



AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

2023 Annual Report



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“African-led conservation is a mindset that, like wildlife, transcends human boundaries. There is room for everyone to join us on this important journey.

Kaddu Sebunya
AWF CEO



 The Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) has 4 main goals towards a vision of living in harmony with nature, with 23 targets to meet by 2030 to ensure progress. AWF works on multiple levels to mobilize collective effort towards the targets in line with our human rights-based approach to project implementation on the ground.

BUILDING A FUTURE WHERE PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE THRIVE

Since 1961, AWF has been Africa’s conservation organization. We are uniquely positioned to serve as a pragmatic and inclusive partner to Africa’s leaders and people in achieving sustainable economic development in balance with nature.

Influencing a Changing Continent

Africa’s rapid economic growth is a defining global story. But that growth does not have to come at the expense of our natural systems, which support not just wildlife, but also people. Securing these systems requires bold action on behalf of Africa’s leadership. That is where AWF comes in.

For more than 60 years, AWF has understood that effective conservation must be reinforced by complementary economic development to enable the survival of wildlife, wild lands, and their associated economic and ecosystem service contributions. The issues driving large-scale ecological changes in Africa today are complex—and they all put wildlife at risk.

The African Development Bank has identified multiple forces at play. They include drivers on the continent such as political trends, population growth, urbanization, consumption patterns, the sustained increase in business investments, and infrastructure development. These are complicated by external drivers, including climate change, global macroeconomic health, and the global appetite for primary commodities. Africa holds 30 percent of the Earth’s mineral deposits. The demand for these minerals and other natural resources such as oil, timber, and precious metals continues to escalate. The world is also increasingly looking to Africa for food production, a major cause of habitat loss. Our wildlife is further threatened by global demand for illegal wildlife products. From ivory to rhino horn, pangolin scales, lion bone, and more, Africa is being robbed by international criminals.

In this 2023 Annual Report, you will see how AWF, wherever possible, takes a supportive role in assisting African institutions, governments, and leaders across society to plan and implement conservation initiatives that promote wildlife in balance with development. We do this through an integrated approach with complementary strategies designed to bring conservation into decision-making, promote sustainable coexistence between people and wildlife, and protect wildlife at risk.



AWF’s Strategic Vision in Action

The fiscal year 2023 can best be characterized by one word: **momentum**. As the world emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, AWF’s strategy of linking conservation to progress met fertile ground. Africa was eager to define a more sustainable path forward, one where we, as Africans, take responsibility for defining the future of conservation on the continent. AWF’s emphasis on leadership and on ensuring that conservation creates opportunities for people allow us to influence important decisions in unique and powerful ways at a pivotal time.

It began in July 2022, with the Africa Protected Areas Congress in Kigali, Rwanda. This landmark global gathering defined **a new conservation agenda for the continent**.

In the following months, we strengthened powerful pan-African networks of leaders in government and civil society and increased our investments in young policymakers and managers through professional fellowship programs. As a result of direct interventions by these networks and a cadre of AWF policy fellows, AWF contributed to defining Africa’s position in the United Nations’ strategy for halting global biodiversity loss, the Global Biodiversity Framework, which guides the world’s policies and investments in protecting nature.

While influencing global policies and investments is a high-level example, we invested in conservation leadership across society, because we know that for conservation in Africa to succeed, it must become an intrinsic part of how Africans define growth. People making choices about infrastructure, economic investment, and energy, whether they are making them for a village or as part of national policy, need to understand how their decisions and nature are linked. And people advocating for conservation need pathways to influence decision-makers. *You can learn more about how we reached decision-makers and influenced Africa’s conservation agenda in the **Leading for Wildlife** section of this report [Read on page 4].*

Theory of Change



The foundation for creating opportunities for people while conserving wildlife starts, literally, at the ground level with something AWF has done for many years—strategic land-use planning. This process defines how land is zoned for use, so that wildlife and people can coexist. It considers parks and other protected and conserved areas, but it also encompasses the land that connects them, providing essential space for wildlife migration and movement. We complement this with strategies that help people and wildlife successfully share space. *Our head of Conservation Strategy’s interview at the start of the **Living with Wildlife** section offers a stark example from the DRC that illustrates why land-use planning is so important to get right [Read on page 12].*

AWF’s investments in leadership and coexistence are grounded in conservation science, which guides how we choose the landscapes where we work, the wildlife species we prioritize, and the wildlife protection strategies we support. FY23 was an encouraging year, with 93% of the wildlife populations we monitor stable or increasing. *Read about some of our FY23 success stories and strategies in the **Caring for Wildlife** section [Read on page 20].*

Learn how AWF’s integrated approach of Leading for Wildlife, Living with Wildlife, and Caring for Wildlife has succeeded in Manyara Ranch, Tanzania:
[AWF.ORG/MANYARA-RANCH-SUCCESS](https://www.awf.org/manyara-ranch-success)

The World Needs Africa

I know those of you outside of Africa are often asked, “Why does conservation in Africa matter to me?” It matters because Africa’s choices have global ramifications. Almost 20% of the 8 billion people on Earth are in Africa. Our cities are growing. Our economies are growing. Demand for our natural assets is growing. And those assets are important to the world, from the rare earth minerals necessary for electric car batteries to the massive Congo Basin rainforest that sequesters more carbon than the Amazon. How we define progress will touch the lives of everyone, regardless of where they live. And it will most certainly define the future of the continent’s wildlife and wild lands.

Africa is changing, quickly. Our work in FY23 drives home how much we have done and how much opportunity there is to do more. That effort requires all of us. African-led conservation is not about leaving anyone out. It is about Africa taking responsibility for the choices we make, being at the table when decisions are being made that affect our fate, and putting people at the center of conservation. It is about driving a continental mindset that values wildlife and wild lands as an essential asset for future generations. It is a mindset, like wildlife, that transcends national boundaries. There is room for everyone to join us on this important journey. Thank you to all of you who support our work. We can travel far, together.

Sincerely,

Kaddu Sebunya
AWF Chief Executive Officer

Leading for Wildlife

AWF works to link conservation to progress and influence decision-making in favor of wildlife. To do this, we invest in and support leadership across all levels of society. **AWF’s Vice President of Global Leadership, Fred Kumah**, explains how we did it in FY23.

Fred, how does AWF view “leadership,” and what does it look like in practice?

We view leadership within the African context as African voices owning and shaping the conservation agenda on the continent. Our premise is that when Africans own and lead that agenda, conservation efforts will have the societal buy-in necessary to be sustainable in the long run. In practice, this means deliberately creating opportunities for individuals and stakeholder groups to coordinate on issues and find common ground.

At the policy level, it includes facilitating and mobilizing formal networks of local civil society organizations, governmental protected area leaders, and African youth to influence and drive decision-making. At the programmatic level, we partner with governments and businesses to integrate nature into their value chains, support microenterprises, and train youth and women in sustainable livelihoods. *Read examples of these, including our role in Zimbabwe’s landmark Biodiversity Economy Report, later in this report.*



“The African Protected Areas Congress powerfully demonstrated AWF’s strength as conveners and thought leaders around the concept of African-led conservation.

FRED KUMAH
Vice President of Global Leadership

We also invest directly in promising young African professionals through internships and three different fellowships—one dedicated to policymaking, one to management, and one to conservation filmmaking.

FY23 kicked off with the Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) in Kigali, Rwanda, in July. Can you describe why it was important?

The Africa Protected Areas Congress powerfully demonstrated AWF’s strength as conveners and thought leaders around the concept of African-led conservation and as a driving force in empowering African conservation voices.

It was co-convened by AWF, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the government of Rwanda, bringing together more than 2,400 people, including representatives from 52 African countries. For the first time, there was shared space for Africans—ministers, civil society organizations, youth, Indigenous people and

local communities—to discuss and shape the continent’s conservation agenda. Positioning nature’s value to development and people’s value to nature was a central theme. It resonated in July and has continued to build as a rallying concept across Africa and beyond.

One important outcome of the Congress for AWF was how it strengthened two pan-African networks we helped to establish. The first is the Africa Protected Areas Directors (APAD) network, which played a critical role in developing the themes of the Congress. This membership, which represents Africa’s 8,811 official protected areas—14% of Africa’s total land—has evolved into a dynamic driver of governments’ conservation strategies. Another key network is the African Civil Society Organizations Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA), which gained membership and influence. ACBA was established to help local nonprofits and civil society organizations find common ground and support each other.

Today it is recognized as a key voice for African civil society organizations in the conservation space at both regional and global negotiations like the climate and biodiversity COPs.

The Congress also laid the ground for us to engage with key partners across the conservation and development sectors. Most significant were contacts with Esri, the European Union (EU), the French Development Agency (AFD), the German Ministry of Environment (BMU), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

One of the objectives of AWF’s Global Leadership program is to drive positive policy outcomes for Africa’s biodiversity. What milestones did you mark in FY23?

One of our biggest policy milestones was connecting the pan-African networks we support with the African Group of Negotiators charged with negotiating biodiversity issues for Africa at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15, which took place in Montreal in December 2022.

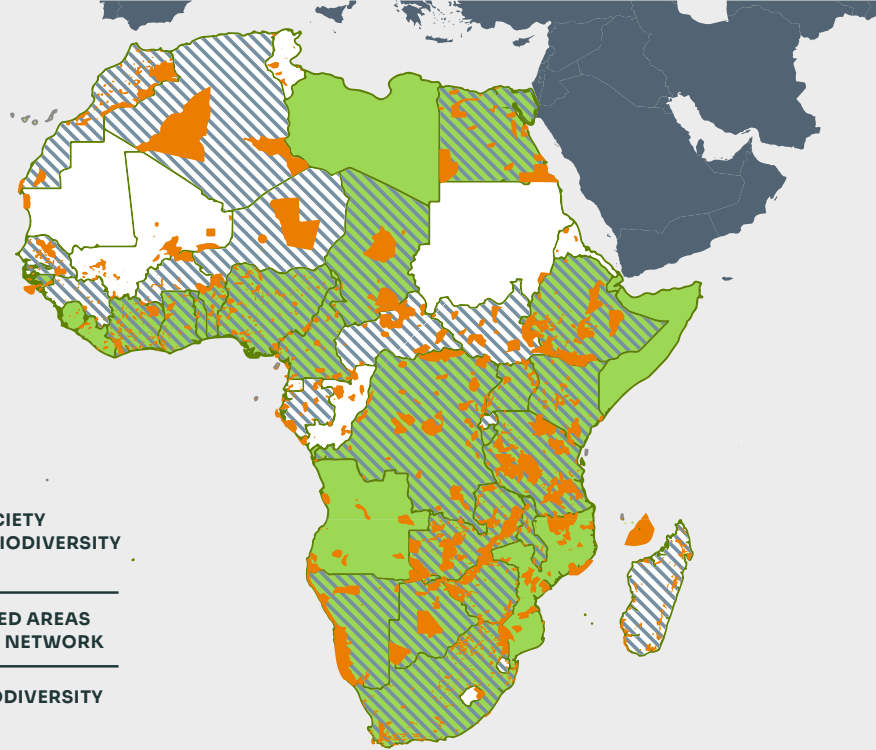
CBD COPs are meetings where global agreements to prevent biodiversity loss are finalized and announced. We helped to bring the negotiators and members of civil society together before the December meeting, which allowed them to find alignment on their goals and positions. This meant Africa came to COP15 with a common voice and shared understanding of priorities. That contributed to two big wins for Africa. One was the acknowledgment that 30x30 needs to consider the rights of Indigenous people and local communities within Africa’s national planning needs. The other was the establishment of

a fund for biodiversity within the Global Environment Facility (GEF), dedicated to delivering on the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Another milestone was at CITES COP19 in Panama in November, where we sought to promote a common African voice based on discussions we facilitated in September at the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in Dakar, Senegal. Our efforts informed the decision to create an African Group of Negotiators for CITES. CITES is very important for determining global responses to how humanity “uses” nature as it provides the framework for regulating international trade in animals and plants among its 184 member countries. Historically, African countries have had divergent national interests, sometimes at the detriment of pan-African representation. This has significantly reduced Africa’s overall influence on the decision-making process. An African Group of Negotiators at CITES will change that dynamic and allow the continent to be represented more cohesively.

What are some of the other ways AWF is mobilizing African conservation voices?

It was a busy year. We relaunched two young professional fellowships, the AWF Charles R. Wall Policy Fellows and Charles R. Wall Leadership and Management Fellows. We also premiered six conservation films made



- AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS BIODIVERSITY ALLIANCE (ACBA)
- AFRICAN PROTECTED AREAS DIRECTORS (APAD) NETWORK
- GLOBAL YOUTH BIODIVERSITY NETWORK (GYBN)



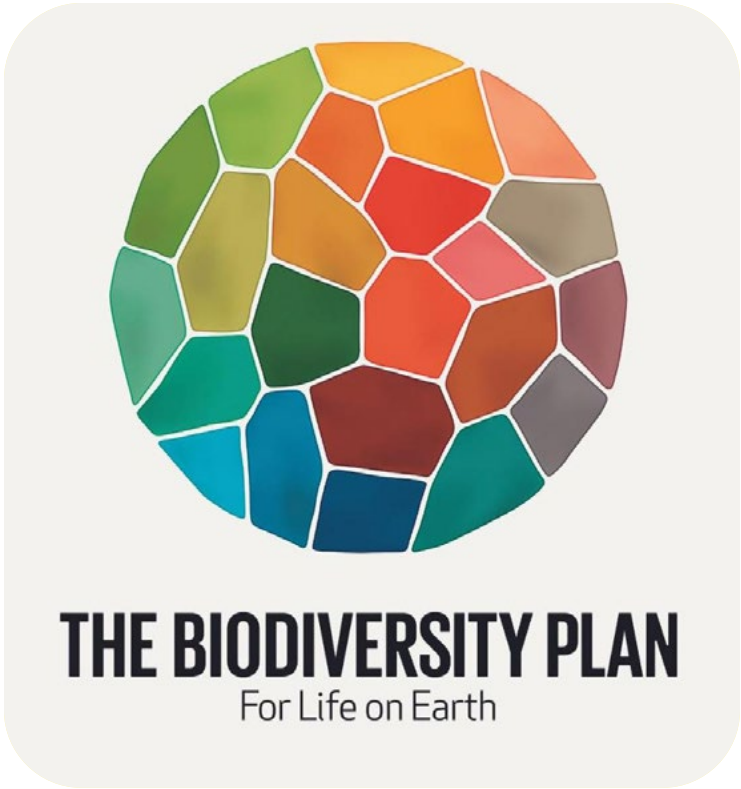
FROM POLICY TO IMPLEMENTATION: AWF AND THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

The United Nations Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was the culmination of a four-year consultation and negotiation process between 196 countries. It is the roadmap for the world to halt and reverse biodiversity loss while supporting the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Framework and subsequent National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans are shaping priority investments for governments, the private sector, and society as a whole. Among the Framework’s various financing sources is the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It is the largest global multilateral funder for biodiversity, distributing more than US \$1 billion annually. In 2022, donor governments committed US \$5.33 billion to the GEF for the next four years, with approximately 30% earmarked for Africa. Included in this is a new GEF-managed fund, the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund, which requires 20% of funding to be allocated directly to Indigenous people and local communities—a positive development for Africa.

AWF contributed to the Framework itself by supporting Africa’s representation at the negotiation table [Read on page 7]. We are now helping to set the course for Africa to meet the Framework’s 2030 targets. This includes ongoing policy work to inform and influence decision-makers at all levels across African society; programmatic interventions on the ground to protect, restore, and ensure the sustainable use of biodiversity; and efforts to engage agents of change, particularly the private sector, in transforming how African decision-makers value and invest in biodiversity.

To see examples of how AWF contributes towards meeting Global Biodiversity Framework targets, look for the 🌍 as you read through this report.

Continue reading at:
[AWF.ORG/AWF-GBF](https://www.awf.org/awf-gbf)



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The Path from APAC to the Global Biodiversity Framework

July 18-23, 2022 | Kigali, Rwanda
Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC)

APAC was the first-ever continent-wide conservation conference organized for Africa, resulting in the **Kigali Call to Action**. AWF co-convened the Congress alongside the Rwandan government and the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

September 12-16, 2022 | Dakar, Senegal
African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)

AMCEN is a forum where African negotiators decide on a common agenda for the continent in order to prepare to represent Africa at global environmental negotiations such as the CBD COP and the UNFCCC COP. AWF brought four policy fellows and two members of ACBA to participate in crucial discussions that influenced recommendations at CITES COP19 and the CBD COP15.

November 6-20, 2022 | Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – COP27

CITES is the international body that regulates the international trade of more than 38,700 species. AWF has participated as an observer since 1989. At COP19, we carried forward recommendations from AMCEN and facilitated the establishment of an African Group of Negotiators for CITES.

November 14-25, 2022 | Panama City, Panama
The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) – COP19

UNFCCC is the international body that assesses climate impacts and makes global commitments to address climate change. With the generous support of the Swedish Government and our Trustees, AWF supported networks of African youth, Indigenous people, local communities, and civil society to participate in COP27.

December 7-19, 2022 | Montreal, Canada
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – COP15

The CBD is an international body of the United Nations that shapes global commitments to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and to fairly and equitably share the benefits of biological life. AWF staff and a group of AWF Charles R. Wall Policy Fellows strengthened Africa’s negotiating positions by connecting African civil society organizations and protected area leaders with the African Group of Negotiators, engaging participants in preparatory dialogues, and supporting interpretation facilities. This resulted in a strong African position in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the international agreement between 196 countries setting global targets to safeguard biodiversity.



YOUTH AS CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

In FY23, two ambitious AWF initiatives, the Charles R. Wall Young African Policy Fellows and the Charles R. Wall Conservation Leadership and Management Fellows, ran concurrently for the first time. Both are professional training programs focused on developing young conservation leaders, one with an emphasis on policymakers and the other with an emphasis on managers. A core element of the programs is fostering collaboration among participants with diverse experiences and backgrounds. The fellowships aim to build appreciation for this diversity and create a network of professionals grounded in the reality of conservation complexities across the continent. Running the programs concurrently provided a valuable opportunity to observe how these two groups of fellows complement each other and work towards common conservation goals.

“We approach programs like the Charles R. Wall fellowships from a place of co-creation with participants,” said Simangele Msweli, Senior Manager, Youth Leadership at AWF. “When people come and engage, it’s not just about listening to what we have to say, it’s an opportunity for them to be heard as well.”

The Wall Fellows made significant contributions to conservation efforts in FY23, both in partnership with AWF (*Read The Path from APAC*

to the Global Biodiversity Framework on page 7) and as individuals inside their own institutions.

One standout story from the program in FY23 is that of a Kenyan Policy Fellow who works for the county government of Taita Taveta as the politically appointed lead on natural resource use and the environment. Although he has a passion for conservation, his professional background is in business. Through AWF’s fellowship, he gained the perspective necessary to successfully take up a leadership role in the conservation policy space, establishing the first county-led coordination platform for environmental players in his county, which is the largest county in the Tsavo landscape, an important area for wildlife in southern Kenya.

Another example comes from the Leadership and Management program, which requires fellows to develop an “innovation project” addressing real-world challenges within their organizations. A Rwandan Fellow focused on the sustainability of conservation projects in Busaga Natural Forest, which hosts the only nesting and breeding site for hooded vultures in Rwanda. Historically, her organization financed conservation projects in this forest by securing grants. She proposed designing a forest management plan with a business



Banner: The Conservation Leadership and Management Fellowship provides hands-on, experiential learning to leaders of diverse backgrounds. Top: The Charles R. Wall Young African Policy Fellowship trains young professionals in biodiversity policymaking. Bottom: The Young African Policy Fellowship is a partnership between AWF and the UN Environment Programme.

model that enables the forest to generate its own resources as opposed to relying solely on grants. Her organization supported her proposal, and the management plan is currently under review by the Ministry of Environment.

ZIMBABWE BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY REPORT OFFERS NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR NATURE-BASED GROWTH

In September 2023, Zimbabwe launched the country’s **first biodiversity economy report**, which provides a framework to include nature in private and public sector economic decision-making. AWF contributed financial and technical support in developing this landmark analysis.

With the launch of the *Zimbabwe Biodiversity Economy* report, Zimbabwe joined several other African countries in taking a systematic approach to defining how biodiversity can contribute to the country’s economic growth. AWF initiated and spearheaded the report’s development, working with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investments Promotion, the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, and representatives of the tourism and hospitality industry to provide a blueprint for how Zimbabwe can grow its economy in ways that value wildlife and healthy habitats. The report is being used to inform policies and key investment opportunities, and it will guide governmental development planning and decision-making at the ministerial level. Other countries, such as Sierra Leone and Mozambique, have approached AWF as a partner in developing similar analyses for them.

Continue reading at:
[AWF.ORG/ZBE-REPORT-LAUNCH](https://www.awf.org/zbe-report-launch)



Annual Value of Nature to Zimbabwe’s National Economy from 2019

\$1.2 billion
total tourism receipts in 2019,
accounting for 6.3% of GDP

\$250 million
created by fisheries in 2019

\$500 million
per year of non-timber forest products
harvested for subsistence

Nearly 70%
of people derive their livelihoods directly or
indirectly from agriculture and biodiversity

521 million
metric tons of carbon are held in above-
ground carbon sinks, which could be tapped
for carbon credits or other financial schemes



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AWF INSPIRES YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS IN ZIMBABWE

After attending AWF’s Youth Engagement (YES) Co-Creation Workshop in November 2022, 50 young Zimbabwean entrepreneurs registered an organization they founded to support local, nature-based income-generation ideas. The AWF workshop brought together youth participants from [AWF landscapes](#), the Zimbabwe Youth Council, youth organizations, and other institutions to steward green growth in a modern [Zimbabwe](#) by supporting youth leaders and strengthening their networks.

Continue reading at:
[AWF.ORG/ZIMBABWE-YOUTH-ORG](#)

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SCALING POSITIVE ACTION FOR AFRICA’S PROTECTED AREAS

In 2021, AWF partnered with several visionary leaders of African protected and conserved areas to establish the Africa Protected Areas Directors (APAD) network. This network created means for leaders managing protected areas across Africa—representing an astonishing 14% of Africa’s land—to drive collective priorities and solutions for the continent’s 8,811 protected and conserved areas. APAD, with AWF as secretariat, has convened quarterly since its inception, and the forum led to continent-scale results in FY23.

APAD’s influence during FY23 began with shaping the agenda of the Africa Protected Areas Congress in July 2022, which resulted in defining the principles of African-led conservation in the **Kigali Call to Action**, which calls for strengthening the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities,

greater public and private financial investment in nature conservation and protected and conserved areas, and enhanced pan-African collaboration, cooperation, and partnership for protected and conserved area systems throughout the continent. Coming out of the Congress, with AWF support, the network conducted research on building financial resilience in Africa’s protected and conserved areas and advocated in global forums on the environment, contributing to the United Nations Global Biodiversity Framework, the major outcome of CBD COP15 in December 2022.

In June 2023, APAD **launched a new project** with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature



Conservation, and Nuclear Safety. The project leverages protected and conserved areas to fulfill Africa’s commitment to conservation targets in the Global Biodiversity Framework by making it easier for protected area directors to share information and expertise across the continent. In addition, it promotes the inclusion of Indigenous people, local communities, and youth in decision-making and action.



Profile

AWF POLICY FELLOWS PARTICIPATE IN PAN- AFRICAN CONSERVATION NEGOTIATIONS

Knowledge Vingi and Careen Joel Mwakitalu, two fellows in AWF’s Charles R. Wall Policy Fellows program, discuss what motivates them and what they hoped to achieve at the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in September 2022.

Read More
[AWF.ORG/WALL-FELLOWS-AMCEN](#)

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AFRICAN CONSERVATION VOICES FILMS DEBUT

Six short films produced by AWF’s **African Conservation Voices** Media Labs in partnership with Jackson Wild premiered in Austria at the Jackson Wild Summit in September 2022. The films, some of which were shown in an early “sneak peek” at the Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) in July, were created by young Kenyan and Rwandan filmmakers and feature conservation stories from Maasai Mara, Kenya, and Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda. In addition to the APAC showings and official Summit premiere, the films were screened at community events and distributed through various media in Africa.

The media labs were designed to provide mentorship and skill-building to early-career African conservation filmmakers in order to support African storytellers in telling authentic stories of conservation from an African perspective. Each media lab included virtual sessions and hands-on, field-based shoots. The program was supported by Adobe, Avatar Alliance Foundation, the Embassy of the United States of America to Kenya, Heather Sturt Haaga, and Sony.

View the videos at:
[AWF.ORG/ACV-2022-VIDEOS](#)



Living with Wildlife

AWF models scalable conservation strategies that create opportunity for people. We focus on solutions that promote coexistence so people and wildlife can thrive in shared landscapes. **AWF’s Sr. Vice President of Conservation Strategy, Impact, and Learning, Charly Facheux**, explains what that looked like on the ground in FY23.

Charly, living with wildlife is about how people and wildlife negotiate space. What were the biggest challenges in that negotiation in FY23?

Climate change is creating the biggest challenges in how wildlife and people coexist, driven mainly by competition over access to water. In the last five years alone, there has been an increase in human-wildlife conflict in many parts of Africa, and much of it is because of water. In 2022 for example, drought in Tsavo National Park drove over half the elephant population there into community areas, including ranches.

While human-wildlife conflict is generally on the rise, in FY23 we managed to reduce it by almost fifty percent across the landscapes where we work. It was a big effort. Success was the result of sitting down with people to revise land use plans and adjust land allocations so human access to water avoided wildlife corridors. It also involved introducing wildlife deterrence tactics to discourage wildlife from destroying existing farmland.

One of the things we consistently find is that people in towns doing the land-use planning are often disconnected from local insights into nature. They don’t always know exactly where water flows during the rainy season. They don’t know where wildlife like to go and look for water. So we need to combine the knowledge of natural rhythms held by traditional local communities with the development needs identified by townspeople and villagers. Once we have that combination, we add scientific knowledge, including GIS-based simulations and modeling. The GIS work helps us propose space allocations that meet the needs of people and wildlife and reduce human-wildlife conflict.

Can you give me a specific example of how that played out on the ground in FY23?

Bili-Uele in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is an example of where this recently played out. Bili-Uele is a region of about

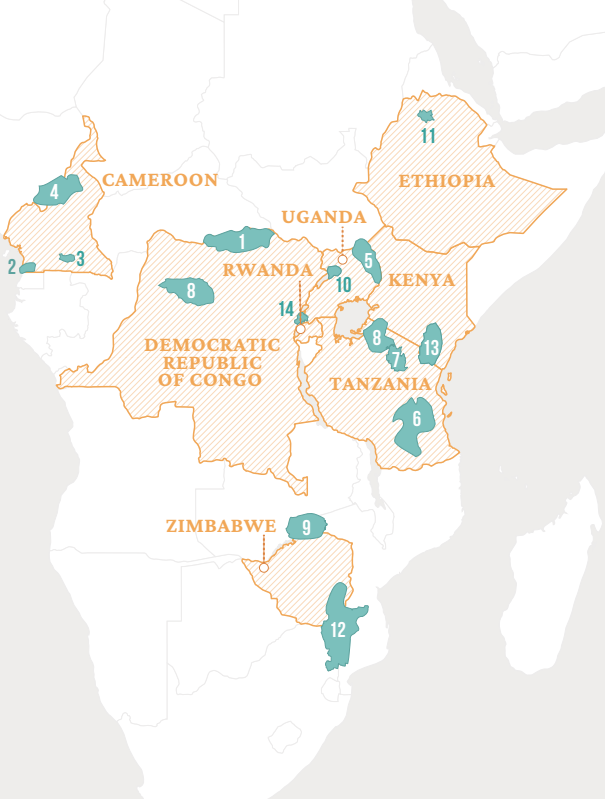
“We focus on building trust, and you can see it in how communities talk about us and the way we work together.

CHARLY FACHEUX
Vice President Conservation Strategy, Impact and Learning

40,000 square kilometers (about the size of Switzerland) in the northeastern part of the DRC. This region is insecure because of armed militias moving between the Congo Basin and the Sahel. Two communities in the landscape needed to relocate to get out of harm’s way. One looked for AWF’s advice, the other did not. Because of the land-use planning we were doing, we were able to advise the first community on locating their homes and fields away from areas that would put them in conflict with wildlife. This allowed them to successfully farm even as wildlife movement increased in the area. The second community did not want to take advice on where to move. Their new location was in a wildlife corridor. Elephants came through and destroyed that

AWF Priority Landscapes

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1 BILI-UELE | 8 MARINGA-LOPORI-WAMBA |
| 2 CAMPO-MA’AN | 9 MID-ZAMBEZI |
| 3 DJA | 10 MURCHISON FALLS |
| 4 FARO | 11 SIMIEN MOUNTAINS |
| 5 KIDEPO | 12 SOUTHEAST LOWVELD |
| 6 KILOMBERO | 13 TSAVO-MKOMAZI |
| 7 MAASAI STEPPE | 14 VIRUNGAS |



community’s cassava fields and homes. It created tremendous hardship for them. Now, we are working with them to prevent that from happening again.

Are there any particular landscapes that stand out as a success in FY23?

One example is our work with Indigenous people in Campo Ma’an, Cameroon, who are extremely poor and marginalized. We have been working with the women of the **Bagyeli community** to establish a small business and tree nursery. They have been able to collect non-timber forest products and sell them in the market. For the first time in many years, the women received money from their own business. This is important because the community is one which suffers from a lack of investment and sometimes even harassment from other stakeholders working in or around the forest. As part of this work, we also implemented a rights-based conservation program. This is important to make sure that their voices are becoming loud, that they aren’t confronted with issues and forced to stay silent. We offered rights-based training and put in place a grievance mechanism. Now, when there is an issue, they raise their voices. That is a big success.

Another, very different example is **Manyara Ranch**. The ranch is an interesting model of negotiating space for people and wildlife: it is a working cattle ranch in the middle of a

wildlife corridor between two national parks in northern Tanzania’s safari circuit. It’s a habitat restoration success story, based on an almost 20-year commitment from AWF and partners, particularly USAID. This year marked several milestones, including the handover to the government of a school on the ranch that AWF renovated and relocated away from the center of wildlife movement. Wildlife populations have rebounded, and we are looking at ways to support the local governing council in taking over the management of ranch operations and developing part of the property for ecotourism. Beyond its importance as part of the wildlife corridor, I’m confident that Manyara Ranch is going to become an exciting tourism destination in Tanzania. The wildlife there is incredible.

What is AWF’s greatest strength in the field?

I am proud of our ability to partner with local communities, particularly women in communities like the one I described in Campo Ma’an. We focus on building trust, and you can see it in how communities talk about us and the way we work together. Of course, we also have partnerships with other institutions such as the governments and wildlife authorities. All of these are important. But they can only really be successful if the ones we have with communities are strong. Our approach to partnership with communities and our respect for our partners are two of AWF’s greatest differentiators.

Is there anything from the past year that makes you particularly optimistic?

Four years ago, AWF decided to invest in leadership, in youth and communities, and in building and amplifying the voices of African-led conservation. That investment is paying off. We are living in a moment where you can see that vision for including people was critical. Young people want to be part of deciding their futures. They want to be part of policy discussions. They’re going to ensure that the leaders are taking wildlife and wild lands into consideration when they’re developing laws and country strategies. Women and communities as well. They are making what they need and believe in known. That is important. And it makes me happy as an African. I’m very optimistic.

What’s on the horizon?

Moving forward, we need to be thoughtful about how we address the larger issues of climate change. How do we define what we call adaptation or having a community that is resilient to climate change? That, for me, is essential for lasting impact. There’s a lot of opportunity for us to make a difference in this area, building on our commitment to communities and African leadership. We are open to new and different partnerships. We are open to seeing what other organizations are doing and how we best contribute.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL ENTERPRISE CHANGES ATTITUDES TOWARDS POACHING IN BONOBO STRONGHOLD

In the Maringa-Lopori-Wamba landscape, an area of 74,000 square kilometers (around the size of Ireland) in north-west DRC, AWF partnered with Arcus Foundation and Village Enterprise to **subsidize small business owners** with microgrants, financing 240 micro-businesses with grants of around US \$200-\$500 each. We organized 180 business owners from three villages into 60 business groups, training participants in business management and saving strategies and providing coaching and assessments so the business groups had the ongoing support they needed to succeed.

To create alternatives to poaching for food security and income, we also kickstarted new conservation-friendly enterprises such as food processing, adding value to non-timber forest products, and preserving fish in areas where both poaching levels and poverty were high.

Community Members Attest to Improved Standard of Living

Local businessperson Claude Bossio shared that before this initiative, he lived solely from hunting and struggled to feed his family. Now, he says, “Our group has created a pharmacy, and the profits we share have enabled me to set up my own mobile pharmacy to bring medicines to people who live far away in the forest. I’m no longer dependent on the fruitfulness of the forest, because with my money, I can now buy everything my family needs.”

Another plus: women in the Mongo community have greater financial

opportunities. “We used to be considered only as universal receivers, in that we received everything from our husbands, but today we are happy to contribute financially to the running of the household,” says Lundi Ifili, another businessperson.

Regarding bushmeat hunting and trade, she continued, “We’ve got better things to do now.”

When People Thrive, so Does Wildlife

“We don’t conserve for the sake of conserving; we conserve for people,” says Antoine Tabu, AWF Country Coordinator in the DRC. “That’s why it’s... encouraging to see that conservation is changing the lives of local communities.”

The communities have largely turned away from hunting for bushmeat or poaching. Most hunters in the area have turned in their firearms to the authorities, and of the 12 poachers caught over two years, none were from the project area.

AWF has worked with communities in Maringa-Lopori-Wamba since 2004, starting with a project initiated by CARPE/USAID, which developed local capacity to manage natural resources, protecting the forest and its biodiversity. Today, in addition to encouraging small businesses, we also support participatory land-use planning, biological monitoring of wildlife populations and habitat, regular



1,890 People engaged in community enterprise in Maringa-Lopori-Wamba



23/360 direct/indirect observations of bonobos (FY23)

meetings and workshops in the community to engage in conservation planning, and counter wildlife trafficking efforts in partnership with the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (DRC’s wildlife authority).

These interdependent interventions are paying off. While bonobos and forest elephants are endangered and critically endangered, respectively, and populations of both are decreasing globally, ecological monitoring indicates that they are increasing in areas in the landscape where AWF has intervened.

Learn about how one woman chief is motivating her community to conserve: [AWF.ORG/DRC-WOMAN-CHIEF](https://www.awf.org/drc-woman-chief)

NEW WILDLIFE CORRIDORS MAPPED AND ECO-GUARDS SENSITIZED TO COMMUNITY RIGHTS IN THE DRC’S BILI-UELE LANDSCAPE

Covering an area about the size of Switzerland, the Bili-Uele Protected Area Complex in northern DRC is facing pressures from mining, deforestation, and insecurity, all of which threaten important wildlife habitat. AWF has worked in the area since 2016. In FY23, we concluded a five-year European Union-funded project designed to improve governance, management of natural resources, and security in the landscape. As part of this project, we led land-use planning processes to strategically allocate land to maximize both ecological integrity and productivity for people. One outcome was the designation of **4,527 square kilometers for wildlife corridors**. The plans set aside other zones for agriculture, hunting, forest harvesting, fishing, and artisanal mining, leaving the corridors open as critical habitat for forest elephants and chimpanzees.

Inclusive and transparent conservation planning workshops ensured that diverse stakeholders—including local authorities, representatives chosen by the local communities, wildlife authorities, and private sector actors like fishers, farmers, and hunters—had a role in determining land use recommendations. These workshops enable communities to make informed decisions about where to locate houses, roads, and other infrastructure, as well as to better understand where farming and extractive activities will have the least detrimental impact. *Read the **Living with Wildlife Q&A** for an example of what happened when a community disregarded insights from land-use planning on page 12.*

The project also supported the DRC’s wildlife authority, the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN), in recruiting **40 new eco-guards** to deter poaching and increase security in Bili-Uele, running trainings in anti-poaching, law enforcement, and rights-based conservation. Technical and financial support was also provided for patrols.

Violent conflict is a major threat to both people and wildlife in the area. To address this, the project built capacity and trained law enforcement to map and respond to security threats and collaborate across borders. After the first two years of the project, 65% of community members surveyed reported a greater sense of safety in the landscape, where even walking to the market can be a risk due to various regional conflicts and militias.

“I am happy to see that efforts made by AWF and its partners to restore security in our area are bearing fruit. Markets are open again and business activities have resumed, making it no longer a problem to get food. Now even my child can go to the market without worrying about whether he will come back safe and sound or not,” said Nyamada Léon, head of the local Bambilo community.

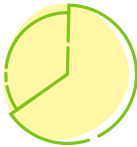
AWF has partnered with the DRC’s wildlife authority since 2016. As a result of these activities, the key species we monitor—chimpanzees and forest elephants—remained stable between 2019 and 2022, with populations estimated at 1,525 and 144 individuals, respectively. In addition, the



The participatory mapping process strategically allocates land in the interest of people and wildlife.



4,527km² Mapped for wildlife corridors



65% Of local communities surveyed feel safer

reduction of bush fires and promotion of sustainable agriculture stabilized deforestation where we worked. Chimpanzees, baboons, buffaloes, pangolins, and even elephants were sighted where their presence had not been observed for several years.

COMMUNITIES PROFIT FROM NATURE-BASED SMALL BUSINESSES AND LIVELIHOODS: TWO EXAMPLES FROM CAMEROON 🌍

Communities Grow Incomes from Sustainable Use of Their Forest in Dja, Cameroon

The Dja landscape is in the south of Cameroon and includes the 526,000-hectare Dja Faunal Reserve (around the size of the Washington DC-Baltimore metro area, or twice the size of metropolitan Paris). In FY23, AWF concluded a five-year program designed to boost conservation-friendly agroforestry, agriculture, fish farming, and forest harvesting here. Community members learned to make household goods like soap and cosmetics from what they could harvest from the forest. They were then able to use the products themselves or offer them for sale. The program, which was funded by ECOFAC-6, also reduced poaching through training and equipping eco-guards. The results are impressive: local incomes increased by 78%, and poverty was reduced by 83%.

Through small training groups, AWF supported people in developing income opportunities from non-timber forest products (any plant or tree-based products from a forest besides cut timber) and cocoa production. Approximately 60% of the participants were women. Across the training groups, incomes increased by an average of 70%.

The non-timber forest products included the njangsang fruit and the moabi tree. Njangsang fruit contains nutritious edible kernels and seeds that can be processed into oil and sold to cosmetic companies. Seeds from the moabi tree are also processed into oil, and the multi-purpose tree produces edible fruit and medicinal bark. The moabi tree has historically been a popular source of timber, but based

on AWF’s project, community members began to see more value in keeping the trees alive.

AWF also facilitated local stakeholder forums, bringing together local authorities, civil society organizations, public and private sector representatives, security forces, and local and Indigenous communities to collaborate on a vision for the landscape and its natural resources. The goal was to create a framework for ensuring accountability, transparency, and inclusivity around decision-making in the landscape.

Indigenous Communities Gain Opportunities in Campo Ma’an

Cameroon’s Campo Ma’an landscape is part of the rainforest on the western coast of Cameroon, very close to Kribi, a town of over 55,000 with a major seaport that exports goods like cocoa, timber, and coffee. The Campo Ma’an National Park is home to gorillas, chimpanzees, elephants, and over 80 other mammal species. Poaching, the illegal wildlife trade, logging, agriculture, and coastal development are threatening wildlife in the park and habitat around it.

In 2018, food insecurity in the landscape was forcing Indigenous Bagyeli communities to hunt for illegal bushmeat. In partnership with FEDEC and KfW, AWF introduced sustainable community farming, including the use of agroforestry, which is the practice of strategically integrating trees in agriculture. We helped seven villages establish a



Plantain seedlings grown in a community nursery increase the productivity of the land on rubber farms.

DJA LANDSCAPE

78% increase in local incomes among AWF program participants

83% reduction in poverty among AWF program participants



CAMPO MA’AN LANDSCAPE

38,000 cocoa plants distributed to communities

4,500 plantain seedlings distributed to communities



cooperative community nursery, where they grow cocoa and plantain. In the last half of FY23, we distributed 4,500 plantain seedlings, and by the end of the fiscal year, we delivered 38,000 cocoa plants to the seven villages. These seedlings improved land productivity

and diversified food grown by the community. Overall, the agroforestry initiative successfully generated revenue, strengthened community food security, and created an attractive alternative income to poaching for the Bagyeli.

Women and Indigenous community members in particular have taken advantage of these interventions, which is significant, as Indigenous communities have historically suffered from under-investment and even

harassment. To ensure that everyone has fair representation, we trained 500 people, including Indigenous people, rangers, park authorities, and local community members, in grievance and conflict management. Overall, 2,000 people were sensitized to the grievance process, which has improved community engagement and conflict resolution with rangers and park authorities.

“Before, we felt neglected, uninformed, and unable to exercise user rights. Now, the Grievance Mechanism builds trust, raises awareness, and empowers us to be involved in park management.

HIS MAJESTY EKANGANA ANGO CHARLES OF NNEMEYONG VILLAGE

MAKING SPACE FOR GORILLAS AND PEOPLE IN RWANDA 🌍

At the foot of Volcanoes National Park, the Rwandan town of Kinigi hosts Rwanda’s annual naming ceremony for baby mountain gorillas, celebrating the species’ rebound from mere hundreds in the 1980s to over 1,000 today. In September 2022, AWF CEO Kaddu Sebunya was invited to name one of the babies, choosing the name “Sacula,” to honor the SACOLA (short for the Sabyinyo Community Livelihoods Association) community trust and AWF’s role in establishing it. The trust owns the luxury Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge, which was Rwanda’s first community-owned luxury lodge, built in 2007 with AWF’s financial and strategic support. Since its founding, the lodge has delivered more than US \$3.25 million in revenue.

Starting with the donation of 28 hectares to the park in 2018, AWF has been partnering with the Rwandan government on a pioneering plan to enhance community livelihoods and resilience while restoring the park to give gorillas more room to expand. In FY23, we made strides on a pilot park restoration program, educating affected local communities on their rights



regarding relocation from the restoration area and mobilizing funds that will be used to buy 50 hectares of land for a modern green town designed for the communities. In addition, we conducted an economic analysis to determine the impact of the restoration on agriculture, which will inform government plans to offset any negative effects.

Learn more about our work in Rwanda: [AWF.ORG/RWANDA-PEOPLE-GORILLAS](https://www.awf.org/rwanda-people-gorillas)

Wild mountain gorillas are only found in the Virungas, a range of mountains shared by Rwanda, Uganda, and the DRC.

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AGRICULTURE AND CONSERVATION CAN BE COMPLEMENTARY: TWO EXAMPLES FROM TANZANIA 🌍

Protecting the Richness of Kilombero

Tanzania’s lush Kilombero Valley is part of an important regional watershed, with its rich soils and growing conditions making it ideal for food crops. The valley is in the middle of the country’s Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor, also known as Tanzania’s “bread basket.” The corridor stretches from eastern Zambia to the Indian Ocean in central southern Tanzania, producing more than half of all the food grown in the country. To transport crops like corn, wheat, rice, and sugar, the Tanzanian government has worked with investors like China to build better road and rail systems. Development pressures from agricultural expansion and shifting growing patterns from climate change are threatening the health of the watershed, degrading key rivers like the Mngeta and the Mchombe, and compromising wildlife movement between Udzungwa Mountains National Park and Selous Game Reserve.

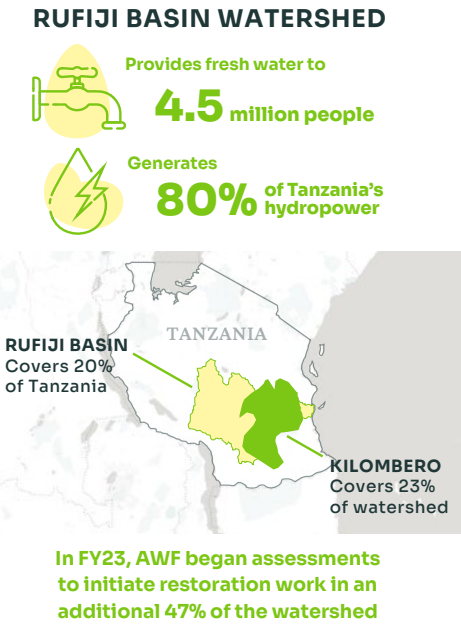
Since 2014, AWF has partnered with local communities and commercial agricultural producers to resolve agricultural and biodiversity challenges, supported by funding from DGIS, SIDA, the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV)/International Climate Initiative (IKI) through the IUCN, and Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the Global Nature Fund (GND). This included facilitating locally-led land-use planning to preserve key wildlife



corridors and identify where river restoration can have the most impact. We also expanded farmers’ use of ecologically and economically viable production technologies and improved farmers’ access to financial institutions and markets, maximizing use of the land and reducing the need to clear more for agriculture. Today, farmer coops and grower associations we helped establish are flourishing.

Recently, AWF helped establish water use associations, empowering local stakeholders with the knowledge and tools to manage **water catchments**, which are areas of land where vegetation collects rainwater to feed the river. Trees were planted to help prevent erosion along river banks, and water use association members were trained to sample and test water health. Looking forward to FY24, we are extending our restoration approach to three village communities in the Great Ruaha catchment, starting with an assessment of the feasibility and appetite for establishing a finance mechanism where upstream communities will be paid for the ecosystem services provided by the river they are restoring.

In Kilombero, water use associations monitor the health of Mchombe River to inform conservation action.



Helping Farmers reduce Human-wildlife Conflict in Mkomazi

Across the 14 landscapes where we worked in FY23, AWF supported farming initiatives to help manage human-wildlife conflict, including showing farmers how to plant wildlife-detering crops or place beehives among crops to prevent wildlife from trampling their fields. Due in part to tactics like these, among farmers we partnered with, we measured a 49.2% reduction in human-wildlife conflict in FY23, including a 53% drop in crop destruction.

One example of what this looks like can be found in Tanzania. The Tsavo-Mkomazi landscape in Kenya and Tanzania currently faces challenges with human-wildlife conflict, due in part to the large elephant populations there. It is a landscape where conflict mitigation measures make a difference. Mkomazi is on the Tanzanian side of the transboundary landscape, which becomes known as Tsavo when it crosses into Kenya. In Mkomazi, AWF introduced sunflower farming within existing land use plans, planting the crop strategically around farms because the thorny crop discourages

wildlife from passing through it, minimizing the likelihood of elephants or other wildlife wandering onto farmland. Besides reducing the destruction of other crops, sunflower farming offered farmers an alternative income opportunity, as they were able to sell the seeds for cooking oil and sunflower seed cakes to feed livestock. In FY23, one village processed 600 kilograms of sunflower seeds, and the protected farmland had no wildlife incursions. The success has motivated farmers to scale up their sunflower crops.

As another means of managing conflict between farmers and wildlife in Mkomazi, in FY23, AWF provided refresher training for farmers who have installed beehive fences to keep elephants away, protecting 100 hectares and preventing crop damages estimated at 10 million Tanzanian shillings, or about US \$4,000. (According to 2018 data from the Food and Agriculture Organization, the average small family farm in Tanzania grosses US \$5,000 per year and farms around 1.2 hectares. A hectare is around the size of a rugby field.)



Caring for Wildlife



AWF partners with wildlife authorities and other stakeholders to protect species currently under threat, with strategies focusing on species that are leading indicators of a landscape's ecological integrity. AWF's Chief Scientist, Philip Muruthi, shares his insights into how wildlife fared across the landscapes where AWF works in FY23.

Philip, how did wildlife populations monitored by AWF do this year?

Population trends were either upward or stable in most places. For example, ten of the 11 elephant populations we monitor were stable or growing. In fact, elephants are stable across the continent overall, which is promising. Some of the species populations we monitor are small, like mountain gorillas, which number around 1,000 in total. It's the only great ape population in Africa that is increasing, but it's still a small population. I would say the same for the eastern black rhino, which we monitor in Kenya (Kenya has the majority). It did very well in the Tsavo landscape where we work. But again, we are talking about populations that are relatively small, yet key to the overall global population.

When we get to the very large numbers, like elephants in Tsavo, where we have close to 15,000 individuals increasing at about 4% a year, the concern moves from population viability to coexistence.

When we talk about the greatest threats to wildlife, there are three types. One is insecurity of populations because of war or poaching, one is habitat change or loss, and then the third is coexistence and human-wildlife conflict. Is that right?

Yes. And they are all related. Poaching is related to livelihoods and people accepting conservation. We have seen that if conservation is really endeared to people and they see wildlife as a resource, poaching goes down. But right now, the greatest threat to African wildlife is not poaching. It is habitat loss. And that is also linked to whether wildlife plays a big role in people's livelihoods. When wildlife are tied to livelihoods, people make choices to protect habitats. So, you are right about the threats, but I would emphasize that they are connected. They are not independent.



Right now, the greatest threat to African wildlife is not poaching. It is habitat loss.

PHILIP MURUTHI
Vice President, Conservation Science & Planning

Which population is at greatest risk right now? When you wake up in the morning, which one do you worry about most?

I'm worried about the Walia ibex in the Simien Mountains of Ethiopia for one reason. Not only are they few, but there are reports now that they may have been poached—carcasses were seen—but nobody knows what the impact has been. We've talked to the Ethiopia Wildlife Authority, who are aware of the reports, and our team on the ground is out there monitoring the situation. I always worry about populations where the numbers are small and threat levels are high. Ethiopian wolves are another example, but recent sightings of pups were a promising sign there.

It may sound counter-intuitive, but I also worry for the populations on the other side

of the spectrum, those with large numbers. It's a different worry: what does success really look like? Successful conservation has to be socially acceptable to the people being asked to coexist with wildlife. We have growing elephant populations in landscapes like Tsavo and the Mid-Zambezi Valley—what does that mean for local communities? More conflict, more destruction of crops? How do we define it so both people and wildlife thrive? How does wildlife fit into the economy, and how do people take part in wildlife conservation?

Where does AWF need to double down?

We need to keep demonstrating that conservation works as a means of improving people's livelihoods and well-being. That doesn't just mean that people should utilize wildlife and make money. It means that we show how making space for wildlife contributes to human well-being holistically—for the provision of water and other ecosystem services.

The other emerging priority is species recovery and restoration. We have challenges in some places like northern Cameroon and Uganda, where we know that species like the rhino have been locally extinct for many years. We also know from science that once you remove large mammals like rhinos and elephants from a place, there are cascading effects on the resiliency of the system. The loss of that species and its associated system services, like seed dispersal, is a loss of opportunities for livelihoods and human well-being as well—some of which we can't really quantify yet.



The restoration and recovery of large mammals go beyond just the return of a species back to its habitat. We are also returning the ecological functions and other impacts of those species. Their return makes the ecosystem healthier and more resilient—a key consideration given climate change.

Looking forward, where do you see AWF concentrating its efforts in Caring for Wildlife?

I would not downplay maintaining what we currently have, which is a constant battle (see Combating Wildlife Crime Requires Vigilance). But restoration is also important. An example of the recovery work we are doing is in Faro National Park in northern Cameroon. Securing that park and its connectivity to hunting zones and parks like Bouba Njida, Bénoué, and Gashaka Gumti will make the whole protected area network better for wildlife and people.

Was there a particular story of hope during this reporting period?

The mountain gorilla is a really nice example of hope for conservation. If you go back not just through the past year, but way back to the nineteen eighties, the species was almost extinct. Now, we are seeing the mountain gorilla population growing to the point that

the Rwandan government has partnered with AWF to plan how to best increase space for gorillas and improve the lives of people around the park.

Another one that I really like, because I've worked on this program since I joined AWF, is the black rhino population, especially the eastern black rhino in Tsavo, Kenya, where AWF helped build a sanctuary at Ngulia in the mid-1980s. There were just a couple of rhinos left, and now the population has grown. It can be a donor population to repopulate areas where populations have dropped or become locally extinct. The rangers I meet in Ngulia always tell me how instrumental AWF has been. We literally built the place, the offices, the fence. How well the animals have done is because of us, among others. That's inspiring. So the story of the eastern black rhino is a great one that we must keep alive.

COMBATING
WILDLIFE CRIME
REQUIRES VIGILANCE

The landscape of wildlife crimes is shifting, presenting a host of challenges that demand a recalibration of conservation strategies. While poaching of some species has declined, illegal online trafficking, which first became an issue during the Covid-19 pandemic, is on the rise. The online trade influences what wildlife products are in demand and how criminals move their product, with a shift towards digital technologies and new cargo routes. Law enforcement has been challenged to keep up.

In FY23, AWF’s Counter Wildlife Trafficking team tackled the challenge by implementing comprehensive training programs for rangers and law enforcement officers in specialized detection techniques and handling of evidence, including digital and DNA forensic evidence. AWF provided law enforcement agencies with training to investigate online wildlife trade, track digital transactions, and handle electronic evidence. The result was a more adept and tech-savvy law enforcement community.

One example of success? The Kenya Wildlife Service’s DNA Forensic Lab now boasts a **98% success rate** in doing analysis of DNA samples submitted by rangers.

AWF also led judiciary tours to wildlife areas—an opportunity for judiciary staff to meet park wardens and wildlife authorities—and court monitoring programs supported by the United States Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics & Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). Both programs facilitated a deeper understanding of the intricacies of wildlife crime cases. Judicial officers, after participating in these initiatives, demonstrated increased understanding and commitment to delivering meaningful penalties, contributing to the deterrence of wildlife crimes.



“Deterrence is a pressure we always have to maintain.”

Didi Wamukoya
AWF Director of Counter Wildlife Trafficking

Didi Wamukoya (left) is the director of AWF’s Counter Wildlife Trafficking program, which unveiled two evidence rooms for the Kenya Wildlife Service in March 2023.

“In some countries, like Ethiopia, wildlife was not a priority for law enforcement agencies at all. And now it’s a very important issue for them. They are requesting AWF support to establish a dog unit and asking for a database for illegal wildlife traffickers. They want tools in order to help them deal with wildlife crimes, deal with trafficking, and improve the way they enforce their laws. That is a good thing,” said Didi Wamukoya, Director of AWF’s Counter Wildlife Trafficking Program.

Another noteworthy accomplishment in FY23 was the construction of evidence rooms in Kenya through support by INL. These evidence rooms, designed and handed over to authorities by AWF, have become benchmarks for the standardization of evidence management. Their significance was further highlighted when key stakeholders, including judiciary members, recognized them as essential to maintaining the integrity of wildlife crime cases.

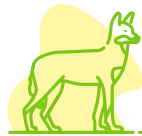
One challenge seen in FY23 is that dog units at some airports and ports have been so successful in deterring traffickers from using those airports and ports that traffickers have switched to road networks, which require more resources. “Law enforcement is constant,” said



199
Prosecutors and judiciary staff trained in the DRC, Ethiopia, and Kenya



404
Officers trained in law enforcement



6
National wildlife authorities supported with canine units

Didi. “If in our countries we say, there’s little or no crime, let us remove the police—the crime will return. Seeing an officer walking in a street will prevent criminals from committing a crime. This is true of wildlife trafficking as well. Deterrence is a pressure we always have to maintain. We have to be vigilant.”



MANYARA RANCH: A WILDLIFE
CORRIDOR RESTORED

Twice a year, when the rains come, thousands of wildebeest in northern Tanzania begin their migration, spreading out from Lake Manyara and the Tarangire River to the plains, where fresh forage and seasonal streams await them. In their wake, they leave copious amounts of dung that enrich the soil and support the vegetal growth of the savanna for all animals. The wildebeest serve as long-distance lawnmowers, trimming grasses across broad swaths of land, helping reduce the frequency of wildfires. And as prey, they are a source of food for predators such as lions, hyenas, and leopards.

Though not as famous as their Serengeti cousins who migrate by the millions, northern Tanzania’s wildebeest migration is equally crucial for the health of the larger ecosystem. In the 1960s, researchers described ten different migration routes the wildebeest followed as they dispersed. Today, however, as a result of habitat degradation and the expansion of farming and mining, **just two viable migration routes, or corridors, remain.**

Manyara Ranch sits right in the middle of one of them, facilitating the migration of wildebeests and supporting populations of zebras, gazelles, and many other animals.

Established as a multi-use community-led conservancy in 2001 with the aim of

integrating sustainable livestock management and wildlife protection, Manyara Ranch not only helps protect the all-important wildebeest migration but it also supports a higher density of many species—including elands, lesser kudu, Thompson’s gazelles, and Grant’s gazelles—than even nearby national parks do. Under the management of the African Wildlife Foundation, land-use zoning has revitalized and now maintains the health of the grasslands; game scouts and tracker dogs deter poachers and manage human-wildlife conflict; and the rebuilding and regular maintenance of dams and boreholes provide a reliable source of fresh water in an otherwise dry area.

Wildebeest now are so comfortable at Manyara Ranch that some even stop to have their calves there, says Philip Muruthi, AWF’s vice president of species conservation.

The ranch is also a favorite spot for endangered Maasai giraffes to give birth. With more than 900 counted on the ranch in 2020, this group helps sustain the entire region’s population. Striped hyenas are at home on the ranch, as are lions and elephants, which have not been victim to poaching on the ranch since 2015. Even species such as rare endangered wild dogs and elusive cheetahs now are spotted occasionally. And after no sightings for several decades, rangers **encountered a hippo** dashing from a thicket into a pond in 2019. While the

ranch is most known for its high numbers and rich variety of antelope and other ungulates, ostriches, spring hares, aardvarks, porcupines, and warthogs roam the grassy savannas and acacia woodlands as well.

“One of the key achievements that we are proud to see [is that] the wildlife populations have been recovered,” says Pastor Magingi, AWF’s country coordinator for Tanzania. A healthy habitat not only supports the balance of the Tarangire-Manyara ecosystem more broadly, but it sets Manyara Ranch out as an example of how conservation and human activities such as ranching need not be mutually exclusive.

Read the full story of AWF’s work at Manyara Ranch
[AWF.ORG/MANYARA-CORRIDOR](https://www.awf.org/manyara-corridor)



AWF INVESTMENTS IN MID-ZAMBEZI VALLEY HAVE LASTING CONSERVATION RESULTS 🌍

In May 2023, Zimbabwe and Zambia signed the Lower Zambezi Mana Pools Transfrontier Conservation Area Memorandum of Understanding, formalizing processes to collaborate on conservation management affecting two parks, the Lower Zambezi National Park (Zambia) and Mana Pools National Park (Zimbabwe). The parks share the Zambezi River as a boundary.

Leading up to, and in support of, the MOU, AWF in partnership with Zimparks (Zimbabwe’s protected area authority) played a major role in encouraging collaboration in the region. This included organizing and funding cross-border programs to curb elephant poaching and developing strategies to improve community relations with protected area authorities and manage human-wildlife conflict. As part of this effort in June 2023, AWF facilitated discussions between traditional leaders in the Middle Zambezi Valley to explore ways of reducing conflict and determine how to operationalize conflict mitigation plans in the landscape. One outcome was the establishment of a regional human-wildlife conflict mitigation steering committee comprised of four chiefs from across the region and representatives from Zimparks, rural district councils, law enforcement, the private sector, and NGOs, including AWF.

During the course of the AWF-Zimparks partnership, AWF has invested in anti-poaching equipment, built camps and a vehicle maintenance garage, provided transport, and supported wildlife crime investigations and ranger training for Mana Pools National Park and adjacent protected areas. The work has been supported by several key funders,



The Zambezi River is a lifeline for elephants and other wildlife

including the CITES Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) program, the Dorothy Batten Foundation, the European Union, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

One major outcome of the partnership with Zimparks was the formation of the Zambezi River Specialized Anti-Poaching Unit in 2020, staffed by Zimparks rangers and co-managed by AWF’s Simon Muchatibaya. Under Simon’s leadership, AWF closed out FY23 by supplying Mana Pools rangers with essential training and equipment and making infrastructure improvements to the park.

FY23 efforts included the launch of a digital radio system throughout the park and the drilling of a freshwater borehole for one of the park’s camps, Chewore South, as rangers there did not have access to clean water (work was finished in FY24). AWF also began the installation of a water purification plant for the borehole.

Other AWF support initiated in FY23 included ranger training on the use of GIS monitoring systems and the provision of equipment such as handheld GIS devices, TV screens for operations rooms, and laptops for data capture. As a result, all ranger stations in the Zambezi Valley now have adequate tools to collect field data and trained field data managers. To increase the usability of that data, AWF supported and spearheaded the development of a standardized field data collection model for use across the Mid-Zambezi Valley.

FY23 marks the fourth year Zimparks reported that no elephants were poached in the conservation area.

To complement investment in park rangers, AWF supported community scouts working outside Mana Pools National Park in a variety of ways. One was through a program that supplied women community scouts with training, monthly allowances, and patrol rations. Many of these rangers are single mothers or widows. The financial support allowed them to invest in small nature-based business ventures to supplement their ranger income, build up their savings, and construct better homes. AWF also trained scouts on ecological monitoring, data collection, problem animal management, and human rights-based approaches to conservation. Anti-poaching results have included an increase in recoveries, detections, and arrests facilitated by community scouts working with ZimParks rangers.

Read more about anti-poaching work in Lower Zambezi
[AWF.ORG/ZAMBEZI-INVESTMENT](https://www.awf.org/zambezi-investment)



WOMEN RANGERS EXPLAIN HOW THEY USE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY 🌍

Florence Sakatira and Samukele Zhou, two rangers in Zimbabwe’s Mana Pools National Park, reflect on how AWF’s introduction of SMART technology supports their work.

Continue reading at:
[AWF.ORG/RANGERS-DIGITAL-TECH](https://www.awf.org/rangers-digital-tech)



Samukele Zhou (left) and Florence Sakatira (right) are Zimparks rangers trained to use the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) in the Mid Zambezi Valley



CAMERA TRAPS OFFER A SNAPSHOT OF WILDLIFE TRENDS 🌍

In August 2022, one of AWF’s camera traps in Cameroon’s Campo Ma’an National Park captured an image that astounded the team: a picture of an African leopard. The photograph was the first direct evidence of *Panthera pardus* (see to the left) within the park in 22 years. Camera traps have captured images of elephants, chimpanzees, gorillas, mandrills, and pangolins in the park.



80
Camera traps in use in Cameroon

SPECIES ACTION PLANS
AID RECOVERY OF BLACK
RHINO AND MAASAI
GIRAFFE IN KENYA 🌍

The **Tsavo-Mkomazi** landscape is home to elephants, lions, giraffes, rhinos, and other key species. Infrastructure development, climate change, and fresh water availability are threatening wildlife habitat and creating competition for resources between wildlife and the people who live there.

The black rhino is of particular concern—its national population in Kenya declined from around 20,000 in 1970 to fewer than 400 in the mid-1980s. Today, the population has more than doubled, and strongholds like Tsavo-Mkomazi are critical to their continued recovery.

On the Kenyan side, Tsavo is home to nearly one-fifth of the country’s black rhino population, making it a crucial area for the critically endangered species. In mid-2022, AWF helped develop Kenya’s Black Rhino Action Plan, the official government strategy for conserving the species. It targets a national

population of 2,000 by 2026. At a growth rate of over 5% each year, the population is on track to reach that target.

In some areas, success creates new challenges. The rhinos in Tsavo’s Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary, which AWF helped to establish, have exceeded their ecological carrying capacity, meaning their population has grown as much as the current habitat can support. To address this, plans are underway to relocate the extra rhinos to other conservation areas. The landscape is also one of the Maasai giraffe’s last strongholds. Starting in the 2010s, poaching and habitat loss quickly began to put them at increased risk. Hunters in the area refer to giraffes as “motorbikes” because just one poached animal is worth up to US \$700—enough to buy a motorbike. In 2016, the International Union for Conservation of Nature listed giraffes as vulnerable, and then upgraded their listing to endangered in 2018. Since 2018, AWF has worked with the Kenya



Kenya aims to grow a national population of 2,000 black rhinos by 2026. At a growth rate of over 5% each year, the population is on track.

Wildlife Service on a Species Recovery and Action Plan for Kenya’s giraffes, equipping rangers, creating awareness for conservation in schools, supporting infrastructure for wildlife authorities, developing land-use plans, and carrying out ecological monitoring.

In FY23, AWF trained a rapid response unit from the Kenya Wildlife Service to address wildlife crimes and supported scouts in carrying out patrol operations and collecting data on wildlife crimes. Over hundreds of patrols, scouts covered more than 3,000 kilometers. Though one giraffe was found killed for bushmeat on the Tanzanian side, there was no poaching on the Kenyan side, and the population AWF was monitoring increased overall.

ETHIOPIAN WOLF PUPS SIGNAL
HOPE FOR AFRICA’S MOST
ENDANGERED CARNIVORE

In early 2023, AWF’s ecological monitoring team in Ethiopia’s Simien Mountains landscape made a heartening discovery: three healthy wolf pups. With a remaining total population of around 500 individuals, the survival of Ethiopian wolves continues to be of critical concern. AWF, in collaboration with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority and conservation partners, has worked to protect this endangered species for decades.

Continue reading at:
[AWF.ORG/ETHIOPIAN-WOLF-PUPS](https://www.awf.org/ethiopian-wolf-pups)



The sighting of three Ethiopian wolf pups in the Simien Mountains National Park marks the first successful breeding of the critically endangered species in three years

Profile
GUARDING WILDLIFE: THE STORY OF DRC
ECO-GUARD PITCHOU MWANA

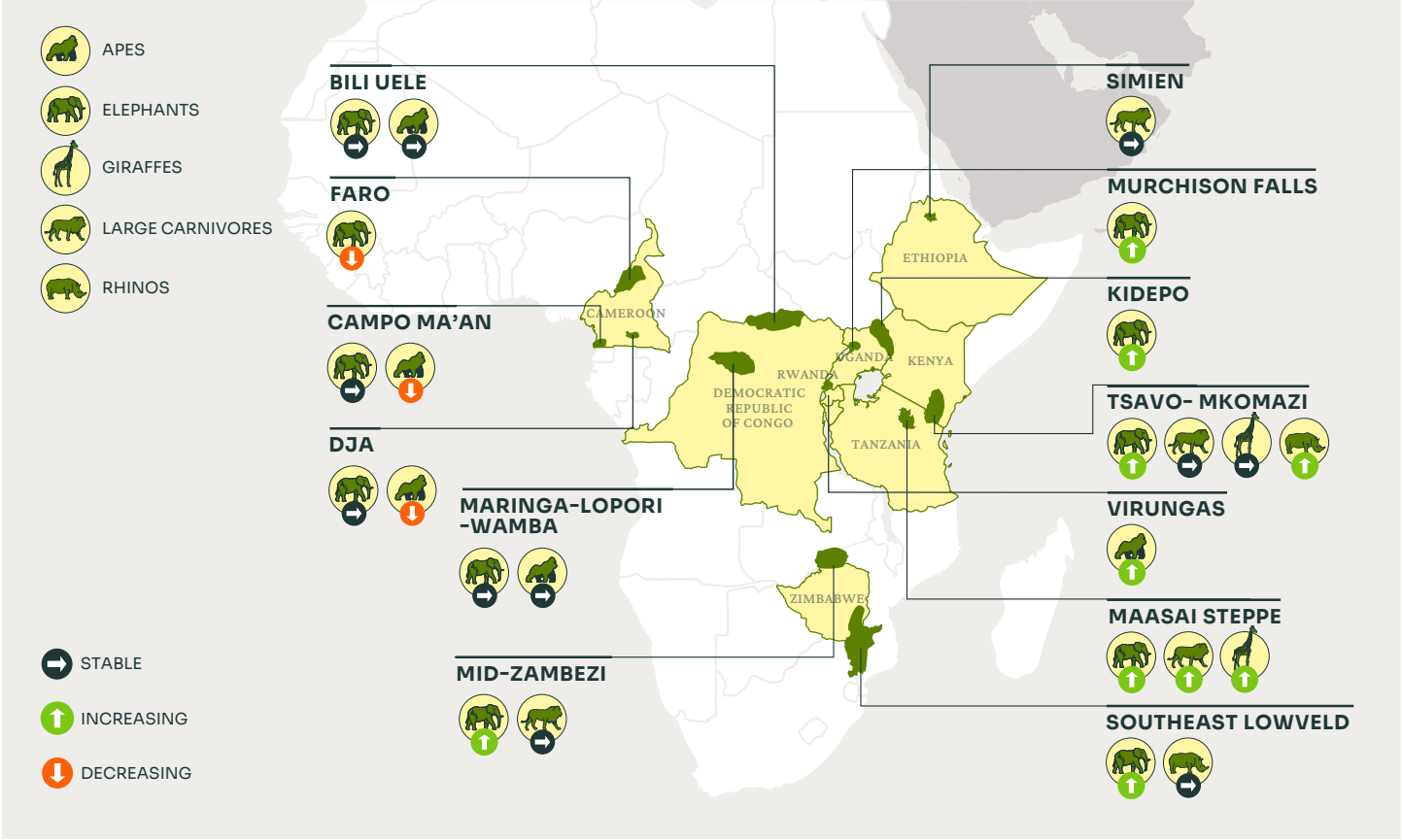


In FY23, AWF trained and supported 174 eco-guards, rangers, and scouts across three protected and conserved areas in the DRC, including the Bili-Uele Protected Area Complex, an area about the size of Switzerland. In the remote forests of Bili-Mbomu (an 11-square-kilometer section of the Bili-Uele complex), eco-guards literally risk their lives while on patrol. Trained as a biologist, Pitchou Mwana joined the eco-guard corps in March 2022 as part of a new group of recruits supported by AWF with funding

from the European Union. In addition to basic training on ecological monitoring and wildlife law enforcement, the group received rights-based training to ensure their work respects the local communities in and around the complex.

Continue reading at:
[AWF.ORG/ECO-GUARD-PITCHOU](https://www.awf.org/eco-guard-pitchou)

AWF FOCAL SPECIES: STATUS UPDATE



Integrated Strategies in Action: Faro, Cameroon

Across the 14 landscapes where we work, the elements of our approach—leading for wildlife, living with wildlife, and caring for wildlife—complement each other. How they work together depends on the threats and pressures specific to each landscape.



In Cameroon's Faro landscape, the emphasis has been on promoting security for wildlife by reducing poaching and putting in place the building blocks to invigorate an isolated and poorly resourced protected area. When secure, wildlife habitat will connect to a larger protected area network that stretches between northwestern Cameroon and eastern Nigeria.

Located in northern Cameroon and crossing into Nigeria, the Faro landscape provides critical habitat for savanna elephants and the largest hippo population in Central and West Africa. In FY23, AWF completed a five-year program supported by ECOFAC-6 to revive activities in a nearly abandoned protected area here, Cameroon's Faro National Park. The park is part of a larger protected area complex that includes hunting zones and parks like Cameroon's Bouba Njida and Bénoué and Nigeria's Gashaka Gumti.

Faro National Park faces significant challenges that threaten not only wildlife but also the park's connectivity to the larger protected area complex, and thus the greater ecosystem. They include commercial poaching, illegal fishing, and climate change impacts, including pressure from overgrazing by livestock. In addition, the lack of adequate roads and river crossings impedes rangers from keeping the park secure, both for wildlife that face commercial and bushmeat poaching and for herders and farmers who face armed raiders and kidnappers.



Mohamadou Ahmadou, pictured here, leads awareness campaigns to mitigate the impacts of overgrazing.

Leading for Wildlife

Seasonal livestock herding (technically known as transhumance) exerts pressure on wildlife habitat when cattle overgraze and herders cut trees. Climate change impacts and instability in the Sahel, the transition region between the Sahara Desert and the savannas of North-Central Africa, are pushing herders in the Nigerian part of the Sahel southwards into Faro, leading to conflict with local communities over natural resources.

In response, AWF helped establish an Association for Peaceful Management of Transhumance, or TANGO association, which is a community initiative that bridges the divide between local subsistence farmers, local authorities, and herders. The association is made up of cattle herders and local leaders chosen by fellow community members for their integrity, leadership abilities, and interest in maintaining biodiversity. TANGO teams deployed throughout the landscape help minimize the strain on natural resources and peacefully manage conflicts.

The program also brought together traditional leaders, local communities, administrative authorities, and herders on both sides of the Cameroon-Nigeria border for five conferences involving 450 participants to enable inclusive decision-making about land use and the peaceful management of herds moving across the border.



The Tchamba Rural Resources Center nurses plants to serve the community.

Living with Wildlife

In addition to TANGO, AWF deployed several community engagement strategies to help local communities see how conservation is connected to their well-being. This included organizing **tree-planting days** in schools and communities, where AWF distributed 8,000 tree seedlings to about 150 people. Grown locally in the Tchamba Rural Resources Center—which AWF helped establish in partnership with the World Agroforestry Center to meet rural farmers' needs on land threatened by overuse—the indigenous seedlings included shade and food trees such as *moringa*, *anacardium*, *mangifera*, guava, pawpaw, and citrus. Besides their tangible benefits, the newly planted trees are a sign of the community's enthusiasm for stewarding nature. To raise awareness for the value of wildlife specifically, in coordination with the tree planting days, AWF distributed 3,000 copies of a storybook of wildlife folk tales from the local Tchamba community, "Stories from Faro." Alongside the folk tales, the book offers environmental education and paints a picture of wildlife as a part of local cultural heritage.

Finally, AWF helped community members establish beehives, which produced nearly 400 liters by the end of the project. We also distributed improved corn, millet, beans, and rice seeds, which local people are growing in the Tchamba Rural Resources Center, with plans to scale up the farming of these crops in the community to mitigate land degradation and produce more food per hectare of farmland.



AWF uses camera traps to monitor elephants in Faro National Park, which is the last refuge for savanna elephants in northern Cameroon's network of protected areas.

Caring for Wildlife

Maintaining the 344,249-hectare (an area a little more than two and a half times the size of Los Angeles) protected area in Faro National Park requires significant capacity from the Conservation Service of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF), Cameroon's wildlife authority. During the program, AWF recruited, trained, and equipped eco-guards to support anti-poaching patrols. Patrols resulted in the arrest of 89 poachers and traffickers; the seizure of 74 weapons, 959 bullet rounds, and 551 traps; and the seizure of over 2,000 kilograms of wildlife products.

Dilapidated infrastructure posed major challenges to eco-guards in moving around the park. AWF worked to update the infrastructure in order to allow for better patrols, including rehabilitating 280 kilometers of roads in the park. In addition, we broke ground on a 900-meter airstrip to allow for faster travel in and out of the region. (By road, it can take up to 18 hours to travel to Faro National Park from Yaoundé, the closest major city.)

To create a baseline understanding of key wildlife populations in the park, AWF carried out two wildlife inventories in 2018 and 2021. These inventories provided essential data to inform conservation action in and around the protected area.

Letter from the Chair



Dear Friends of AWF,

I grew up in South Africa close to nature but have spent the past 31 years as a business owner in California. When I moved to the United States, I wanted to share the majesty and beauty of Africa’s wildlife and wild lands with others—and to ensure they live on in perpetuity.

AWF’s strategy of linking conservation with the aspirations of Africans rings true for me.

Reflecting on what motivated me to accept the role of Chair of AWF’s Board of Trustees, it comes down to that strategy—I believe AWF has the best vision for achieving lasting conservation results in Africa. Our approach and our unique commitment to African leadership and agency make us increasingly relevant as Africa defines its future. Our track record of building trust with governments and communities, innovating conservation solutions that work for people, and applying scientific know-how to protect wildlife at risk assures me we can have a transformative impact.

While AWF is seen by communities, partners, and governments as being truly “of” the continent and not just working “on” it, that doesn’t mean we are exclusively African. In fact many of the Board are not. As Kaddu states in his opening letter for this report, we have room for everyone to join us. Our mission is not parochial. To meet planetary challenges, the world needs Africa. To address those challenges, Africa needs support from the world. As a global citizen with a stake in the outcome of the planet’s future, AWF needs you—whatever continent you call home.

As an entrepreneur, I recognize the galvanizing power of ambitious individuals to drive and scale change. I see it in AWF’s current leadership, and I see it in the people we’ve invested in over our more than sixty-year history. Today they are biologists, media

personalities, farmers, government officials, county planners, park wardens, community leaders, policymakers, lawyers, and business owners. They are judges, rangers, parents, and voters. They are the faces of African-led conservation. As are our donors, partners, and members. The door is open, there is room.

This fiscal year saw our strategy, our networks, and our on-the-ground efforts come together powerfully, starting with the landmark pan-African gathering of conservation leadership, the Africa Protected Areas Congress (the first in-person meeting of its kind coming out of the pandemic). It laid the ground for Africans to create a shared definition of what it means to put people at the center of conservation. Between the Congress and today, AWF has led the way, empowered others, and created pathways for measurable action, all of which you can see from the stories in this report. FY23 was a definitional year in AWF’s history, one in which we leaned into showing exactly what it takes to build a future where people and wildlife thrive.

I am proud to be part of what AWF has achieved, and I am honored to help guide how we expand on it in the years to come. Thank you to Heather Haaga, AWF’s previous Board Chair, the Executive Committee, and the entire AWF Board for your visionary leadership leading up to and during this year. Thank you to the Board and to all of AWF’s donors and partners for your commitment to living our values as an Africa-based and Africa-led conservation organization.

Sincerely,

Larry Green
Chair, AWF Board of Trustees

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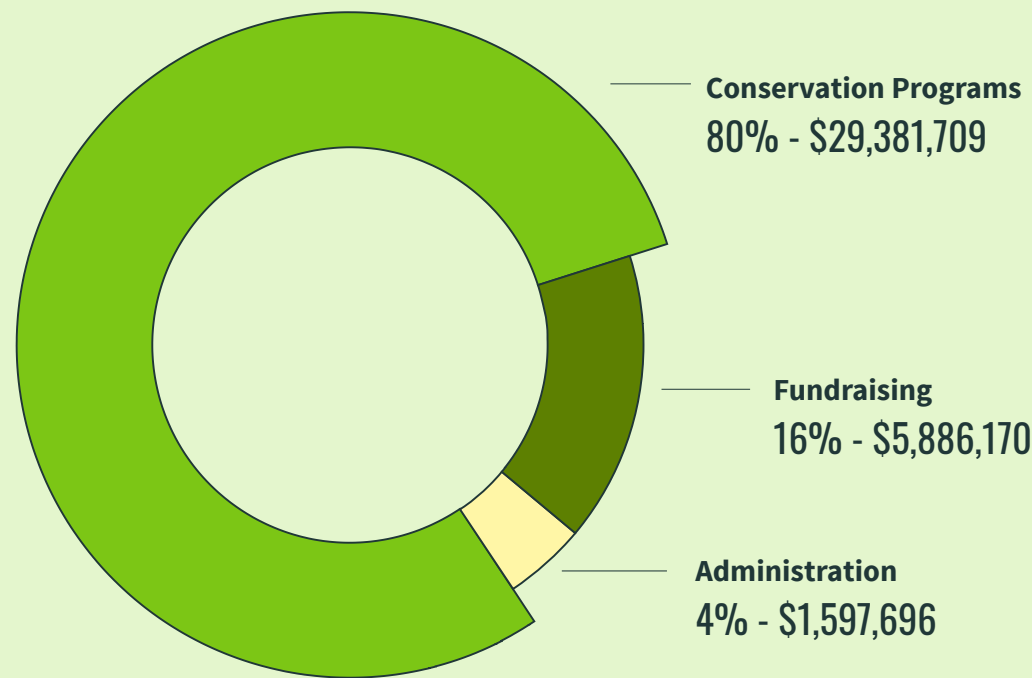


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Since AWF’s beginnings over 60 years ago, we’ve been a responsible steward of your contributions in service to Africa’s wildlife and wild lands.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY



REVENUE BREAKOUT



SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AS OF JUNE 30, 2023

OPERATING REVENUE	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL
Gifts from individuals	16,303,997	3,144,238	19,448,235
Corporate & foundation support	965,311	5,436,113	6,401,424
Public-sector grants	6,414,398	-	6,414,398
Program income	62,771	-	62,771
In-kind contributions	271,264	-	271,264
Restricted net assets utilized	5,670,371	(5,670,371)	-
Total Operating Revenue	29,688,112	2,909,980	32,598,092
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Conservation programs	22,916,776	-	22,916,776
Education & outreach	6,464,933	-	6,464,933
Total program expenses	29,381,709	-	29,381,709
Finance & administration	1,597,696	-	1,597,696
Fundraising	5,886,170	-	5,886,170
Total supporting services	7,483,866	-	7,483,866
Total Operating Expenses	36,865,575	-	36,865,575
Non-operating activities	-	-	-
Net investment income	1,919,330	441,804	2,361,134
Total Non-Operating Activities	1,919,330	441,804	2,361,134
Change in Net Assets	(5,258,133)	3,351,784	(1,906,349)

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF JUNE 30, 2023

	2023	2022
Cash and equivalents	3,647,480	2,458,002
Investments	23,350,982	26,927,302
Gifts and grants receivable	7,071,325	9,024,224
Accounts receivable	397,910	248,513
Prepaid & other assets	1,508,962	1,084,865
Impact loans receivable	360,640	442,118
Property & equipment, net of depreciation	5,129,990	4,705,570
Rights of Use asset	3,330,935	3,911,357
Total Assets	44,798,224	48,801,951
Impact notes payable	-	-
Accounts payable & accrued expenses	1,846,519	3,294,472
Refundable grant advances	2,242,278	720,066
Loan payable	-	1,425,000
Lease liabilities	4,552,501	5,299,946
Other liabilities	148,697	147,889
Total Liabilities	8,789,995	10,887,373
Unrestricted net assets	23,052,231	28,310,364
Restricted net assets	12,955,998	9,604,214
Total Net Assets	36,008,229	37,914,578
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	44,798,224	48,801,951



