

2025

Annual Report



EWASO
LIONS

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% Kenyan 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

Evanson Kariuki
Education Manager

Evelyn Oduor
Operations & People's Manager

Munteli Lalparasoroi
Mama Simba Manager

Matthew Wachira
Research Manager

Elijah Lengaina
Camp Manager

Laikos Letupukwa
Lion Manager

Mercy Maina
Finance Manager

Arzina Bhanjee
Finance Director

With deep gratitude, we thank Arzina for her years of commitment and contribution to Ewaso Lions and wish her a fulfilling and well-earned retirement.

A Landmark Year for Ewaso Lions

Because of your support, 2025 was a year of growth for our lions, our community partnerships, and a new generation of conservationists.

1,647

Invasive Plants Removed

We cleared 1,647 Mathenge trees (*Prosopis juliflora*), recovering critical habitat for lions and indigenous plants. This invasive species chokes out indigenous vegetation and degrades grazing land.

27

Warriors Engaged

27 warriors joined our Warrior Camp, exploring their role as protectors of both community welfare and natural heritage.

1,920

Animals Protected

We vaccinated 1,920 domestic animals against rabies and canine distemper, protecting these highly valued animals while preventing disease spread to wildlife. These veterinary interventions strengthen the bond between people and wildlife.

47

Livestock Compensation Claims Supported

We assisted 47 community members in filing livestock loss claims with the Kenya Wildlife Service, providing transport and reducing the economic impact of living alongside carnivores.

7

Lion Kids Camps Hosted

We welcomed 176 children from neighbouring Conservancies to 7 Camps, nurturing their connection to wildlife and conservation values.

3

Lions Equipped with GPS Collars

3 lions now wear tracking collars, providing essential data to strengthen our conservation strategies. Real-time location data helps us monitor lion movements, identify human-wildlife conflict hotspots, and respond quickly to protect both lions and livestock.

640

Community Members Reached

Through Kura's Pride, we connected with 640 individuals, building conservation support across the region. Our Domestic Animal Mobile Veterinary Unit brings animal welfare education directly to communities, supporting dialogue and understanding.

6

Lion Cubs Thriving in Nanai's Pride

All six of Nanai's grandcubs, born in 2024, are alive and thriving across our landscape. Their survival signals a healthy, stable lion population and demonstrates that our community-led conservation approach is creating safe conditions for lions to raise their young successfully.

36

Elders Taken on Camel Husbandry Learning Trips

The camel husbandry learning trips brought together 36 male participants from Westgate Community Conservancy, building connections between communities and strengthening the vital link between proper animal husbandry and peaceful coexistence with lions.

116

Lion Sightings

Our monitoring teams logged 116 sightings throughout the year, evidence of successful conservation and a flourishing population with five prides sharing the landscape with communities who have chosen continued coexistence.

96

Lion Habitat Recovery Days

The Mama Simba programme conducted 96 habitat recovery days, maintaining grass enclosures and nurturing the recovery of indigenous trees throughout lion territories, creating healthier ecosystems that support lions, prey species, and local communities alike.



Highlights From the Team



Shivani

We were honoured this year to be invited to give the keynote speech at the 15th Carnivore Conference hosted by the Kenya Wildlife Service after being recognised as being 'an outstanding project in community-led conservation'.



Evanson

For the better part of 2025, we were busy laying the groundwork and commencing the construction of the Lion Kids Camp base. This experience has taught us a lot of patience. We will be reopening in early 2026 - stay tuned!



Jeneria

Our new camel husbandry programme has led to an almost immediate reduction in conflict between camels and lions. The camel husbandry learning trips have led to quick impact already! We have noticed conflict between lions and people has reduced, and our elders are taking more ownership over looking after camels and training them. I am excited to see what more we can do to reduce conflict further.



Grace

I was honoured to give presentations about Ewaso Lions after going through intense training on public speaking. I was also so happy with the Leadership and Management Training that I received - it made me feel proud because women in the community have been empowered with new knowledge.



Letupukwa

I have two special moments this year. Collaring three lions has made it easier to monitor their movements, and I was this year's recipient of the Houston Zoo's Wildlife Warrior Award.



Toby

26 signs going up! We had very productive meetings working with our partners, the Kenya National Highways Authority, who approved signage to be placed along the highway where wildlife mortality is high, to encourage road users to slow down.



Nanai's Legacy Thrives

2025 was an extraordinary year, marked by the sight of six young cubs tumbling over one another in play — descendants of Nanai, one of Samburu's most cherished lionesses.

Late in 2024, Nanai's Pride welcomed seven cubs into the world. Though we grieved the loss of one, the six survivors are now thriving beyond our expectations.

At just over a year old, these cubs are mastering the art of survival. We have watched them move confidently between Samburu and Buffalo Springs National Reserves, their playful energy transforming into focused hunting behaviour.

One October morning brought relief to our team: the pride had successfully brought down a young elephant that had separated from its

herd. For the cubs who had appeared worryingly thin just weeks before, this massive kill was more than a meal; it was a turning point.

Every sighting of Nanai's Pride in 2025 has provided crucial data on pride health, movement patterns, and survival strategies. But it has also proven that our community-led conservation approach is working, protecting not just this pride but also the other four prides we monitor in this landscape. These lions thrive because local communities, rangers, and conservation partners have embraced them as an essential part of the landscape.



Spotting the Kalama Pride

When the heavy rains swept across our landscape in early 2025, they brought life to the grasslands, but also washed away lion tracks and turned monitoring into a daily challenge.

Week after week, our team searched. Early morning patrols. Long days scanning the horizon. No sign of the Kalama Pride.

Then, after weeks of persistent searching, the breakthrough moment arrived. There they were: the Kalama Pride, healthy and resilient. And among them, the sight that gave us relief, Neiyo's cub, alive and thriving after months without confirmation. For a team that had spent countless hours wondering about this young lion's fate, seeing that familiar face was overwhelming.

The sightings also revealed changes in pride dynamics. Lesoitoo and Lgejuk, two males from Kalama Pride, have struck out independently, a natural progression we are monitoring closely as they establish their own territories and identities. Ngarsis is also pregnant, and we cannot wait to welcome her new cubs in January 2026.





Lion Kids Camp

Our Commitment to Supporting Young Community Conservation Leaders

In 2025, we hosted 7 Lion Kids Camps, welcoming 176 children who are now rewriting the story of coexistence.

At one of our Camps held in May, 26 young livestock herders from Westgate Community Conservancy boarded a vehicle for their first-ever safari. Despite living near Samburu National Reserve, none had ever seen the wildlife roaming their homeland in a positive light. For them, wild animals meant danger: lions that attacked livestock, elephants that chased people.

By the final day, every child could list ways to protect livestock from predators, such as strengthening livestock enclosures, using guard dogs, and taking specific actions to conserve wildlife in their communities.

100%

Now believe wildlife brings more benefits than problems (up from 42%).

100%

Felt responsible for protecting wildlife after the Camp. Before Camp, this was only 4%.

58%

Of children wanted MORE lions in their area. An increase from 38%.

100%

Agreed that killing wild animals is "very bad".

Mama Simba

Recovering Lion Habitat, One Tree at a Time

In 2025, the Mama Simba programme conducted 96 habitat recovery days, removing the invasive *Prosopis juliflora* (Mathenge) trees that choke out native vegetation, destroy grazing land, and eliminate the cover lions need for hunting and shelter.

The Lokeres (grass enclosures) managed by Mama Simba are no longer bare ground. They are now frequented by elephants and Grevy's zebras at night, and serve as "cow hospitals" during the day - where recovering livestock can graze on lush vegetation, even during dry seasons. Indigenous grass seeds planted in carefully dug bunds are revegetating bare soil, rebuilding ecosystems that support both wildlife and community livelihoods.

THE NUMBERS BEHIND THE TRANSFORMATION

1,647

Mathenge trees uprooted by hand, one stubborn root system at a time.

8

Acres of traditional grass enclosures (Lokeres) now thriving with indigenous vegetation.

100+

Semi-circular bunds were dug to capture precious rainwater in our semi-arid landscape.

Kura's Pride

Where Healthy Domestic Animals Means Safer Lions

In landscapes where people and predators share the same space, a single livestock loss can mean the difference between tolerance and retaliation.

That is why our Community Animal Health Initiative (CAHI) does not just protect domestic animals, it protects lions.

Through our Domestic Animal Mobile Veterinary Unit, we vaccinated 1,920 domestic animals against rabies and canine distemper in 2025, preventing deadly diseases from spreading between domestic animals and wildlife populations.

*The Community Animal Health Initiative is a partnership with Samburu County Government, VetinWild, Animal Care Centre and Foundation for International Aid to Animals.

322

Clinical treatments provided to domestic animals across the landscape.

45

Animals treated for predator attacks and other emergencies.

62

Population management services delivered to maintain healthy and thriving dog populations.

640

Community members reached with education and awareness on the importance of responsible animal ownership.

Warrior Watch

Building a Legacy of Conservation Leadership Across Generations

Since launching in 2010, our Warrior Watch programme has been independently evaluated three times to measure its impact.

This latest 2025 evaluation was particularly significant: with a new generation of warriors now at the forefront, we seek to assess how the programme is building a legacy across generations to continue supporting human-wildlife coexistence. The evaluation reached 81 community members across 23 locations and included focus group discussions with warriors involved since 2021, documenting dramatic intergenerational shifts:

The independent evaluation concluded that Warrior Watch represents a robust, scalable, and culturally appropriate model for community-led conservation. By working within existing social structures, we have developed a leadership succession pathway where warriors identify and nurture new conservation leaders from within their own communities.

100%

of warriors reported that the programme effectively addresses critical challenges: livestock protection, grazing safety, and human-lion conflict management.

23

Surveyed locations reported more frequent and timely reporting of lion sightings and predation incidents.



Increased community tolerance toward lions, with a notable transition from retaliatory killing to viewing lions as an endangered species worth protecting.



Strengthened traditional warrior roles, with participants now seen as conservation champions and trusted change agents in their communities.

“Amazing in its responsiveness to local needs.”

Was how one evaluation participant described the programme.



From Cattle to Camels

Climate change is transforming Samburu. We are ensuring communities and lions can adapt together.

For generations, the Samburu have been cattle people. But severe droughts are forcing a dramatic shift: communities are replacing cattle with camels, animals far more resilient to climate change.

The problem? The Samburu did not know how to herd camels. And both communities and lions were paying the price.

Camels were being lost to lion predation at alarming rates. Unlike cattle, which Samburu herders understood instinctively, camels require different techniques, training and specialised knowledge. The herding methods perfected over generations simply did not translate.

These camels had no fear of predators. They would walk directly into lions, making them easy prey. For communities already struggling with climate-driven changes in their livelihoods, every lost camel was devastating. Conservation efforts were needed to reduce conflict and support the long-term survival of lions across the landscape.

In 2025, we launched comprehensive camel husbandry learning trips, taking 36 Samburu elders from Westgate Community Conservancy north to Marsabit to learn from the Rendille, who have centuries of experience managing camels in lion country.



36

Participants trained in specialised camel husbandry techniques.

94%

Were completely new to camel herding.

22

Elders identified camel herding techniques as their key takeaway.

21

Elders highlighted grazing and movement patterns as particularly valuable.

4.28/5

Post-training confidence in managing camels surged from 3.25 to 4.28 (on a 5-point scale).

Training spanned three generations:

22% aged 20-34 years;

42% aged 35-49 years;

36% aged 50-65 years.



The training covered camel herding techniques, grazing patterns, disease recognition, and the crucial role of elders in pastoral societies. Participants identified enhanced skills, reduced carnivore conflict, and community benefits as the most valuable outcomes.

“The camel husbandry learning trips have led to quick impact already! We have noticed conflict between lions and people has reduced, and our elders are taking more ownership over looking after camels and training them. I am excited to see what more we can do to reduce conflict further.”

Community Conservation Director, Jeneria Lekilelei

Our vision is to train 100 elders who will become teachers and leaders, passing knowledge to other elders across the landscape. Participants have already requested additional training sessions and recommended including youth in upcoming programmes, ensuring this expertise spans generations.



Thank You for Your Support – Ashe Oleng

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

In 2025, 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)
- Kenya National Highways Authority
- Wildlife Conservation Network
- World Women Work
- Whitley Fund for Nature
- Zoological Society of London
- San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance
- Samburu County Department of Veterinary Services
- Grevy's Zebra Trust
- Save the Elephants
- Northern Rangelands Trust
- Centre for Ecosystem Restoration - Kenya
- Animal Care Centre
- Foundation for International Aid to Animals
- All Ewaso Forum Members
- Conserveability Pathways
- Houston Zoo
- VetinWild

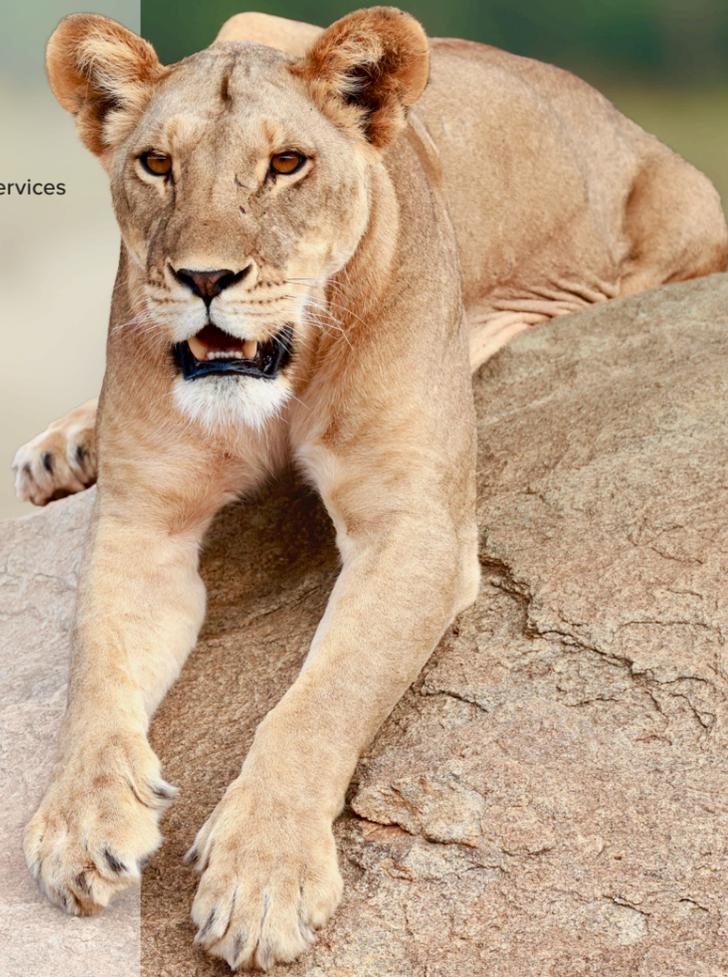
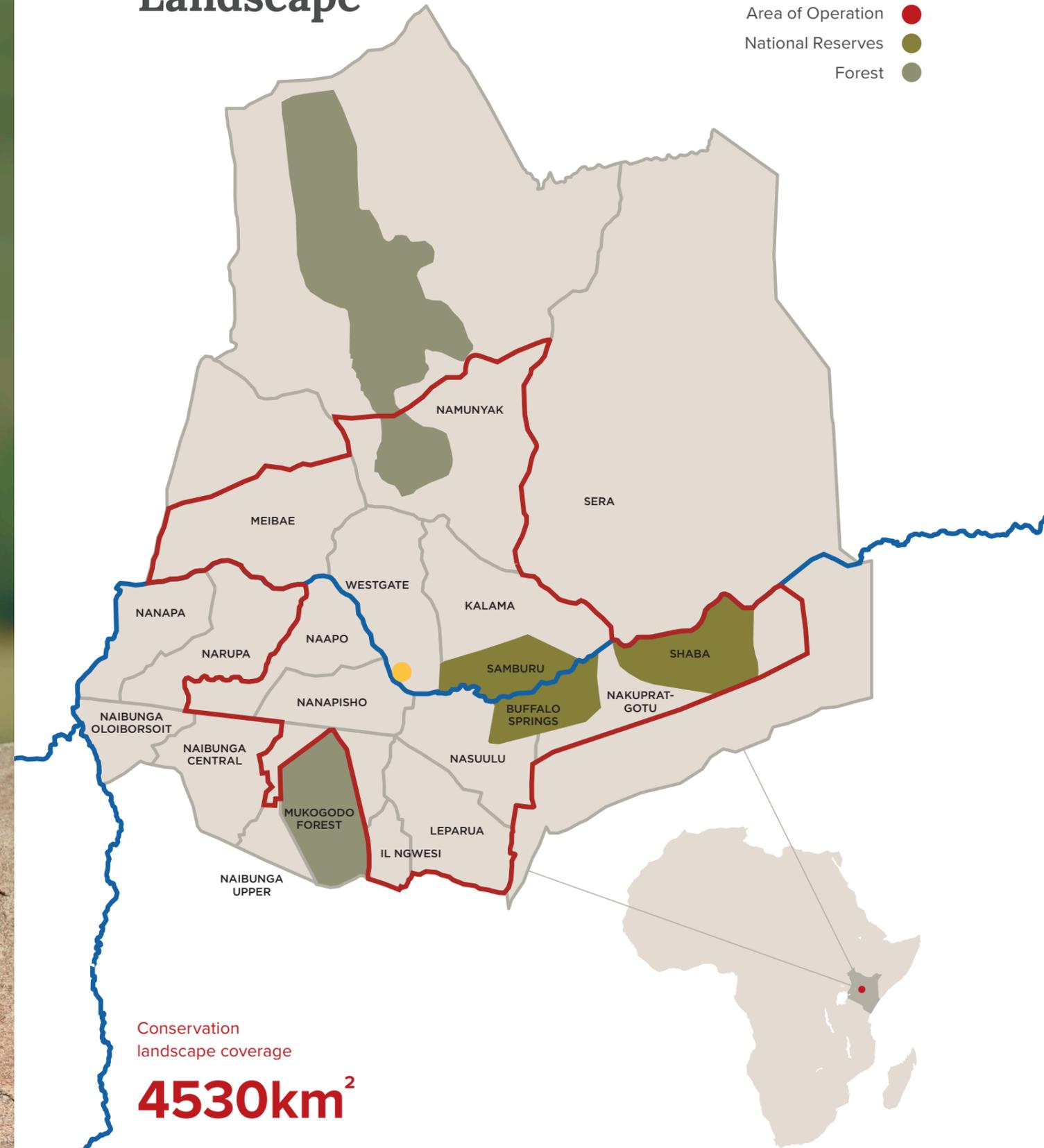


Photo: A lioness from Nanai's Pride resting atop Lion Rock, Samburu National Reserve © Nicole Yde-Poulsen

Our Conservation Landscape

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





Ewaso Lions

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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.