REPUBLIC OF KENYA

WILDLIFE RESEARCH & TRAINING INSTITUTE

Discover Beyond

5th Edition

Research Newsletter



Coordination | Innovation | Partnerships | Sustainability

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CONTENTS

Research Themes 04

Director/CEO's Note 06

Deputy Director's Note 07

New Pancake Tortoise Population Confirmed in Tsavo West National Park Along Kenya–Tanzania Border 08

Tracking threats, protecting giants in Mwea National Reserve 10

New Biodiversity and Avifaunal Assessment Strengthens Conservation Planning at Hell's Gate 12

Yala River Expedition: A Journey to Understand and Protect One of Kenya's Most Important Rivers 14

Kenya Advances National Action On Bushmeat Through Research, Monitoring And Collaboration 16

Kakamega Forest Conservation Education Outreach 18

Human–Hippo interaction In Budalangi-Bunyala 20

From Papyrus to Policy: Kingwal Wetland as a Model for Research-Driven Conservation 22

White-Backed Vultures Find a Stable Breeding Refuge in Nairobi National Park 24

The Wildlife Research and Training Institute Advances Kenya's Scientific Leadership in Global Biodiversity Policy at CBD SBSTTA-28 26

Strengthening Capacity to Monitor Lions 28

Published Papers 34

Research Themes

Wildlife Species Population Dynamics

Examines the status, trends and distribution of wildlife populations in Kenya to inform wildlife conservation and management

Wildlife-Habitat Dynamics

Investigates habitat dynamics and ecological processes affecting wildlife. Generates scientific knowledge to support effective habitat conservation and management.

Natural Resource Governance and Socio-economics

Generates scientific information, standards and tools to assess and strengthen natural resource governance. Examines the socio-economic and socio-ecological dimensions of wildlife resource management.

Wildlife Health and Population Genetics

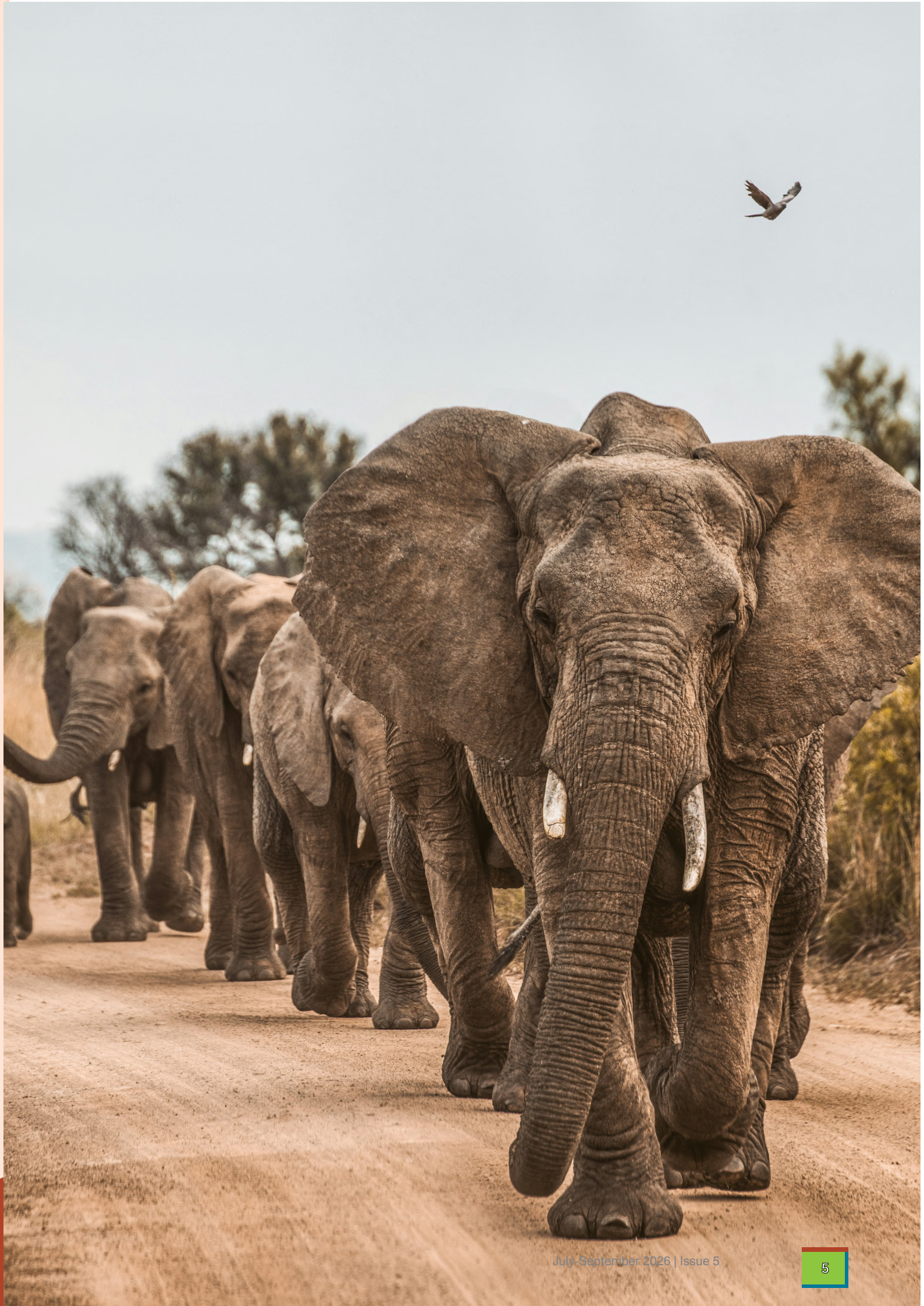
Promotes wildlife, livestock and human health through early detection, identification and management of wildlife diseases using a One Health approach. Examines wildlife genetic composition and supports the application of genetics in wildlife crime investigations

Wildlife Resource Information Management

Focuses on establishing an integrated platform for managing wildlife resource data and information. Supports data access, analysis and dissemination to inform research, policy and conservation decisions.

Climate change

Focuses on developing early warning systems to support wildlife species management. Promotes climate change mitigation and adaptation measures to strengthen wildlife conservation and management.





Director/CEO's Note

Welcome to this edition of the Institute's Quarterly Research Newsletter. It is a pleasure to share our continued progress in advancing wildlife research, innovation and collaboration in support of evidence-based conservation.

This edition highlights key research initiatives addressing human-hippo interactions in Budalangi-Bunyala, vulture conservation in Nairobi National Park and wetland protection at Kingwal These efforts demonstrate the Institute's commitment to generating scientific knowledge that informs policy, strengthens conservation management and supports sustainable development.

I commend our researchers, partners and stakeholders for their dedication to advancing conservation science. I also extend my sincere appreciation to the Board for its continued oversight, strategic guidance and support in strengthening the Institute's mandate.

As you explore this edition, I hope the insights shared will inspire continued collaboration and knowledge exchange towards effective, science-driven solutions for wildlife and biodiversity conservation in Kenya and beyond.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Dr. Patrick Omondi, OGW

"The Institute advances science-based conservation to protect Kenya's biodiversity, ecosystems and livelihoods."



Deputy Director's, Research Note

Research is most valuable when it generates credible evidence, deepens our understanding of ecological processes and informs decisions that advance conservation. This edition of the Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI) Research Newsletter showcases the Institute's contribution to understanding Kenya's wildlife and ecosystems through field investigations, long-term monitoring and multidisciplinary research.

The articles featured in this edition demonstrate how scientific research contributes to identifying conservation challenges and informing management responses. Monitoring White-backed Vulture nests in Nairobi National Park, assessing biodiversity and infrastructure-related risks at Hell's Gate, and documenting changes in Kingwal Wetland illustrate the importance of ecological assessments and spatial information in conservation planning. Similarly, research on human-hippo conflict highlights how understanding incident patterns, seasonal variation and environmental conditions can help inform appropriate mitigation measures.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate the importance of sustained research, reliable datasets and collaboration in addressing emerging conservation challenges. While individual observations provide valuable insights, consistent monitoring enables researchers to identify trends, assess ecological changes and generate evidence that supports informed decision-making. Robust methodologies, quality assurance and sound interpretation remain essential to ensuring that research findings are credible, relevant and applicable to conservation practice.

As we advance the Institute's research agenda, we remain committed to promoting scientific rigour, interdisciplinary collaboration, innovation and effective dissemination of research findings. Equally important is strengthening the link between scientific evidence and practical application by ensuring that identified knowledge gaps inform research priorities, management interventions and policy development. Through these efforts, WRTI will continue to support evidence-based approaches to wildlife conservation and sustainable ecosystem management.

I commend our researchers, technical personnel and collaborating institutions for their dedication to generating knowledge that advances wildlife research and conservation. Their contributions strengthen the Institute's capacity to address emerging ecological challenges and support the conservation of Kenya's rich biodiversity and natural heritage.

Dr. David Ndeereh, HSC

> **"The institude strengthens conservation through rigorous research, long-term monitoring and interdisciplinary collaboration, translating scientific evidence into practical wildlife management solutions".**





New Pancake Tortoise Population Confirmed in Tsavo West National Park Along Kenya–Tanzania Border



Researchers confirm a new Kenyan population of Critically Endangered pancake tortoises in Tsavo West".

Researchers have confirmed the presence of a population of the Critically Endangered pancake tortoise *Malacochersus tornieri* in Tsavo West National Park, near the border with Tanzania's Mkomazi National Park. The discovery represents a new distribution record for Kenya and adds significant conservation value to the Tsavo Conservation Area, highlighting the importance of protecting the region's rocky habitats and associated biodiversity.

The pancake tortoise is a distinctive species adapted to life among rocky hills, outcrops and crevices, where it finds shelter and suitable vegetation. In Tsavo West, the newly recorded population occurs in the Kavuma area, where rocky ridges and outcrops provide potential habitat. However, because suitable rock crevices occupy only a small proportion of the surrounding hills, researchers anticipate that the population may be relatively small and locally concentrated.

The field survey aimed to establish the presence of pancake tortoise along the border between Tsavo West and Mkomazi national parks. Sampling covered several locations within the park, beginning at the isolated Kanjaro Hill before extending to the Kavuma rocky outcrops and a nearby rocky kopjes. The team also surveyed community land at Kuranze in Kwale County, as well as sites around Rumang'ombe Hill and Kavuma Hill near the international boundary.

Findings of this field survey discovered evidence of droppings that were morphologically distinct to the pancake tortoise. Further a single male tortoise was found beneath a rock at Kavuma Hill within Tsavo West National Park. Two individuals were also cited on the southern side of Rumang'ombe Hill, near the boundary between Tsavo West National Park and Mbale Ranch, in the wider Taita-Taveta and Kwale county border area.

These findings confirm presence of pan cake tortoise in the Tsavo West Ecosystem. Previously their presence has been documented in the northern sector of Tsavo East National Park, including Kiasa, Ithumba and Umbi hills. These populations form part of a broader distribution associated with rocky landscapes extending northwards from the hills north of the Galana River and the Yatta Plateau towards the Mount Nyiro area. The new record in Tsavo West therefore provides important evidence of the species' presence in an additional part of the Tsavo ecosystem.

Beyond confirming the species' presence, the discovery underscores the conservation significance of remote rocky habitats along the Kenya-Tanzania border. Such landscapes can support specialised wildlife that may remain undetected without targeted field surveys. Protecting these habitats is particularly important for a species classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List, whose survival depends on the availability of suitable refuges and the continued integrity of its habitat. The discovery highlights the value of targeted wildlife research in revealing previously undocumented populations and improving knowledge of threatened species in Kenya.

By David Kimutai

Tracking threats, protecting giants in Mwea National Reserve



Severe snaring threats in Mwea National Reserve, endanger Nubian giraffes ".

At first glance, Mwea National Reserve seems like the perfect place for wildlife to thrive; open woodland, abundant browse, and some room to roam. The Nubian giraffes greets you barely metres from the main entrance. But beneath this seemingly peaceful landscape, with its beautiful sights, lurks danger: wire snares set by poachers for illegal hunting. For the Critically endangered Nubian giraffes of Mwea, this' not just an abstract conservation concern, snares are indiscriminate! Set low in the vegetation and often concealed, a single loop of wire can turn a routine foraging walk into a struggle for survival or worse, fatal. While target species are typically small game, large mammals like giraffes, elephants, and buffaloes frequently fall victim of tragic bycatch

Through ongoing research and monitoring, the Institute is helping to uncover where these threats occur, how they intersect with wildlife, and what they could mean for one of Kenya's important Nubian giraffe populations. By bringing together field observations, historical records, Nubian giraffes monitoring and spatial analyses, researchers are turning scattered clues across the landscape into a clearer picture of the challenges facing Mwea's wildlife. Preliminary findings reveal a non-random spatial distribution of snares across the reserve, identifying localized, evidently targeted spatial clusters of snaring activity.

These findings come at a critical time as the institute spearheads Kenya's National Bushmeat Action Strategy, translating research and stakeholder collaboration into coordinated action to tackle bushmeat hunting and safeguard Kenya's wildlife

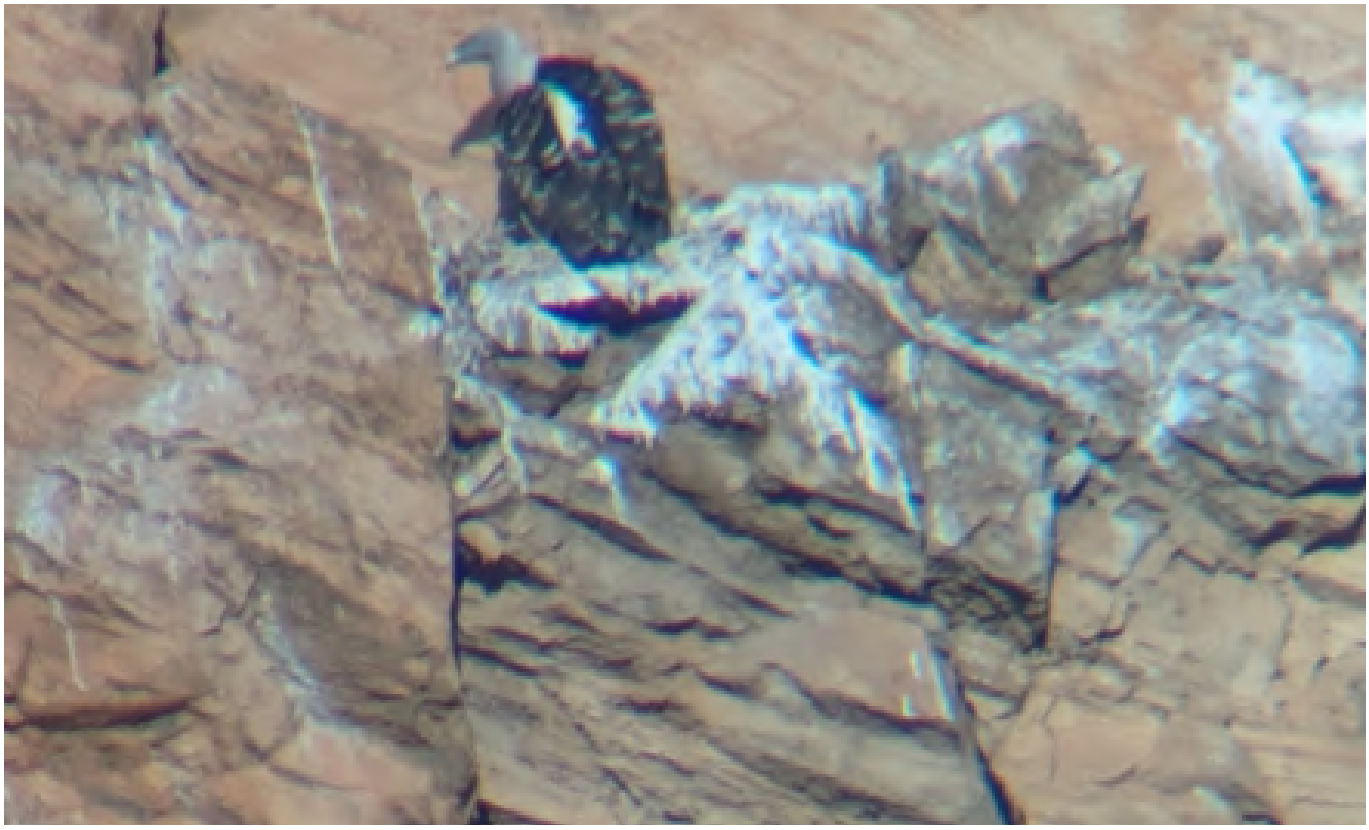
On a positive note, the research further reveals a balance between acute threat and population resilience. Supplementing aerial census data, recent ground surveys used AI driven GiraffeSpotter identification platform to confirm the persistence of Nubian giraffes across different sex and age classes in Mwea National Reserve. This successful recruitment reinforces the reserve as a critical conservation stronghold for the subspecies. However, as these iconic species browse and breed, several have been found trailing wire snares or suffering

from debilitating injuries that threaten their long term population viability. Hence, protecting Nubian giraffes demands more than removing traps/snares; it requires proactive data, vigilance, and systemic collaboration. From field research and ranger patrols to partner collaborations, it is only when science drives action that these gentle giants will continue to stand tall.

By Faith Muchiri



New Biodiversity and Avifaunal Assessment Strengthens Conservation Planning at Hell's Gate



The institute and KWS assessed biodiversity at KenGen's Olkaria Green Energy Park.".

The Institute , with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) , has completed an biodiversity and avifaunal assessment for the KenGen Green Energy Park in Olkaria, Naivasha. It addresses the ecological sensitivity of the landscape associated with Hell's Gate National Park and the wider Lake Naivasha ecosystem.

The assessment combined baseline data with field datasets, vegetation records, georeferenced observations, spatial data, engineering drawings and maps. The avifaunal survey recorded 83 observations representing 72 species-level taxa, complemented by a Kenya Bird Map dataset containing 230 species-level taxa. It also documented mammals, reptiles, vegetation and human pressures.

Rüppell's Vulture (*Gyps rueppellii)* emerged as the principal conservation receptor. The assessment documented a main breeding colony, an old colony or roost, and a nesting record associated with the Verreaux's Eagle nest cliff. Other priority species include Secretary bird, Martial Eagle, Steppe Eagle and Augur Buzzard. These findings underline protecting nesting and roosting features and manage interactions with infrastructure.

The study mapped Hell's Gate National Park, corridors and sensitive features. The connectivity network includes the Oserian Game Corridor, Kamere Corridor and Hell's Gate-Mt. Longonot corridor, linking protected areas and habitats. Sensitive habitats include vulture cliffs, raptor nests, cliffs and gorges, wetlands, riparian areas, bushland, woodland and water points.

Further, the assessment evaluated bird collision and electrocution risks associated with the 220 kV transmission infrastructure. Preliminary GIS screening placed the main Rüppell's Vulture breeding colony approximately 2.36 kilometres from the power geometry. The report emphasizes that this is a screening distance, not a definitive ecological buffer, and recommends tower-by-tower assessment using approved engineering information and verified bird movements. **By Jackline Mutwiri**



Yala River Expedition: A Journey to Understand and Protect One of Kenya's Most Important Rivers



The Institute and The Wilderness Project complete a source-to-mouth Yala River expedition".

The Yala River is one of western Kenya's most important freshwater systems, rising on the Nandi Escarpment before flowing through forests, agricultural landscapes, and the expansive Yala Swamp on its way to Lake Victoria. It supports rich biodiversity, provides water for communities and agriculture, and sustains livelihoods across its catchment. Despite its ecological and socioeconomic importance, relatively little research has examined the river as a connected system from source to mouth. To address this gap, the Institute, in partnership with The Wilderness Project, undertook a multidisciplinary expedition along the entire river. The objective was to establish a scientific baseline of the river's ecological condition while documenting the environmental pressures and natural features that define this important freshwater ecosystem.

The expedition adopted a continuous river transect approach, following the Yala River from its headwaters to the Yala Swamp. Researchers travelled primarily by packraft through the upper and middle reaches before transitioning to canoes in the lower floodplain, portaging around waterfalls and impassable rapids to maintain an uninterrupted journey along the river. Throughout the expedition, the team collected water and sediment samples, recorded biodiversity observations, documented riparian vegetation and land-use practices, and measured river discharge using an Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP). GPS mapping and photographic documentation complemented the scientific sampling, creating a comprehensive environmental record of the river. This integrated methodology allowed researchers to understand not only individual sampling sites but also how ecological conditions changed along the river's entire length.

The expedition revealed a river that remains remarkably diverse but is increasingly influenced by human activities. The upper reaches flowing through South

Nandi Forest Reserve and Kakamega Forest retained healthy riparian vegetation and demonstrated the important role of protected forests in safeguarding freshwater ecosystems. Further downstream, however, agriculture became more intensive and artisanal gold mining emerged as one of the dominant land-use activities. Numerous active mining sites were observed along the riverbanks, raising important questions about sediment dynamics, water quality, and aquatic ecosystem health. Hydrological measurements also demonstrated considerable variation in river discharge across the catchment, while the extensive collection of environmental samples will provide further insight into the river's physical, chemical, and biological condition once laboratory analyses are complete.

The Yala River Expedition represents an important milestone in freshwater research in Kenya. Through the collaboration, the expedition successfully completed one of the first comprehensive source-to-mouth environmental assessments of the Yala River. As laboratory analyses and data interpretation continue, the information collected will strengthen our understanding of this important river system and provide valuable evidence to support its conservation and sustainable management. More importantly, the expedition demonstrates how collaboration between scientists, conservation practitioners, and expedition teams can generate the knowledge needed to protect Kenya's freshwater ecosystems.

By Jared Lumbasi and Dr. Judith Nyunja



Kenya Advances National Action On Bushmeat Through Research, Monitoring And Collaboration



Kenya advances a coordinated five-year Bushmeat Action Plan.

Kenya has taken another important step towards addressing the challenge of bushmeat through a two-day National Bushmeat Research, Monitoring and Action Planning Workshop held at the KCB Leadership Centre in Karen, Nairobi, from 5-6 October 2026. The workshop brought together government agencies, research institutions, conservation organisations, universities, development partners and other stakeholders to develop a coordinated national approach to bushmeat research, monitoring and management.

The workshop built on recommendations from the National Bushmeat Workshop held in May 2026. The earlier meeting identified priority research and monitoring needs, while the October workshop focused on translating these priorities into a practical five-year Bushmeat Research, Monitoring and Action Plan.

Participants examined key knowledge gaps surrounding bushmeat in Kenya, including its prevalence, drivers, impacts, monitoring approaches and the need for stronger evidence to guide policy and management. Discussions emphasized that bushmeat is not solely a wildlife conservation issue, but one that intersects with livelihoods, food security, public health, biodiversity conservation, law enforcement and national development.

A key outcome of the workshop was recognition that the Action Plan must become an actionable national tool rather than simply a policy document. Participants therefore proposed establishing a clear coordination framework, including a Technical Working Group, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, reporting arrangements and institutional linkages to ensure that implementation is followed systematically.

The plenary also emphasized the importance of regular follow-up. The five-year plan will require periodic review to track progress, identify emerging challenges and adapt interventions where necessary. Participants agreed that the coordination mechanism should provide clarity on responsibilities, reporting expectations and how stakeholders will remain engaged beyond the workshop.

Closing discussions stressed the importance of bringing together the considerable amount of bushmeat-related research already being undertaken by different institutions. Better coordination and communication were identified as essential for ensuring that valuable scientific findings translate into practical conservation and management action.

The workshop concluded with a shared commitment to consolidate the contributions into a strong, evidence-based and practical national Action Plan, providing Kenya with a coordinated framework for research, monitoring, management and long-term action against unsustainable bushmeat use and trade.

By Moses Otiende

Kakamega Forest Conservation Education Outreach



The institute and partners reached learners and teachers through Kakamega Forest conservation education.

The Institute carries out research on Kenya's wildlife, its habitats and the communities that live alongside it. Findings from this research are not meant to stay on the shelf. WRTI shares this knowledge with communities and learners. The goal is to build ecological literacy, encourage people and wildlife to live side by side, and promote sustainable use of natural resources.

In line with the Institutes strategic plan on partnerships, the Institute recently ran a conservation sensitization in the Isecheno area of Kakamega Forest. Its partners were the Kakamega Monkey Project (KMP), the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and the Kakamega Forest Community Bio-cultural Conservation Organization (KAFEBICCO). The sensitization targeted schools within five kilometres of the forest boundary, and its aim was to strengthen knowledge for the conservation of Kakamega Forest.

Over 5 schools were visited during the sensitization, that reached 738 people. The outreach found that learners knew little about conservation, and that poaching appeared to be common. This probably reflects attitudes and practices in the wider community around the forest, which threaten its biodiversity. The partners therefore recommend a sustained conservation programme for the communities living next to Kakamega Forest. Such a programme would help ensure this unique forest is protected for future generations.

The findings also point to a need for further research. A detailed study of knowledge, attitudes and practices in the communities around the forest would give a clearer picture of the extent of poaching and what drives it. It would also provide a baseline against which the impact of future conservation education can be measured.

By Emily Atai



Human–Hippo Co-existance In Budalangi-Bunyala



“The institute documented human–hippo conflict incidents in Budalangi-Bunyala.”

In the low-lying Budalangi-Bunyala floodplain of Busia County, farms, fishing grounds and homesteads lie side by side with some of the most important hippopotamus habitats in the Lake Victoria basin. As people and hippos increasingly compete for the same wetland spaces, conflict between the two is fast becoming a serious threat to both conservation and local livelihoods.

A rapid assessment by the Institute has examined the nature, extent, trends and drivers of human-hippo conflict in the area between 2020 and May 2026. The study documented 192 conflict incidents over the period. Conflict was most intense in 2021, when 72 incidents were recorded, up from 63 the previous year. Reported cases then fell steadily, dropping to 14 in 2024, before resurging sharply in 2025 with 58 incidents. The assessment links these fluctuations to flooding, changing water levels, shifting habitat conditions and growing human activity around wetlands and floodplains.

Crop destruction was by far the most common form of conflict, featuring in 154 cases. Threats to people and disturbance by hippos were reported in 83 cases, with many incidents involving more than one type of conflict. The assessment also recorded 13 livestock deaths, nine livestock injuries, seven cases of property damage, four human injuries and two human deaths. While crop losses account for the heaviest economic toll, the figures show that encounters with hippos also pose a real danger to human life.

The conflict follows a clear seasonal pattern. April recorded the highest number of incidents at 45, followed by May with 39, January with 38 and July with 34. The most affected areas include Bukoma, Siginga, Sisenye, Bandubusi, Mundere, Rudacho Beach, Mabinju, Madua Swamp and Busembe.

According to the assessment, the conflict is driven largely by the expansion of farming into wetlands and riparian zones, the growth of settlements, habitat degradation, flooding, and the blocking of the routes hippos use to move between water and their feeding grounds. Rising water levels compound the

problem by displacing both people and hippos, pushing them into ever closer contact.

To address the problem, the report calls for greater community awareness, protection of wetland and riparian habitats, and improved land-use planning. It also recommends stronger early-warning and rapid-response systems, safer fishing practices, the use of non-lethal deterrents, and closer collaboration among the Kenya Wildlife Service, the county government, local communities and conservation partners. Such measures, the report concludes, are essential to safeguarding livelihoods while promoting coexistence between people and hippos in the Lake Victoria basin.

One thing to check before publishing: the yearly figures for 2020, 2021, 2024 and 2025 already add up to 207. That is more than the 192 total, before 2022, 2023 and 2026 are even counted, so one of those numbers needs correcting.

By George Anyona



From Papyrus to Policy: Kingwal Wetland as a Model for Research-Driven Conservation



Kingwal Wetland assessment reveals 65% papyrus loss, declining Sitatunga numbers and reduced water retention".

Kingwal wetland in Nandi County is a vital ecological and hydrological system in the upper Yala River basin. It sustains diverse wildlife, feeds downstream water resources and supports the livelihoods of surrounding communities. Yet the wetland is under growing pressure from agricultural encroachment, drainage, vegetation clearance and grazing. To generate evidence for its conservation and restoration, the Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI), as a member of the Multi-Agency Technical Team (MAT) tasked with assessing the status of the wetland, contributed scientific expertise to an integrated assessment.

The assessment took a multidisciplinary approach, examining the wetland's biodiversity, hydrology and patterns of human use. This made it possible to delineate the wetland's boundaries, analyze its relationship with neighboring land parcels and identify areas of high ecological and hydrological value. On this basis, the wetland was classified into core, buffer/riparian and outer influence zones, providing a scientific foundation for differentiated conservation and land management.

Biodiversity surveys confirmed Kingwal's ecological importance, recording 105 bird species, 12 mammal species, 142 plant species, 99 macro-invertebrate species and five fish species. Amphibian surveys recorded 664 frogs belonging to 15 species. Particular attention was given to two flagship species: the Grey Crowned Crane and the Sitatunga (*Tragelaphus spekii*), a wetland-dependent antelope of conservation concern in Kenya.

Satellite imagery from 2010 to 2024 revealed dramatic habitat change, with an estimated 65% loss of papyrus cover. This loss matters: papyrus provides critical habitat for wetland wildlife while stabilising banks, filtering water and regulating flows. Sitatunga numbers tell a similar story. An estimated 125 individuals were recorded in 2008, compared with only 46 documented during the MAT situation analysis in March 2026 within the wetland and surrounding marshes, a decline of more than 60%. The findings suggest that habitat degradation may

be pushing Sitatunga onto adjacent private land, raising the risk of human-wildlife conflict.

Hydrological assessment placed these changes within the wider Yala River system. Kingwal is fed by the Kesses River and several streams and springs, and is the source of the Kimondi River, a permanent tributary of the Yala. Field observations and spatial analysis examined drainage channels, inflows and waterways, focusing on the wetland's roles in water storage, flood attenuation, groundwater recharge, water purification and the maintenance of downstream ecological processes. Drainage emerged as a major threat, with the assessment estimating a 40% reduction in the wetland's water retention capacity.

Local communities depend on Kingwal and its surroundings for farming, livestock grazing, water, papyrus and other natural resources. These uses have shaped land-use patterns and intensified pressure on the wetland. Understanding these socio-economic links is essential, because lasting restoration must address both ecosystem degradation and the livelihoods of the people who rely on the wetland.

The assessment shows how research can turn ecological and socio-economic evidence into practical conservation priorities. By integrating biodiversity, habitat, hydrological, geospatial and land-use data, it provides a scientific basis for identifying critical areas, prioritizing restoration and guiding sustainable land management

By Ms. Jacquiline Benard



White-Backed Vultures Find a Stable Breeding Refuge in Nairobi National Park



Nairobi National Park supports White-backed Vulture nests".

Nairobi National Park continues to play an important role in the conservation of the White-backed Vulture (*Gyps africanus*), despite being surrounded by a rapidly urbanizing landscape. A nest monitoring programme conducted from June 2024 to July 2026 has revealed a relatively stable number of monitored nests, while also providing new insights into vulture habitat use and breeding-site dynamics.

A baseline survey conducted between May and September 2023 recorded 42 White-backed Vulture nests in the park. Subsequent monitoring recorded 42 nests in 2024, 38 in 2025 and 43 by July 2026. The report indicates that these fluctuations do not necessarily represent population decline or growth, but may reflect nest-site turnover, with some nests becoming inactive while new or previously undetected nests are identified. On average, about 40 monitored nests have persisted during the monitoring period, highlighting the importance of Nairobi National Park as a breeding refuge.

The monitoring also recorded 145 White-backed Vultures during a single survey, comprising 74 individuals at a water pool and 71 perched in trees. In addition, 24 Rüppell's Vultures, four Tawny Eagles and one Secretarybird were recorded at a water pool, highlighting the importance of these sites to a wider assemblage of scavenging and raptor species.

An important ecological observation was a change in the water pool used by vultures for drinking and bathing. Bathing is believed to support feather maintenance and thermoregulation, suggesting that water pools are important habitat features beyond their role as drinking points. The report recommends mapping and incorporating frequently used water pools into critical vulture habitat management.

The study also documented abandonment of nests at the Ivory Burning Site and Kingfisher Picnic Site. Although the cause has not been established, their location within recreation areas warrants further investigation into possible dis-

turbance, while recognizing that natural factors may also influence nest occupancy.

The findings underscore the need for continued long-term monitoring, protection of nesting trees, monitoring of abandoned nests and safeguarding important water-use sites. In a rapidly changing urban landscape, Nairobi National Park remains a critical refuge for White-backed Vultures and an important site for understanding and conserving Africa's threatened scavenging raptors.

By Elphas Bitok



The Wildlife Research and Training Institute Advances Kenya's Scientific Leadership in Global Biodiversity Policy at CBD SBSTTA-28



“The institute advances Kenya's global biodiversity leadership through science-based conservation, sustainable financing and strategic partnerships.”.

The Institute participated in Global Biodiversity Policy Meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting brought together Parties to multilateral environmental agreements, scientists and conservation partners to advance implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The Institute contributed to strategic side events and held bilateral engagements with international partners. In one of the side events the Institute held bilateral meetings to strengthen collaboration and future research partnerships.

They were discussions on international policy for Fungi, a global fungal conservation initiative, discussions explored sharing scientific information and technical resources to document Kenya's fungal diversity, an emerging conservation area, and lay foundations for future research and policy.

In that meeting partners i.e The Zoological Society of London (ZSL), reaffirmed their commitment to expanding collaboration in wildlife research, biodiversity monitoring, capacity building and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.

The second side event was Convened by the Smithsonian Institution with the CBD, CMS, WOAH and other partners, this side event examined how human-mediated wildlife movement can integrate biodiversity conservation, animal health and human well-being under a One Health framework.

The Institute proposed evaluating wildlife movement against three interconnected outcomes: benefits to the individual animal, to biodiversity and ecosystem health, and to human well-being. It was noted that that human well-being remains under-integrated, particularly where wildlife trade is involved. Success, should therefore be measured not only by an animal's survival after release, but also by gains in ecosystem resilience, reduced disease risk, improved coexistence and better local livelihoods. Drawing on the CITES MIKE Programme, future initiatives should begin by defining the conservation problem and be implemented through stronger collaboration among Parties, con-

ventions, researchers and communities.

Participation in the meeting reaffirmed the institute's growing role in supporting Multilateral Environmental Agreements through research and evidence-based policy advice. By sharing Kenya's experience in biodiversity monitoring, capacity building and One Health approaches, WRTI showed how these can advance the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

By Sospeter Kiambi



Strengthening Capacity to Monitor Lions



The institute trained African carnivore biologists in lion monitoring.”.

The Institute, in collaboration with the Lion Recovery Fund and Kenya Wildlife Trust, brought together 25 carnivore biologists from nine African countries–Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, South Africa and Cameroon–for specialised training in lion monitoring. Held from 28th September to 8th October 2026, the workshop aimed to strengthen African-led scientific capacity to monitor lion populations and generate reliable information to guide conservation decisions across the continent’s lion landscapes.

Opening the workshop, the institute CEO Dr Patrick Omondi emphasised the importance of translating scientific research into practical conservation action.

He also emhasized the need to package scientific data to speak to decision-makers, and communities. The training focused on Spatially Explicit Capture-Recapture (SECR), and participants learned the monitoring process, from survey design and field data collection to photographic identification of individual lions, data management and statistical analysis. A key component was a hands-on lion survey in Nairobi National Park, where participants collected data that were analysed during the training. This enabled them to apply classroom learning to a real conservation setting and examine information on the park’s lion population.

The workshop also encouraged participants to share experiences, exchange ideas and discuss practical challenges in monitoring lions across different landscapes. These interactions provided opportunities to learn from one another and explore approaches that could be adapted to their respective countries.

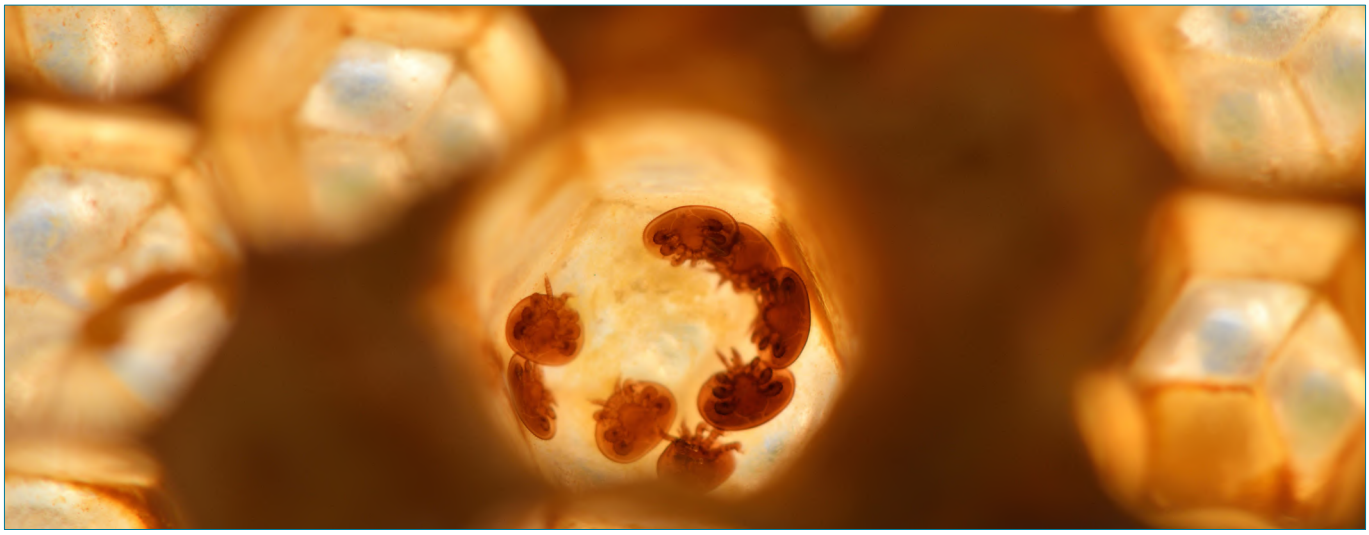
For Nairobi National Park, the survey contributes to ongoing efforts to monitor a lion population living in a rapidly changing landscape. Regular, scientifically robust surveys can help track population trends, improve understanding of habitat use and provide evidence to inform management decisions. By combining practical training, collaborative learning and analysis of real field data, the

workshop contributed to building African expertise and professional connections to support long-term lion monitoring and conservation across the continent.

by Monica Chege



Published Papers

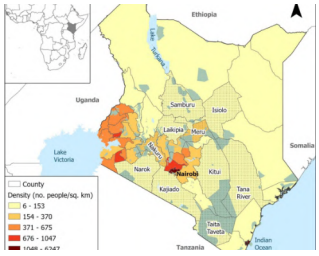




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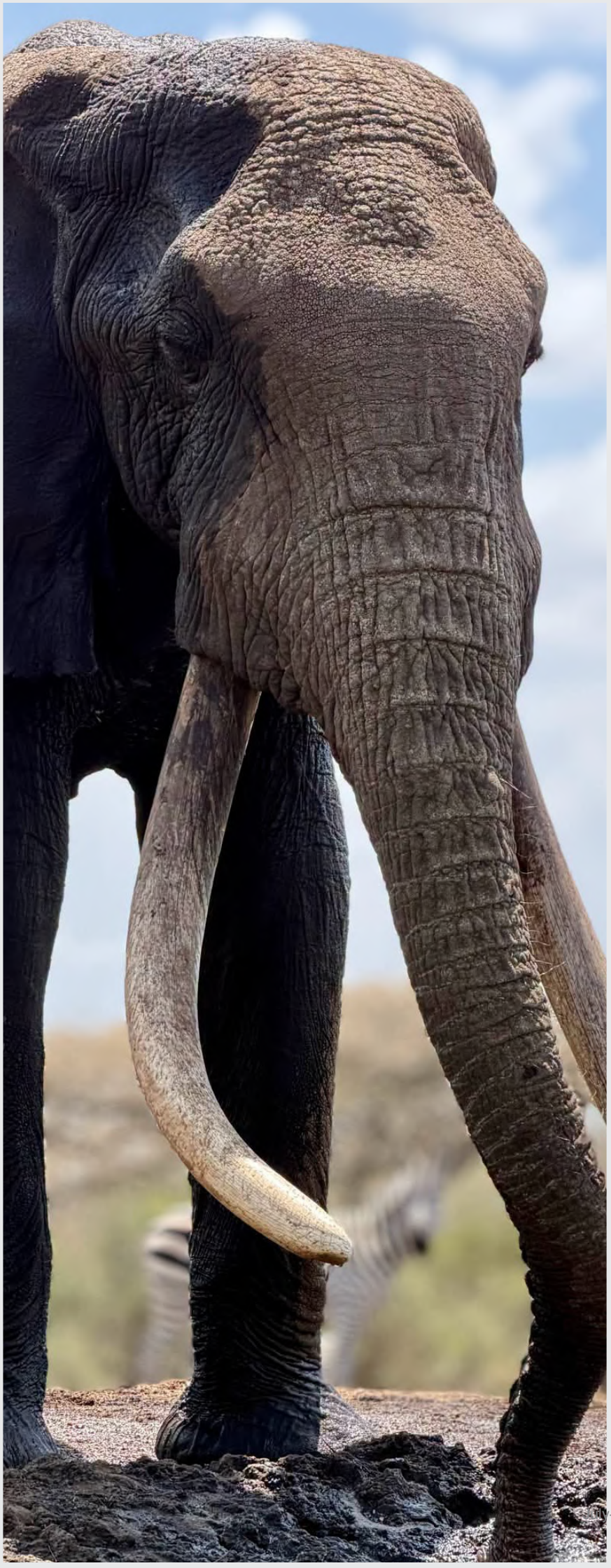


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