

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



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

We see a secure future for lions in a dynamic, cultural landscape, achieved through community-led conservation.

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.



ABOUT LIONS

The African lion population has disappeared from 92% of their historical range*. It is estimated that there are between 20,000 to 30,000 lions remaining across the continent - down from perhaps 200,000 lions a hundred years ago.

In Kenya, the national population now numbers fewer 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

LEADERSHIP TEAM

DR. SHIVANI BHALLA
Founder & Executive Director

JENERIA LEKILELEI
Director of Community Conservation

TOBY OTIENO
Director of Impact & Operations

ARZINA BHANJEE
Finance Director

FRANCIS LENDOROP
Community Liaison Manager

EVANSON KARIUKI
Education Manager

EVELYN ODUOR
Operations & People's Manager

MUNTELI LALPARASROI
Mama Simba Manager

MATTHEW WACHIRA
Research Manager

ELIJAH LENGAINA
Camp Manager

YEAR OF TRIUMPH FOR EWASO LIONS

Thanks to you, in 2023 we saved lions, supported our community and inspired new generations to protect wildlife.

9

NEW LIVES

Recorded the birth of 9 lion cubs across our conservation landscape, contributing to the vibrant ecosystem.

50

LION POPULATION

Maintained a stable lion population of 50 within our conservation landscape (x3 population recovery since 2007).

158

IMPRESSIVE LION SIGHTINGS

Recorded 158 lion sightings across our conservation landscape, showcasing the thriving lion population and success of our conservation efforts.

9

NEW LIONS IN SHABA

Identified 9 new lions in Shaba, expanding our understanding and monitoring of this crucial lion population.

1646

ANIMALS SAFEGUARDED

Administered vaccinations to 1646 domestic animals, protecting them against rabies and distemper, ensuring their health and safety.

60

HOUSEHOLDS PROVIDED RELIEF

Provided food relief to 60 households affected by the November floods, providing essential support and solidarity during challenging times.

60

ENGAGING COMMUNITY GATHERINGS

Facilitated 60 community meetings on lion conservation, uniting almost 2000 community members—achieving a record-breaking level of participation this year!

70

CONFLICT RESPONSE

Warriors and Lion Governors responded to 70 conflict cases.

57

LIVESTOCK COMPENSATION CLAIMS SUPPORTED

Assisted communities in filing 57 livestock compensation claims with the Kenya Wildlife Service, providing transport to affected livestock owners—alleviating hardships caused by carnivore predation.

10

INSPIRATIONAL LION KIDS CAMPS

Organised 10 Lion Kids Camps, hosting 245 children from 7 Conservancies—an exceptional milestone since 2013, fostering a love for nature and conservation values.



YEAR IN FOCUS: HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR TEAM



SHIVANI

One of the most heart-warming experiences for me was when the Whitley Fund for Nature honoured our team with the Whitley Gold Award this year. It's rare for award organisations to celebrate team accomplishments rather than focusing on individuals, and it fills me with hope that more funders will embrace conservation as a collective effort, moving beyond the solo-hero narrative. Standing on stage alongside six of our team members and accepting the award together is a memory that will stay with me forever."



MATTHEW

This year marked a pivotal upgrade in our field data collection, enhancing efficiency and reducing data loss risks. This underscored my dedication to using technology in lion conservation – something that really excites me. Additionally, I represented Ewaso Lions at two key conservation conferences which broadened my perspective on global conservation while refining my ability to communicate complex ideas internationally."



GRACE

The Leadership and Management Training we underwent was a significant highlight for me. It provided me with an understanding of leadership skills and transformed me into a more effective leader. Through this experience, I gained valuable insights into improved communication, planning abilities, and problem-solving skills. Now equipped with these skills, I feel more confident as a leader."



JENERIA

Even though during the previous year we had such a tough drought, the lions had a chance to raise their cubs and I am so delighted to see the increase in our lion population. Every time I see lion cubs I get so happy. I was so worried for Nanai when she was sick and unable to take care of her cubs but am so proud of the team for all the times we saved her life. Although losing her in May was one of the hardest days ever, I look at her cubs now and feel proud for who Nanai was and what she did for our lion population."



LETUPUKWA

This year, our Central Team, under my management, emerged as a force within Ewaso Lions, particularly in the critical task of lion monitoring. Together with my dedicated team members, Jeremiah and Lebacha, we achieved a remarkable feat by doing the most number of patrols and lion sightings within Samburu National Reserve and the surrounding community areas. I am so proud of that."



ARZINA

I am happy to see great improvements in operational efficiencies across the organisation while providing significant value to our continuously evolving conservation framework. The better we get, the better we can support the needs of our holistic programmes."



TOBY

This year our organisation underwent a transformative restructuring process, resulting in the establishment of a new organisational framework. This restructuring empowered six managers, each with clearly defined roles, setting the stage for improved operational efficiency across various programmes. This structural overhaul enabled us to strategically prioritise larger-scale initiatives such as collaboration efforts and partnership building. It has been a great year for partnerships."



PAINOTI

After teaching children for so many years at our Lion Kids Camps, I was so happy to try something new this year. We brought together many warriors to our Lion Kids Camp base and I really enjoyed teaching the warriors about conservation. Hearing their positive feedback and opinions about conservation at the end of each Warrior Camp gave me a lot of hope for the future."



LEMARLE

One of my highlights this year was providing food relief support to the Learata community near my home during the November floods. This initiative allowed us to show our commitment to our community in a meaningful way."



NANAI - A SAMBURU LEGEND

For 14 years, we were truly fortunate to witness and safeguard Nanai, the lioness who became an emblem of Samburu National Reserve.

Upon her birth, Jeneria named her Nanai, signifying “mine” in Samburu because of the strong connection he felt to her. Over the years, we witnessed her evolution, gleaning invaluable insights into the lions of the north.

In late 2022, our team noticed Nanai grappling with eating and hunting due to a substantial growth in her mouth. With her three cubs still months away from fending for themselves, it became imperative for us to intervene for Nanai and her family’s well-being. Collaborating with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), we orchestrated a transformative event under the shelter of an Acacia tree in January, where Nanai underwent surgery to remove the growth.



The successful procedure shifted our concern for her into a profound sense of relief and excitement as we witnessed her remarkable recovery. For an additional four months, she thrived - hunting, and nurturing her cubs until sadly her cancerous growth returned and reached a point where survival was no longer tenable. On the 26th of May, Nanai was compassionately euthanised by KWS Veterinarians.

Months later, her cubs have matured and are navigating the wild with other members of their pride. We closely monitor their progress, harbouring continued hope for their future.

Nanai lived an extraordinary life, perpetuating the legacy left by her mother, Nashipai. Her impact on the landscape and the lion population was monumental, and we remain profoundly grateful for every shared moment. Our appreciation extends to the entire KWS team, Samburu and Buffalo Springs Reserves management and rangers, as well as all guides who reported sightings and expressed concern.

Nanai shall forever stand as a living legend and enduring icon within the rich tapestry of Samburu’s heritage.



TRANSITIONING FROM SOLITARY LIONS TO THRIVING PRIDES

For over a decade, we have primarily been observing solitary lions. However, since 2022, we’ve witnessed remarkable growth in Northern Kenya’s lion population; a transformation marked by the formation of several prides.

This represents an extraordinary shift and stands as a testament to the unwavering dedication and hard work of our team, as well as the resilience and courage of our communities in coexisting with this iconic species.

This year, our encounters have been particularly special with the Kalama Pride, featuring the delightful presence of four young cubs. Additionally, prides have taken root in Shaba where we found nine new lions, whilst we have also watched Nanai’s Pride come together, and Naramat’s grand cubs thrive within the Westgate and Meibae Community Conservancy landscape.

Our observations tell us that the recent formation of prides can be attributed, in part, to the impact of last year’s drought. The lions, confined to smaller territories, found themselves

in closer proximity with one another, while the abundance of large prey made for easier access, eliminating the need for competition over smaller prey. Notably, Nanai’s Pride comprises several sub-adults, each offering support to one another on their journey to adulthood. This transitional phase in the lion population intrigues our team, and we are diligently documenting these unfolding changes.

Regrettably, despite the strides we have made, this year has brought the loss of five lions. Alongside the tragic demise of Nanai and Sanapari (refer to page 13), we mourn the loss of Lolgeeti, who succumbed to seven gunshot wounds to the shoulder, and Mararoi, along with another unidentified female, due to unknown circumstances. These losses weigh heavily on our lion population, fortifying our resolve to press on with even greater determination in our mission.





WARRIORS AND LION GOVERNORS

Safeguarding lions and livelihoods this year

Our own dedicated team of eight Warriors, supported by our six Lion Governors, have been vigilantly monitoring the lions, employing both on-foot and vehicular surveillance.

Lkasian, our Head Warrior, played a pivotal role in leading and nurturing the team, guiding them to embrace their new responsibilities. Notably, Lkasian has transitioned into the role of our newest Ewaso Lions driver, partnering with Lenakae, our Lion Governor, to cover the northern section of our conservation landscape. Our temporary base at Remot camp served as a strategic vantage point for overseeing Naramat's Pride until the rains made the area impassable in November.

This past year marked the commencement of our inaugural Warrior Camps, where 90 Warriors from various Community Conservancies actively engaged with us on lion conservation and strategies for coexisting harmoniously with lions. Discussions also delved into broader topics such as peace and security, and we extend our gratitude to all partners who contributed to the success of these Camps.

Additional highlights from the year include:

70

Our team of Warriors and Lion Governors swiftly responded to 70 conflict cases.

277

A total of 277 patrols were conducted by our regional lion teams, comprising foot, vehicle and motorbike patrols throughout the year.

57

Assisted communities in filing 57 livestock compensation claims and provided transport to affected livestock owners.

41

Rescued 41 livestock from carnivore threats, amounting to a significant economic saving of KSh 1,342,000 (USD 8,800) for our communities.



Highlights from our Mama Simba team this year include:

23

Waterholes dug for wildlife when the Ewaso Nyiro River dried up.

189

Invasive trees uprooted to protect lion habitat.

10

Cultural meetings hosted involving almost 500 women.

2

Grass enclosures sustained by implementing semi-circular bunds and planting grass.

20

Indigenous trees grown as an experiment to aid the recovery of lion habitat.

5

Months actively monitoring Nanai between January and May during her surgery and recovery.

17

Women from 2 villages attend weekly eco-literacy school sessions.

INSPIRING CHANGE

A year of dedication and achievements with Mama Simba

BRINGING BACK WILDLIFE TO WOMEN

This has been a remarkably busy year for our 18 Mama Simba ladies, and their dedication has yielded tremendous results. From cultivating the indigenous toothbrush tree to tending to their grass enclosures, known as Lokeres, and engaging in cultural meetings, to digging waterholes for wildlife and participating in eco-literacy school sessions, their efforts have been diverse and impactful. The addition of a new large car, complete with a distinctive logo, and the leadership of Munteli, has invigorated the Mama Simba ladies, inspiring a fresh vision and strategy that has proven the seemingly impossible to be entirely achievable.

These achievements underscore the profound impact, hard work, and dedication of the Mama Simba ladies and showcase how they've turned challenges into opportunities for positive change.



ROARING SUCCESS

Inspiring a new generation of conservationists at Lion Kids Camps

Our Lion Kids Camps continue to ignite a passion for conservation in the hearts of the new generation through an engaging and enriching 5-day experience designed for children. With over 1000 participants to date, our Camps have become a beacon of inspiration.

This year marked a milestone as we hosted the largest number of Lion Kids Camps ever conducted! A total of 10 Camps welcomed both herding and school-going children from diverse backgrounds across 7 Community Conservancies.



The impact of our Camps this year has been truly remarkable, with several noteworthy highlights:

9/10

Lions graced the wildlife safaris during 9 out of 10 Lion Kids Camps, offering children unforgettable encounters.

99%

Following the Camps, the percentage of children accurately identifying the threats facing lions soared from 70% to an impressive 99%.

58%

Awareness of the responsibility to conserve carnivores surged post-Camp, with recognition rising from 9% to 58%, with nearly 60% attributing this responsibility to their own community.

61%

The average number of pro-conservation actions listed by children increased significantly from 39% to 61% after participating in the Camps.

We eagerly anticipate witnessing the ongoing impact of our Camps on the children of northern Kenya, fostering a new generation of informed and empowered conservationists.

FROM DREAMS TO REALITY

Solomon's journey to becoming a veterinarian

Ewaso Lions, through the Jeremy Lucas Education Fund, sponsored Solomon for four years of secondary education.

Subsequently, Solomon continued his academic pursuit with Ewaso Lions' sponsorship, and in 2022, he earned his Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and Resource Conservation at Kenyatta University.

“

Going to school was not something I had ever dreamed of because no one in my family had gone to school. In the whole family, we are nineteen and I am the only one who went to school. I consider myself as the luckiest one.”

Solomon

Since 2021, Solomon has served as Ewaso Lions' Kura's Pride Coordinator, making significant contributions to community engagement in animal welfare and responsible dog ownership. Now he is embarking on the next chapter of his remarkable journey - studying veterinary medicine at Egerton University! We eagerly anticipate witnessing Solomon evolve into the next veterinarian in the Samburu-Isiolo region in the coming years as he completes his education.



PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMES

KURA'S PRIDE

Bridging animal health and human-wildlife coexistence

Our Community Animal Health Initiative*, which commenced in October 2021, endeavours to mitigate disease transmission between domestic animals and wild carnivores within our landscape. Additionally, it aims to alleviate human-wildlife conflict by promoting responsible animal ownership.

This year, we successfully provided care to 2203 animals within our community. This included administering 1646 vaccinations to dogs and cats, conducting 61 population control procedures, treating 462 dogs and cats, and executing 34 emergency interventions. Furthermore, our outreach efforts reached 603 community members through engagement and educational initiatives.

*A partnership between Ewaso Lions, VetinWild, Animal Care Centre, Foundation for International Aid to Animals and the Samburu County Department of Veterinary Services.

“

We are glad our dogs have got someone to help them, because dogs are very important guards for our livestock. Vaccinations helps to protect them.”

Nasas Lempunya



“

We are less scared of getting rabies from dogs. Dogs do not get sick and have become good watchmen over our livestock.”

Rose Lekinait



PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMES

BIO-INFRASTRUCTURE

At a crossroads

In 2023, our Biodiversity and Infrastructure Programme* faced a critical juncture, quite literally at the crossroads of the A2 Highway.

This highway intersects three national reserves and several Conservancies where we operate, significantly affecting wildlife movement and safety in accessing food and water. Tragically, in May, a young male lion named Sanapari, crucial to his pride's survival, fell victim to a vehicle collision, underscoring the risks.

*A partnership between Ewaso Lions and the Grevy's Zebra Trust



Key Highlights:

5 years

After five years of data collection and analysis through the Northern Kenya Road Watch, we proposed actionable measures to the Kenya National Highways Authority, in collaboration with national agencies, counties, and Conservancies. Scheduled for implementation in 2024, these initiatives promise to enhance safety for wildlife, including endangered species like wild dogs, and for drivers, passengers, pedestrians, and livestock.

150 stakeholders

Additionally, Ewaso Lions co-hosted the African Conference for Linear Infrastructure and Ecology (ACLIE) in September. Attended by around 150 stakeholders globally, the conference aimed to envision the future of linear infrastructure and ecosystems in Africa, offering essential insights for decision-makers in government, finance institutions, and NGOs.





SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AND FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS

Extending a helping hand to flood-affected communities

In November, we bore witness to the devastating aftermath of unrelenting floods and torrential rainfall that swept through the region.

Navigating the Learata villages, the severity of the situation became painfully apparent. Families forced to abandon their waterlogged homes, presented a poignant scene of despair. Ewaso Lions mobilised quickly and, in collaboration with our local Member of Parliament and Kalama Conservancy management, provided crucial flood relief aid to 60 households in Learata.



Enhancing Kenya Wildlife Service ranger's residences

Towards the latter part of 2023, our collaboration with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) team in Wamba bore significant fruit.

Together, we embarked on a vital initiative – the renovation of ranger housing. Acknowledging the importance of this project to the KWS Wamba team, we were privileged to offer our support. The transformation is noteworthy; the rangers' housing now features new walls and roofs, ensuring a safe and comfortable living environment for the dedicated team. This improvement not only elevates their living conditions but also contributes to their overall well-being and morale. Our heartfelt appreciation extends to the KWS team for their unwavering dedication.



EWASO LIONS RECEIVES RECOGNITION

The Whitley Gold Award

Ewaso Lions proudly received the esteemed Whitley Gold Award, presented by HRH Princess Anne at a spectacular ceremony in London's Royal Geographical Society in April. Sir David Attenborough narrated a captivating video on Ewaso Lions, providing a glimpse into our impactful work.

Seven of our team members graced the stage, addressing a 500-strong audience of supporters, donors, and country Ambassadors. Together, we celebrated the power of community-led conservation, culminating in a Samburu blessing for conservationists worldwide during the 30th Whitley Awards ceremony.

This honour recognises our community-led programmes and the courageous communities coexisting with wildlife in northern Kenya. With the Gold Award's support over a two-year project, we're developing a globally applicable community-led conservation toolkit. While distinct from our daily Ewaso Lions work, this initiative leverages our 16 years of learnings together with the experiences of 25 other global conservation leaders, whom we'll bring to Samburu in 2024. We are excited to collectively shape this transformative toolkit and grow our conservation impact around the world.



SHARING OUR MISSION GLOBALLY

This year, Ewaso Lions also had the privilege of being highlighted on various esteemed platforms such as NTV Wild in Kenya, the Times U.K., BBC News, BBC Focus on Africa, Financial Times, National Geographic Kids U.K., the East African, among others.

The exposure has played a crucial role in raising awareness about the significance of lion conservation, highlighting the positive impact



our dedicated team is making in northern Kenya. We are truly grateful for the opportunity to share our mission and contribute to securing a brighter future for lions in the region.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT – ASHE OLENG

Ewaso Lions is an independent non-profit organisation and relies on donations and grants to run our programmes and operations.

In 2023, 93% of the funds raised supported our conservation and research programmes, 4% went to administration and 3% went to fundraising.

Thank you so much to all our partners who enable us to make a conservation impact in Kenya:

Kenya Wildlife Service

Wildlife Research Training Institute

Samburu, Isiolo and Laikipia County Governments

Samburu, Buffalo Springs and Shaba National Reserves Managements

Community Conservancies (Westgate, Kalama, Nasuulu, Nakuprat-Gotu, Naapo, Nanapisho, Meibae, Leparua, Il Ngwesi, Lekurukki, Namunyak)

Wildlife Conservation Network

World Women Work

Whitley Fund for Nature

Houston Zoo

San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance

Samburu County Department of Veterinary Services

Grevy's Zebra Trust

Save the Elephants

Northern Rangelands Trust

VetinWild

Animal Care Centre

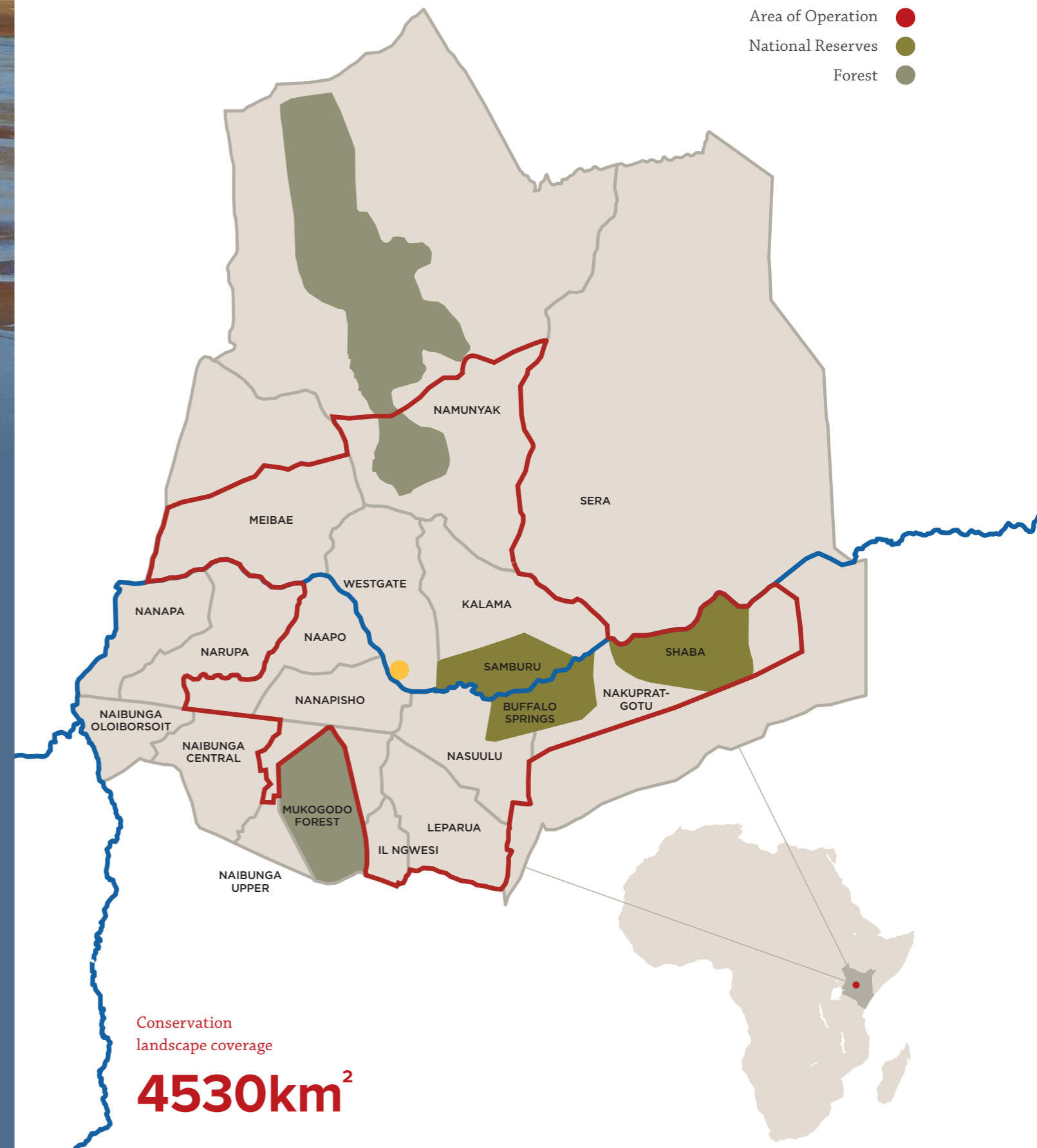
Foundation for International Aid to Animals

All Ewaso Forum Members

Endangered Wildlife Trust

OUR CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE

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





Ewaso Lions

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San Francisco, CA 94107.

Make cheques out to Wildlife Conservation Network with a note indicating Ewaso Lions.

Please include your address for the mailing of tax information. WCN gives 100% of your donation directly to Ewaso Lions.