



In the Warrior Watch programme, traditional knowledge meets modern tools. With each scan, the man with the binoculars is not just looking for lions, but he's also watching over his people's livestock, preserving peace, and protecting Kenya's last wild lions

# A Story of Coexistence in

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# Northern Kenya



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ooking through the lens at the northern Kenyan horizon, we don't just see wildlife. We see stories of transformation, of people reclaiming their connection to the land, and of lions finding safety in places once marked by conflict. In this landscape, lions face mounting threats: habitat fragmentation, human-wildlife conflict, and the steady disappearance of prey due to land degradation. But amid these challenges, we also witness hope.

Through community-led conservation, these struggles are being met with resilience, and continued coexistence is slowly becoming possible.

We share the journeys of two powerful community-led conservation movements, Warrior Watch and Mama Simba (Mother of Lions), anchored by Ewaso Lions in the heart of Samburu, northern Kenya. These are leading examples of how conservation can be led by the community. The Samburu warriors, men who were once seen only as potential threats to wildlife, are today the protectors.

The programme idea came from a Samburu warrior himself, Jeneria Lekilelei. Armed not with weapons, but with smartphones, binoculars, notebooks, and a resolve. Today they

## FROM THE FIELD



### **Above and right :**

Our Mama Simba Manager, Munteli, first woman from a village to drive in Samburu. Mama Simba was also her brainchild (together with Mparasaroi)

Mama Simba members digging water pans along the dry Ewaso Nyiro River bed, to supply water at home and even for the wildlife around the area, supporting wildlife during the dry season





Mama Simba members involved in restoration efforts in the landscape



track lion movements, alert herders of approaching lions, and prevent livestock loss. Today they traverse thorny terrain, sometimes on foot, sometimes by vehicle, covering hundreds of kilometres not for glory, but to keep the peace. They've moved from the periphery to the centre of the conservation story.


In 2013, a group of Samburu women from Westgate Conservancy approached Ewaso Lions, expressing a desire to be actively involved in conservation.

Their request led to the founding of Mama Simba, a pioneering initiative that empowers women to protect lions, educate their communities, and advocate for

continued coexistence. These women are not just mothers; they are matriarchs of change.

They bead, they teach, they monitor lions, and they meet drought with dignity by growing grass and digging water pans for wildlife. Their mantra, "bringing back wildlife to women," isn't a slogan. It's a return to balance. 🐾

## FROM THE FIELD



As part of Ewaso Lions' Warrior Watch programme, these men walk in rhythm with the land, bridging ancient traditions with modern conservation. Each step across this rugged terrain is a step towards continued coexistence

