



BIG LIFE
FOUNDATION

QUARTERLY REPORT

JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH

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Photo: Jeremy Goss

We were all hugely relieved to see the rains return at the end of the first quarter, and despite all the dire forecasting, they continued to fall in a manner and frequency we haven't seen for almost two years. The ecosystem has received enough to thrive, and the plains are shimmering a vibrant green and gold once more. For a few precious weeks, I watched the clouds build across the horizon each day, bringing much needed life back to this region, and read as our daily sitreps came back with fewer and fewer incidents. However, it would prove to be a fleeting period of peace as we were recently dealt two sucker punches that have overshadowed all this progress.

The first was a report linking this drought and the successive failed rains across East Africa to human-caused climate change. We've long suspected that it would have had an impact on the severity of this drought, but the new data not only validates this suspicion, but doubles down in a disturbing way: asserting that droughts will be more frequent and more severe. Unpredictability will be the norm and we are already preparing for the next drought even though the grass in front of me is still green. I must say an enormous thank you to our donors who have stepped up yet again to enable us to begin making the necessary preparations for this.

While the first punch went to the head, the second has struck right at the hearts of everyone here at Big Life Foundation. Our initial hopes that human-wildlife conflict would finally calm down have not been realized. If anything, this conflict feels more severe, and the drought only served to douse it in petrol, with a match being all that was missing. Last weekend that match was lit, and it resulted in six lions being killed on our doorstep by an enraged mob of over 70 Mbirikani residents. The spark was relatively small, being in response to those same lions killing 12 goats the night before. However, it was the level of violence that followed that is simply unprecedented, especially since it comes after years of successful compensation for livestock depredation that has seen the ecosystem's lion population reach carrying capacity and satisfied livestock owners refraining from killing predators. We are still in shock, and while we have been working closely with Mbirikani leadership to ensure this will never happen again, I can't deny that this feels personal. It's a blow that has rattled us all.

Nevertheless, as we have done every single time we have been confronted with a crisis, we will not falter in our commitment to this remarkable ecosystem, and we will continue fighting for the benefit and preservation of its wildlife, its lions, and its people. Looking over the figures from our first quarter, I'm amazed at how far we have come as an organization and just how much our rangers and field staff are able to accomplish. We really couldn't do it without you.

Thank you, as always, for your support.

Richard Bonham
*Executive Chairman & Founder –
Big Life Foundation Kenya*



WHERE WE WORK

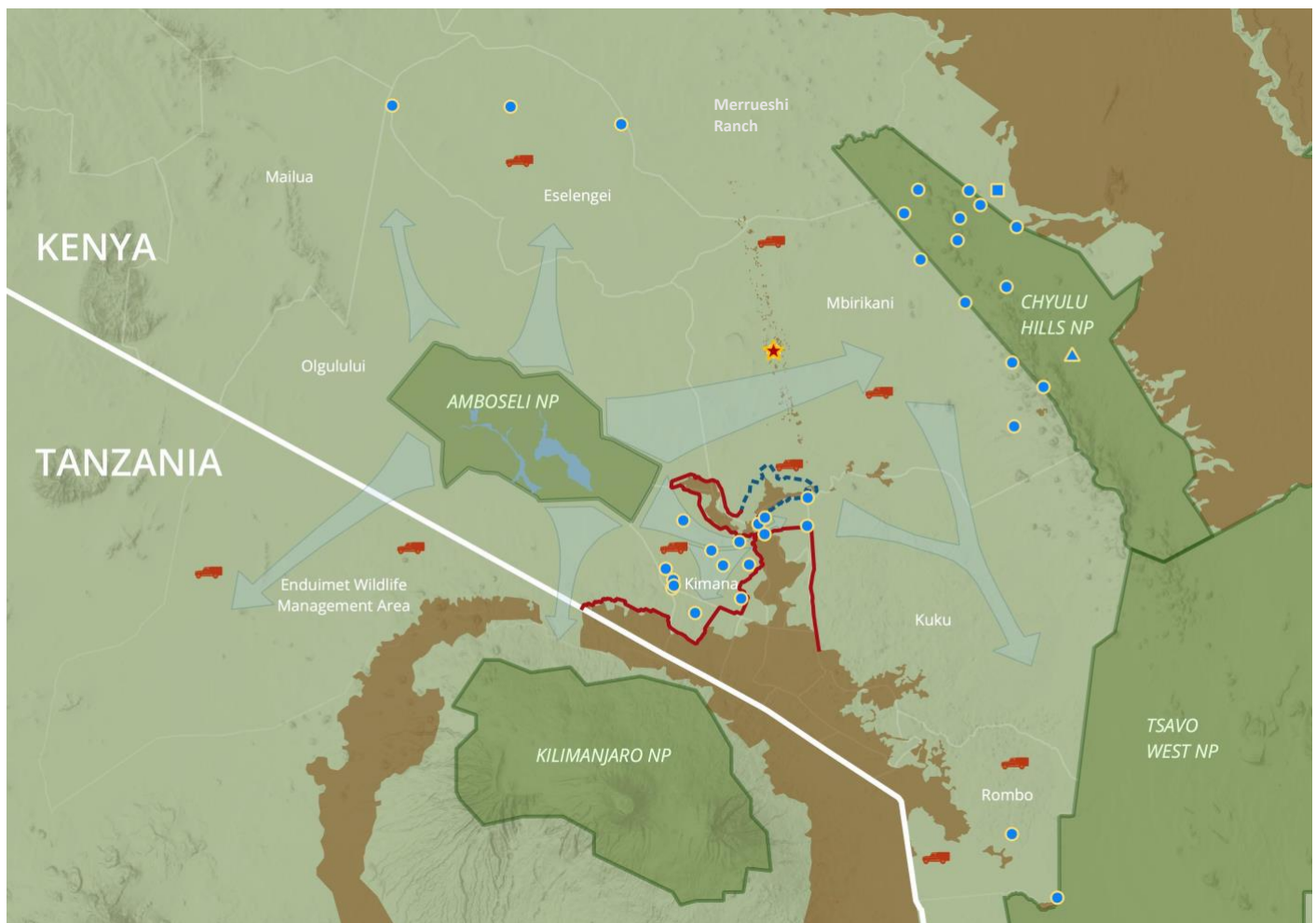
Big Life Foundation's (Big Life) Area of Operation (AOO) covers approximately 1.6 million acres across the Amboseli-Tsavo-Kilimanjaro (Greater Amboseli) ecosystem in East Africa. Our team of 500+ helps to protect and secure wildlife and critical habitat stretching from the rangelands north of Amboseli to the Chyulu Hills and Tsavo West National Parks in the east, and south to Kilimanjaro National Park. The area is a central connection point for migrating wildlife and contains some of the most important habitat left in Africa. Big Life was the first organization in the region to conduct collaborative cross-border patrols between Kenya and Tanzania.

Our AOO is divided into a core area with a permanent ranger presence and regularly patrolled by mobile units, a non-core area where mobile units respond based on need and are actively covered by our intelligence network, and adjacent areas where we provide support as needed. The level of Big Life support provided varies between outposts.

Core AOO: Eselengei, Kimana, Mbirikani, Rombo, Chyulu Hills National Park, and Enduimet Wildlife Management Area (Tanzania)

Non-Core AOO: Merrueshi Ranch, Taveta Area

Adjacent*: Amboseli National Park, Kuku, Mailua Ranch, Olgulului, Tsavo West National Park



* Except for intel-related arrests, incidents that occurred in adjacent areas are not reflected in this report.

WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Big Life strives to prevent the poaching of all wildlife within our area of operation. We track and apprehend poachers and collaborate with local prosecutors to ensure that they are punished to the fullest extent of the law. One of the largest employers of local Maasai in the ecosystem, Big Life's community rangers are expertly trained and well-equipped to tackle a variety of wildlife crimes.

Since our inception, poaching of all animals has dramatically declined in our area of operation.

Our **2023 Q1** ranger activity in Kenya and Tanzania¹ is summarized below:

OVERVIEW

Big Life employs Maasai rangers from local communities who work collaboratively with a vast informer network and a number of tools to undertake a variety of activities including anti-poaching and trafficking, conflict mitigation, community support and much more.

Total Staff: 544	Rangers: 362
Ranger Units: 46	Tracker Dogs: 2
Mobile Ranger Units: 11	Permanent Outposts: 32
Aerial Surveillance Hours: 48	Rangers Trained: 19
Total Suspects Arrested: 88 YTD Total: 88	Total Arrest Incidents: 42 YTD Total: 42
Kilometers Patrolled This Quarter: On foot: 40,938 By vehicle: 134,650 Q1TOTAL: 175,588 YTD TOTAL: 175,588	Total Kilometers Patrolled Since Inception (2011): On foot: 1,246,397 By vehicle: 3,905,994 TOTAL: 5,152,391

WILDLIFE CRIME & ANTI-TRAFFICKING

Following the arrest of suspects by Big Life rangers, our Prosecution Officer monitors court cases to ensure that maximum penalties are pursued. Meanwhile, Big Life's intelligence team remains actively involved in investigating wildlife trafficking, both in the immediate ecosystem and beyond.

SUSPECTS ARRESTED Poaching - Bushmeat: 37 Poaching Intention: 7 Trophy Possession: 20 Wildlife Trafficking: 0	RECOVERED ITEMS Ivory: 222 kg Snares: 79 Other: bushmeat (796 kg), sandalwood (73 kg)
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INCIDENTS Bushmeat Poaching: 118 Poaching Intention: 2 Trophy Possession: 7 Wildlife Trafficking: 0	PROSECUTIONS Cases - Concluded: 3 (only 1 sentenced) Cases - Ongoing: 927 suspects
MORTALITIES - ELEPHANT Human-Elephant Conflict: 5 Human-related: 1 Poaching: 0 Natural Causes: 5 Unknown: 4	MORTALITIES – OTHER (<i>excluding large predators</i>) Dik-dik (4), Eland (9), Gazelle (7), Giraffe (15), Impala (1), Lesser kudu (2), Wildebeest (1)
INJURIES - ELEPHANT Elephants Injured: 12 Elephants Treated: 10	RESCUES/TREATMENTS - OTHER ANIMALS elephant (4), giraffe (8), Lion (1), zebra (2)

RHINO INTENSIVE PROTECTION ZONE

There are **seven** known Eastern black rhinos in Big Life’s area of operation. They spend most of their time in the densely-forested Chyulu Hills National Park, protected by dedicated Big Life rangers and the Kenya Wildlife Service. In addition to monitoring and protecting the resident rhinos, Big Life has been working to improve and maintain infrastructure in the rhino area, the goal of which is to maintain Intensive Protection Zone (IPZ) status, which will allow for the future inbound translocation of rhinos from other territories.

Rhino Mortalities: 0	Rhino Snares Found: 0
Rhino Protection Rangers: 56	Dedicated Rhino Outposts: 10 Dedicated Rhino Units: 10
RHINO MONITORING Direct Sightings: 2 Indirect Sightings (<i>via camera trap</i>): 16 Spoor Sightings: 6	INFRASTRUCTURE Fencing: 70+ km constructed by SWT to date Water Points: 3 Camera traps: 48

NOTABLE UPDATES (click to read):

- Rangers helped rescue an [abandoned elephant calf](#)
- Rangers [rescued a giraffe](#) caught in a snare



HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT MITIGATION

Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) takes three primary forms across Big Life’s area of operation: crops raided by wildlife, particularly elephants; livestock killed by predators, such as lions; and humans injured or killed due to living in close proximity with wildlife.

Our **2023 Q1** activity is summarized below:

HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT MITIGATION

Poaching continues to pose a significant threat, but many elephants face an even bigger challenge: conflict with humans. As the human population increases, so do competing land uses, such as farming and cattle grazing. As humans compete for limited resources like water, land, and grass for livestock, we further encroach onto what were once wild lands. With less space to share, people and animals now come into direct contact at an alarming rate and often with deadly results.

Crop-Raiding Incidents: 31 Crop-Raiding Incidents Involving Elephants: 31	Acres Damaged: 11.75 Acres Damaged by Elephants: 11.75
Crop Raids Prevented by Big Life: 30	Elephant Retaliatory Hunts Attempted: 0 Retaliatory Hunts Stopped: n/a
Crop-Protection Fence Constructed to Date: 100 km Crop-Protection Fence Maintenance Workers: 32	Non-crop-raiding, elephant-related incidents*: 18 <i>*including water tanks/pipes damaged by elephants, boma destruction, etc.</i> Livestock Killed by Elephants: 3

PREDATOR PROTECTION

Big Life protects vulnerable predators in the ecosystem in collaboration with partners and local communities. The core component of Big Life’s predator protection program in Kenya is livestock compensation, which reduces the motivation for retaliatory killing in response to livestock depredation.

The Predator Compensation Fund (PCF) pays Maasai livestock owners a portion of the value of their livestock lost to predators, on the condition that no predators are killed in retaliation. Big Life manages the PCF on Mbirikani, Eselengei, and the Kimana Conservancy. Given the success of this program, the goal is to continue expanding the PCF across the entire ecosystem.

The second part of Big Life’s predator protection program in Kenya is the Maasai Olympics, which was established in 2012 as an alternative for the traditional killing of lions. At the Maasai Olympics, young warriors can compete for recognition, prove bravery, and attract girlfriends through a sports competition based on traditional warrior skills. The 6th edition of the games will happen in 2024.

Lion Mortalities: 2 (natural) Violations of PCF: 1 (<i>poisoned lion treated/recovered</i>) Lion Retaliatory Hunts: 0 Retaliatory Hunts Stopped: N/A	Maasai Olympics Engagement: Meetings/events: 0 People engaged: n/a
Compensation Issued for: 111 Cows: \$17,375 266 Sheep/Goats: \$7,567 4 Donkeys: \$143 Q1 TOTAL: \$25,085 YTD TOTAL: \$25,085	Livestock Killed by Predators: Cheetah: 40 Hyena: 239 Jackal: 21 Leopard: 15 Lion: 63 Painted dog: 0
Additional Predator Mortalities: Caracal: 1 - <i>unknown</i> Civet: 1 - <i>unknown</i> Jackal: 1 - <i>unknown</i> Hyena: 1 - <i>unknown</i>	Other: 0 incidents of problematic predators moved away from bomas to avoid depredation (by chasing or translocation)

ADDITIONAL WILDLIFE CONFLICT

Humans Injured: 3	Wildlife Responsible for Injuries: elephant (2), snake (1)
Humans Killed: 1	Wildlife Responsible for Deaths: elephant (1)

NOTABLE UPDATES (click to read):

- A deadly human-elephant conflict incident led to a [dramatic translocation](#) of the elephants involved
- Drought lead to increasing conflict, and rangers helped with treatments on [several occasions](#).



SECURING WILDLIFE HABITAT

The Amboseli ecosystem is one of our planet's surviving natural treasures. It is also home to almost 200,000 people. Big Life and our partners have taken on some of the most complex conservation challenges and been successful. But the demands of an increasing human population, and unplanned development, have already blocked some key wildlife corridors and habitats. If this continues, space will run out, decimating Amboseli's wildlife populations and depriving human communities of the natural resources that they rely on.

Big Life is working with local communities to protect land that is strategically important either as wildlife movement corridors or dispersal areas but is also valuable to the local livestock economy as a grazing resource. This protection can be achieved through land-use planning and the establishment of conservancies, including the legal and management systems necessary for their effective functioning, and assisting to develop income-generating opportunities such as tourism.

Our **2023 Q1** activity is summarized below:

LAND-USE PLANNING & SUBDIVISION

This work has recently accelerated as a process called 'land subdivision' is sweeping Amboseli, fragmenting large tracts of community-owned land into thousands of small, privately-owned parcels. Resultant land sales, land-use conversion, and fencing have the potential to destroy this irreplaceable ecosystem. Big Life is supporting our partner communities by investing in proper land-use plans, using spatial planning to create area designations for all land-use types (e.g. settlement, agriculture, rangeland, and conservancy/wildlife corridors). The outcomes are extremely positive, communities are reserving large areas for wildlife conservation and livestock grazing, and a series of corridors will connect these habitats across the ecosystem.

CONSERVANCY DEVELOPMENT & LAND LEASES

Big Life believes that land belongs best in the hands of its traditional owners, but widespread land sales as a result of subdivision have the potential to destroy large areas of natural habitat, and result in landless communities. Our involvement in the land subdivision processes has ensured that important wildlife habitats are protected, but things don't stop there. The next critical step is to develop revenue streams from these areas or risk their eventual conversion to other land-uses.

Conservation land lease agreements are a way of ensuring continued local ownership AND generating the financial returns that those landowners need. These lease agreements are willingly entered into by both parties, the terms of which restrict land conversion and fencing in exchange for annual lease payments.

Kimana Conservancies (ALOCA): The Kimana Ranch subdivided two decades ago, and while some landowners sold their parcels, the majority came together to form six 'Kimana Conservancies', which border Amboseli NP and protect the first section of the Kimana Wildlife Corridor.

With support from Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, Big Life has lease agreements with hundreds of landowners in the conservancies, protecting thousands of acres of critical wildlife habitat. These lease payments are intended to limit destructive development of the land, other than that which is compatible with conservation and pastoralism and made possible thanks to the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust.

Kimana Sanctuary, at the easternmost part of the Kimana Corridor, was one of the first community-owned and run wildlife conservancies in East Africa. After years of mismanagement, at the request of the community, Big Life took over management in 2017. With support from the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and D.N. Batten Foundation, Big Life set about getting the Sanctuary back on its feet. It now acts as an important dispersal area for wildlife moving to and from Amboseli National Park. A [partnership](#) with Angama will increase the tourism revenue, allowing the Sanctuary to become self-sufficient, simultaneously covering the costs of its protection and increasing income to its landowners.

<p>ALOCA:</p> <p>Land Owners benefitting from lease fees: 333</p> <p>Number of acres protected: 19,980</p> <p>Tourism road network: 51.3 km built to date</p> <p>Other: AGM held where ALOCA trust was officially launched</p>	<p>Eselengei:</p> <p>Land Owners signed lease agreement: 652</p> <p>Number of acres under lease: 30,644</p> <p>Other: 433 matched with corresponding lease documents and archived at BLF registry, 82 landowners whose documents were ready received first installment of 2023 lease fee</p>
<p>Kimana Sanctuary:</p> <p>Landowners benefitting from lease fees: 844</p> <p>Number of acres protected: 5,700</p> <p>Paying visitor days: 373</p>	

HABITAT

RANGELANDS MANAGEMENT

Amboseli’s arid rangelands are hurting. High stocking rates of livestock animals, and the breakdown of traditional rotational grazing practices, has resulted in unsustainable pressure on the savannah grasses, and over-harvesting of natural resources in all forms has degraded habitats. Big Life is working to combat these threats to the ecosystem.

Our **2023 Q1** activity is summarized below:

LAND

Rangers actively protect the land by fighting against illegal habitat destruction activities such as logging or charcoal production, sand and water extraction, and combatting bushfires. Rangers also enforce protected area rules in conservancies and national parks, where encroachment activities like trespassing, settlement, and grazing are illegal and harmful to critical ecosystem habitats.

Lastly, since 2017, we've partnered with local communities, partner NGOs, and local government to implement a [carbon credit program](#) in the Chyulu Hills to protect it from deforestation and overgrazing. The program generates significant income for the management of the Chyulu Hills National Park and creates benefits for surrounding communities.

Suspects Arrested* for Habitat Destruction: 16 Habitat Destruction Arrest Incidents: 9 <i>*Sometimes released depending on severity of crime</i>	Non-Arrest Habitat Destruction Incidents: 12 <i>(Kenya)</i>
	Incidents of Community Grazing and Conservancy Rules Enforcement: 8

RESTORATION

Overgrazing in an arid environment has resulted in large areas without a protective covering; soils are eroding, and gullies scar the landscape. The little rain that does fall runs straight off the hard surfaces, depriving the land of moisture and resulting in a downward spiral. Large areas have been rendered unproductive, with negative impacts for both wildlife and people.

Thanks to support from Conservation International and Apple Inc., Big Life is working with the Mbirikani community to restore 10,000 acres of rangeland back to health.

Rangeland Restoration Area: 9,460 acres Active restoration: 1,960 acres Natural regeneration: 7,500 acres	Bunds installed Q1: 20,231 YTD: 20,231 Total: 98,129
Total acres reseeded: 337 to date	Number of people employed: 193



COMMUNITY

Winning the hearts and minds of the community and providing a mutual benefit through conservation is the only way to protect wildlife and wild lands far into the future. To that end, Big Life provides a number of services in support of the community generally, including education, healthcare and income-generating initiatives, and also lesser-known activities, such as growing food for local students through a sustainable farming project, using ranger vehicles as ambulances, arresting criminals for community crimes (e.g., theft), conducting human and/or livestock search and rescue operations, and more.

To support the community during the recent drought, in **Q1 of 2023**, Big Life provided **14,318 students across 46 schools with lunches**.

Community Crime Incidents: 16	Suspects Arrested: 5
Human Search and Rescue Incidents: 3	Livestock Search Incidents: 3
Other Community Support Incidents: 14 - <i>crime response (8), emergency transport (6)</i>	
Beehives: 299 in 6 apiaries <i>Harvest cancelled due to drought</i>	Sustainable Farms: 1

EDUCATION

Big Life invests in the future of participating communities by funding teachers' salaries, providing scholarship funds for local students, and implementing conservation-specific curriculum in classrooms and communities.

Our **2023 Q1** activity is summarized below:

Long-Term Student Scholarships Awarded: 512 Boys: 179 Girls: 333	Students Reached by Conservation Lessons: 1,714
One-Time Student Scholarships Awarded: 33	School Visits: 33
Amount paid in Scholarships: \$91,500.00	National Park Trips: n/a
Tertiary-Level Graduates: 4	Teachers' Salaries Paid: 7

NOTABLE UPDATES (click to read):

- A [Celebration](#) of Maasai Education took place in January

HEALTHCARE

Big Life works in partnership with the Kajiado South Sub-County Department of Health to implement backpack nurse outreaches focused on the provision of family planning, immunization and antenatal services, to run educational community meetings discussing many sexual and reproductive health and rights topics, and to support a team of Community Health Volunteers across the Great Amboseli ecosystem. Big Life is also now working with the Ministry of Education and the Kajiado South Sub-County Department of Health to improve sexual and reproductive health and rights education in schools and for the youth and adolescent community.

Our **2023 Q1** activity is summarized below:

Back-Pack Medical Outreaches: 69	CHV Household Visits: 8,878
Family Planning Dialogue Days: 71	People De-wormed: 1,825
Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights school talks: 0	Immunizations Administered: 2,946
Child Rights Club Meetings: 240	Family Planning Services Provided: 1,795
	People Reached with Family Planning Information: 30,338
	People receiving primary healthcare: 1,781



Thank you to our wonderful partners and supporters for helping make our work possible. Together we can save wildlife and wild lands - now and for future generations. Please consider making a life-saving [donation](#) to support the critical programs mentioned in this report. Thank you for your support

ⁱ Livestock losses and crop-raiding incidents from Enduimet Wildlife Management Area (Tanzania) have been excluded from this report as they aren't part of the PCF program nor have comparable crop-raiding mitigation measures.