



Laikipia Wildlife Forum
CONSERVATION IN ACTION

Forum Focus Newsletter

Conservation in Action

Q3 Edition 2024

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Honouring our ecosystem guardians
on World Rangers Day

BECOME OUR MEMBER TODAY

Join us in making a difference for wildlife conservation and the restoration of our natural resources in the greater Laikipia region. As a friend, philanthropist, and well-wisher, your support is vital to the success of the Laikipia Wildlife Forum.

With your generous donation, we can continue to work towards championing for wildlife conservation and sustainable natural resources management in the greater Laikipia landscape. Your contribution, no matter the size, will help us to ensure a future where the landscapes flora and fauna thrives and flourishes. Please consider making a donation today and together, we can create a better environment for all.

Also, you can access our membership brochure using the provided QR Code and feel free to subscribe to any of the membership categories highlighted.



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CONFERENCE 2024 HELD BETWEEN 13TH
AND 15TH AUGUST 2024 AT THE RCMRD
COMPLEX IN NAIROBI

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As we share this third-quarter newsletter, we are filled with immense gratitude for the collective efforts that continue to propel Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) forward in our mission to conserve the greater Laikipia landscape. First and foremost, we extend our heartfelt thanks to our dedicated LWF team. Your commitment to successfully implementing projects and executing activities seamlessly has been remarkable. A special mention goes to our Finance Department, featured in this issue, for their timely and accurate financial reporting, which plays a pivotal role in maintaining the trust and support of our partners.

Our sincerest gratitude also goes to our Board for their continued oversight and guidance, and to our members, whose subscriptions across various membership categories contribute to the success of our work. Your unwavering belief in our mission is the foundation of all we achieve.

We would also like to acknowledge the invaluable support of our partners and collaborators. A special thanks to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Alliance Bioversity International-CIAT, People Powered, and TerraFund for AFR100. Your financial and technical contributions have been instrumental in ensuring the success of our projects. We also deeply appreciate the collaboration of our local partners, including the Northern Kenya Conservation Clubs (NKCC), Borana Conservancy, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, The Leo Project, Daraja Academy, the National Government through its lead agencies and departments, and County Governments within our jurisdiction. Together, we are making meaningful strides in conservation, education, and community empowerment.

This quarter, we celebrate key milestones in our Climate Democracy Accelerator Project and our TerraFund for AFR100 initiatives. We are also excited to introduce new partners, such as Daraja Academy, whose feature in this newsletter underscores the growing spirit of collaboration within Laikipia.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunities the remainder of the year holds. We aim to continue implementing our projects with the same enthusiasm and look forward to welcoming more LWF members across all categories. If you or your organization would like to join our efforts, please consider supporting us as a donor, partner, or through membership. Together, we can create lasting change for the people and wildlife of Laikipia.

For more information on becoming a member or making a donation, please reach out to us at communications@laikipia.org or call +254 726 500 260. Every contribution helps us move closer to our vision of realizing a productive, healthy and robust Upper Ewaso landscape that supports livelihoods and healthy populations of wildlife.

John Kiongo
Membership and Communications Officer

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



In this quarter, we again share with you progress in our project-implementation but make it more informative by giving it a financial perspective. Our timely presentation of reports and their subsequent approval by our development partners reflects Laikipia Wildlife Forum's (LWF's) commitment to excellence, transparency, and accountability in managing funds.

We continue tackling climate change by empowering communities to drive climate action. We did this by raising awareness and enabling local communities in the fifteen Wards of Laikipia County, through Citizen Assemblies, led by Ward Climate Change Planning Committees (WCCPC) to advocate for meaningful change. We further established three tree nurseries, one in our LWF compound, to ensure a boosted supply of seedlings under our TerraFund AFR100 project. Within the same project, we were able to begin the growing of 70,000 trees in Shamanek forest.

Even as we addressed the environmental aspects of climate change, we did not forget the human wellbeing aspect and in this regard, we participated in a Youth Café organized by The Leo Project. The topic of discussion was climate anxiety, also known as eco-anxiety, which is a growing fear or worry about the future due to the effects of climate change.

Our Conservation Education (CE) Programme keeps making milestones by the day and in this quarter, we joined our partners; Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and Borana Conservancy in an environmental education workshop for teachers within the greater Laikipia Landscape, Meru and Isiolo Counties. Besides, we continue with our activities with schools and this saw us participate in a Community Conservation Day at Kimanjo Primary School as well as carry out environmental activities at Three Rivers Academy.

Having experienced water shortages during the long drought that ended in the year 2023, we are not taking chances with the management of water which includes preventing its pollution. We will therefore contribute to prevention of water-pollution in a project funded through the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Russell E. Train Education for Nature (EFN) Program aimed at protecting the Likii River sub-catchment from improper waste disposal. We are happy to have this new development partner on board.

Our interaction with other stakeholders is not limited to the implementation of projects but also through participating in discussions and events. LWF participated in a roundtable discussion with the Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife and attended the launch of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Strategic Plan for year 2024 to 2028. We also make sure that we are up to speed with new research findings as well as emerging trends hence in this quarter, we participated in the 8th International Conference of the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD).

We have developed a calendar of international days that are commemorated in the environment and natural resource space that will be shared with all relevant stakeholders. One of these days, which we participated in commemorating, is the World Ranger Day whose national celebration was hosted by Laikipia County at the Nanyuki Stadium.

I conclude by inviting you to read more about an exceptional school known as Daraja Academy. This is a school with a unique approach of no rules but only four pillars that guide both students and staff members. Let's find out.

Ms. Celline Achieng'
Executive Director
Laikipia Wildlife Forum

FINANCE DEPARTMENT'S NOTE

During the third quarter, the Finance Department focused significantly on financial reporting activities for various projects. This process is crucial as it ensures compliance with partnership agreements between LWF and its donors and partners, thereby fostering an environment conducive for continued funding and operations. We are pleased to announce substantial achievements in implementing various project objectives and an overall improvement in all our focal activities.

Firstly, we are delighted to report that the final report for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)-funded project was approved. The final reporting was conducted in April, with project documentation approved in June 2024. This approval paved way for the signing of the fourth Letter of Agreement (LoA), allowing us to continue implementing activities during the fourth quarter of the year.

The Alliance Bioersivity International & CIAT Project, titled Restoration Challenge Grant Platform for Smallholders and Communities, with Blockchain-Enabled Crowdfunding, was successfully completed. Closing reports for this project were finalized, approved, and signed off. The efficient reporting process showcased our effective use of donor resources. Furthermore, this reporting provides an opportunity to strengthen our engagement with donors, ultimately benefiting smallholder farmers and promoting environmental management.

We also completed the mid-year reporting for the Terrafund for AFR100 Project, Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Tree Cover in the Laikipia Landscape, Kenya. The interim reporting process was successfully completed and approved by the donor, allowing us to proceed with the implementation. This project aims to recover ecosystems and enhance tree-cover, providing significant advantages to the surrounding communities.

The timely presentation of reports and their subsequent approval reflect LWF's commitment to excellence, transparency, and accountability in managing funds. We strive to effectively utilize donor funds to bring sustainable improvements to both the community and the environment.

The approval of all our reports signifies not only administrative success but also clear evidence that LWF is making a tangible difference in the field. Efficient usage of donor funds is instrumental in driving positive change for both the community and the environment. Looking ahead, we remain committed to developing and enhancing relationships with current and potential funders as a top priority.

Calvin Wekesa
Program Finance Officer

ABOUT LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM

Laikipia Wildlife Forum also referred to as LWF, is a dynamic membership led conservation organization supporting, coordinating and facilitating conservation and natural resource management initiatives within the greater Laikipia Landscape.

We provide a platform for dialogue for a cross section of land owners and land users including local community groups, private ranchers, pastoralists, small-scale farmers and tourism industry players.

Our mantra of “Forumness” calls on us to bring people together to work on matters relevant to natural resource management. LWF provides a platform for people to find solutions to common problems. This is what makes it unique and is the origin of Laikipia Wildlife Forum.

OUR VISION

To nurture, support, and partner with organizations championing wildlife conservation and sustainable natural resource management within the greater Laikipia region

OUR MISSION

To realize a productive and robust Upper Ewaso Ng’iro landscape that supports livelihoods and healthy populations of wildlife

Our mantra of “Forumness” calls on us to bring people together to work on matters relevant to natural resource management.



LWF provides a platform for people to find solutions to common problems



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO DRIVE CLIMATE ACTION

In the arid and semi-arid regions of Laikipia County, where the effects of climate change are increasingly evident, local communities are stepping up to address these challenges. Through the Climate Democracy Accelerator (CDA) project, supported by our development partners; People Powered, we have made significant progress, not only in raising awareness but also in empowering marginalized groups to advocate for meaningful change.

Across all the 15 wards in Laikipia County, that is Ngobit, Nanyuki, Mukogodo East and West, Tigithi, Salama, Segera, Rumuruti, Marmanet, Sosian, Ol-Moran, Umande, Thingithu, Githiga, and Igwamiti, we have introduced a unique approach to climate governance: Citizen Assemblies. These gatherings provide a platform for community members to voice their concerns and propose solutions, forming the backbone of our participatory climate policy-making efforts.

These assemblies have done more than raise awareness about climate issues. They have given marginalized communities a voice in the decisions that affect their environment and livelihoods. For the first time, grassroots' voices are influencing climate policies. Residents, many of whom have faced climate-related challenges like water scarcity, are now advocating for practical solutions such as rainwater harvesting.

One of the key successes of this project has been the empowerment of marginalized communities, particularly those in remote and arid regions like Mukogodo and Sosian. For years, these communities were often excluded from the county's decision-making processes. However, through the CDA, they now possess the tools and knowledge to actively engage in climate governance.

The Ward Climate Change Planning Committees (WCCPC) which are politically elected bodies with deep connections to their communities, have greatly benefited from our advocacy training. Prior to this project, many of these committees had not received any formal training since their formation in 2023. This initiative has changed that, equipping them not only with knowledge about climate change impacts but also with the skills to advocate for policies that can improve both their environment and local economy. Rather than waiting for solutions, these communities are now advocating for them.

A key highlight of the project has been our close collaboration with the WCCPC, which play a pivotal role in local climate governance. Our training has focused on strengthening their capacity to address climate challenges effectively. Workshops have equipped committee members with essential skills in project management, climate policy development, and fundraising, which are critical tools for implementing long-term solutions.

One of the key successes of this project has been the empowerment of marginalized communities, particularly those in remote and arid regions like Mukogodo and Sosian.



Representatives from WCCPC actively engage in a group discussion at the Rumuruti CDA Workshop

These skills are especially vital as the committees work to access and implement projects under the World Bank's Financing Locally-Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) program. With improved governance structures, these committees are now better positioned to secure funding and implement climate resilience projects, ensuring that their communities benefit from sustainable development initiatives.

One of the pressing issues we have tackled is the scarcity of water . During participatory planning sessions, we collected valuable data from all the 15 wards, focusing on water access and rainwater-harvesting. This data is now being used to develop a comprehensive policy brief on rainwater-harvesting, a crucial resource in an area regularly affected by drought and erratic rainfall. Once completed, this policy brief will be presented to the County Assembly, advocating for the adoption of rainwater harvesting structures to help communities mitigate water shortages.



Daniel Githura, WCCPC representative from Ol Moran Ward, actively participates in the Rumuruti workshop

Although the project has primarily focused on policy-development and advocacy, our efforts have laid the foundation for future infrastructure projects that will address water scarcity in a sustainable way.

None of this progress would have been possible without strong collaboration. Our partnership with the County Government of Laikipia's Climate Change Unit has been instrumental in aligning our activities with bigger C goals at County level. This collaboration ensures that the climate action plans and policy briefs we develop have the potential to be adopted at the highest levels of governance. By working closely with the government, we are paving the way for tangible changes that will benefit both the people and the environment.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORT FOR IMPROVED WATER RESOURCE PROTECTION IN LIKII RIVER SUB-CATCHMENT

Freshwater resources are highly vulnerable and can easily become compromised without proper management. As population growth and industrial activities increase, so does the demand for water, elevating the risk of pollution and threatening both human health and the environment.

The Likii River, a vital water source for Nanyuki municipality, faces significant pollution from excessive chemical use on smallholder and commercial farms, improper solid waste disposal, and activities such as washing of vehicles directly in the river. Without timely intervention, this pollution could render the water unsafe for human consumption, livestock, and the surrounding ecosystem.

To tackle these pressing pollution challenges, the LWF, with support from the WWF Russell E. Train Education for Nature (EFN) Program, is launching a project aimed at protecting the Likii River sub-catchment from improper waste disposal.

The initiative will focus on improving water quality by promoting sustainable waste management practices in the Likii and Kangaita informal settlements; home to more than 10,000 residents.

The project's success hinges on strong collaboration with key local actors in the water and waste management sectors. These include the Likii Water Resource Users Association (WRUA), Ng'arisha Mtaa Youth Group, Mazingira Recyclers, and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). Together, these partners will drive pollution awareness campaigns and foster behavioral changes necessary to adopt sustainable waste management practices.

Youth-led organizations such as Ng'arisha Mtaa and Mazingira Recyclers will play a pivotal role in mobilizing the community, raising awareness, and actively involving local residents in maintaining a clean environment. Under the motto "Mazingira Safi, Jukumu Letu" (A Clean Environment, Our Responsibility), these groups will encourage community engagement and environmental stewardship.



The project's success hinges on strong collaboration with key local actors in the water and waste management sectors



On World Clean Up Day, LWF teamed up with Ngarisha Mtaa, Mazingira Recyclers, and other stakeholders for a clean-up in Majengo

A key focus will be on household-level waste management, with community members given opportunities to visit examples of waste being transformed into useful resources. One such example is the production of plastic poles from recycled waste by Mazingira Recyclers, which will serve as an educational model to inspire change of behaviour across the community.

To amplify this initiative's impact, LWF will conduct radio talks and podcasts to reach a broader audience. The project aims to reduce pollutants originating from informal settlements, irrigation farms, and peri-urban areas, thereby safeguarding this crucial freshwater resource for both the present and future generations.

NURTURING A SUSTAINABLE NURSERY AND RESTORING OUR FORESTS

Under the facilitation from Terrafund for AFR100, LWF began the establishment of three trees nurseries; at Ilmamsi Community Forest Association (CFA), at the Laikipia Wildlife Forum offices and at Likii Water Resource Users Association compound in Laikipia County. This initiative aims at leveraging our restoration efforts of rehabilitating degraded areas such as forests, rangelands and riparian zones.

After a reconnaissance visit and guidance from the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), LWF began the process of nursery establishment. The establishment of a new tree nursery at our offices marks a significant step in our conservation efforts aiding in supply of tree seedlings to restoration sites. The nursery targets to hold a capacity of 10, 000 of both fruit and indigenous tree seedlings. Additionally, we aim to distribute the seedlings to Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and schools, championing environmental conservation.



Nursery preparation at LWF offices.



The Ilmamusi CFA is a renowned organization dedicated to a range of conservation activities such as restoration of forests, sustainable grazing practices and the promotion of ecotourism. LWF is thrilled to support the establishment of an indigenous tree nursery in Ilmamusi CFA, a crucial step towards the sustainable management of the Mukogodo Forest in Laikipia County. This initiative is designed to enhance forest restoration and biodiversity. Currently, the CFA has already installed two water tanks with a holding capacity of 10,000 litres each and we are in the process of erecting shade nets to protect young seedlings. These efforts are aimed at rejuvenating the ecosystems and also fostering community involvement in environmental conservation.

LWF in partnership with Nanyuki Green Champions has actively been involved in restoring the riparian area of Nanyuki River by planting Giant bamboo which is well known for its ability to filter water and fast-growth rate. Currently, there is an ongoing process of Giant bamboo propagation which is taking place in one of the community nurseries we visited. Through the active participation in riparian restoration, we are paving way for revitalization of these vital ecosystems.

RESTORING SHAMANЕК FOREST

With support from TerraFund for AFR100, we are dedicated to combating climate change, restoring critical ecosystems, and reviving biodiversity by replenishing forests that are vital to the health of our planet. Shamanek Forest in Nyahururu has been identified as one of the key areas for our restoration efforts.

On August 9, 2024, we paid a strategic courtesy visit to the newly appointed Laikipia County Forest Conservator (CFC), Mr. Peter Kariuki, to strengthen ties and establish a strong working relationship as we embark on our restoration project in Shamanek Forest. This meeting provided an excellent opportunity to foster collaboration on future conservation efforts.




The LWF team poses with the newly appointed County Forest Conservator (CFC), Mr. Patrick Kariuki, alongside Amos King'ori, Secretary of the Shamanek CFA, during our visit to Nyahururu.

Aligned with our goal of planting 70,000 tree seedlings to restore 36.3 hectares of Shamanek Forest, we were joined by the secretary of the Shamanek Community Forest Association (CFA), Mr. Amos King'ori. The initiative focuses on planting four main indigenous tree species in the area: *Dombeya torrida* (Forest dombeya), *Syzigium cordatum* (Water berry), *Juniperus virginiana* (Red cedar), and *Podocarpus falcatus*.

During the meeting, the CFC emphasized the importance of using the Jaza Miti mobile application to document every tree planted, helping to keep accurate records toward Laikipia County's ambitious goal of planting 37 million trees within a year. Shamanek Forest, having experienced wildfires two years ago, is highly suitable for restoration. However, due to the hilly terrain, Mr. Kariuki stated that the Plantation Establishment and Livelihood Improvement Scheme (PELIS) would not be appropriate for this area.

Mr. Kariuki also shared Mr. King'ori's suggestion of establishing a temporary onsite nursery to facilitate planting, particularly given the challenging conditions of the roads during the rainy seasons. We agreed to source seedlings from local communities, not only to support their livelihoods but also to encourage sustained engagement in reforestation. The CFC, together with the CFA and the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), pledged full support for restoring various sites within the forest. Additionally, Mr. Kariuki recommended documenting the entire tree-growing process from the start to simplify monitoring over the next six years.

Additionally, we visited two community nurseries to assess the types of seedlings available, inquire about their prices, and evaluate their suitability for planting. These forest-adjacent communities collect seeds from the forest, making the seedlings more resilient to local climatic conditions, which results in higher survival rates. By using locally sourced seeds, these communities play a vital role in preserving native plant species, enhancing biodiversity, and supporting the surrounding ecosystems. This approach should be replicated in other forested areas to improve environmental resilience and strengthen community livelihoods.



The initiative focuses on planting four main indigenous tree species in the area: *Dombeya torrida* (Forest dombeya), *Syzigium cordatum* (Water berry), *Juniperus virginiana* (Red cedar), and *Podocarpus falcatus*

OUR VISIT TO LOISABA CONSERVANCY

On September 4, 2024, we visited Loisaba Conservancy to explore areas of synergy and partnership. Tom Silvester, the CEO of Loisaba Conservancy, hosted the meeting with the objective of identifying mutual opportunities to enhance conservation efforts across Laikipia.

Upon arrival, we received an extensive tour of Loisaba's operations, visiting various departments, including Conservation, Human Resources, Finance, and their advanced Control Room. The team also explored the Conservancy's Conservation Center, where Loisaba's diverse programs and initiatives were showcased.

The meeting officially commenced with an introduction by LWF's Executive Director, Celline Achieng'. She presented LWF's core thematic areas and highlighted ongoing programs in education, restoration, and conservation. Tom provided an overview of Loisaba's programs and milestones, notably the creation of approximately 500 jobs as a result of their initiatives, illustrating the Conservancy's significant community impact.

One of the visit's highlights was a tour of Loisaba's biogas plant, where *Opuntia engelmannii* is being transformed into biogas. This innovative approach, as demonstrated by Francis at the plant, serves as a model for the resourceful use of invasive species, currently providing gas for the rangers' mess, which serves 40-50 individuals daily.



Benard Gituku from Loisaba guides our team through the biogas plant, explaining the innovative use of Opuntia engelmannii

The visit concluded with promising opportunities for collaboration. The meeting emphasized the importance of partnership between conservation organizations such as LWF and Loisaba Conservancy. Through such collaboration, both organizations can significantly enhance their efforts to preserve ecosystems and promote sustainability.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION IN ACTION

Our Conservation Education unit remains committed to promoting environmental awareness and equipping learners with the practical skills necessary to mitigate the effects of climate change and address other environmental challenges. In partnership with institutions such as Three Rivers Academy, Borana Conservancy, and Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, William Holden, among others, LWF focuses on hands-on environmental activities that empower learners to understand and tackle climate change at the local level. Recent initiatives highlight these collaborative efforts through workshops and community engagement designed to enhance conservation education.

Borana/Lewa Conservation Education Workshop

This quarter, we participated in a two-day workshop organized by Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and Borana Conservancy, which brought together teachers from 32 primary and secondary schools across Laikipia, Meru, and Isiolo Counties. The workshop aimed to deepen teachers' understanding of environmental education and help them integrate it with the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

During the workshop, Ephantus Mugo, the Conservation Education Coordinator at Lewa, led a session on the current environmental status. He emphasized the need to broaden conservation efforts beyond tree-planting to include essential practices like water conservation, waste management, soil preservation, and energy efficiency. This holistic approach ensures that environmental education is comprehensive and practical for learners.



Ephantus Mugo engages educators and stakeholders on the first day of the workshop at Lewa Wildlife Conservancy.

Fidel Omondi, the Assistant Conservation Education Coordinator at Lewa, outlined the key components of environmental education, which include awareness, knowledge, attitude, skills, and participation. He emphasized how these elements can be incorporated into the Kenya school curriculum to foster sustainable practices among students. Another key session, led by Alfred Muriuki, introduced the integration of digital tools into conservation education. Using platforms such as PACE (Pan African Conservation Education) and ChatGPT, educators can generate innovative conservation projects and engage students through technology-driven methods.

At Borana Conservancy, Mwangi Gachagua presented the concept of ‘green schools,’ institutions dedicated to environmental sustainability. These schools implement eco-friendly practices such as efficient resource use, sustainable curricula, and energy conservation, making them models of environmental stewardship for students and the community alike.

Community Conservation Day at Kimanjo Secondary School

LWF also took part in the Northern Kenya Conservation Clubs’ (NKCC) Community Conservation Day held at Kimanjo Secondary School. This initiative gathered conservation clubs from various primary and secondary schools to showcase their understanding of environmental conservation. Students expressed their views on climate change, land degradation, and human-wildlife conflict through creative presentations, including skits, poems, and traditional songs.

The students further demonstrated practical solutions, highlighting the importance of recycling and reusing materials. Projects such as turning old jeans into sofas and repurposing wine bottles into decorations underscored the importance of the 3Rs—Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. This event provided a platform for the broader community to learn from the students’ innovative approaches and engage in discussions on sustainable practices and wildlife conservation.



LWF’s team participates in the NKCC Community Conservation Day at Kimanjo Secondary School

Practical Environmental Activities at Three Rivers Academy

LWF has also strengthened its partnership with Three Rivers Academy, focusing on practical environmental activities that directly contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change. This collaboration provides students with hands-on experience in areas such as water harvesting, tree planting, and sustainable waste management. These activities not only equip learners with valuable practical skills but also cultivate a deep sense of environmental stewardship.

Through these partnerships with Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Borana Conservancy, the NKCC, William Holden and schools such as Three Rivers Academy, LWF is advancing conservation education by making it more practical and relevant. By fostering collaboration, these efforts ensure that learners and communities are empowered with the knowledge, skills, and motivation needed to address environmental challenges and promote sustainability.

FAO DEPUTY DIRECTOR VISITS LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM'S RESTORATION PROJECT SITES IN IL NGWESI COMMUNITY LAND

On Friday, August 2, 2024, the Deputy Director of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN paid a visit to Laikipia Wildlife Forum's (LWF) project sites in Il Ngwesi Community Land, where FAO has been supporting the **"Restoration of Degraded Areas and Improvement in Water Accessibility"** project. The visit began with a warm reception from the local community, who welcomed the Deputy Director with traditional Maasai songs and dances.

The visit was preceded by a meeting with ILMAMUSI Community Forest Association (CFA), which provided an in-depth overview of the Mukogodo Forest. The manager of ILMAMUSI CFA informed the Director about the critical value of the dryland forest, which they co-manage with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS). She was told that the forest is not only a water catchment area but also a source of livelihood for Indigenous communities, particularly the Maasai.

Following the briefing, the Deputy Director proceeded to the hay farm establishments covering 60 acres (24.49 hectares) in the Il Ngwesi community. The project aimed at providing reliable fodder supply during drought seasons and enhancing the economic well-being of community members through hay sales. The initiative is also a key intervention to reduce pressure on the adjacent Mukogodo Forest, which has been under threat from livestock encroachment during dry seasons.

During her tour of the project, the Deputy Director interacted with several community members involved in the restoration efforts, including 15 women from the Indigenous Maasai community who played a critical role in the hay farming initiative. She was impressed by the women's active participation in the project, noting that their involvement is essential in ensuring sustainability of the initiative.

She enquired about the seed-sourcing process for the hay farm. She was happy that the planted variety, i.e., Boma Rhodes grass seeds, was doing very well. The Programs Officer explained how they mixed the seeds with sawdust to prevent wind dispersal during planting.

In conversations with LWF's Program Officer, Peter Mathenge, the Deputy Director was briefed on the next steps for the project, which include developing a business plan for the commercialization of hay farming. In addition, there were plans to train community members on best practices for harvesting, packaging, and storing the hay to maximize its market value. The Deputy Director expressed her support for the next project steps and encouraged continued community engagement to ensure long-term success.

The area chief, Mr. Kisio, informed her that the availability of hay not only benefits domestic livestock but also serves the two Black Rhinos within the conservancy.

Her visit concluded with confirmation of FAO's commitment to supporting sustainable land restoration efforts in the region, particularly in areas where there are community led restoration efforts.

INSIDE DARAJA ACADEMY



Daraja Academy is a boarding school in Naibor, near Nanyuki, offering full scholarships to exceptional Kenyan girls from underprivileged backgrounds. Daraja provides an opportunity for girls at risk of early marriage, FGM, and other hardships to gain independence through education backed by a curriculum that focuses on three key objectives:

1. **Her Life** – Empowering girls to overcome past traumas, achieve better health, pursue higher education, and access employment.
2. **The Community** – Equipping girls to contribute to their communities through financial support, service initiatives, and mentorship.
3. **The World** – Preparing girls to become leaders and advocates for peacebuilding, sustainability, and women’s rights.

Our Programs

Daraja Academy: Academic Innovations Using a modified KCSE syllabus, Daraja teachers utilize project-based learning techniques to teach subject matter. Partnerships with U.S universities have been established to provide professional development for teaching students. Through the knowledge gained in class for example, our girls were able to invent a working water pump and many other innovations

WISH (Women of Integrity, Strength, and Hope): This is a 4-year Women’s Empowerment program that covers topics such as identity, self-worth, sex education, leadership, global citizenship, and social justice. Due to its positive community impact, the program has expanded to 11 other secondary schools in Laikipia. Recognizing the need for a similar initiative for boys, Daraja launched The Man I Am, a program designed to empower boys to navigate 21st-century challenges. This boys’ empowerment program is now active in 7 public schools in Laikipia.

Psychosocial Welfare Program: This is a 4.5-year Psychosocial Welfare program that focuses on students’ mental and emotional well-being, helping them overcome traumatic challenges such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), abuse, gender-based violence, poverty, teen pregnancies, and early marriages. The program nurtures resilience through 24-hour professional counseling, offering both individual and group sessions to support the personal growth of the girls.

A 5 Months Transition Program: This program aims to keep girls engaged between finishing school and starting university by equipping them with practical skills not covered in the traditional curriculum. It prepares them for self-reliant, sustainable lives through lessons in computer literacy, personal finance, entrepreneurship, and career exploration.

The Culture

Daraja Pillars: Daraja is a school with a unique approach of no rules but only four pillars that guide both students and staff members. These 4 values that guide the school in its teaching and operation include:

Pillar 1. Be accountable for the role you play at Daraja, neither neglecting nor abusing it.

Pillar 2. Maintain open communication. Speak honestly and listen respectfully.

Pillar 3. Embrace differences. Treat all with dignity and respect.

Pillar 4. Each day, leave it better than you found it.



LWF’s Brian Otieno takes a photo of the pillars during our visit to Daraja Academy

Environmental Conservation: Incorporated in every aspect of Daraja, conservation and climate action is not run by a club but as an initiative of the whole school. So far projects like hosting a “Women in Conservation” series, addressing the conservation of native and endangered wildlife and sustainable practices such as hosting annual climate action week, composting, beekeeping and organic gardening, innovation of an automatic hand-washing machine designed to reduce water waste, which earned Daraja students the 1st runners-up at the Green Kids Award and recognition at the Africa Youth Climate Assembly alongside artistic projects focused on climate change have been running at Daraja Academy.

The Daraja Wildlife Project: Founded in 2016 by Peter Barto, a certified naturalist from California, with extensive experience in wildlife research and outreach to teach Daraja Academy students how to run a wildlife camera-trapping program and introduce them to wildlife research methods through trail cameras. Through the project students learn about the animals using the Daraja campus as a corridor or home range. The project’s future goal is to expand, training students to become naturalists and advocates for wildlife conservation in Kenya and East Africa.

Peter Barto, along with his family, are long-time supporters of Daraja Academy.



Alumni Mentorship: This program fosters a strong sisterhood among graduates. Alumni return for Mentorship Days to receive guidance and training while mentoring current students. From the moment they join Daraja, they become part of a “Family Tree” and take on the responsibility of supporting their younger sisters. Through social media, WhatsApp, and phone calls, alumni share internships, job opportunities, and celebrate each other’s milestones, such as graduating, getting married, or having children.


Community service: The Academy requires that each student commits to 10 hours of service in their home communities during each of the three-term breaks. This teaches the girls that the education they are receiving is something to be shared and that it nurtures their innate leadership abilities. Girls volunteer at health clinics, schools, community centers, etc. Daraja girls volunteer approximately 12,000 hours every year in their local communities.

How to support

To support Daraja Academy and be part of its mission, you can:

- 1. Sponsor a Girl’s Education:** Directly contribute to covering the education expenses of a student at Daraja. Your support can transform a girl’s future.
- 2. Share Daraja’s Mission:** Spread the word about Daraja Academy to your network, encouraging others to get involved and support this cause.
- 3. Post on Social Media:** Help raise awareness by sharing Daraja Academy’s story, mission, and impact on your social platforms. You can use your voice to inspire others to support the initiative.

Each contribution helps create lasting change in the lives of the girls at Daraja Academy.



Daraja provides an opportunity for girls at risk of early marriage, FGM, and other hardships to gain independence through education backed by a curriculum

WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL DAYS CALENDAR

DATE	ENVIRONMENTAL CELEBRATION
JANUARY	
31st January	International Zebra Day
FEBRUARY	
2nd February	World Wetlands Day
MARCH	
3rd March	World Wildlife Day/ African Environment Day(Prof. Wangari Maathai Day)
21st March	International Day of Forests
22nd March	World Water Day
23rd March	World Meteorological Day
30th March	International Day of Zero Waste
APRIL	
22nd April	International Mother Earth Day
MAY	
11th May	Global Big Day(annual celebration of birds near and far)
14th May	World Migratory Bird Day
20th May	World Bee Day
21st May	World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
22nd May	International Day for Biological Diversity
JUNE	
5th June	World Environmental Day
7th June	World Food Safety Day
8th June	World Ocean Day
17th June	World Day to Combat Drought and Desertification
21st June	World Giraffe Day
21st- 27th June	Insect week
JULY	
11th July	World Population Day
AUGUST	
9th August	The International Day of the World's Indigenous People
10th August	World Lion Day
12th August	World Elephant Day
20th August	World Mosquito Day
SEPTEMBER	
5th September	International Vulture Awareness Day
7th September	International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies
16th September	International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
22nd September	World Rhino Day
27th September	World Tourism Day
28th September	World Rabies Day
OCTOBER	
7th October	World Habitat Day
21st October	World Reptile Awareness Day
21st- 22nd October	World Energy Day
DECEMBER	
5th December	World Soil Day
11th December	International Mountain Day

CLIMATE ANXIETY: STAYING VIGILANT THROUGH THE CRISIS

Amid the escalating impacts of climate change and the urgent need to empower youth in building resilience, LWF participated in a Youth Café organized by The Leo Project. The event brought together a distinguished panel including Dr. Catherine Machungo from Natural State, Njoki, an Organizational Psychologist from Kazi Mind Wellness, Wambui from the Kenya Red Cross, and James Njihia from LWF.

One of the key topics discussed was climate anxiety, also known as eco-anxiety—a growing fear or worry about the future due to the effects of climate change. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), climate change is the greatest threat to humanity. Globally, we are witnessing an increase in heatwaves, wildfires, and devastating floods.

. In Kenya, the recent prolonged drought severely impacted families with food shortages, while in Northern Kenya, wildlife mortality soared due to lack of pasture and water. As the effects of climate change intensify, understanding and engaging the youth in combatting and adapting to these impacts is crucial.

The Leo Project has been at the forefront in creating climate-resilient communities, particularly through youth-focused training on climate adaptation. “The psychological impact of climate anxiety, heightened by emotional and mental distress in response to alarming changes in climate, remains largely unaddressed,” remarked Njoki from Kazi Mind Wellness.



Dr. Catherine from Natural State, James, LWF, Njoki from Kazi Mind Wellness and Wambui from the Kenya Red Cross, engage the youth in a robust discussion about climate anxiety

In Laikipia, both floods and droughts have devastated communities, with some of the most extreme cases leading to malnutrition and death. As populations grow, the demand for land for agriculture and settlement increases, intensifying human-wildlife conflict in shared habitats. James from LWF emphasized the need to address climate anxiety at the grassroots level, using sustainable approaches. Initiatives that empower communities to adapt to climate crises, such as LWF's youth-led tree-growing activities in riparian and degraded areas, help mitigate floods and increase forest cover. Through eco-schooling outreach, LWF also mentors younger generations, preparing them to remain vigilant in the face of climate change.



Youths actively engage the panelists with questions at The Leo Project Co:Work Space

Wambui from the Kenya Red Cross spoke on disaster preparedness, particularly concerning climate-related disasters such as floods and landslides. She highlighted the importance of early warning systems and the need for communities to be cautious and prepared to avoid loss of life and trauma. Wambui also called on the youth to step up by developing innovative solutions and adaptation strategies.

Dr. Catherine explored the emerging carbon credits market, an innovative model aimed at offsetting carbon emissions while improving community livelihoods. She explained how carbon markets work to reduce atmospheric carbon through sequestration by trees and soil, and how Natural State has linked community groups to companies involved in carbon markets. However, she pointed out the gap in youth involvement in carbon credits, stressing the need for public literacy on the topic.

The forum highlighted the importance of engaging youth in the fight against climate change and addressing climate anxiety. 'Reversing the damage caused by climate change requires an intergenerational commitment. To succeed, we must prepare and empower the younger generation to take action. We remain committed to supporting the youth in championing sustainable solutions for a resilient future.' Concluded the panelists.

Photo Credits: Kelvin Maina

LWF PARTICIPATES IN A MEETING TO ENGAGE WITH THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR TOURISM AND WILDLIFE

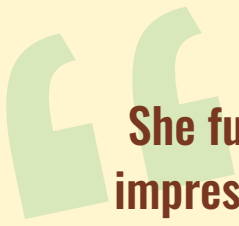
Conservation Alliance of Kenya (CAK) organized a meeting and invited its members to meet with Ms. Rebecca Miano, the Cabinet Secretary (CS) for Tourism and Wildlife on 23rd September 2024 in Nairobi to discuss the areas in wildlife management that need attention by the Ministry. The 13 organizations present highlighted some key issues after which the CS made her comments. She said that the main purpose of this meeting was to know each other as well as know how to work together. She further said that she has noted and is impressed that the conservation sector has more of an anchored passion than just work.

She suggested ways in which she thinks we can work together. First, is to streamline the way we engage. She said she believes in roundtable discussions where such engagements can take place. Secondly, is to work together on emerging issues. 'We don't need to agree on everything as we do this but we will have made effort.' She added. Thirdly, she challenged us that since we are their first-line in public participation, we need to be very proactive.



LWF's Executive Director and fellow stakeholders meet with the Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife, Ms. Rebecca Miano, during a roundtable organized by the Conservation Alliance (CAK) of Kenya to discuss key wildlife management issues

Fourthly, she promised that her Ministry would address issues of mistrust and accountability because serving people should not be seen as a favour or luxury. She advised that we need to develop a calendar of events or an action plan to enable us have more of such engagements between the Ministry and stakeholders. Fifthly, she informed that the Ministry is finalizing the multi-sector policy to ensure harmony in implementation among the various sectors. She added that they are not going to reinvent the wheel but chat out a way forward for execution. Sixthly, she emphasized that issues of youth are a profound agenda and need to be given keen attention. She concluded by saying that she is happy to learn that stakeholders in the conservation of wildlife, other natural resources and the environment, have high expectations of her.



She further said that she has noted and is impressed that the conservation sector has more of an anchored passion than just work

HONOURING OUR ECOSYSTEM GUARDIANS ON WORLD RANGERS DAY

Rangers play a vital role in protection of our ecosystem enhancing survival of our wildlife. Their work exemplifies unwavering dedication that has significantly contributed to the sustainability of our fragile ecosystems.

On 31st July 2024, we joined the globe in celebrating the World Rangers Day at Nanyuki Stadium. Dr. Erastus Kanga, the Director General of the Kenya Wildlife Service, presided over the event in honor of the rangers. This year's theme, Celebrating Kenya Rangers' Efforts Towards Achieving 30 by 30, aims at conserving 30% of Kenya's biodiversity by 2030. The presence of the Director General signified the importance of the Mountain Conservation Area as echoed in his speech.

Mountain conservation area hosts the highest population of rhinos in Kenya at 75% with Solio Game Reserve holding 35% of the population. Their survival depends solely on the rangers who work round the clock as highlighted by Dr. Kanga who termed them as Guardians of Nature, emphasizing their importance to the public.



OI Pejeta Conservancy team explains technological tools used in monitoring among them, the FLIR cameras

The celebration was an opportunity for rangers to display their expertise on their areas of operations. Stakeholders in the wildlife sector presented how technology has leveraged the work of rangers towards delivering their services. Among the technology showcased was the Earth Ranger by Borana Conservancy that has transformed monitoring of wildlife in the conservancies, ranches and outside protected areas. Ol Pejeta Conservancy exhibited how the use of FLIR camera has amplified their scope in terms of monitoring; a useful tool for rangers. “Sniffer Rangers”, a term given to sniffer dogs, joined the celebration with their keepers showcasing their intelligence and agility in mapping out illegal activities such as poaching and tracking of wild trophies



A sniffer ranger demonstrates agility and intelligence in mapping weapons and wildlife trophies

Laikipia Landscape greatest challenge in wildlife management is Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) exacerbated by climate change. Rangers from KWS demonstrated how they respond to cases of HWC using a skit. They sensitized on mediation to resolve disputes arising from HWC reinstating the role of the community towards conservation. Attendees were educated on the new Human Wildlife Conflict Digital Payment Scheme that seeks to leverage the recording process and fasten the payment process.

To the rangers, the celebration was a platform to reflect on their journey of wildlife conservation as narrated by Kapona Lepale from Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. Hailing from a deep rooted cultural community, his transition from a poacher to a ranger was remarkable, narrating how he had killed carnivores for hides. After understanding the importance of conservation, he actively advocates for wildlife protection by educating the public especially those from communities living together with wildlife. His transformation magnified the importance of coexisting with wild animals urging communities and stakeholders to collaborate in mitigating human wildlife conflict.

In a County with strong cultural beliefs, there is need to integrate indigenous knowledge to mainstream conservation efforts. This was depicted during entertainment through traditional songs that emphasized on conservation from different communities. Despite coming from a rich cultural set up, the passion for Kapona towards conservation could not deter him from becoming a wildlife guardian.



KWS Director General, Dr. Kanga, awards Mr. Kapona for his exemplary work as a ranger

The culmination of the celebration was awarding certificates to rangers who had shown exemplary work in conservation. Awarding them, Dr. Kanga emphasized that it requires dedication and passion to become a ranger. Additionally, he called for collaboration among stakeholders in reference to Kenya Wildlife Service Strategic Plan 2024-2028 dedicated towards thriving wildlife population for all, forever. He reiterated that wildlife is for everyone, explaining it through Tunza Mali Yako, an initiative that seeks to sensitize the public to embrace wildlife conservation.

Laikipia Wildlife Forum recognizes the unwavering commitment of the rangers towards enhancing sustainability of wildlife populations and has been collaborating with conservancies, ranches and protected areas in championing wildlife conservation.

Photo Credits: Ann Ngunjiri

LWF PARTICIPATES IN THE LAUNCH OF THE KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN



Tourism and Wildlife Cabinet Secretary Hon. Rebecca Miano, Principal Secretary, State Department for Wildlife Silvia Museiya, her Tourism counterpart John Oloituaa, Dr. Kanga and other dignitaries, proudly present the newly launched Strategic Plan

The Executive Director represented LWF in this event that was held at the Ivory burning site in the Nairobi National Park on 30th September 2024. The Chief Guest was Ms. Rebecca Miano who is the Cabinet Secretary (CS) for Tourism and Wildlife. She was accompanied by the Principal Secretaries for both Tourism and Wildlife and other Ministry officials.

The event was also graced by the Director General of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Dr. Erastus Kanga, the Director of the Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI) Dr. Patrick Omondi and his colleagues, the KWS Board of Trustees, other government institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the private sector, among other stakeholders.



LWF's Executive Director, Celline Achieng', with other stakeholders at the launch of the Strategic Plan

The Director General (DG) of KWS, Dr. Erastus Kanga informed that the process of developing the plan had taken about six months and thanked everyone who was involved. In his brief overview of the Plan, he began by informing that KWS has changed its Vision. The new Vision is 'Thriving wildlife and healthy habitats for all, forever.' He went on to explain that the Plan has five strategic issues, five strategic goals, seven result areas, twenty-four strategic objectives and eighty nine strategies. An abridged version (also found on the KWS website) of the Plan was shared out in hard copies and stakeholders encouraged to read the full version from the KWS website: www.kws.go.ke The CS launched the Plan and challenged the Service to ensure its full implementation.

LWF PARTICIPATES IN THE LAUNCH OF THE KENYA BIRD TRENDS PLATFORM



LWF's Executive Director alongside other stakeholders during the launch of the Kenya Bird Trends Platform

The Executive Director represented LWF at the launch of the Kenya Bird Trends platform by the Tropical Biology Association (TBA) on 23rd August 2024. The event was held at the Kenya Wildlife Service's Nairobi Safari Walk, with the Director General of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Dr. Erastus Kanga, as the Chief Guest. This online platform allows users to track changes in the range of bird species in Kenya over time by comparing historical and recent data on interactive maps.

Mr. Anthony Kuria, the project lead, informed participants that the platform is a product of the 'Improved Decision-Making through Citizen Science' project, funded by the Darwin Initiative. The project focused on capacity building through citizen science, training 31 citizen managers and producing eight new citizen science analyses.

Dr. Keter from the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) highlighted that there are 121 Key Bird Areas (KBAs) in Kenya, with 10 endemic bird species found in these regions. Dr. Peter Njoroge, also of the NMK, explained the platform's applications in areas such as conservation (species and site prioritization, international obligations, environmental monitoring, invasive species control); Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) (legal obligations, project financing); tourism (avitoourism, field guides); public health and food security (avian flu surveillance, pest bird species control); and research on emerging issues (AI and machine learning, the aviation industry, biodiversity credit markets).

The event concluded with awards presented to three individuals and a couple for their efforts in bird tracking and identification.

The platform can be accessed at kenyabirdtrends.co.ke

LWF PARTICIPATES IN THE REGIONAL CENTRE FOR MAPPING OF RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT (RCMRD) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2024 HELD BETWEEN 13TH AND 15TH AUGUST 2024 AT THE RCMRD COMPLEX IN NAIROBI



Panellists at the 2024 RCMRD Conference

The Executive Director, Celline Achieng' represented the LWF in this conference. The theme of the conference was 'Earth: our only home' and it was anchored on five thematic areas with various institutions and organizations presenting their research work and on-going projects. These thematic areas were: Agriculture and Food Security; Disaster Risk Reduction and Health; Land Administration and Management; Biodiversity and Blue Economy; and Innovations and Data. 1000 attendees, 15 exhibitors, 10 keynote speakers and 60 presenters, participated in this conference.

In his opening remarks, the Director General (DG), Dr. Emmanuel Nkurunziza emphasized the need for integrating science and policy. He informed that RCMRD was formed in the year 1974 while the international conference begun in 2017 hence this was the 8th.

The DG explained that the insights shared at the conference reflected the collective expertise of stakeholders from the RCMRD member states, academia, the private sector, NGOs, and local communities. He further added that the presentations made not only serve as a testament to their progress but also as a clarion call to action. He reiterated that it is imperative that we translate scientific knowledge into actionable policies that ensure the sustainability of our planet for future generations. The conference ended with participants promising to ensure that the scientific results will be used for the benefit of humanity because it otherwise does not make sense to have good results that just sit on shelves. They also agreed that it was important to synergize rather than work in silos so as to achieve greater impact.



Laikipia Wildlife Forum
CONSERVATION IN ACTION



LAIKIPIA TOURISM
ASSOCIATION

LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE AND TOURISM EXPO 2024

SATURDAY 16TH NOV
2024

LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM OFFICES

Located off the Nanyuki – Timau road approximately 1.2km from Nanyuki town – just behind the Nanyuki Sports Club Rugby pitch and adjacent to the BATUK/ASK Showground



9AM–5PM

WHAT TO EXPECT

Exhibitions: Showcase of sustainable tourism practices, innovative conservation efforts, and nature-based solutions.

Networking: Meet and collaborate with tourism and conservation experts, industry leaders, and stakeholders.

Cultural Experiences: Explore the rich cultural heritage of Laikipia communities.

WHY ATTEND?

- ✔ Learn about wildlife conservation and sustainable tourism practices.
 - ✔ Explore collaboration opportunities with Laikipia's top conservancies, lodges, and tour operators.
 - ✔ Engage with new technologies in wildlife conservation and tourism.
- Support efforts to create a sustainable future for Laikipia's wildlife and communities



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK YOUR EXHIBITION BOOTH, CONTACT:

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