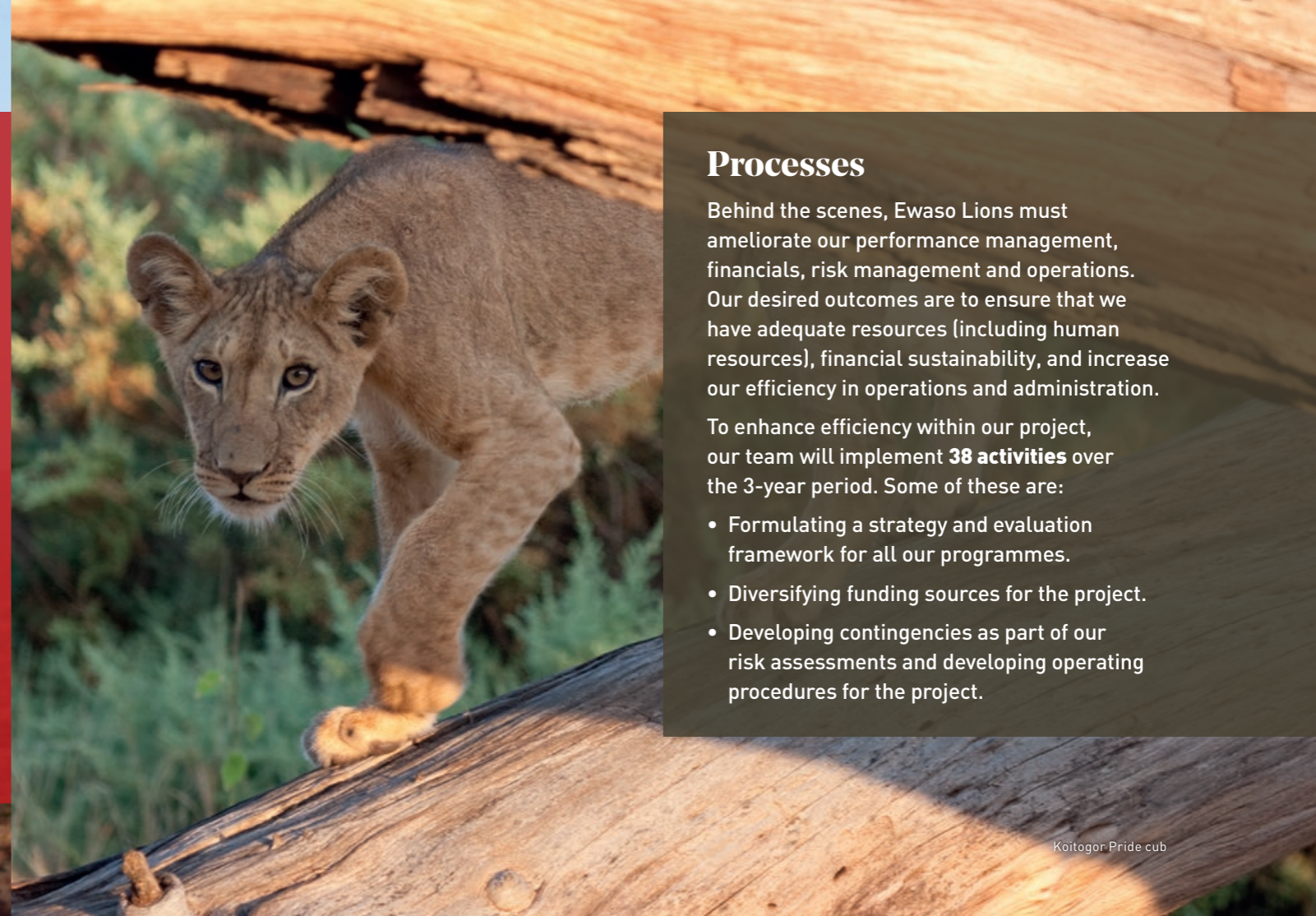
Yesalai & Lion Kids

## Education

Education of our local community is a focal theme of our strategy, as we aim to increase awareness about lions and the importance of their conservation. Education programmes are planned, designed and evaluated, and expanded in to areas outside of our focal region. By 2020, we aim to have a clear conservation education strategy, increase collaboration to deliver education programmes, ensure the team and community have all knowledge and information on Ewaso Lions and environmental issues, and lastly, expand our conservation education focus in other parts of Kenya that are important to maintaining breeding populations and functional connectivity for lions.

Our team has **18 activities** to achieve this educational theme, chief among them being:

- Scaling up Lion Kids Camps from 3 to 10 a year.
- Sponsoring up to three students a year through the Jeremy Lucas Education Fund.
- Holding workshops with the Ewaso Lions team and communities.



Koitogor Pride cub

## Processes

Behind the scenes, Ewaso Lions must ameliorate our performance management, financials, risk management and operations. Our desired outcomes are to ensure that we have adequate resources (including human resources), financial sustainability, and increase our efficiency in operations and administration.

To enhance efficiency within our project, our team will implement **38 activities** over the 3-year period. Some of these are:

- Formulating a strategy and evaluation framework for all our programmes.
- Diversifying funding sources for the project.
- Developing contingencies as part of our risk assessments and developing operating procedures for the project.



## Behaviour Change (promoting positive change and action)

Though this theme was borne out of a single example surrounding herding behaviour, it encompasses a broad array of important issues that we will face in the next three years. From influencing infrastructure development changes to dealing with poaching to fuel the lion bone trade that is spreading across Africa, we must change behaviour and mindsets pre-emptively to build enough support for lions and ensure they survive in a time of flux. Some of our activities here include:

- Gathering information on herders' encroachment in our conservation landscape.
- Holding trainings for infrastructure planners to improve their ability to rationalize conservation and development.

Young herders



Moses & Yesalai

## Partnerships

We aim to strengthen working relationships with technical partners, increase public education and outreach, and build a resilient relationship with the scientific community. Our desired outcomes include having strong relationships with partners, including wildlife organisations, county governments and wildlife officials. Additionally, we aim to increase public awareness of lions and conservation in Kenya and globally, contribute to the body of scientific knowledge and lastly, bridge the gap between the tourism industry and conservation.

Our team has **33 activities** to implement over the 3-year period to achieve our desired outcomes. Some of the key activities include:

- Increasing awareness about lions through talks, which we intend to give to both local and international audiences.
- Collaborating on data collection, research, conservation activities and landscape infrastructure work.
- Actively participating in key conferences and events on carnivore conservation.
- Ensuring reporting is achieved on a quarterly basis to all key partners and funders and publishing articles about our work.

# WHERE WE WORK

Ewaso Lions Study Area 2018-2020

- Ewaso Lions Camp ●
- Ewaso Nyiro River ●
- Study Area ●
- National Reserves ●
- Forest ●
- Community Conservancies ●

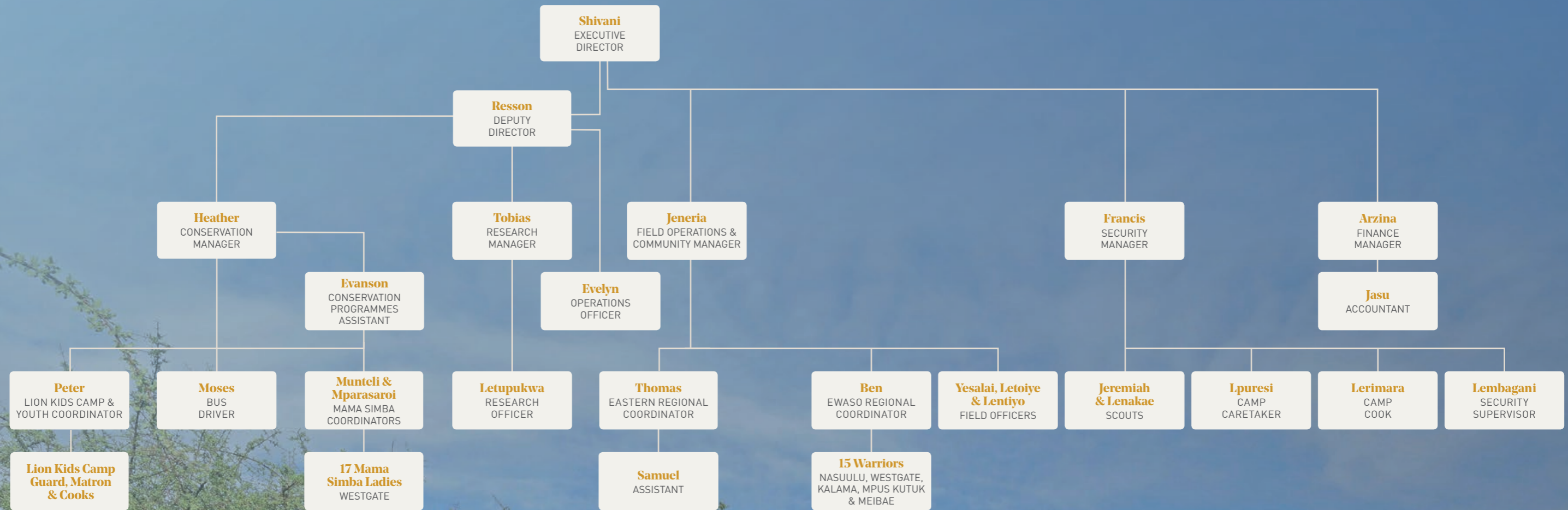


“This strategic plan is very important because it will help us in achieving our mission through reaching more communities and expanding to new areas and hence reducing retaliatory killing of lions - one person at a time.”

Ben Lejale,  
Ewaso Regional Coordinator, Warrior Watch



# OUR TEAM



**“We believe that a long time ago all wildlife belonged to the women and then they were released to the wild. No one brought them back. Now because women are involved in conservation, we will conserve them in the wild.”**

**Mparasaroi Lemantaan,  
Mama Simba Coordinator**





**Ewaso Lions**

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