



2023-2025

STRATEGIC PLAN

Lion Conservation in a Changing Landscape



EWASO LIONS IS DEDICATED TO CONSERVING LIONS AND OTHER LARGE CARNIVORES BY PROMOTING COEXISTENCE BETWEEN PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE.

Ewaso Lions is an independent 100% African wildlife conservation organisation which engages and builds the capacity of key demographic groups (warriors, women, elders and children) by developing approaches to reduce human-carnivore conflict.

Our conservation landscape includes; three protected areas (Samburu, Buffalo Springs and Shaba National Reserves) and eleven Community Conservancies in northern Kenya. We raise awareness of ecological problems to spur solutions from within our communities, and conduct research and educational initiatives that reinforce traditionally held beliefs and the evolving culture of wildlife conservation across the landscape.

Ensuring a future for Kenya's lions through community-led conservation.

OUR COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES



Warrior Watch

Warrior Watch is Ewaso Lions' anchor project. The programme builds on the warriors' traditional protection role by increasing their ability to mitigate human-carnivore conflict. The Warriors serve as a network working across multiple communities, informing herders of lion presence so they can avoid certain areas, averting depredation.



Mama Simba

This programme, designed by Samburu women, provides a platform for traditional women to reclaim their place as the owners and protectors of wildlife. Through environmental literacy, lion habitat recovery activities, engagement and awareness work on coexistence and culture, women are re-engaging in conservation in northern Kenya.



Lion Kids Camp

5-day immersive camps are designed to engage with and inspire a new generation of wildlife conservationists in Kenya. The programme gives school-going and herding children the chance to experience and learn about their country's wildlife through interactive experiences, combining safaris, drama, classroom education, and conservation-themed games.



Jeremy Lucas Education Fund (JLEF)

JLEF provides sponsorship opportunities for promising students lacking the funds to continue their studies. Students' tuition is covered for the four full academic years of Kenyan secondary school and university/college. Our model also ensures that after the students complete tertiary education, we work with them to build their careers.



Kura's Pride

In 2019, Ewaso Lions launched a programme to address the challenges communities and domestic dogs face in the Samburu landscape. The programme known as Kura's Pride (named after Ewaso Lions' famous first dog Kura), leads to healthier dogs and less human-carnivore conflict, reduced disease transmission to wild carnivores and an overall healthier balance between people, livestock, wildlife and the environment.



Biodiversity and Infrastructure Programme

This is our proactive approach to ensuring wildlife needs are taken into consideration as mega-infrastructure takes centre stage in northern Kenya. Ewaso Lions and Grevy's Zebra Trust initiated a collaborative project in 2018 to ensure community and non-governmental participation in the decision-making process as the infrastructure is designed and built, and monitor and mitigate the impacts of the LAPSET project to harmonise infrastructure development with wildlife needs.



ABOUT LIONS

The African lion population has disappeared from 92% of their historical range*. It is estimated that only between 20,000 to 30,000 lions remain across the continent - a significant decrease from the possible 200,000 lions that roamed Africa a hundred years ago.

In Kenya, the national population now numbers less than 2,500 individuals. The reduction in lion numbers in Kenya is primarily due to habitat loss and conflict with humans, typically when lions kill people's livestock. More recent threats now include the development of large-scale infrastructure projects, disease and climate change leading to loss of prey. 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 the 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 communities live.

*Stolton, S. and Dudley, N. 2019. The New Lion Economy. Unlocking the value of lions and their landscapes, Equilibrium Research, Bristol, UK

CONSERVATION RESEARCH

All our community programmes are underpinned by research. This includes:

- Identifying all lion prides and individuals in the Samburu-Isiolo ecosystem to estimate population size and trends. We record social structure and associations of prides and individuals to determine the lion demographics.
- Identifying key areas for lions within Community Conservancies and understanding what factors influence the suitability of such areas.
- Collaring lions to mitigate conflict, map movements and to understand the dispersal of young lions within the landscape.
- Identifying and mapping key wildlife habitat and corridors in relation to infrastructure development.
- Mapping carnivore disease outbreaks in our area.
- Evaluating communities' attitudes towards wildlife conservation.

OUR MILESTONES



250

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF LIVESTOCK SAVED FROM PREDATION ANNUALLY, SAVING THE COMMUNITY OVER \$100,000.



6000+

DOMESTIC ANIMAL VACCINATIONS COMPLETED TO STOP THE SPREAD OF DISEASES BETWEEN DOMESTIC AND WILD ANIMALS.



763

CHILDREN HAVE ATTENDED A FULL LION KIDS CAMP SINCE ITS INCEPTION.



2

EVALUATIONS PUBLISHED SHOWING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WARRIOR WATCH.



18

STUDENTS SPONSORED THROUGH THE JEREMY LUCAS EDUCATION FUND.



4530km²

OF AREA COVERED THROUGH OUR CONSERVATION OPERATIONS. THIS HAS INCREASED FROM 1742km².



10

YEARS OF STABILITY IN THE LION POPULATION, WHICH IS AT ITS HIGHEST IN 2022.



63

MEMBERS IN THE TEAM! OUR TEAM HAS GROWN FROM 4 PEOPLE TO 63.



9

LIONS COLLARED TO PREVENT CONFLICT.



1500+

COMMUNITY VISITORS HAVE BEEN FACILITATED TO PARTICIPATE IN EDUCATIONAL TOURS TO NATIONAL RESERVES.



LION PRESENCE INCREASED IN COMMUNITY AREAS WHERE THEY ARE BREEDING SUCCESSFULLY.



REDUCED NUMBER OF LIONS AND OTHER CARNIVORES KILLED IN CONFLICT.

BUILDING A CULTURE OF CONSERVATION

We began our work in northern Kenya with a quest to understand conflict at a time when the population of lions in Kenya numbered less than 2000.

The journey became a mission to promote coexistence. With a focus on lions, local leadership and embracing the pastoral way of life, a thriving lion population is now safe on community lands, and we have seen true ownership of lions grow across the landscape. 15 years on, we reflect on our journey.

2007

In 2007, a researcher and a group of residents in Samburu started discussions on why lions were disappearing when they left the reserves. From these small beginnings, together, they ignited the hope in people all around that continued coexistence on community lands is truly possible in the 21st century. The researcher was Shivani Bhalla. The residents, Jeneria Lekilelei, Francis Lendorop and Jeremiah Letoole. This was the birth of Ewaso Lions.

2008

Naramat was born in Samburu National Reserve. Her mother was the famed lioness Nashipai. From the very first day, the team monitored her, not knowing that she would be the most famous community lioness, a symbol and reminder that continued coexistence is possible.

2009

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

2010

Ewaso Lions' Warrior Watch was established by Jeneria Lekilelei to engage warriors – those most commonly implicated in retaliatory killings of lions – in conservation. Ewaso Lions graduated from pursuing research to doing conservation.

2011

The team documented Magilani's cubs hunting successfully at the tender age of one and a half years after the death of their mother. This added to the knowledge about the solitary nature of lions in arid areas, and the survival skills they pass on to their kin.

2012

An evaluation study on Warrior Watch showed significant social and political empowerment of the warrior demographic.

2013

Our inaugural Lion Kids Camp was held, laying the foundations for a successful education programme designed to inspire a new generation of Kenyan conservationists.

2014

Mama Simba, the first programme to be designed by and for Samburu women in lion conservation forged ahead. Ladies attended workshops, went on wildlife safaris and started their lion beadwork activities.

2015

Triumph for lions and people as Naramat made permanent dwelling in community lands – living proof that continued coexistence is possible. The same year, Ewaso Lions moved from the temporary camp to permanent dwellings atop a hill overlooking the Conservation Area.

2016

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

2017

Munteli becomes the first traditional Samburu woman to drive a car. License in hand, Munteli drove into her village at dusk and was blessed by the elders. Lions had opened up a new world for women in Samburu.

2018

Ewaso Lions teams up with the Grevy's Zebra Trust to launch the Bio-Infrastructure Programme, to harmonise our green vistas with the incoming mega-infrastructure projects planned by our Kenyan government.

2019

Not a single lion was killed in retaliation for any incidences where Warrior Watch intervened. 2019 marked a turning point where success was now not to be measured solely by how many conflict incidents we attended to, but by the tolerance we are building.

2020

The year where we rebuffed one crisis after another. From locusts to Covid-19, floods and drought, 2020 tested our team to breaking point. But what emerged was a pride in being a local, grassroots organisation ready to support our community through thick and thin. Ewaso Lions is here to stay.

2021

Kura's Pride partners with Samburu County and other organisations to launch the Community Animal Health Initiative, a first-of-its-kind mobile veterinary unit for domestic animals – vaccinating dogs, cats and donkeys, treating animals injured by wild carnivores and keeping disease at bay.

2022

We recorded the highest number of lions on average in 15 years. Lion numbers in the protected areas increased, cub survival was high and lions grouped together in Community Conservancies. 50 lions were known by our team.

OUR 2023-2025 STRATEGY

Like the rest of the world, we must recalibrate. At the beginning of our 2018-2020 Strategic Plan, there was no sign in sight for locusts, Covid-19, mega-infrastructure, or a shift in perspectives on how our landscape would or should look.

We know now that we must make room for crises, including climate-induced disasters, and we also must take a long view of our future landscape. And we cannot go alone. We must work alongside partners – the people who have the most to gain or lose from the decisions we make collectively. As we do, we must be explicit about what we want to take with us. The culture of pastoralism is 2500 years old, and holds valuable lessons for conservation and coexistence. Community-led approaches to handling crises, planning for disease surveillance, recovering lion habitat, ensuring space for wildlife among other critical issues will keep lions roaming on landscapes where people live for many years to come.

As such, Ewaso Lions has grown in leaps and bounds in our thinking and our capacity, and our vision for the future therefore is wide-ranging in its depth and breadth.

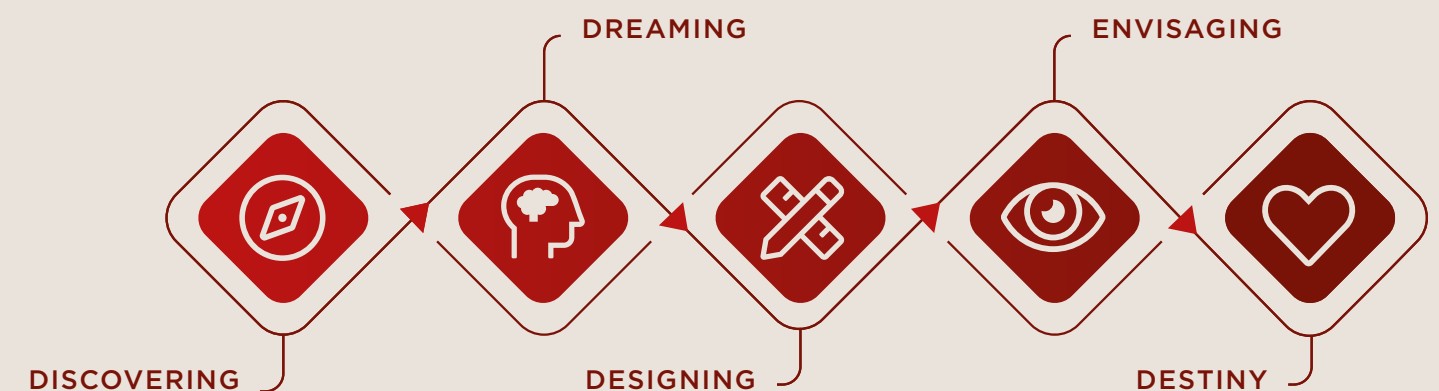
Our visioning process for 2022-2024 began in mid-2021. The final stages took place in late 2022 and a 2023-2025 strategy has been developed.



THE PROCESS

Our 2023-2025 strategy represents Ewaso Lions second intentional vision-casting process since the inception of our organisation.

This time, we chose an *Appreciative Inquiry Approach*. With a focus on our strengths and what the team and our partners really felt the organisation would excel and push us into our niche, we began *Discovering, Dreaming, Designing and Envisaging our Destiny*.



VISION

A secure future for lions and other large carnivores in a dynamic cultural landscape, achieved through community-led conservation.



MISSION

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

VALUES

A deep reflection on what each team member remembered most about the past years revealed our values, as snapshotted here.

Teamwork:

“The day I found Naramat injured, I called for support. So many people came to help quickly. I remember Jeneria, Toby, Marko and Jisana turned up first. Although it ended sadly, I will always remember how we worked together that day - everyone helping everyone.”

Sanangi

Commitment:

“The Jeremy Lucas Education Fund student from my village was falsely accused at school and put in jail. Ewaso Lions stuck by him, and helped him in every way until his case was complete. We paid school fees twice. Very few organisations do that.”

Jisana

“When the Mamas were preparing to go to the U.S., we did a lot of work preparing them. Getting passports, visas and so many things they didn’t know they needed. I feel proud to have followed it all through to the end. Few organisations do this.”

Evelyn

Community:

“We use different ways of working with community members to help strengthen our strong bond with communities, through different things; Lion Kids Camps, exposure tours, scholarship programme and others.”

Lesiamito

“Sometimes when I go to Archers Post someone approaches the car. I often think it might be a request for help. But many times, it is people coming to say thank you for helping, either take their son to hospital, or a brother who was in need. Ewaso Lions does that a lot, to the point sometimes we don’t remember.”

Toby

Courage:

“Every day, people face their fears to protect lions, console people who have lost livestock. Ewaso Lions is courage.”

Letupukwa

Ownership:

“The day Lolgeeti was in trouble, the whole team came together to help. Each team member used all their energy and strengths to avoid failing. People didn’t leave their watch (place). Evanson sat there and drank six litres of water in the sun waiting and scanning the distance. Even the kitchen team went to help.”

Moses

Adaptability:

“We don’t know what the landscape will look like in ten years, or even two years. The threats we are facing are very different from the ones we had when we first started. We have success in our work because we change when things change. If we don’t continue to be flexible, there is no future for lions here.”

Jeneria

Reliability:

“We cover all the demographics so all the mamas, warriors, everyone knows Ewaso Lions. We always go back to do what we say we will. When I receive a call, we never ignore. That has helped us build trust with the community.”

Jeneria

Resilience:

“We were very angry after the elder came and destroyed our *lokere* (grass enclosure). It felt like all our efforts had been for nothing. But we came back, we discussed it and we are rebuilding the grass enclosure. We have to, and we know it will help the lions get food in future.”

Munteli



OUR PILLARS

We imagined and explored all the possibilities that would secure a future for lions, culture and communities in northern Kenya’s pastoral landscapes. From here, we defined 4 new pillars where our programmes would fit, and defined each as follows:



Landscape & Lions

To stabilise and grow northern Kenya’s population of lions through understanding their behaviour and movements, securing their refuges and corridors, and mitigating human-carnivore conflict.



Landscape & Leadership

To nurture an inclusive, diverse community of leaders who work to find and implement solutions which meet the needs of people, livestock and wildlife - a community at the forefront of decision making.



Landscape & Lifestyles

To merge wildlife conservation with the culture of pastoralism, and build community and carnivore resilience to emerging threats such as disease by improving indigenous domestic animal health, and recovering habitats.



Landscape & Horizons

To plan pro-actively for the future of the changing landscape, convening collaborators to envision and contribute to the future health of the ecosystem in regards to emerging grey infrastructure, climate resilience, crises and space for wildlife.

Each of our programmes have vision documents outlining goals/activities and expected outcomes over the next 3 years. These are available on our website under each programme.

LANDSCAPE & LIONS

This theme captures:

- Warrior Watch
- Lion Governors
- Research

“

One day, lions will have good habitat, encroachment will reduce, settlements will be managed, core areas will be set up, and we will have less conflict.”

John

“

I dream in the future we will manage to collar more lions so that we can know their movements and help avert conflict.”

Nicholas

LANDSCAPE & LEADERSHIP

This theme captures:

- Mama Simba
- Jeremy Lucas Education Fund
- Lion Kids Camp
- Warrior Watch
- Lion Governors

“

One day, we will have built the capacity of our team and multiplied the effort that we do. Each person will be able to stand as a leader in their Conservancy, doing programmes, research, and conflict work seamlessly.”

Evanson

LANDSCAPE & LIFESTYLES

This theme captures:

- Kura's Pride
- Mama Simba

“

I am thinking about the potential of Kura's Pride. I hope one day we will expand our work to other Conservancies. In the future we will vaccinate different domestic animals apart from dogs and cats. This work can be a tool to get more people to know and be a part of lion conservation.”

Solomon

LANDSCAPE & HORIZONS

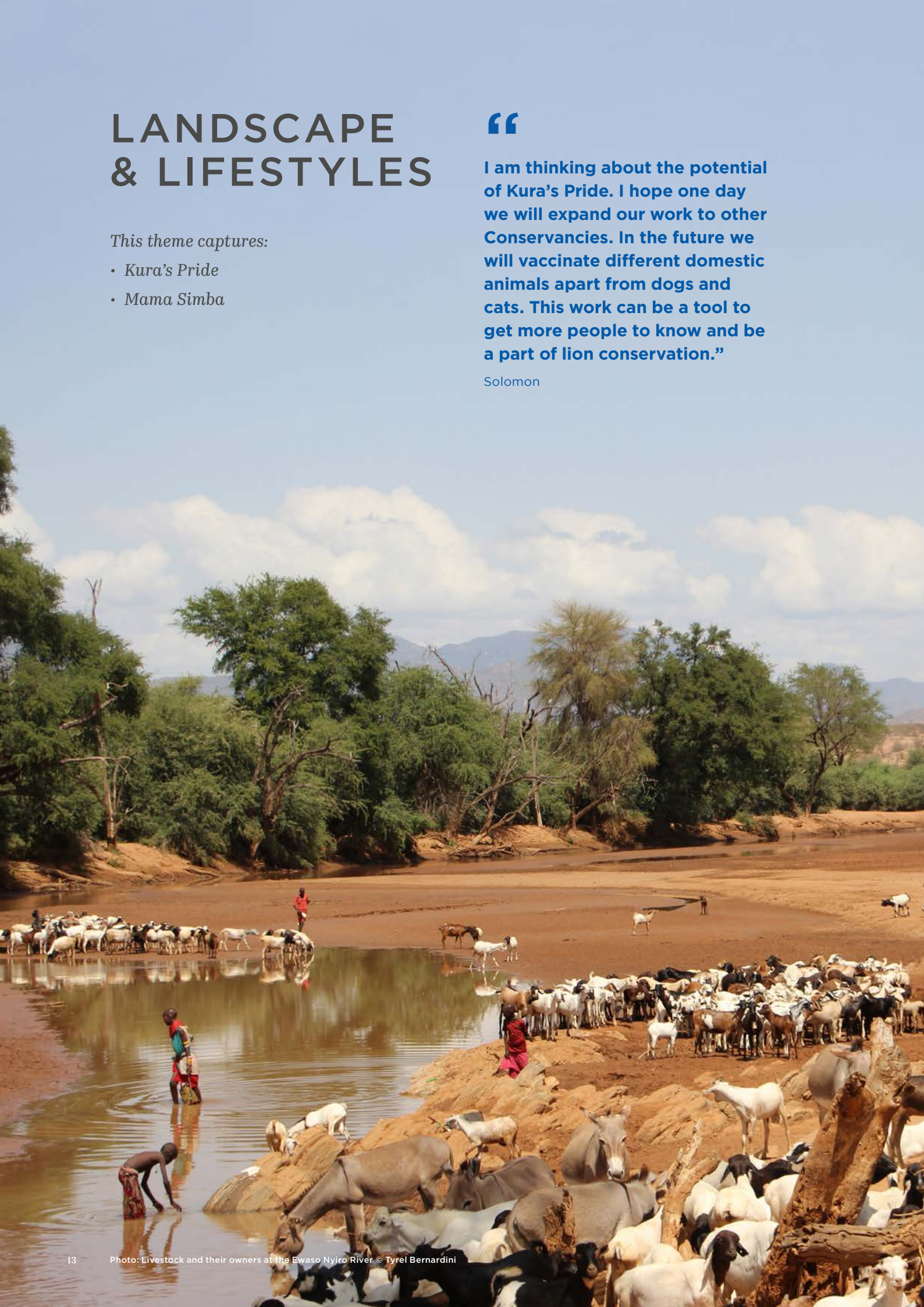
This theme captures:

- Lalenok
- Bio-infrastructure
- Partnerships

“

I imagine a future where grazing is properly managed. Lions will have their wild prey, livestock will have enough grass and everyone will know where they should go. Conflict will be reduced and coexistence will continue be part of our life every day.”

Jisana



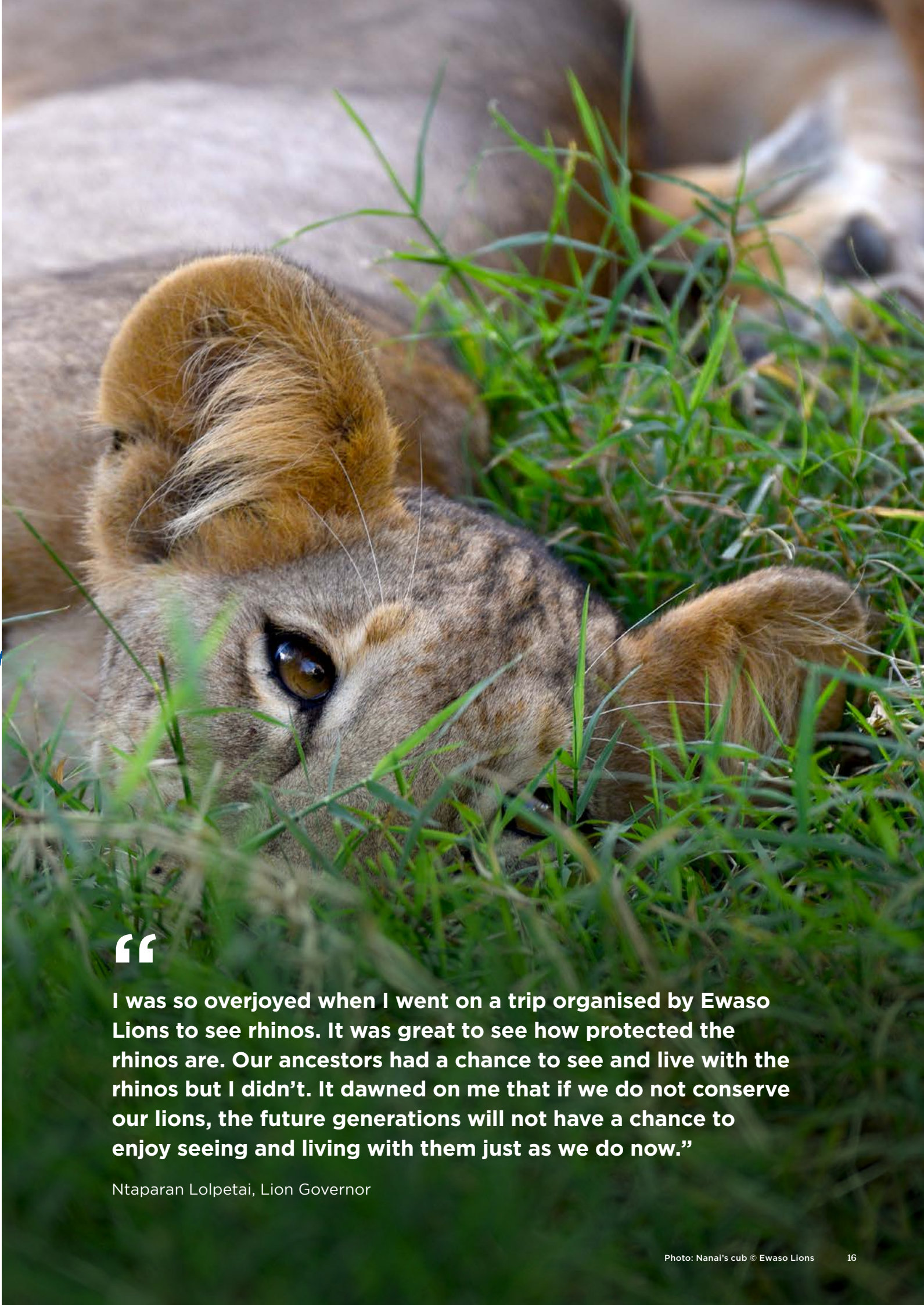
EWASO LIONS LANDSCAPE

- Ewaso Lions Camp
- Ewaso Nyiro River
- Community Conservancies
- Area of Operation
- National Reserves
- Forest



Conservation landscape coverage

4530km² / 1749mi²



“

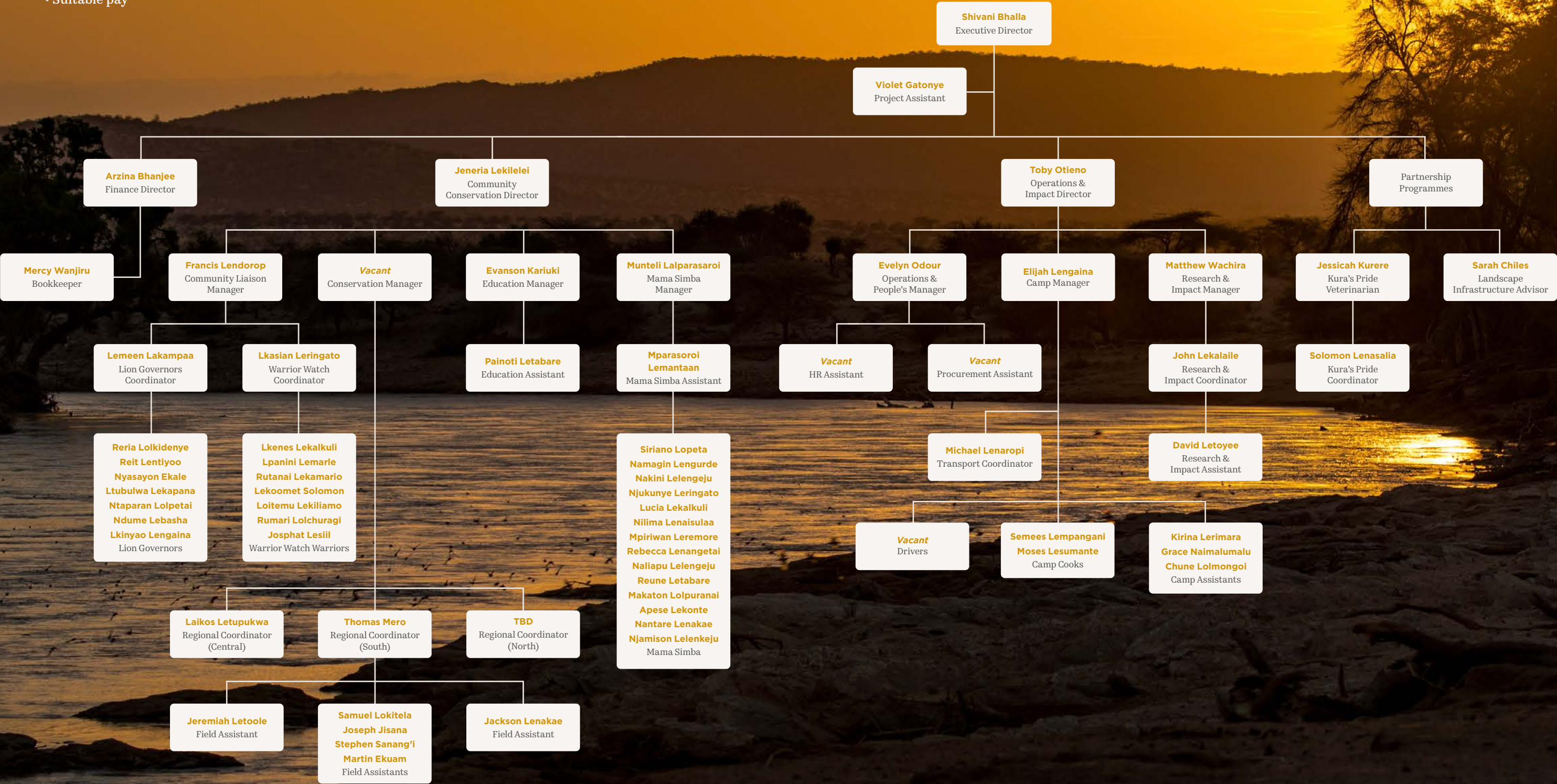
I was so overjoyed when I went on a trip organised by Ewaso Lions to see rhinos. It was great to see how protected the rhinos are. Our ancestors had a chance to see and live with the rhinos but I didn't. It dawned on me that if we do not conserve our lions, the future generations will not have a chance to enjoy seeing and living with them just as we do now.”

Ntaparan Lolpetai, Lion Governor

OUR TEAM

Ewaso Lions is committed to our team in a number of ways and ensures that our team receives:

- Career development and training
- Safety provision
- Welfare/wellness support
- Compliance support
- Suitable pay





Ewaso Lions

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Please include your address for
the mailing of tax information.

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Account number: **Your email address**

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