



2026–2028

Strategic Plan Summary

*Community-Led Conservation
in Northern Kenya*



INTRODUCTION

Ewaso Lions is a Kenyan-led not-for-profit organisation that believes conservation only succeeds when communities are in the lead. Across northern Kenya's Samburu-Isiolo landscape, warriors, elders, women and youth are the conservation force, running programmes like Warrior Watch, Mama Simba, Lion Governors, Lion Kids Camp and Kura's Pride that protect lions and livelihoods together. Ewaso Lions provides the science, resources and institutional capacity that make that leadership effective.

That model, nearly two decades in the making, is now the foundation of a growing global Community-Led Conservation (CLC) movement. With like-minded partners, Ewaso Lions is leading that movement, codifying what it has learned and sharing it.

Northern Kenya faces mounting pressure from the combined effects of climate change, habitat fragmentation and rising human-wildlife conflict. Drought reduces the availability of natural prey and drives carnivores toward livestock. For a pastoralist family, the loss of even a single animal can be devastating to food security and household income. One challenge is growing in urgency: the widespread shift from cattle to camels, driven by drought and changing livelihoods, is creating a new and significant source of conflict as lions increasingly target these animals. Addressing it is a direct priority of this strategy.

The 2026–2028 Strategic Plan is a roadmap for scaling community leadership, integrating rigorous science, drawing on cultural traditions and strengthening institutional capacity, so that people and lions continue to share this landscape.

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 continued coexistence between people and wildlife, through a Community-Led Conservation model that places communities at the centre of every decision, programme and outcome.



Ewaso Lions’ values have been shaped by the team and communities that built this organisation over nearly two decades. They describe not just how we work, but who we are.



Community Ownership

Conservation works when communities own it and are the primary decision-makers, planners and stewards of their own landscape.



Commitment

To our communities, to each other, and to the mission, consistently and especially when things get hard.



Courage and Resilience

Working at the interface of people and wildlife, in a landscape shaped by conflict and climate change, demands both.



Evidence-based action

Decisions are grounded in both scientific and traditional data.



Responsibility

Every member of the team, and every community member we work with, takes responsibility for outcomes.

OUR IMPACT

Two decades of community-led conservation in the Samburu-Isiolo landscape.

50+

Known individual lions in the landscape, a threefold recovery since 2007

22

Cubs born between 2023 and 2025, signalling a stable and growing population

145

Lion conflict cases responded to by Warrior Watch and Lion Governors, 2023-2025

144+

Livestock rescued, saving communities over KES 2.7 million (USD 20,800)

1,589

Children reached through Lion Kids Camps

5,026

Dogs and cats vaccinated, alongside 3,136 domestic animals treated

4 to 65

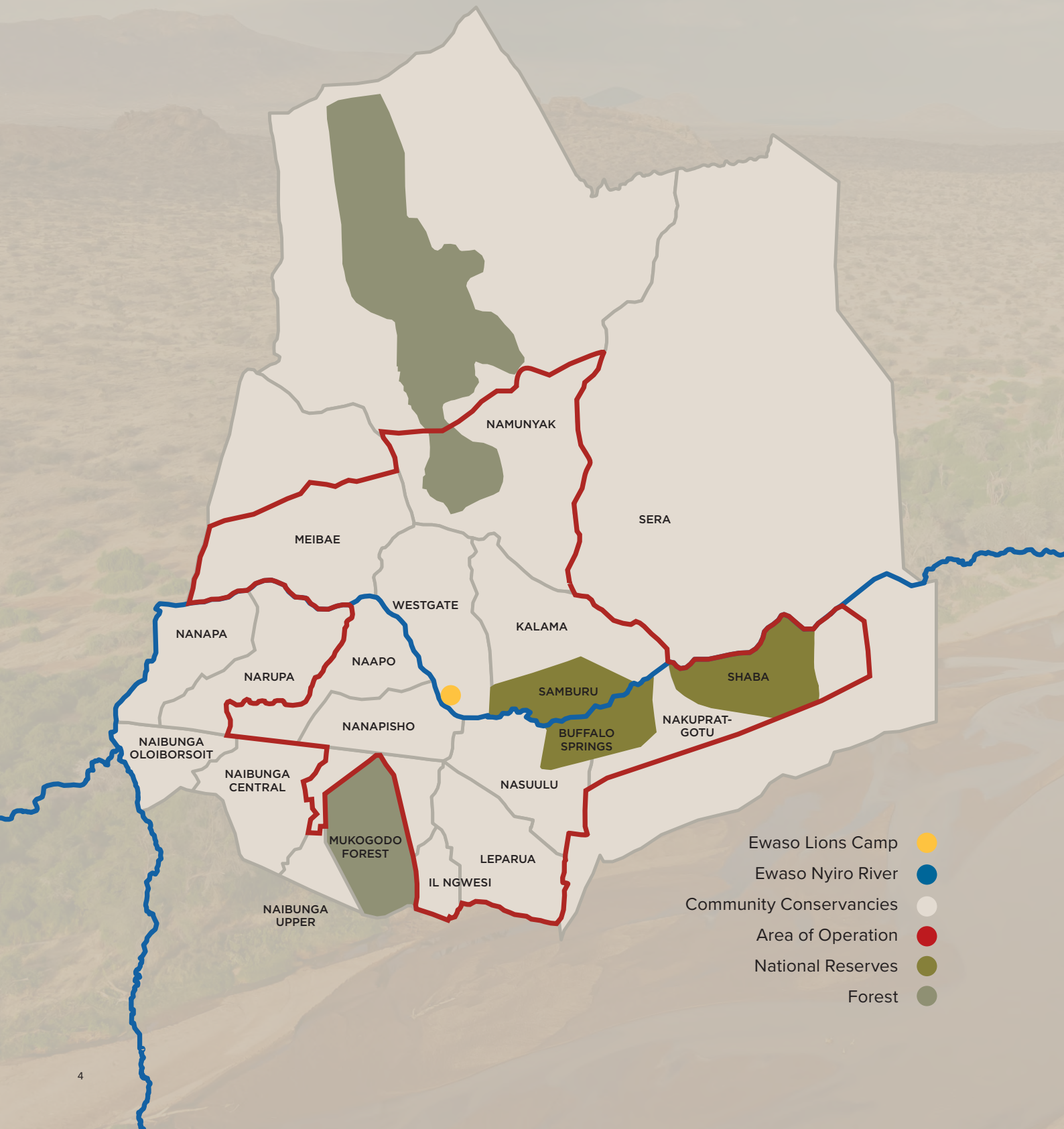
Growth in the Ewaso Lions team over 20 years

2023

Awarded the Whitley Gold Award, one of conservation’s most prestigious honours

WHERE WE WORK

The Samburu–Isiolo landscape of northern Kenya, across 11 Community Conservancies and 3 National Reserves.. This is a pastoralist landscape where communities live alongside a small but growing lion population, and where national and international policy increasingly recognises community-led conservation as central to conservation success.



DEVELOPING OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

This strategy was shaped by the entire Ewaso Lions team, together with the warriors, elders, women and young people who represent the communities at the heart of this work. It is not a document written about communities, but one developed with them and by them, reflecting their knowledge, their priorities and their vision for the landscape they call home.

The plan sets out how each pillar’s activities are expected to produce results: a chain of assumptions that can be tested, monitored and adapted through the organisation’s Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework. Progress is reviewed quarterly and annually, with a mid-term review in 2027 and a full evaluation in 2028.



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Ewaso Lions’ Theory of Change rests on one core assumption: if communities lead conservation, livelihoods are protected, and decisions are informed by both science and culture, then coexistence between people and lions is sustainable. Nearly two decades of practice in the Samburu–Isiolo landscape have proven this to be true.



5 PILLARS DRIVE OUR CONSERVATION WORK

Running across all five pillars is the Community-Led Conservation (CLC) model, the principle that conservation succeeds when communities plan, lead and own it.

Each pillar expresses a different dimension of that model. Research and Monitoring generates the evidence that supports community action. Community Engagement and Coexistence turns that evidence into practice. Education and Youth Engagement grows from the trust this builds. One Health reduces the pressures that drive retaliation. Organisational Sustainability is the enabling foundation for all of it.

Pillar 1: Research & Monitoring

GOAL

Generate rigorous scientific data to inform conservation actions, improve coexistence strategies and ensure evidence-based decision-making.

PROGRAMMES	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	KEY INDICATORS
Human–Lion Conflict Monitoring & Analysis	• Generate robust spatial and temporal evidence on human–lion conflict to inform targeted mitigation, recording, verifying and mapping every incident using standardised protocols. • Maintain a long-term understanding of lion population dynamics, movement, behaviour and habitat use, deploying four GPS collars annually on priority lions. • Strengthen evidence-based decision-making through an integrated MEL system, community perception surveys and interactive dashboards built on SMART, CyberTracker and EarthRanger.	• Lion population trend, stable or increasing • Conflict incidents recorded and mapped each year • Number of collared lions tracked • Corridor and connectivity plans agreed • Community perception scores
Lion Population Monitoring & Ecology		
Ecosystem Health, Prey & Habitat Monitoring		
Landscape Connectivity & Infrastructure Research		
MEL & Knowledge Management		
Conservation Technology & Data Systems		
Applied Research & Innovation		

Pillar 2: Community Engagement & Coexistence

GOAL

Support communities to develop and lead conservation programmes through the Community-Led Conservation model, reducing human–lion conflict and promoting coexistence.

PROGRAMMES	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	KEY INDICATORS
Warrior Watch	• Strengthen the capacity of community warriors to serve as effective frontline conservation leaders, improving conflict prevention, lion monitoring and rapid response (Warrior Watch). • Support women as conservation leaders by strengthening their capacity for habitat recovery, preserving cultural knowledge, improving livelihoods and influencing community attitudes towards coexistence (Mama Simba). • Strengthen the role of traditional governance institutions in conservation decision-making and conflict resolution and reduce livestock losses through improved camel and livestock husbandry (Lion Governors).	• Retaliatory killings per year • Conflict incidents and response times • Livestock lost to predation • Habitat area recovered (ha) and tree survival rates • Number of community members engaged in camel husbandry programme
Mama Simba		
Lion Governors		
Community Conflict Mitigation & Sustainable Camel Husbandry		
CLC Capacity & Governance		



Pillar 3: Education & Youth Engagement

GOAL

Inspire and equip a new generation of community-led conservation leaders through environmental education, bursaries and pathways into conservation careers.

PROGRAMMES	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	KEY INDICATORS
Lion Kids Camp Jeremy Lucas Education Fund Youth Leadership & Conservation Careers	• Inspire children and young people through high-quality, experiential environmental education that connects wildlife, culture and pastoral livelihoods, delivering at least one Lion Kids Camp every month. • Increase equitable access to quality education and create clear pathways for young people from pastoralist communities to become conservation professionals, through bursaries, mentoring and an active alumni network. • Develop a pipeline of community-led conservation practitioners by equipping young people with leadership and technical skills through internships, apprenticeships and work placements.	• Number of children engaged • Camps delivered • Bursaries awarded • Internships and placements secured • Change in knowledge and attitudes among participants



Pillar 4: One Health (Kura’s Pride)

GOAL

Safeguard domestic animal and human health to indirectly protect wildlife by reducing disease risks and strengthening tolerance for carnivores.

PROGRAMMES	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	KEY INDICATORS
Veterinary Services & Animal Health delivery Disease Surveillance & One Health Monitoring Community Education & One Health Awareness One Health Partnerships & Applied Research	• Improve the health and welfare of domestic animals to reduce disease transmission and minimise conflict, delivering biannual vaccination campaigns and expanding mobile veterinary services into underserved Conservancies. • Strengthen surveillance, early detection and coordinated response to diseases affecting domestic animals, people and wildlife, working jointly with government veterinary services. • Increase community understanding of the connections between human, domestic animal and wildlife health through education campaigns, film and outreach.	• Number of domestic animals treated • Proportion of dogs and cats vaccinated • Outbreaks detected and jointly responded to • One Health education sessions delivered • Expansion of Kura’s Pride to other Conservancies



Pillar 5: Organisational Sustainability

GOAL

Build a resilient, well-governed organisation capable of long-term impact, and lead the global Community-Led Conservation movement.

PROGRAMMES	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	KEY INDICATORS
Fundraising & Financial Sustainability	- Secure diversified, sustainable and flexible funding, including conservation finance mechanisms, reserve and endowment funds, and the 20th Anniversary Campaign. - Build a high-performing, inclusive and accountable organisation through strong governance, leadership succession and investment in staff wellbeing and professional development. - Position Ewaso Lions as a global centre of excellence for Community-Led Conservation, convening the CLC Conference in 2026 and establishing the CLC Resource Hub.	- Funds raised from new sources and major gifts secured - Staff retention and succession plans in place - Community conservation leaders trained - CLC practitioners reached globally
Communications, Storytelling & Brand Leadership		
People, Leadership & Governance		
Operations, Finance & Organisational Systems		
Infrastructure & Operational Support		
Strategic Partnerships & Collaboration		
CLC Leadership & Global Influence		

WHAT IT WILL TAKE

Nearly twenty years of work have proved that this model succeeds. What it now needs are the resources to reach the whole landscape, and the stability to keep operating through drought years, election years and the years in between.

USD 7.3 million

over three years, 2026 to 2028

Across five strategic pillars and the 3 National Reserves and 11 Conservancies in which Ewaso Lions works.



Where that investment goes

Communities in the lead

What it sustains

Warrior Watch patrols, Mama Simba habitat recovery, Lion Governor mediation and camel husbandry training, across every priority Conservancy.

A new generation

What it sustains

A Lion Kids Camp every month, bursaries and mentoring, and internships that turn herder children into conservation leaders.

An organisation built to last

What it sustains

Skilled and supported staff, strong governance, an endowment fund, and the CLC Resource Hub that carries this model to practitioners worldwide.

Evidence that targets the work

What it sustains

Collars, conflict monitoring, prey and habitat surveys, and the data systems that send teams to the right place at the right time.

Healthy animals, fewer grievances

What it sustains

Vaccination campaigns and mobile veterinary services reaching underserved Conservancies, and the disease surveillance behind them.

HOW TO PARTNER WITH US

Institutional funders

Foundations, international NGOs and conservation funds, supported by robust monitoring systems and a clear results framework.

Corporate and tourism partners

Safari operators, wildlife-focused brands and companies with conservation commitments, through financial and in-kind support.

Partnership enquiries:
info@ewasolions.org

Individual supporters

A US 501(c)(3) entity, established in 2026, will enable US donors to make tax-deductible contributions, helping Ewaso Lions expand and diversify its individual donor base.

Endowment and legacy giving

The 20th anniversary campaign in 2027 launches a formal endowment fund, building income that outlasts any single grant cycle.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we approach our 20th anniversary, we are proud of how far we have come. Together, we have seen lion populations recover, livelihoods better protected, and our team grow from just four people to sixty-five. We are also developing a community-led conservation model that is to be shared beyond Kenya. We remain committed to advancing community-led conservation, and to supporting a new generation of conservation practitioners, and expanding this model to landscapes far beyond northern Kenya.





Ewaso Lions

P.O. Box 14996, Nairobi 00800, Kenya

info@ewasolions.org

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TO DONATE IN KENYA:

LIPA na M-PESA (Paybill)

Ewaso Conservation Company

Business number: **542542**

Account number: **30166**

CHEQUE PAYABLE TO:

Ewaso Conservation Company Limited.

Email: **accounts@ewasolions.org**

for further information.

DONATING ONLINE:

Please visit ewasolions.org/donate

GIVING BY CHEQUE (IN THE U.S.):

Please mail cheques to:

Wildlife Conservation Network

209 Mississippi Street,

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.