

FOUNDATION
GREAT PLAINS
CONSERVING AND EXPANDING NATURAL HABITATS

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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CONSERVING AND EXPANDING NATURAL HABITATS

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VISION

We strive for a world in balance, where its precious landscapes are restored, its biodiversity is protected now and for the future, and our communities can coexist in harmony, passively and with sustained wealth as real partners in those ecosystems. We work towards a shared vision for the natural world with all stakeholders. *Imagine.*

MISSION

To conserve and expand natural habitats for biodiversity to thrive with a long-term commitment to the environment, wildlife and local communities.



OUR PATH

PROTECTING & RESTORING NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS FOR A HEALTHY PLANET WITH HEALTHY PEOPLE

CONSERVE LAND



Wildlife needs vast amounts of land to roam freely. As Great Plains Foundation, we interact with the 1.1m acres of land held under lease by Great Plains. Our mission is to acquire land leases from local communities to bring income to the communities through conservation tourism and biodiversity protection. By partnering with communities to enhance the landscape and reduce negative impact activities, the large-scale ecosystems have a more sustainable future where both biodiversity and communities thrive.

PROTECT BIODIVERSITY



Biodiversity plays an essential role as functioning healthy ecosystem engineers. The interconnectedness of flora and fauna on a landscape where the value lies, and restoring ecosystems to optimum health is the Great Plains mission. Conservation efforts to restore ecosystems range from daily monitoring of environmental changes to large-scale translocations to recover declining populations.

EMPOWER COMMUNITIES



Local communities are the custodians of these wild landscapes and are essential in long-term development and conservation of natural resources. Community development starts with the next generation, which is why reducing barriers to education and sponsored education are central pillars to our efforts. It is recognised that women are the foundation of community development, and empowering women into business has a trickle-down effect in local communities.



THE PATH BACK TO BALANCE

**A message from Dereck and Beverly Joubert
Founders of Great Plains Foundation, National Geographic
Explorers At-Large.**

If we could crystalize one objective of the Great Plains Foundation it would be in our daily efforts to find balance and restore it.

We look around and see overhunting collapsing whole ecosystems, or mining efforts, human growth and spread into protected areas. At the same time, we come across gender inequality in the conservation workforce and overlooked children in our communities. To each problem, if we applied the answer, 'let's put it on the path back to balance' we'd quickly know if we, at Great Plains, can be of any use and if we are the right people to help.

There was once a time when everything was in balance, and it seems to have swung way off course. Our job is to bring elephants into landscapes where they have been poached or move rhinos into places where they were once prolific but now extinct. Hungry children often just need a helping nudge to attend schools and trees can be planted to put us on track again in the imbalance of our carbon footprint that has tipped the scales one way, and that needs correcting.

If we are going to give our planet and its vitally important wildlife, (which are both critically in balance with each other,) a fighting chance, we are going to need to be vigilant about leaning in when we see something teetering. That is what Great Plains does now, and it can only happen with friends like you who trust our judgement and understand our vision, which is all presented in this annual final report. Once again, we want to thank you profusely for that support.

Dereck and Beverly

TOTAL IMPACT

OF THE GREAT PLAINS FOUNDATION THROUGH DECEMBER 2024

Generating Impact is the at the core of the Great Plains Foundation's work. Here is a summary of our impact so far from our programs.

COMMUNITY



SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM

SINCE 2022

Nutritious meals to boost attendance, attention and progress

5.5 MILLION

Nutritious Meals Distributed



SCHOOL SUPPORT

SINCE 2010

Great Plains partners with schools to boost education in rural communities

16,700

School Children Benefiting



MOBILE CLINICS

SINCE 2022

Bringing regional medical specialists to schools in rural communities

2,502

School Kids Reached



CONSERVATION EDUCATION

SINCE 2010

Knowledge sharing through Conservation Education camps for schools

1,654

School Kids Hosted



SOLAR MAMAS

SINCE 2019

Women-led business bringing safe renewable energy to off-grid communities to support education and human-wildlife coexistence

800

Homes Installed with Solar



CONSERVATION GOALS

SINCE 2019

Engaging youth in conservation and development through Netball and Football

590

Young People Engaged



BEADS FOR BUSINESS

SINCE 2022

Supporting a Women Empowerment bead business where profits go towards education and healthcare of the Mamas

105

Women in the Business



GREAT PLAINS EARTH ACADEMY

SINCE 2020

Bringing vocational training courses to rural communities to boost employment rates in young people

101

Students Trained



SMALLHOLDER FARMER SUPPORT

SINCE 2023

Supporting smallholder farmers in Botswana and Kenya through partnerships.

29

Farmers Supported



SPONSORED TEACHERS

SINCE 2021

Sponsoring the salary of teachers to boost quality of education and support teachers

37

Teachers Sponsored



SPONSORED STUDENTS

SINCE 2023

Sponsoring students to attend Conservation Leaders Courses as the next generation of leaders

6

Students Sponsored



BUILDING BRIDGES

SINCE 2022

Providing communities with safe access across dangerous rivers to school and medical facilities

4

Bridges Built





CONSERVATION



ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION

SINCE 2006

Land under Great Plains protection in Africa

1.1 MILLION

Acres Protected



CONSERVATION ROOTS

SINCE 2019

Planting indigenous trees for ecosystem restoration, food security and carbon sequestration

37,728

Indigenous Trees Planted



PROJECT REWILD

SINCE 2022

Translocations of wildlife for conservation and post-translocation monitoring

70 101 68 184

Giraffe Elephants Zebras Impalas



FEMALE RANGERS

SINCE 2021

Hiring, training and equipping women from local communities to become Female Wildlife Rangers

27

Female Rangers Trained



RHINO CONSERVATION

SINCE 2015

Protecting endangered rhinoceros for future generations

87

Rhinos Translocated
as Rhinos Without Borders



PROJECT RANGER

SINCE 2020

Grant-based project funding anti-poaching units across Africa

43 9

Grants in Countries



BIG CATS INITIATIVE

Grant-based initiative dedicated to supporting big cat conservation efforts worldwide.

157 29

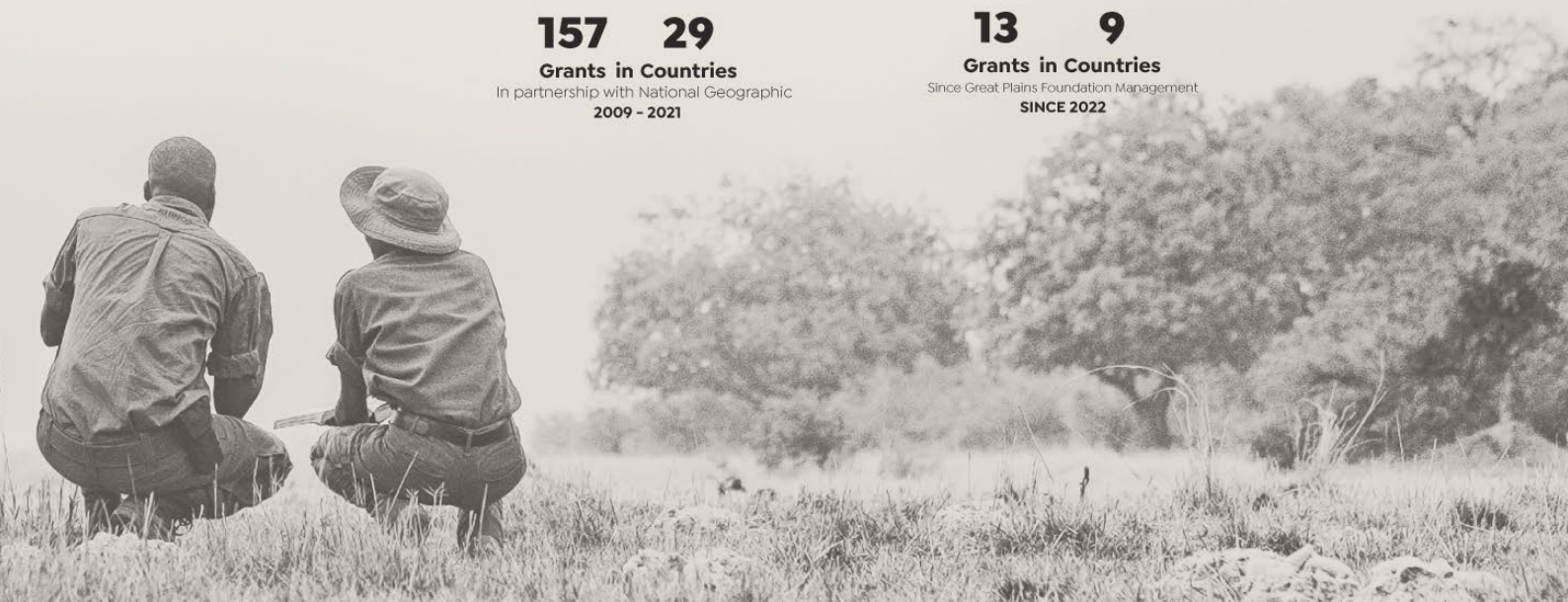
Grants in Countries

In partnership with National Geographic
2009 - 2021

13 9

Grants in Countries

Since Great Plains Foundation Management
SINCE 2022





Land

Currently. Great Plains is protecting and restoring 1.1 million acres of land across Botswana, Zimbabwe and Kenya.

Protecting land provides vital habitats where species can thrive, ecosystem services can clean air and water as life-support systems, and improve our resilience to climate change.



PROTECTING AFRICA'S CRITICAL LANDSCAPES AND WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

Great Plains Foundation operates in some of Africa's most ecologically vital landscapes, safeguarding over one million acres across Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Kenya. Each reserve and conservancy is a protected space that is a key component of globally significant ecosystems, supporting rare biodiversity, critical migration routes, and human-wildlife coexistence.

BOTSWANA

Our Selinda, Duba, and Sitatunga reserves are integral to the northern Okavango Delta system, one of the largest inland deltas in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, within the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA).

This area supports a diverse range of biomes, including seasonal floodplains, mopane woodlands, and riverine forests, which are home to endangered African wild dogs, white rhinos, and the rare sitatunga antelope, to name a few.

ZIMBABWE

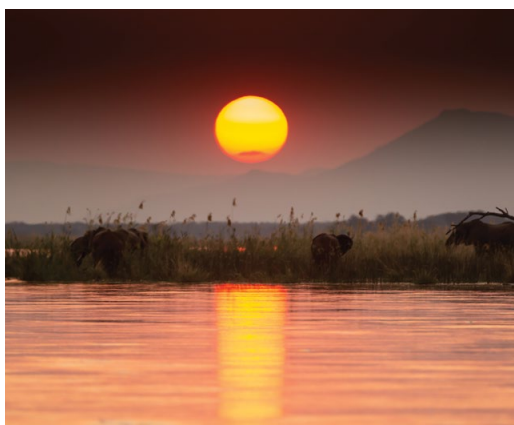
The Sapi Reserve lies adjacent to Mana Pools National Park and forms part of the Zambezi Valley within the Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Zambia Transfrontier Conservation Area (ZIMOZA TFCA).

This critical corridor hosts a diverse array of wildlife, including lions, leopards, and elephants, while protecting floodplain and miombo woodland habitats.

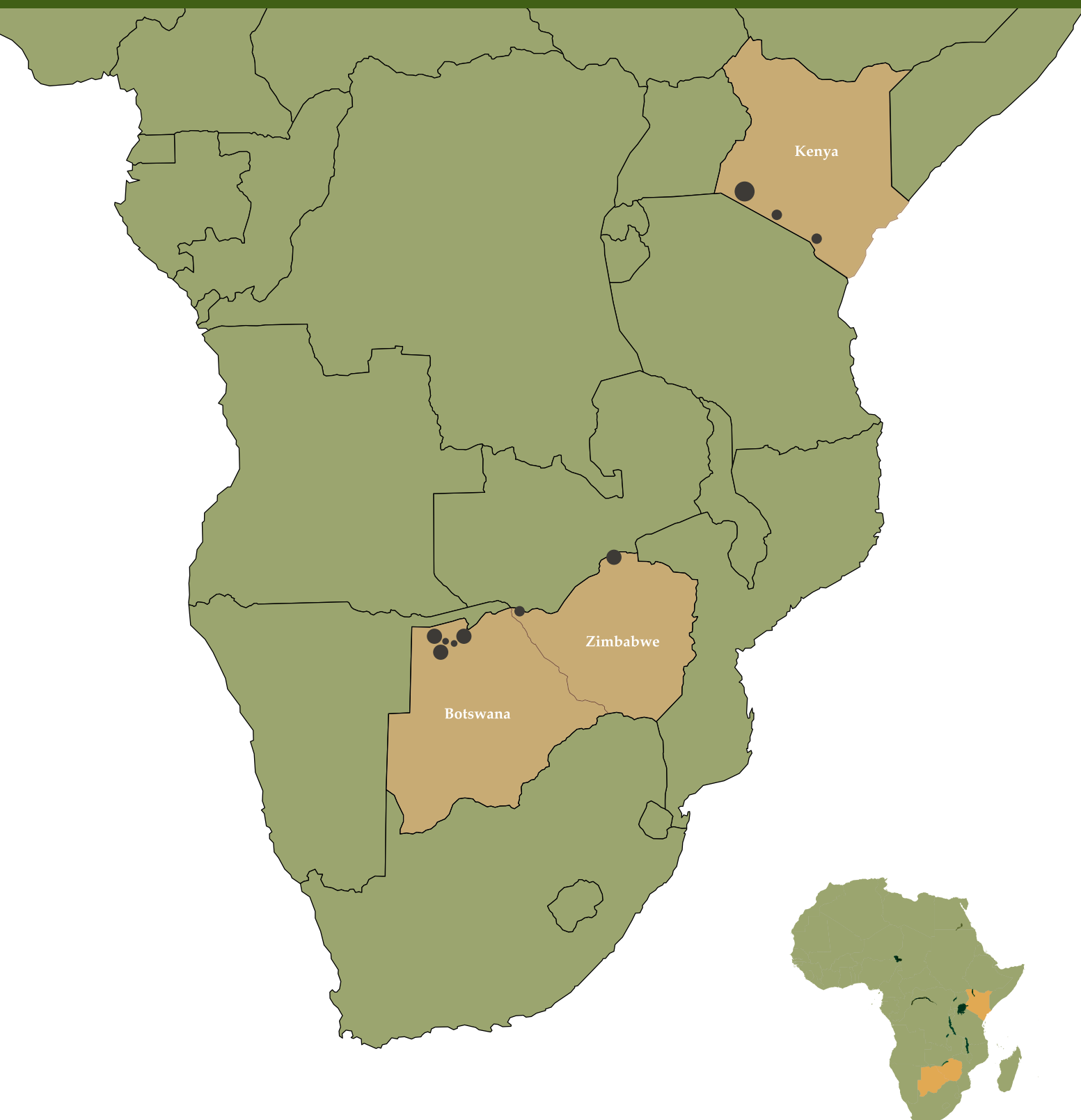
KENYA

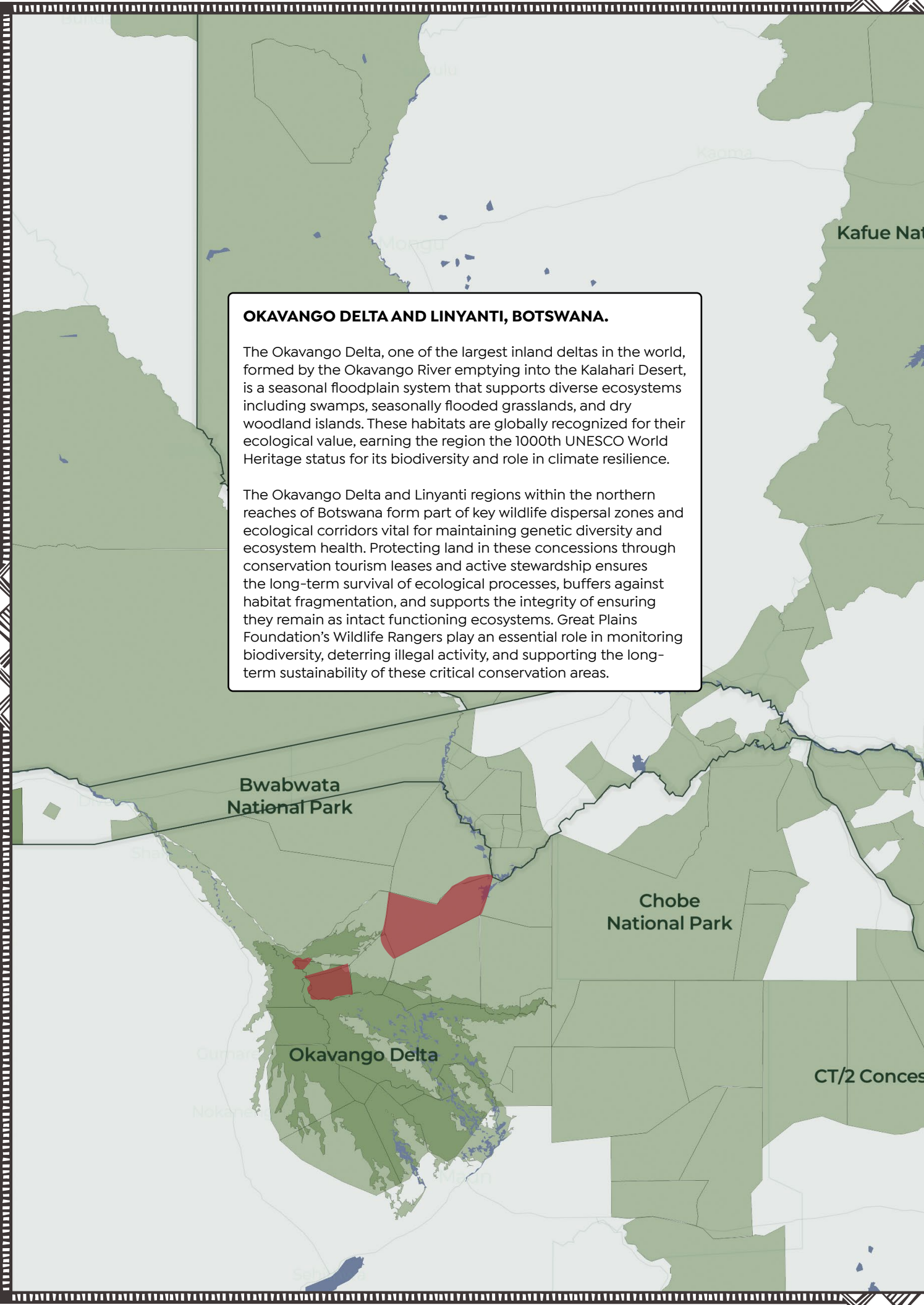
We work across Maasai-managed lands, including Mbirikani Group Ranch, Shompole, and conservancies in the Greater Mara ecosystem: Naboisho, Mara North, and Olare Motorogi.

These areas are essential to the functioning of the Mara-Serengeti migration and Tsavo-Amboseli corridors, hosting critical species such as zebras, cheetahs, and elephants, and preserving East Africa's iconic savannahs and acacia-dotted plains.



Collectively, these landscapes create a vibrant mosaic of Africa's major biomes – wetlands, woodlands, and savannahs – and serve as refuges for many of the most endangered species on the planet. They are essential not only for wildlife but also for the communities that depend on these ecosystems for their well-being and, ultimately, for our entire planet.





OKAVANGO DELTA AND LINYANTI, BOTSWANA.

The Okavango Delta, one of the largest inland deltas in the world, formed by the Okavango River emptying into the Kalahari Desert, is a seasonal floodplain system that supports diverse ecosystems including swamps, seasonally flooded grasslands, and dry woodland islands. These habitats are globally recognized for their ecological value, earning the region the 1000th UNESCO World Heritage status for its biodiversity and role in climate resilience.

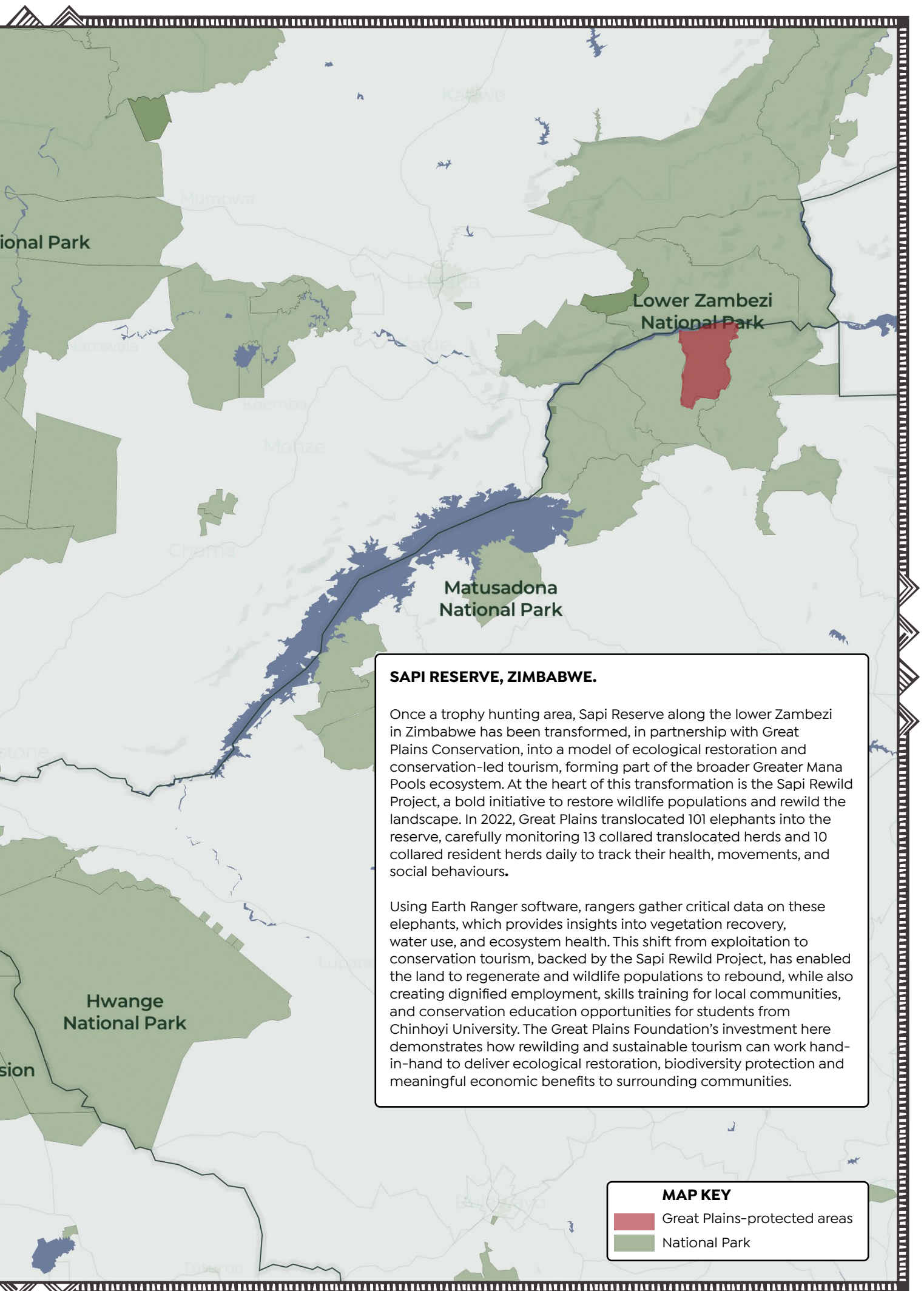
The Okavango Delta and Linyanti regions within the northern reaches of Botswana form part of key wildlife dispersal zones and ecological corridors vital for maintaining genetic diversity and ecosystem health. Protecting land in these concessions through conservation tourism leases and active stewardship ensures the long-term survival of ecological processes, buffers against habitat fragmentation, and supports the integrity of ensuring they remain as intact functioning ecosystems. Great Plains Foundation's Wildlife Rangers play an essential role in monitoring biodiversity, deterring illegal activity, and supporting the long-term sustainability of these critical conservation areas.

**Bwabwata
National Park**

**Chobe
National Park**

Okavango Delta

CT/2 Conces



SAPI RESERVE, ZIMBABWE.

Once a trophy hunting area, Sapi Reserve along the lower Zambezi in Zimbabwe has been transformed, in partnership with Great Plains Conservation, into a model of ecological restoration and conservation-led tourism, forming part of the broader Greater Mana Pools ecosystem. At the heart of this transformation is the Sapi Rewild Project, a bold initiative to restore wildlife populations and rewild the landscape. In 2022, Great Plains translocated 101 elephants into the reserve, carefully monitoring 13 collared translocated herds and 10 collared resident herds daily to track their health, movements, and social behaviours.

Using Earth Ranger software, rangers gather critical data on these elephants, which provides insights into vegetation recovery, water use, and ecosystem health. This shift from exploitation to conservation tourism, backed by the Sapi Rewild Project, has enabled the land to regenerate and wildlife populations to rebound, while also creating dignified employment, skills training for local communities, and conservation education opportunities for students from Chinhoyi University. The Great Plains Foundation's investment here demonstrates how rewilding and sustainable tourism can work hand-in-hand to deliver ecological restoration, biodiversity protection and meaningful economic benefits to surrounding communities.

MAP KEY

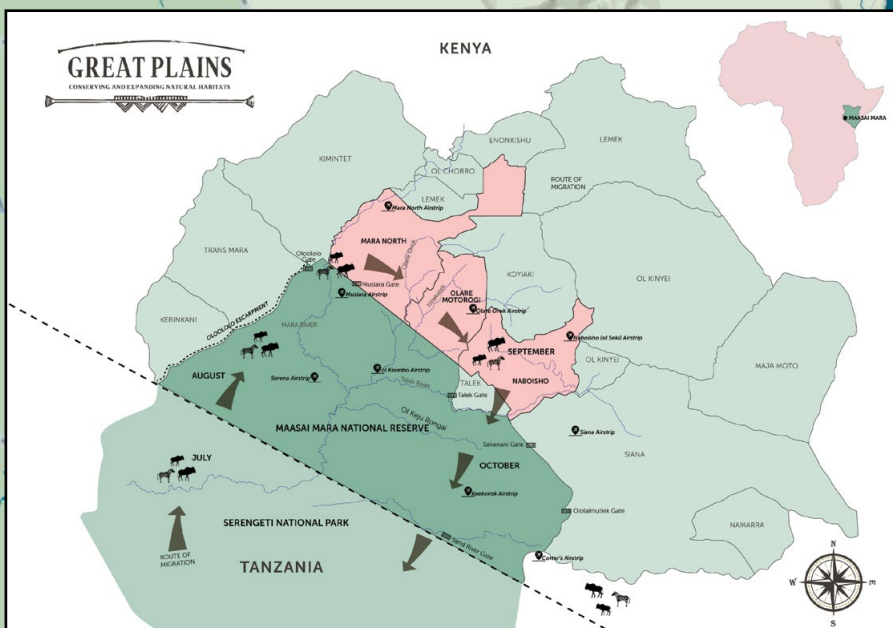
- Great Plains-protected areas
- National Park

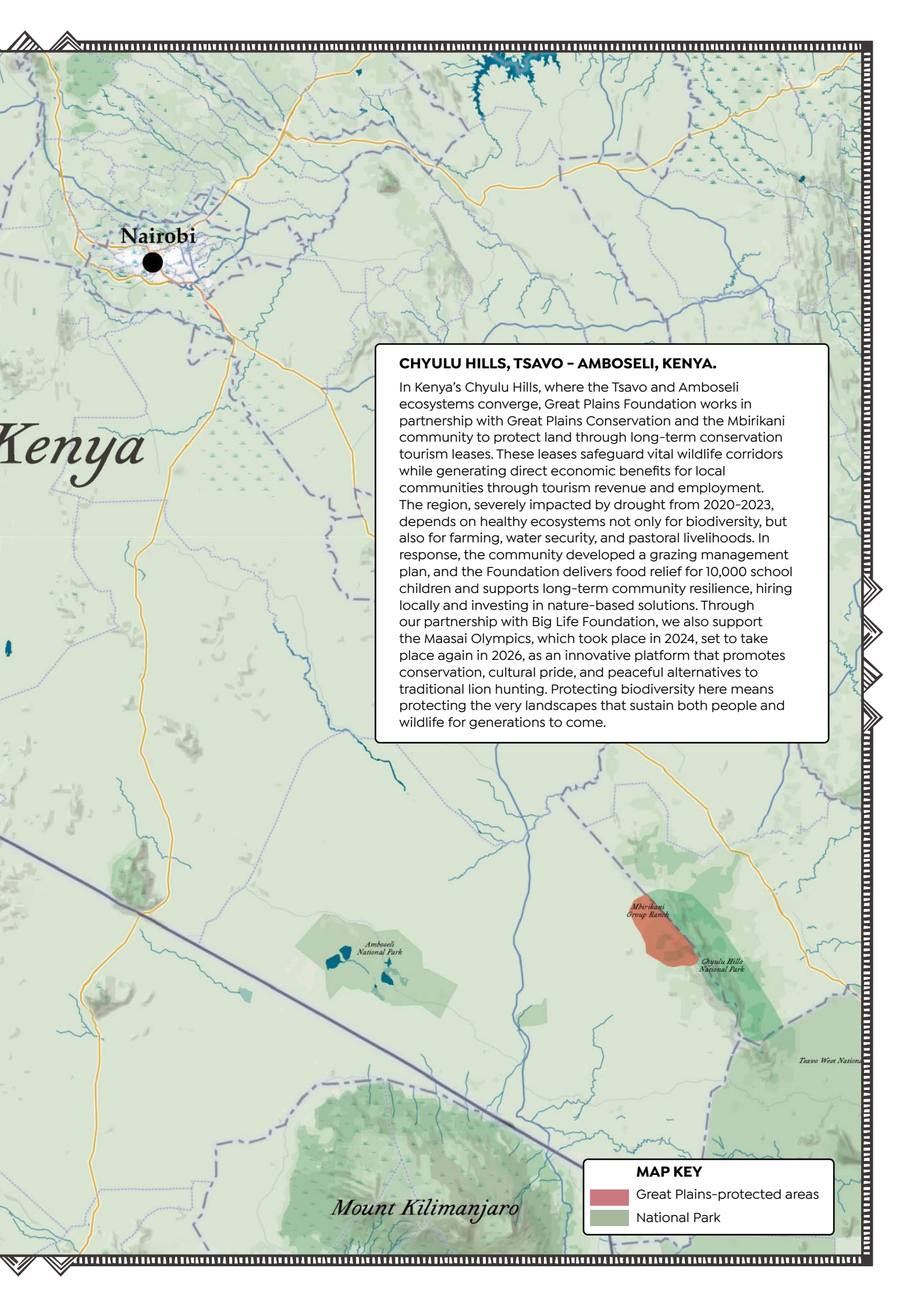
MAASAI MARA, KENYA.

The annual migration of over a million wildebeest, zebras, and other species through the Maasai Mara is one of nature's greatest spectacles—and it depends entirely on open, protected landscapes. Securing space for wildlife movement is essential to this ecological process, and Great Plains Foundation supports ranger programs through Project Ranger in the region to safeguard these corridors from threats like encroachment and poaching. The Foundation simultaneously invests in community development and clean-up programmes across the Maasai Mara, tackling plastic and waste pollution to safeguard ecosystems. It collaborates with local Maasai families to ensure that conservation efforts benefit both people and the environment in this globally important region.

SHOMPOLE, KENYA

The Shompole Conservancy is a diverse wilderness area in the Southern Rift valley of Kenya, closely bordering Tanzania. The conservancy, a critical wildlife corridor between the well-known Amboseli National Park and the Maasai Mara National Reserve, is managed by the local Maasai community. Shompole is home to a variety of wildlife including lions, cheetah, elephant, giraffe, zebra and various antelope. Great Plains is partnering with local communities to improve livelihoods and restore this grassland habitat to benefit both people and wildlife. Implementing conservation practices in the landscapes that connect protected areas is essential to ensure wildlife can move freely in migrations and ensure ecosystems remain healthy and functional.





Kenya

Nairobi

CHYULU HILLS, TSAVO - AMBOSELI, KENYA.

In Kenya's Chyulu Hills, where the Tsavo and Amboseli ecosystems converge, Great Plains Foundation works in partnership with Great Plains Conservation and the Mbirikani community to protect land through long-term conservation tourism leases. These leases safeguard vital wildlife corridors while generating direct economic benefits for local communities through tourism revenue and employment. The region, severely impacted by drought from 2020-2023, depends on healthy ecosystems not only for biodiversity, but also for farming, water security, and pastoral livelihoods. In response, the community developed a grazing management plan, and the Foundation delivers food relief for 10,000 school children and supports long-term community resilience, hiring locally and investing in nature-based solutions. Through our partnership with Big Life Foundation, we also support the Maasai Olympics, which took place in 2024, set to take place again in 2026, as an innovative platform that promotes conservation, cultural pride, and peaceful alternatives to traditional lion hunting. Protecting biodiversity here means protecting the very landscapes that sustain both people and wildlife for generations to come.

Amboseli
National Park

Mbirikani
Group Ranch

Chyulu Hills
National Park

Tsavo West National Park

Mount Kilimanjaro

MAP KEY

- Great Plains-protected areas
- National Park

Conservation

Biodiversity and intact ecosystems are essential to the health of both the planet and humanity. Healthy ecosystems regulate climate, purify water, pollinate crops, store carbon, and provide food, medicine, and livelihoods for the benefit of all people on earth. Biodiversity supports the resilience and functionality of these ecosystems.

When species are lost or ecosystems are degraded, the services they provide diminish, affecting everything from species diversity to local food security to global climate stability. Great Plains focuses on both long-term ecosystem protection and emergency conservation, to ensure we offer agility and flexibility to pivot to the changes happening around us.





LONG-TERM ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION

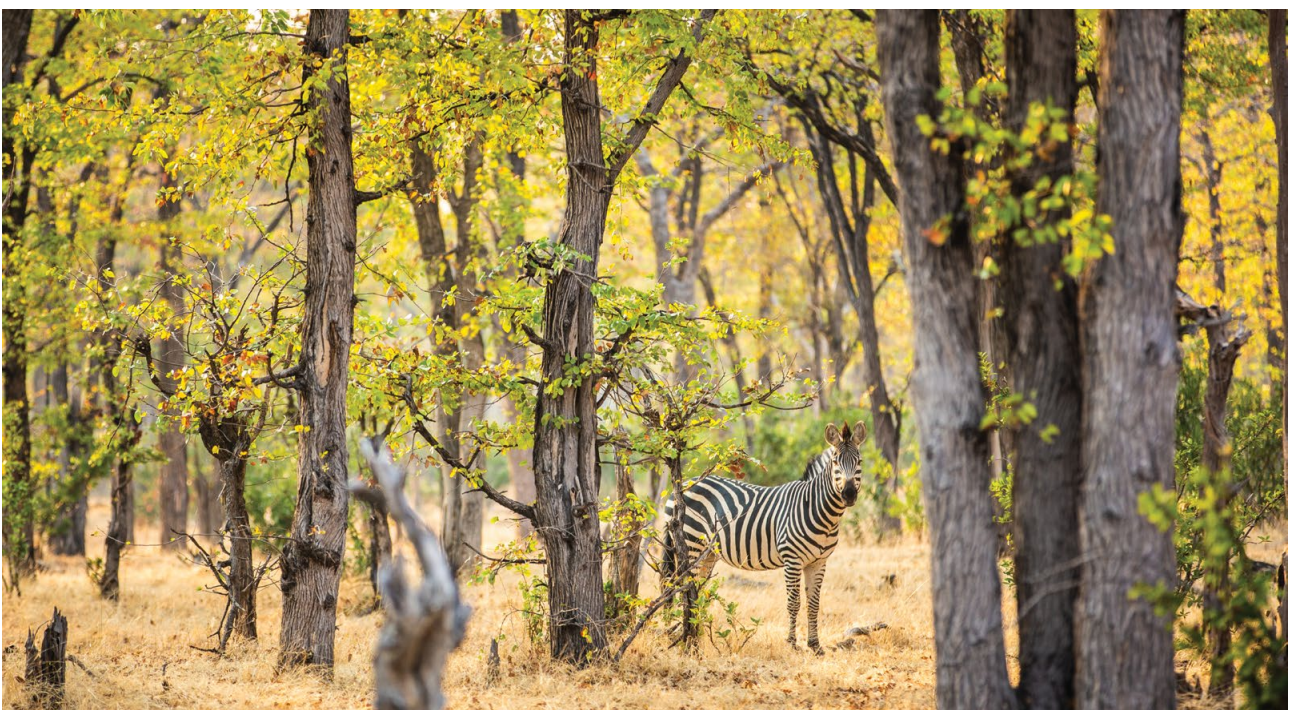
Long-term protection is essential in biodiversity conservation because ecosystems and species need time and stability to recover, adapt, and thrive. Assessing ecosystem health requires continuous monitoring and analysis to understand changes and concerns, which can inform conservation decisions as well as contributing to regional and global data sets. Great Plains Foundation is dedicated to the long-term protection of invaluable landscapes and the biodiversity they support, working to ensure their preservation for future generations.

GREAT PLAINS WILDLIFE RANGERS

Biodiversity and the habitats needed to sustain healthy ecosystems are facing declines. These areas need eyes and ears on the ground to ensure continuous monitoring of the landscape. Wildlife rangers are the frontline defenders of nature, playing a critical role in conserving ecosystems, natural habitats and biodiversity. The positive impact of wildlife rangers is felt both in the field, but also at home with their families and communities.

Project Update:

Our team of dedicated Great Plains Wildlife Rangers have grown not just in numbers this year, but also as individuals both professionally and personally. The expansion of our Female Rangers program and the development of our conservation team has facilitated improved biodiversity protection strategies and outcomes. The ‘boots on the ground’ team are essential to conserving these critical ecosystems.





WILDLIFE MONITORING



Female Rangers

In remote regions of Botswana and Zimbabwe, it is not common to see a woman working in conservation. The value of a woman working as a wildlife ranger and biodiversity monitor has essential and long-term benefits.

Hiring women as Female Rangers offers a chance to shift stereotypes, empower women and foster community engagement. Great Plains recruited 11 new Female Rangers to the team in 2024 across Botswana and Zimbabwe bringing the total number of women upskilled on the program so far to 23.

Every new recruit demonstrates the growing impact of women in traditionally male-dominated roles, paving the way for future generations of girls. The Female Rangers are constantly engaged in trainings, including computer skills, field knowledge, data analysis, tracking and identification, leadership and more.

2024 began with seven Female Rangers completing the final step of their 12-month training. They now lead patrols independently, collecting data and monitoring the landscapes and ecosystems under their purview. One specific skill gap identified among the Female Rangers is a lack of driver's licenses. Having a driving license unlocks considerable independence for both the teams in the field and as individuals, and the year ended with two more Female Rangers passing their driver's license exams.



National Geographic Society

Team Development

Great Plains prioritises professional development and internal paths to career advancement. This year, there were many milestone celebrations of promotions within the teams, showcasing the value of the training and development programs in place.

We are pleased to share that four rangers (two women, two men) were promoted to Team Leader-in-Training and participated in a three-month leadership development course. Rhino Monitoring Team Coordinator Onkgopotse Maboga and Female Ranger Agonneone Botshelo participated in Braveheart Leadership Course at the South African Wildlife College. The course selected just 13 students from across Africa in leadership, conservation ethics, law enforcement, community engagement, technology, communication and combatting corruption. Agonneone was one of just two women selected and ended the course with a distinction as the Best Student in Theory.

Collaboration with Government Authorities

For sustainable, long-term conservation it is essential to collaborate and partner with leading government entities and national strategies. In Botswana, a close partnership with the Botswana Defence Force enables improved operations with rangers from Great Plains and BDF working in tandem for environmental protection and law enforcement. In the Mid-Zambezi landscape, Great Plains works to protect the ecosystem in partnership with Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management (ZimParks).

Within the Sapi Reserve is a ZimParks ranger station, known as G Camp. Over the last year, Great Plains has sponsored new infrastructure enhancements to improve accommodation, and operations, for the rangers. Infrastructure improvements included offices, staff houses, a canteen, an upgraded water system and an ablution facility. Other upgrades included adding a borehole, a bridge, an electric fence around the solar farm and a new operations centre. The operations centre is being equipped to support the SMART system, integrating this region into the larger regional communication channels. By collaborating with and supporting local partners, the strength of long-term ecosystem protection significantly improves.

Community Engagement: Conservation Ambassadors

Another critical role of the rangers is community engagement. The wealth of knowledge the rangers gain in training throughout the year, from the value of ecosystems all the way to wildlife behaviour, doesn't stay just with them, they share it with their community. Knowledge-sharing topics range from understanding the value of protecting resources, tips on how to stay safe around wildlife, and inspiring the youth into careers that sustainably protect their natural heritage.

In 2024, the rangers took part in a variety of outreach activities to discuss conservation with their communities, reaching more than 1,000 people in Botswana alone through the course of the year. Community engagement events included the Great Plains Conservation Goals sports tournament in September, as well as teaching conservation lessons at the Conservation Education Kids Camps held in both August and December, reaching primary school children from the rural communities bordering wildlife areas. All community engagement aims to include local communities in conservation discussions, promote coexistence and inspire future leaders.





Ranger Wellbeing

The work of a wildlife ranger is both physically and mentally challenging. This year saw the start of the Ranger Fitness Program. While the initial focus of the program was to improve physical fitness, the team quickly saw a boost in motivation and well-being, which led to a transformation in teamwork and decision-making.

A highlight of the year included 9 rangers crossing the finish line of the 21km Maun Half Marathon, showing their dedication to training as well as physical and mental strength. The rangers also attended a training course on emotional intelligence development and communication skills, adding more strings to their bow. Every year, rangers in the field risk their lives. Great Plains wildlife rangers took part in First Aid training to perform basic life support on victims in the bush, while medical assistance is on the way, thereby doubling the chance of survival.

ONGOING ECOSYSTEM MONITORING

Building data sets is essential to understanding the health of an ecosystem. One of the roles of the Great Plains Wildlife Rangers and Biodiversity Monitors is to gather landscape-level data to inform ecosystem management decisions. The habitats Great Plains works in have no fences or boundaries, making collaboration and alignment with regional and national conservation strategies essential for success.

Project Update:

Ongoing ecosystem monitoring needs a collaborative approach of on-the-ground fieldwork, making use of technology, and partnering with other organisations in the region. This holistic approach ensures data sets are reliable and knowledge gaps are filled by various entities working together. This year saw detailed mapping of ecosystem health indicators, from soil to habitat to the presence of specific species. Improving information gathering on ecosystems results in a more accurate representation of the region, and can track environmental changes to predict future trends, supporting conservation management decisions.

Soil, Vegetation and Habitat Mapping

Vegetation monitoring is a focus for Great Plains. Continuously tracking ecosystem health allows for early detection of environmental changes, and highlights threats such as invasive species, climate impacts or habitat loss.

In the Sapi Reserve, Great Plains are creating a map that covers both vegetation and habitat diversity. While several maps exist for the regions, they are outdated and no longer reliable as habitats are constantly changing. The team have been taking regular soil samples in every vegetation plot to become the baseline for various studies, as many ecological systems are influenced by soil type and condition.



Working with Earth Ranger

The Great Plains Foundation team uses Earth Ranger to increase their capacity for real-time monitoring of wildlife and habitats to make informed decisions. Earth Ranger is a conservation technology platform that collects, integrates and displays historical and live data. The data is combined with field reports to provide a unified view of collared animals, rangers, enforcement assets, and infrastructure. Two of our rangers, including one female ranger, attended an Earth Ranger workshop in September in Lusaka, Zambia, and returned with invaluable skills and knowledge to share with the team.

Collaborations and Working Groups

Partnering with other organisations in the region is an integral part of Great Plains' work. In 2024 Great Plains partnered with Mabula Ground Hornbill Project to participate in and support the data collection for the IUCN Action Plan for this vulnerable species, by recording and sharing sightings. Our support for bird conservation is expanding beyond Ground Hornbills, with efforts underway to contribute to the Vulture Action Plan for Zimbabwe, the establishment of Vulture Protection Zones, initiation of an Annual Waterfowl Survey and participation in a Regional Bird Atlas Programme.





In loving memory of Tumelo Mojapane.

BIODIVERSITY SURVEYS

Accurate and on-demand population estimates are critical for wildlife conservation organisations worldwide. While our ranger teams ensure ongoing biodiversity monitoring, it is also valuable to coordinate dedicated surveys throughout the year, focussing on a specific research question or interest.

Project Update:

Carnivore Spoor Counts

Spoor counts provide an effective and economical way to estimate species richness and abundance. ‘Spoor’ refers to any sign of an animal’s presence, including footprints, droppings, scratch marks etc. Recording these indicators is a method of estimating populations. In partnership with ZimParks, Great Plains conducted large carnivore spoor counts in the Mid-Zambezi covering Sapi Reserve, Chewore North, and Chewore South, as part of a greater carnivore survey including Mana Pools and Hurungwe. The data from the survey is important for estimating population trends. This will be continuously carried out in the wet and dry seasons every year, which will help management estimate large carnivore population trends for the region.

Game Counts

Waterhole game counts are increasingly critical for species conservation management, helping us understand population trends, dynamics, and range requirements while evaluating wildlife responses to management activities.

Towards the end of 2024, Great Plains Foundation’s team facilitated a game count in the Mid-Zambezi Valley protected areas. The team surveyed four waterholes in partnership with ZimParks, Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) students, Painted Dog Conservation and My Trees Trust to establish baseline information on wildlife species.

Zambezi River Survey

The Sapi team hosted an ichthyology (i.e. fish study!) research team as part of their Zambezi River expedition. The team collected extensive data on river macroinvertebrates, water quality, and DNA samples from fish. They also gathered information on human activities along the Zambezi River and conducted a hippo count. The team was trained in the process of extracting DNA samples from fish, as well as processing sampling for eDNA testing, an incredible tool for conservation efforts. Two Great Plains female rangers joined the team on a section of the river expedition and learned about data collection processes and the team’s day-to-day activities.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR CONSERVATION

It is becoming increasingly important for conservation organisations to harness technology to enhance efficiency, accuracy and scalability of conservation efforts in a world that is facing accelerating challenges. Like game counts, photo-based surveys like camera trapping are essential for species conservation and understanding population trends overtime.

But, traditional methods of identifying animals from images or surveys are time-consuming and prone to human error, especially with large datasets. Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for species identification in conservation offers huge value by making the process faster, more accurate, and scalable.

AI can rapidly scan thousands of images, detect rare or elusive species, and even spot subtle patterns that might be missed by the human eye. Machine learning can help predict patterns of environmental degradation allowing for prioritisation and proactive conservation methods.

Project Update:

Aerial Survey using Artificial Intelligence

While the collection of image data from camera traps, satellites, and aircraft has served us well for decades, this year, Great Plains advanced its capabilities by investing in AI technology to improve the process of ecosystem analysis.

A complete survey of the Duba Plains Concession was conducted using an aircraft fitted with camera pods, capturing over 12,000 images of the area. Led by aerial survey and AI specialist, Howard Fredrick, the team followed standardised transect paths and developed a training platform for staff. The images were then tagged for machine learning, enhancing AI's ability to identify and monitor different species, ranging from elephants, rhinos, vulture nests, bird species, and more. The aerial survey provides a baseline index for biodiversity monitoring in the ecosystem and contributes to ongoing global AI-based data processing, providing more images for a range of animals across different habitats.

The aerial survey not only aided wildlife counts but also uncovered illegal fishing activities in the area, which are often linked to broader wildlife crime networks. Addressing illegal fishing is crucial for protecting ecosystems and reducing poaching. Working with government departments, the team successfully confiscated illegal equipment and arrested those involved.



Items: 9	Sort by ID - ascent
4	rectangle shape elephant
5	rectangle shape elephant
6	rectangle shape elephant
7	rectangle shape elephant
8	rectangle shape elephant

58,883 
Total kms patrolled
in 2024

 **23**
Total
Women
upskilled

7 new female
rangers in 2024

37 
in total
Wildlife Rangers

APPLIED CONSERVATION RESEARCH

Dedicated research in conservation helps conservationists make informed decisions driven by an understanding of ecosystems, species behaviour, population trends, and threats.

Project Update:

The Spatial Ecology of Carnivores

Thomas Mutohori, Great Plains Ecologist in the Sapi Reserve, is commencing his PhD focusing on the spatial ecology of carnivores, with an emphasis on challenges faced by wild dogs, whose numbers are declining sharply in the Mid Zambezi Valley. Collaborating with Zim Parks, Oxford University's Wild CRU, Painted Dog Conservation (PDC), and Chinhoyi University, this research aims to provide valuable insights for the conservation of wild dogs and large carnivores.

Conservation-Based Translocation Efforts

To further understand long-term impacts of translocation on elephants, the team in the Sapi Reserve were excited to welcome an ecologist with ZimParks, Mr Patmore Ngorima, to embark on a PhD focusing on generating critical knowledge and insights into conservation-based translocation efforts. The research has a specific focus on understanding how the translocated elephants are adapting to their new environment by examining their physical condition, behavioural shifts, and ecological health. The herds are being closely monitored through Satellite tracking and advanced real-time platforms such as Earth Ranger and AWT, providing valuable insights into their movement and adaptation processes (more in Section 3).

Carrying Capacity for Large Herbivores

This year we welcomed Tshephang, a PhD student from Okavango Research Institute (ORI), who's research focuses on understanding how large herbivores use the natural resources around them, and how this differs depending on different pressures of the season, competition, predation and more. This research will add to our understanding of the landscape, it's populations and how best to manage them. This is another example of bridging the gap between research, monitoring and management.



EMERGENCY CONSERVATION

There are times where wildlife species come under a threat that requires a rapid and urgent response. In 2015, the urgency was for rhinos; in 2022, the urgency was for elephants. With generous support from donors, partners, and the conservation network, Great Plains Foundation can remain nimble and agile to handle projects that require this level of urgency, equipped with the necessary skills and resources to facilitate these emergency translocations and ensure the long-term survival of these animals through our biodiversity protection programs. With the agility required for emergency conservation, Great Plains is expanding its impact in translocating wildlife for sustainable restoration.

PROJECT REWILD

As part of our emergency conservation initiatives, wildlife translocations serve as a critical tool, involving the intentional capture and release of animals from one location to another to manage populations, enhance genetic diversity, and act as a mitigation measure in human-wildlife conflict situations. As ecosystems face increasing threats from human activities and environmental changes, wildlife translocations are becoming a common tool in conservation, and a keystone project for Great Plains. After the successful translocation of 101 elephants and 184 impalas in 2022, in 2024 Great Plains continued our ambitious efforts under the initiative Project Rewild.

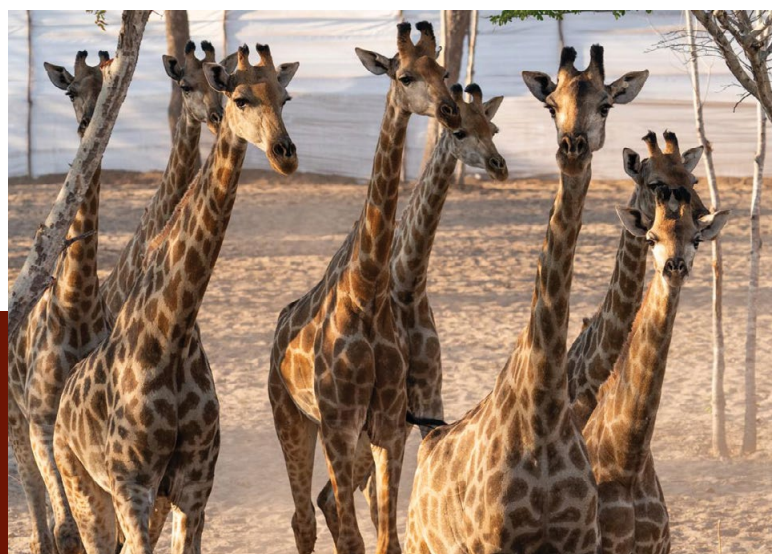
Project Update:

Translocation of Giraffe & Zebra

Great Plains' efforts in translocating wildlife to restore populations and improve genetic diversity continued this year, with a translocation of giraffe and zebra in Zimbabwe. Hwange National Park, and its surrounding concessions had reported declining populations of giraffe and zebra. There was a need to recover those numbers, while gathering data to better understand the threats to the populations in those areas.

In April, Great Plains facilitated the successful translocation of 70 Southern giraffes and 68 zebras by road across 750km of Zimbabwe. The animals were released into a non-hunting conservancy bordering Hwange National Park to bolster the declining population numbers in the region. The animals were moved in 13 trips using a 30-ton truck designed specifically for moving giraffes.

On arrival in Hwange the animals were offloaded into a temporary boma with access to food and water for 48 hours before being released. 30 of the giraffes were tagged on release to allow for two years of monitoring. The post-release monitoring objective is to gain a better understanding of their integration and dispersal into the region, their browse preferences and the main threats in the area.



Total translocations:

68 
zebras, 2024

70 
Giraffes, 2024

MONITORING OF TRANSLOCATED ELEPHANTS

When translocating wildlife for conservation, intentional research and monitoring strategies are put in place to provide valuable data and insights into the behaviour patterns of the species, threats to populations, and wider environmental understanding. The spatial movement of an elephant can inform a variety of understandings, from vegetation change to water distribution in the region.

Project Update:

Great Plains translocated 101 elephants into the Sapi Reserve in 2022. The 13 collared translocated herds, alongside 10 collared resident herds, are monitored daily. The primary focus of the team has been monitoring these collared elephants to document their physical condition, overall well-being, social behaviours, and movements, encompassing both resident and translocated elephants. The team do this with daily patrols and entering data on Earth Ranger. Earth Ranger is a software which gathers remote sensing data and combines it with reports from the field to provide a unified view of collared animals, rangers, enforcement assets, and infrastructure within our area.

Movement Behaviour

Each herd has its own unique social structure and movement pattern, enabling the team to study, compare and understand the herds. For example, one herd frequently visits the same place near the Chirundu border, while another herd has exhibited extensive movement, crossing into Zambia, multiple times and returning. Another herd is roaming entirely on the Zambian side of the Zambezi, showing a broad range of movement beyond the initial translocation release areas. Maps have been created to illustrate the movements of both translocated and resident elephants, not only focusing on the translocation itself but also understanding how residents utilise the resources available to them.

From the data, we can see herds frequently ranging from the Mana Pools National Park area and across the Zambezi River into the Lower Zambezi National Park, in Zambia. One herd, which moved over to the Zambian side, was recently seen by our collaborators Conservation Lower Zambezi (CLZ), who reported the herd had a new calf with them. The observations highlight the dynamic

nature of elephant behaviour and emphasise the importance of monitoring efforts across political boundaries.

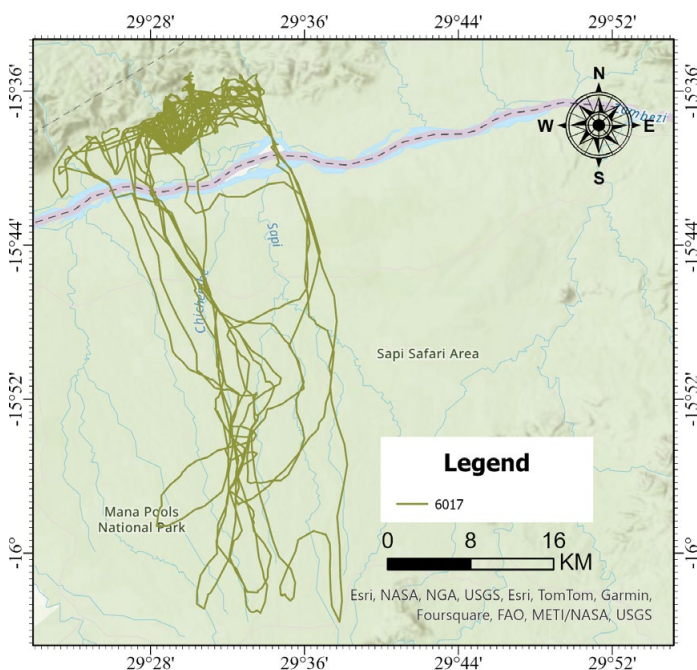
COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Communities living alongside wildlife have a higher chance of coming into contact with each other. The Great Plains team holds a range of wildlife handling expertise, which can be useful to local communities in ensuring the safeguarding of both people and wildlife.

Project Update:

The Great Plains team took part in several emergency response activities this year, addressing wildlife welfare and conservation challenges. The team identified various emergency situations that they were able to address with partners in the area and the government to ensure swift action. Cases included removing snares from wild dogs, buffalo and giraffes and investigating wildlife carcasses in the area and human-wildlife conflict cases.

Wildlife Monitoring Coordinator, Dr Bourquin, continues to offer a service to communities by being on call to relocate reptiles from community areas to protect both people and the reptiles. Over the last year, the team relocated 35 crocodiles, and numerous snakes, including black mambas, cobras, pythons and more, from community areas to be released in managed wildlife areas.



INSIGHT IN TO A WANDERING ELEPHANT HERD

The team have been closely observing, in particular, the movements of elephant herds wandering nearby to community areas. By observing these movements we are able to intervene and steer the animals back to avoid any human-elephant conflict.

During the monitoring, the team noticed a herd had likened to moving closer to a community area, which could end with a call to the team from the community reporting a conflict. With the intervention of the team, using chilli fences, the herd moved back to its former home range in the wildlife area without endangering the local communities. The team visited the community area and were pleased to share that there had been no reports of crop damage or injuries, and the monitoring and management strategy to protect both people and elephants was proving successful.





"The management of translocated herds needs to be planned for the long term, with intensive monitoring for a minimum of two years, only then do we see that they begin to behave more like resident herds"

Dr Sven Bourquin – Wildlife Projects Coordinator

CONSERVATION ROOTS

Trees are invaluable to both the environment and human wellbeing. Great Plains is planting indigenous trees for a wide range of benefits. Over 80% of terrestrial species rely on trees for food, shelter and breeding grounds. Trees provide soil stabilisation to reduce flooding, improve groundwater recharge, filter and regulate water cycles, absorb carbon dioxide and more. Communities rely on trees for livelihoods, climate change resilience and shade. The benefits of planting indigenous trees are endless.

ECOSYSTEM PLANTING

Indigenous trees are essential contributors to the health of many ecosystems. Trees provide food sources and habitat for wildlife, expand forest cover, prevent soil erosion by anchoring their roots, and encourage climate resilience. To ensure long-term viability and integrity of tree planting, it is important to ensure the trees are indigenous to the region and landscape.

Project Update:

This year, Great Plains has planted thousands of indigenous trees across the Maasai Mara and the Chyulu Hills ecosystems to restore degraded landscapes, recover wildlife habitat and improve soil. To ensure the integrity of indigenous tree planting in ecosystems, Great Plains has created five Indigenous Tree Nurseries and a large Central Tree Nursery. The team managing the nurseries works to ensure all the trees we grow are from seeds collected from indigenous trees local to that region, to ensure the health of the ecosystem. In the nurseries, the seeds are nurtured into seedlings and eventually become saplings, ready to be planted back in the wild.



COMMUNITY PLANTING

Engaging local communities in indigenous tree planting is essential for the long-term success and sustainability of these efforts. The lifespan of trees reaching over hundreds of years will be due to the custodianship of local communities. Great Plains is partnering with schools, adults, and traditional indigenous healers to collaborate on the long-term success of indigenous trees.

Project Update:

Over the year, there have been a range of community engagements with schools, traditional healers and community members. Paul, our Head of Trees, has visited partner schools in rural villages, donating 483 trees and sharing the message of the benefits of trees and inspiring the next generation of environmental guardians. The start of the year was busy with school workshops, where our team joined the in-school Environmental Clubs sessions, sharing knowledge about the value of trees and how to protect them.

In 2024 Great Plains also sponsored the planting of 5,000 indigenous trees with My Trees Trust in Zimbabwe. My Trees Trust works with individual farmers, planting indigenous trees in rural communities bordering the protected areas of the Zambezi Valley. The project has a strong community engagement focus with financial benefits to tree growing as well as educational benefits.

"By protecting trees, they will continue to give back to our communities for generations"
Traditional Healer, Maasai Mara



SUSTAINABLE HARVESTING WORKSHOPS

Almost all indigenous tree species in the Maasai Mara hold medicinal value for local communities. Unsustainable harvesting of indigenous trees has led to the decline of tree species in the region, such as *Warburgia Ugandensis*. To reduce unsustainable cutting of trees such as the Green Heart tree, Great Plains is collaborating with traditional healers to promote sustainable harvesting in local communities.

Project Update:

In November, a Traditional Indigenous Healer Workshop was held in the Maasai Mara, where three respected healers from the region came together to share their wisdom with communities, teaching them about how to harvest from indigenous tree species sustainably. Those who attended learnt valuable lessons on sustainable techniques to ensure the trees thrive, and the importance of conserving trees rather than cutting them down. Sustainable techniques included extracting medicinal properties from leaves instead of roots.

"The donation and planting of trees in the community will bring the ecosystem back to where the land is bare. This also encourages the local communities on the importance of tree planting in their surroundings and covering the bare ground."

Felix, Maasai Mara community liaison.



2,606

Trees planted in 2024:

5,000

Sponsored
trees planted

44,758

Total trees planted



"Everything is connected, and as soon as we understand that we are a part of every system on Earth, the easier it will be for us to find that balance here instead of forever being in conflict with nature. We are now at a pivotal time in history; we can do this. We can change the course of history and choose to protect and preserve."

Dereck Joubert, Co-founder of Great Plains Foundation.



Community

Partnering with rural communities living alongside wildlife is essential for the long-term success of ecosystem conservation.

Local communities are the custodians of the landscapes Great Plains works with. Supporting sustainable livelihoods, education, and healthcare fosters resilience against environmental pressures while promoting coexistence, self-empowerment, and sustainability.





REDUCING BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

Education empowers rural communities with the tools to build healthier, more sustainable, and self-reliant futures. It is the foundation of sustainable development, improves household income and breaks the cycle of poverty. Great Plains has been partnering with rural communities for over ten years, building long-term relationships and understanding the key barriers to education in each region.

SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM

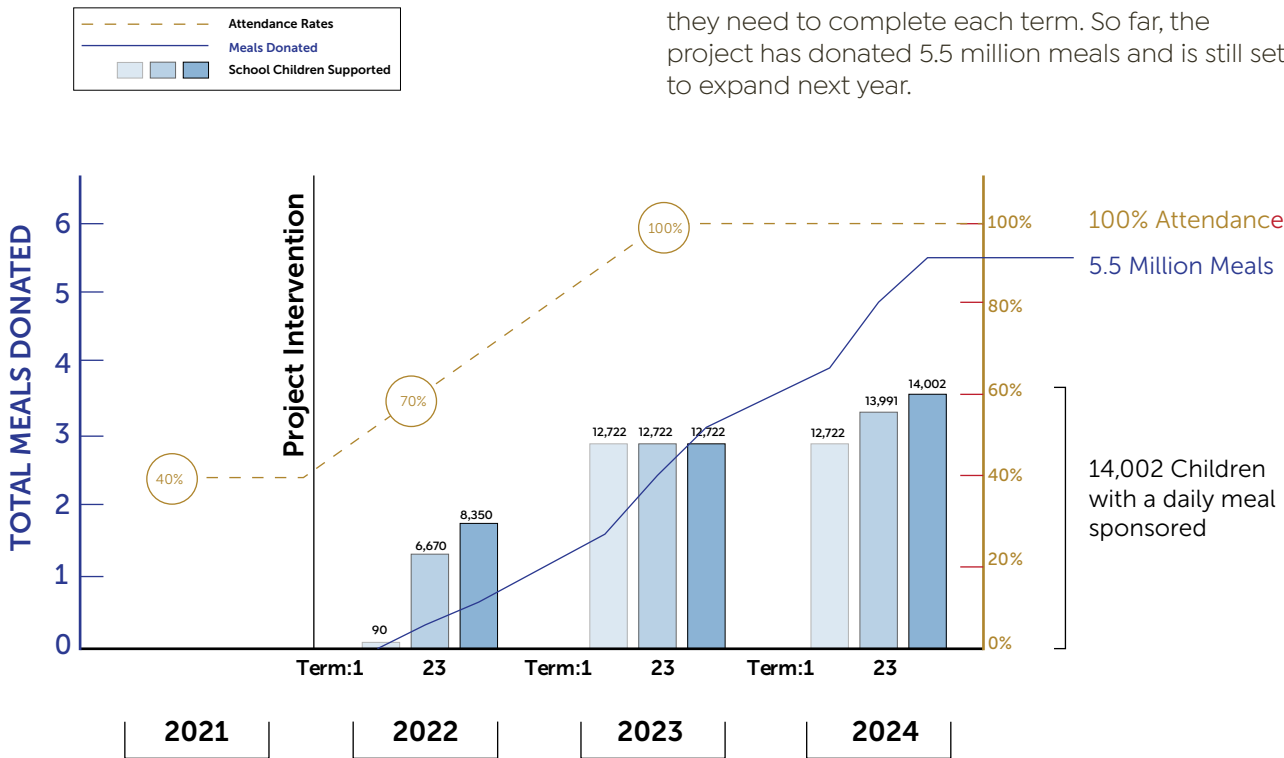
Hunger is a significant barrier to learning, with hungry children being often distracted and unable to focus, disrupting the rest of the class and their progress.

The 2022 drought in the southern regions of Kenya led to high rates of malnutrition. The local community in the Amboseli-Tsavo region of Kenya reached out with concerns about declining school attendance due to the lack of food. The teachers also raised concerns that those who did attend struggled to pay attention.

Project Update:

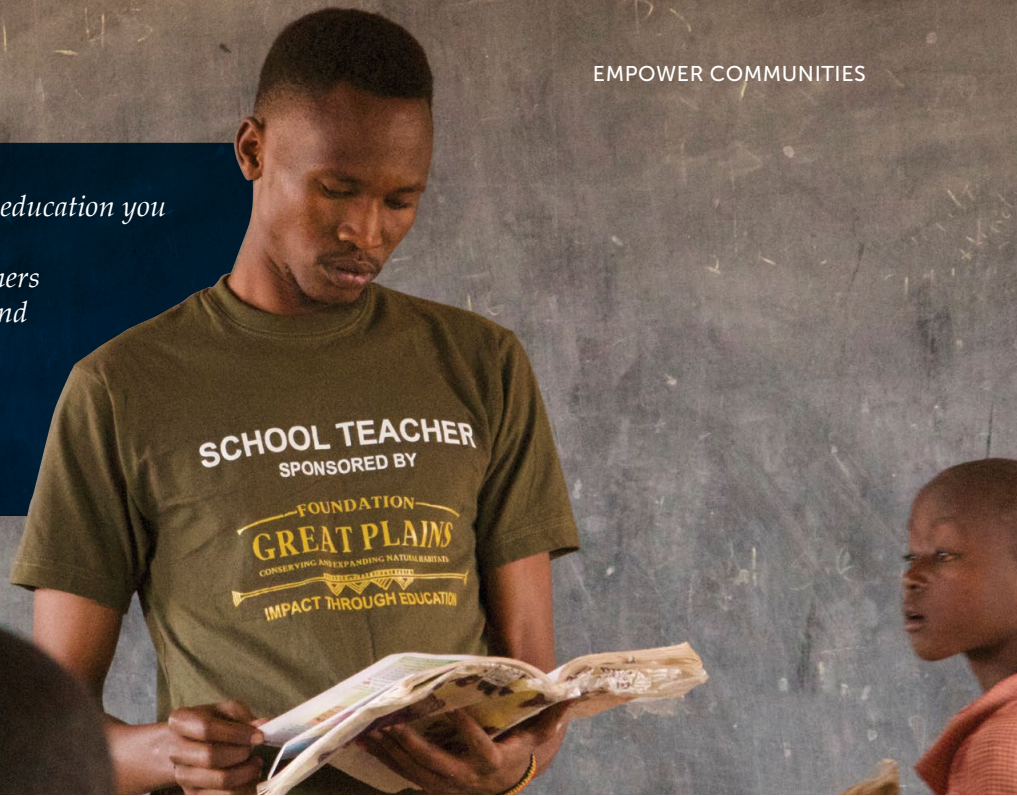
The Great Plains School Food Program is providing students with a better opportunity for education. By distributing nourishing meals to schools in rural Kenya, attendance rates have increased, and students have better focus, attention and progress.

Proper nutrition is essential for brain development, particularly for memory, attention and problem-solving skills. The Great Plains School Food Program supported 54 schools across three regions in Kenya in 2024, feeding 14,002 students daily. The ingredients are donated at the beginning of each term to ensure the students have what they need to complete each term. So far, the project has donated 5.5 million meals and is still set to expand next year.



"Education is the key to life. Without education you have nothing. Here in the schools, the population is big so having more teachers reduces the pressure for the teachers and improves education."

- Jacklyne, Sponsored Teacher at Isinet Primary School.



SPONSORED TEACHERS

In many schools in rural Kenya, the teacher-student ratio is exceptionally high, leading to overcrowded classrooms. Teachers are often managing classes of up to 60 children (and sometimes even managing multiple classes of 60 at a time), reducing their effectiveness.

By supporting additional teachers Great Plains is helping to reduce the student-teacher ratio, leading to more attention being paid to the students. This also reduces the workload on teachers, enabling them to offer quality lessons.

Project Update:

In 2024 Great Plains added three more sponsored teachers to reach 37 sponsored teachers in total. The three additional teachers this year were specialist teachers for a Special Needs school. Enkijape Primary Special Unit, which currently has 42 students, is focused on deaf children, including those with compounding physical and mental needs.

In 2023, the school was facing challenges from poor staffing and was on the verge of closure. Great Plains now funds three specialist teachers for the Special Unit, who are Kenya Sign Language-trained teachers, and the school has managed to remain open. Further support for the school with infrastructure is planned for 2025. By supporting 37 teachers across 17 schools, education for 2,497 students was improved.



**ShIPLEY
Foundation**

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Great Plains works closely with local communities and, in particular, with the schools. Schools often have limited supplies and educational materials, having a negative impact on their education quality. By supporting schools with educational materials, a higher quality education for each student is provided.

Project Update:

Great Plains supports school supplies, in all communities we partner with in Botswana, Zimbabwe and Kenya. The schools share their specific needs, as each school and community differs, and Great Plains either sponsors the schools to purchase their own stationery or invites groups to donate.

In early 2024, donations to a school in the Maasai Mara included stationery, a printer, toner and portable solar units. This gift was part of Great Plains' ongoing partnership with the Celestielle Charitable Trust. The items were donated with funds raised by students of Victory Boxing, who travelled all the way from New Zealand to visit the school and donate the items they had fundraised for.





4
1

bridges built in total

bridge built in 2024



3
37

teachers added in 2024

sponsored teachers in total

GIRLS DORMITORY FIRE SUPPORT

Towards the end of the year, a tragedy struck a school in the Maasai Mara. A primary school that Great Plains partners with experienced a devastating fire in the girls' dormitory. While fortunately no pupils or teachers were harmed, personal items of the students were lost alongside all the furniture including the beds.

Great Plains Foundation stepped in and sponsored the purchase of 40 new bunk beds, restoring accommodation for 80 pupils. The beds bought a positive impact to the learning process as 80 girls can have somewhere to sleep comfortably after their classes in the evening, and continue their studies, as the school is a boarding school.



Bridging the Gap Africa



I'm a mother of two kids. Education is a really vital thing in our lives. The community had a big problem, the villages are on one side of the river and we have the schools and the health centres on the other side of the river. There are some times when the rain is heavy and it is very dangerous to cross. Now that we have a bridge, our children can safely get to school throughout the year and learn without any complications. Thank you Great Plains for building a safe bridge for our communities."

*Damaris, mama of the
Ngousani Community, Maasai Mara.*





16,700
School children
benefitting



2.4 Million
School Meals Distributed In 2024

5.5 Million
Meals Donated In Total

BUILDING BRIDGES

Kenya is well-known for its rainy seasons. During these rainy seasons, the Maasai Mara region experiences downpours that put pressure on the regions winding rivers, which often break their banks. Communities can find themselves on one side of the river, with schools, clinics and markets on the other side. For almost six months of the year, villages can be cut off from schools and essential services. This has a wide range of negative impacts on the communities, including the school children being unable to attend classes. Sometimes students take the risk of trying to cross the rivers to get to school, with some cases of fatalities.

Project Update:

Great Plains started the Building Bridges program in 2022. This involves building strong steel bridges at key river crossing points to enable communities to safely cross and connect them to schools, clinics and markets all year round. For this project, the Great Plains Foundation needed a partner who are experts in building bridges in Kenya, so Bridging the Gap Africa came on board as a construction partner. So far the project has successfully built four bridges in the Maasai Mara.

In the devastating rains of April 2024, one of the bridges was damaged. Great Plains, in partnership with three donors and Bridging the Gap, replaced the bridge entirely to ensure structural integrity was restored. The engineering team, determined to avoid future erosion causing the same challenge, lengthened the bridge by 25 metres.





"We have benefited from 3 years of the Great Plains feeding program. This has reduced absenteeism among ECD learners. In addition, we have seen health improvement and higher self-esteem and confidence in the learners. As the children now comfortably attend afternoon lessons, the syllabus is now covered on time. We are very happy and say thank you to our donors for their tireless support of the school."

Head Teacher Wilson, Maasai Mara



Child	Children	baby	babies
mouse	MICE	dog	dogs
mouse	MICE	dress	dresses
foot	feet	puppy	puppies
man	Men	glass	glasses
tooth	teeth	dog	dogs
ox	Oxen	sheep	sheep

Types of Songs
Lullabies - Song to Soothe a crying baby
Patriotic - Show love and praise for a country
Folk songs - Cultural songs that are passed from generation to generation
Sacred Songs - Religious Songs
Tribal Songs - Songs that a tribe is proud of and often the source

Collective nouns
A bunch of keys
A herd of buffaloes, cattle
A swarm of bees
A gaggle of geese
A pride of lions
A litter of cubs
A bouquet of flowers
A troop of monkeys
A bunch of bananas
A colony of ants
A deck of cards
A team of athletes
A team of players
A peep of geese
A pair of shoes
A choir of singers
A committee of people
A flock of birds, sheep
A caravan of camels
A class of pupils
A set of plates
A set of buses
A set of chairs



CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Conservation education has been one of Great Plains' inaugural projects when the Foundation started, with a focus on inspiring and educating the next generation of conservationists. Local communities are the custodians of their surrounding ecosystems, and the future of these landscapes and the wildlife that call them home relies on them.

BOTSWANA KIDS CONSERVATION CAMP

Great Plains partners with the Okavango Community Trust villages on the fringe of the essential Okavango Delta wetland system in Botswana. In 2024, the Great Plains Botswana team hosted both a Conservation Education camp in the Selinda Reserve in December, as well as an in-community session in August. One of the aims of the program is to encourage attendance of the in-school Environmental Club. Therefore, Great Plains only offers the opportunity to join the conservation education camps to those who are a part of each school's Environmental Club.

During the mid-year conservation education refresher in August, the team invited all student members of the in-school environmental clubs to join the activities, bringing the total number of students to 85. The day included lessons covering

the importance of conserving natural resources, how to safely behave around wild animals, recycling and tree planting. The main conservation education camp was held in December, welcoming 73 young, enthusiastic school kids to a 3-day camp bursting with conservation lessons.

Activities included game drives, sessions on keystone species, the Okavango Delta ecosystem and its importance to livelihoods, and waste management. Other partners joined, such as Ecoexist, sharing lessons on elephant awareness and safe coexistence, and CLAWS, sharing insights into lion coexistence in the region. Great Plains Wildlife Rangers also led workshops on protecting ecosystems and showcasing career opportunities in conservation.



Ecoexist, CLAWS and the Great Plains Conservation team for their contribution to the camp

KENYA KIDS CONSERVATION CAMPS

The Great Plains Kenya team hosted 60 young enthusiasts from the surrounding communities of the Chyulu Hills in Kenya for a conservation education holiday camp. The 60 students were a 50% split of boys and girls, including two deaf children from Enkijape Special Needs Unit. During their stay, the students took part in safari game drives, bush walks, interactive biodiversity lessons and a night of watching conservation documentaries under the stars. The camp partnered with Infinity Outdoors for team-building activities including yoga, orienteering and navigation. Each group had mentorship sessions and were shown opportunities for their futures in careers in both tourism and conservation.

"Thanks to all who made this a success. As young conservation ambassadors they will take care of the wildlife and environment as per the knowledge and skill acquired at the Great Plains camp"

Mr Lemiti, Teacher & Chaperon

SPONSORED MAA TRUST CONSERVATION CAMP

In the Maasai Mara, Great Plains sponsors three educational experiences hosted by The Maa Trust each year. The activities include lessons in sustainable livelihood practices such as crop rotation and organic farming, wildlife-friendly fencing to protect small kitchen gardens and sexual reproductive health and rights. In 2024, the group ranged further afield with a field trip to the Kenyan coast to learn about marine conservation and different cultures and environments. Most of the students had never visited the coast or seen the ocean!

"I'm thrilled to be in camp. It is valuable and I am gaining experience, benefits and memories of living with animals. I hope to be a wildlife leader of tomorrow. This will foster a brighter future for our community."

Crazia Mashanda, pupil of Zimbabwe Kids Camp

ZIMBABWE KIDS CONSERVATION CAMP

We are pleased to announce the start of conservation education kids camps in Zimbabwe in 2024. In partnership with Wildlife Conservation Action (WCA), 59 school children from schools in the Mid-Zambezi joined the four-day camp filled with engaging lessons on ecology, wildlife crime, the importance of trees, conservation of natural resources and more. The WCA Team were joined by members of the Great Plains Foundation team in Zimbabwe, including Female Rangers and our Ecologist based in the Sapi Reserve.

"Our kids got a rare opportunity to interact with other learners from the district and new frontiers. This will inspire and shape future leaders and environmental advocates. Thank you" Masoka Primary School Teacher.



**The Maa Trust in Kenya
Wildlife Conservation Action
in Zimbabwe**



331 
School kids hosted at
5 kids camps

6 
Sponsored conservation
diploma students

40 
University
students hosted

SPONSORED CONSERVATION STUDENTS

Scholarships for Tertiary Education in Conservation

Kenya Wildlife Trust (KWT) is a renowned Kenyan non-profit organization dedicated to three of Kenya's most important ecosystems of the Greater Maasai Mara, Samburu, Laikipia and Amboseli-Tsavo. KWT's Conservation Leadership Program's mission is to raise Kenya's next generation of home-grown conservationists. Great Plains currently sponsors six students earning diplomas from the Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute. Through KWT's program the students also receive additional guidance, support and mentoring.

In 2024 the six sponsored students were exposed to a wide range of experiences, both theoretical lessons and in-the-field practical fieldwork. The students have hiked Mt Longonot, for a wilderness survival camp, visited Amboseli National Park's salty lake ecosystem for wildlife monitoring, Tsavo West National Park, Mombasa and Watamu. Later in the year, the students spent a week camping in Embu and Nyeri understanding irrigation, water treatment, forestry and tree nurseries.

Zimbabwe Chinhoyi University of Technology students

In April, 23 students studying for a BSc in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at Chinhoyi University of Technology in Zimbabwe, participated in a field trip to the Sapi Reserve for some practical experience. The field trip included field skills such as elephant tracking, identifying mammals, dung and spoor, studying habitat occupancy, data management, feeding behaviour, social organisation, and determining the sex and age of the animals. The lessons helped the students determine population density and trends.

In October, the team in the Sapi Reserve were proud to host 17 students from Chinhoyi University of Technology. The field trip enabled the students to apply their theoretical knowledge in a practical setting. The field trip also contributed to a portion of their final exam marks.

Kenya Wildlife Trust
Chinhoyi University
of Technology students





COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The communities living alongside wildlife areas are the long-term custodians of their landscapes, and collaboration is essential to sustainability. Great Plains engages communities to foster understanding and participate in the conservation discussion and efforts.

COMMUNITY LISTENING & ENGAGEMENT

The Great Plains mission is clear; to work closely with the local communities within or surrounding the ecosystems we work in supporting education, empowerment and upliftment of rural communities. When working in a new area, the first step we take is to engage with the local community and listen to, and understand, the main challenges faced by the community and, together, cocreate a plan forward.

Project Update:

At the beginning of the year, Great Plains coordinated an in-depth community engagement initiative with the Shompole community in rural southern Kenya, to understand the priorities of the local community. The engagement took place over two weeks and included community discussions with an external facilitator. To gain a holistic and representative understanding of the Shompole Community, discussions were held with various groups ranging from community leaders, to elders, women, youth, students, teachers and more. The engagement included nine communities, visiting 12 schools and over 12,000 community members were represented. From this integrated discussion, a report was compiled to act as a basis for prioritising projects and partnering with the Shompole community in the most impactful way.

CONSERVATION GOALS

While Great Plains has a wide range of projects focusing on schools and education in rural communities, there was a gap in our engagement with the post-school youth. As important members of the community, their input and engagement are essential for creating sustainability in the region. Conservation Goals blends sport and conservation education, engaging with this important group of community members.

Project Update:

The annual sports-for-conservation tournament 'Conservation Goals' was held in September 2024. Conservation Goals' mission is to engage youth in conversations around wildlife conservation and life skills. The program hosted 200 sporting enthusiasts from villages bordering the Okavango Delta in Botswana to take part in netball and football tournaments. The tournament was preceded by training sessions for the players covering a variety of trainings in conservation and life skills. The tournament itself welcomed over 1,000 spectators from the communities to cheer on their village and listen to Great Plains wildlife rangers speak about the importance of conservation. The winners of the netball and football tournaments received prizes as well as a donation from Great Plains towards an environmental project in the primary school in their village.



12,000

Community members engaged in conservation discussions

COMMUNITY AMBULANCE

Access to healthcare in rural communities continues to be a challenge, with often long distances and lack of transport opportunities. For a long time, in the Okavango Community Trust villages in Botswana, there has been a need for an ambulance to attend to patients and safely transport urgent cases to healthcare facilities. Without a suitable ambulance, community members have had no means to reach a clinic in emergencies.

Project Update:

Great Plains Foundation donated a Land Cruiser ambulance, professionally converted to be fully equipped with medical equipment, including oxygen bottles, to help support the five rural communities we partner with in northern Botswana. The ambulance has been modified to manage the off-road conditions between the villages, ensuring the safe transportation of 50 patients to the main medical centres since it started operating in October.



200 Youth engaged in life-skills, sports and conservation



1 Community ambulance donated
50 patients supported

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development is a cornerstone of sustainable progress across Africa, offering long-term benefits not only to individuals but to entire regions. In rural areas, especially those near vital ecosystems, community-led initiatives foster stewardship of natural resources, improve livelihoods and strengthen social cohesion. Great Plains is supporting skills development training and entrepreneurial support to improve resilience to environmental and economic challenges.

SOLAR MAMAS

With a limited supply of power in rural communities of Botswana, Great Plains was investigating a solution that could bring power to these villages while empowering women in business. With house fires, elephants moving through villages and students studying by candlelight, the Solar Mamas project began. The project aims to empower 9 women in solar engineering and business, to install 1,000 high-quality household solar systems for families in rural Botswana.

Project Update:

In 2024 the Solar Mamas installed 200 additional solar home lighting systems, bringing the total installed in the community to 800. Great Plains subsidises the cost of the system, allowing the Solar Mamas to sell a high-quality solar product at an affordable rate. The ladies are also trained in installation and repair ensuring the systems can be fixed in the field. The Solar Mamas also received ongoing training throughout the year, from improved installation techniques to business management.

Since starting the program, the Solar Mamas have seen a significant impact on their lives due to the income generated from the project. The women's group have shared that they have managed to build houses, send their kids to schools, start other small businesses and improve their families' economic prospects.

"I have 10 kids, there are 3 still studying at school. All 3 can easily read and study after dark now with the amount of light we have. They spend all evening reading and studying that I have to turn off the lights to stop them and get them to go to bed otherwise they wouldn't stop!"

Beneficiary: Kereditse from Beetsa Village.





"We are grateful to Great Plains for all the support you have given us. The income from the sale of our products is paying school fees and purchasing food for our children"

Jane Ntika, member of the Naboisho Women's Group

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN THE MAASAI MARA

In Kenya's rural Maasai communities, as in many parts of the world, women have traditionally been marginalised when it comes to economic opportunities. By supporting women in business, the Great Plains Foundation is helping promote gender equality and independence, giving women a means to support themselves and their families.

Project Update:

The Great Plains Foundation has increased and continued its support for the Naboisho Women's Group in the Maasai Mara; a women-led business of making beaded items and honey. In addition to ongoing support for purchasing the raw materials and training and sales/marketing support in 2024, Great Plains funded the construction of an ablution block and guest welcome centre, and the salaries of a leather specialist and a production manager. These new hires have boosted product quality and production efficiency.

The ladies are ready and excited to welcome guests to the centre and expand their market and business. The 184 women who make up the Naboisho Women's Group generated an income that positively impacts school fees and healthcare for 400 kids. From the total sales in 2024, the women earned a joint income of \$18,369. The exciting progress is in the improved

revenue with the first quarter of the year bringing in \$423 and after the new hires and infrastructure improvements, the final quarter sales brought in \$10,898.

GREAT PLAINS EARTH ACADEMY

The unemployment rate in Botswana is approximately 25%, and even higher among young people in rural communities. After engaging with communities, it became clear that a lack of training opportunities in rural areas was a significant contributor to this. Great Plains built the first vocational training centre in the area, the Great Plains Earth Academy, in 2021. The training academy in Seronga, the largest of the Okavango Community Trust villages and aims to improve employment numbers and self-empowerment in the region.

Project Update:

A range of training courses have been hosted at the centre, training 101 students so far, in hospitality, carpentry, sewing, business skills and more. The impact of the academy doesn't end when the training does, and the team have been busy during 2024 ensuring trainees are placed in businesses and start their careers. 101 students have been trained to date with 99% of those participating in courses focused on hospitality successfully placed in attachments or full-time employment. The project has big ambitions to expand and reach more students to increase its impact in 2025.



200 households installed in 2024
800 installations in total

HUMAN-ELEPHANT COEXISTENCE FARMING SUPPORT

Communities living on the edge of wildlife areas regularly encounter wild animals, and working to ensure coexistence is important for both communities and wildlife. In the Okavango Delta region of Botswana, there are healthy populations of elephants who frequently pass through communities. One of the challenges faced by the communities is elephants raiding their farms and eating their crops.

Project Update:

Great Plains supports a community farming collective in the Okavango Community Trust villages, in Northern Botswana. In the communities, crop fields can usually be found individually, where fencing the area can become a large cost. Great Plains, in partnership with EcoExist, supports the Ghando Cluster, a group of 90 farmers who came together to create one large farm that can be fenced and protected from elephants. The start of the year was the rainy season in Botswana, where the Great Plains-donated tractor was ploughing the large farm, supporting the farmers with their yield prospects.

"I appreciate the garden project for supporting and providing us with chickens and seeds to grow in our kitchen gardens. We are hoping this project will benefit us as a community and society at large. Thank you"
Shadrack Rokoine – Beneficiary.

KICKSTARTING COMMUNITY FARMING

One priority area identified in the Shompole community engagement was a need for a wider range of income-generating opportunities, even those on a small scale. The region, characterised by its arid climate and semi-nomadic lifestyle, faces significant agricultural challenges. Container farming and poultry offer potential solutions to these challenges, as they can be implemented in small spaces.

Project Update:

Great Plains Foundation has partnered with the Guardian Project in Kenya, to equip community members with the knowledge and skills to set up their own small-scale container farming and poultry businesses. In November, the first comprehensive training sessions were conducted for container farming, teaching about water conservation techniques, soil preparation, container selection and repurposing, pest and disease management using organic methods and fertilisation using manure from livestock.

Lessons on poultry were also conducted, including poultry house construction, feeding and watering practices, hygiene and biosecurity measures, disease prevention, balanced diet and nutrition. In December 40 selected beneficiaries launched the project by receiving seeds, planting bags, hens and roosters. The seeds included spinach, kale, cabbage, green pepper, coriander and kunde. To promote sustainability in the project, the beneficiaries who received chickens in the first group donate a chick from the offspring of their chickens to the next beneficiary, and so on.

Ecoexist in Botswana



The Guardian Project in Kenya





99%

employment rate of
Earth Academy trainees



184

women involved in
sponsored business



GREAT PLAINS BIG CATS INITIATIVE



5

new organisations
supported in 2024

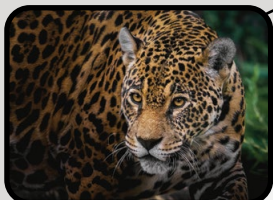


173

grants awarded
in total

LEO FOUNDATION, SENEGAL

In 2024, BCI awarded its first grant to the Leo Foundation for a two-week training for twelve rangers and eco-guards in Niokolo-Koba National Park, Senegal. This park shelters the Critically Endangered West African lion. The hands-on course focused on camera trapping and analysing carnivore scat to improve wildlife monitoring. The training has strengthened local capacity to protect lions and other large carnivores. The Leo Foundation reports increased ranger effectiveness and a stronger commitment to conserving this vital habitat.



INSTITUTO HOMEM PANTANEIRO, BRAZIL

IHP's Felinos Pantaneiros program in Brazil promotes human-jaguar coexistence in the Pantanal. The team works with local herders to improve practices that reduce predation and conflict. They also monitor jaguar populations using camera traps and GPS collars. Alongside ecological research, the project offers environmental education to rural schools, communities, and towns like Corumbá-MS and Ladário-MS. So far, nearly 7,000 people have benefited from these outreach efforts, increasing awareness and support for jaguar conservation.

Big Cats need land. They need this land now more than ever as a reservoir for their rapidly dwindling numbers. There are an estimated 44 million acres of land in Africa on which Big Cats roam that are currently unprotected or under hunting management. Great Plains took over the Big Cats Initiative in 2022, from National Geographic, to continue the legacy of supporting big cat conservation organisations with funding grants. Big Cats Initiative supported five new organisations this year, shown below. The total number of grants distributed by the fund is 173



BIOACOUSTICS RESEARCH GROUP, NEPAL

BRG’s work in Nepal promotes human-wildlife coexistence by mapping tiger presence through prey alarm calls in the Dalla community forest, bordering Bardiya National Park. BRG is developing an automated alert system and training locals to verify data to provide early warning of tiger presence to communities bordering the forest. They have installed ten solar-powered “Caracal” acoustic units to capture alarm calls for analysis. These efforts enhance remote, real-time monitoring of tiger movements, support community-based conservation and have potential applicability with other big cats.

COEXISTENCE FOR CATS, CATTLE & COMMUNITIES (C4), KENYA

BCI continued its support for Lucrecia Agilar’s research on multi-disciplinary work on human-lion dynamics in Laikipia, Kenya. Building on earlier efforts, this year the team collared eleven lions and tagged 100 livestock with solar-powered GPS ear tags. The data from livestock ear-tags is used to track the locations of herds in the landscape in relation to collared lions to deepen understanding of lion predation trends. The C4 team also conducted social surveys with local communities in Laikipia, to further understand attitudes towards lions in the landscape.



WASIMA, TANZANIA

WASIMA supports human-lion coexistence in Tanzania by reducing the burden on communities living near lions and promoting conservation engagement. In 2024, WASIMA completed 54 predator-proof bomas, protecting over 2,400 livestock worth more than USD 514,000. They also facilitated community engagement projects, setting action plans for resource management, governance, and anti-poaching efforts. These initiatives help conserve wildlife while improving local livelihoods in community-managed areas.

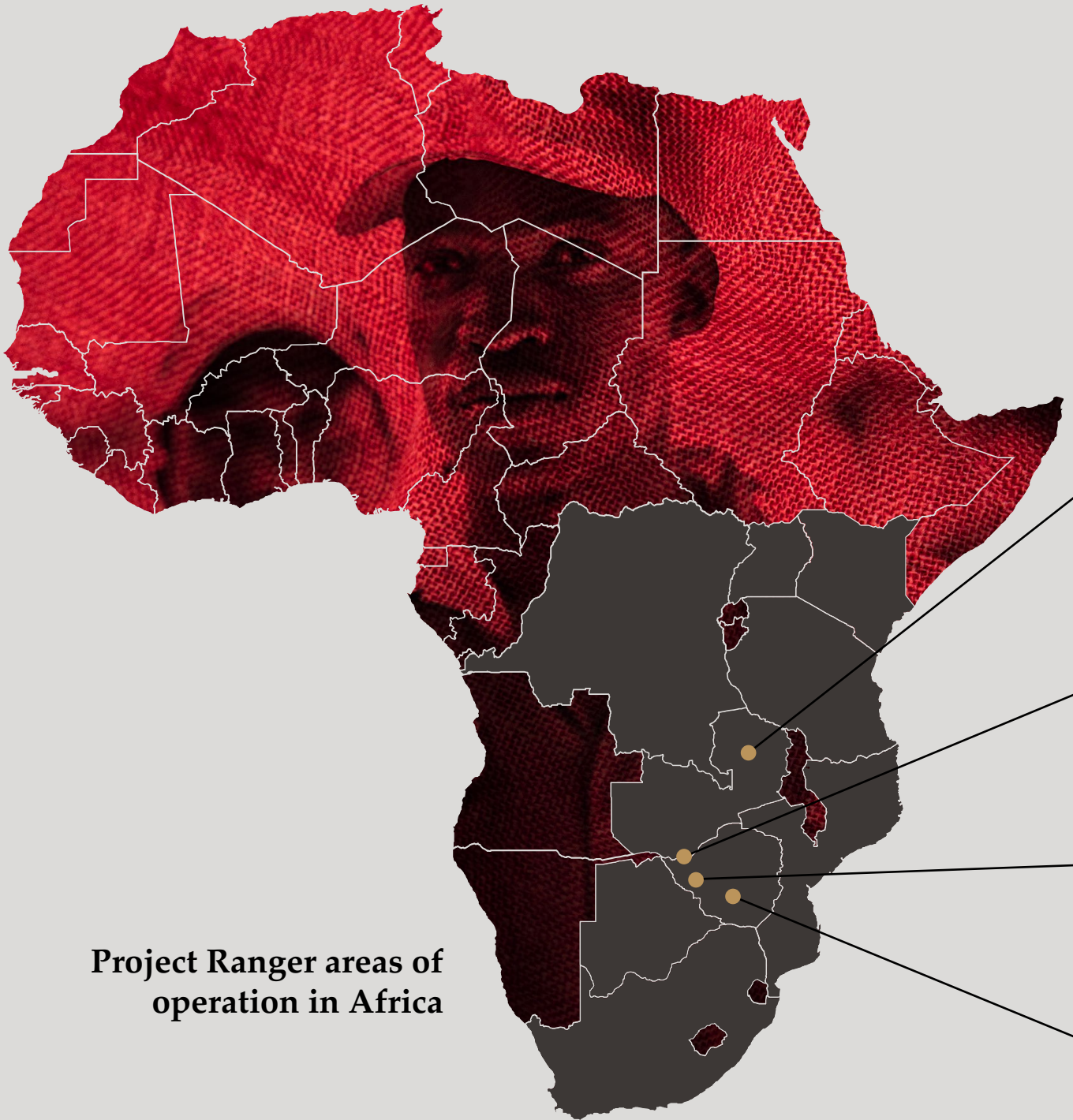


Mays Family Foundation & BRT Charitable Foundation



PROJECT RANGER

PREVENTING A POACHING PANDEMIC



Project Ranger areas of
operation in Africa



4

ranger units
supported in 2024



15

grants awarded
since 2022

"The generosity we have been showing this year has been an absolute lifeline, and it's because of this support that we have been able to make such strides in protecting endangered species (we have not lost an elephant to poaching in over 7 years), and preserving ecosystems."

Bumi Hills Anti Poaching Unit

Illegal poaching and wildlife trafficking continue to threaten ecosystems across Africa. Ranger cohorts continue to be woefully under-resourced, and Project Ranger is a grant initiative granting funding to anti-poaching units across Africa. Wildlife often moves between different regions where different organisations are operating so ensuring the strength of other organisations is a focus of Great Plains' wider mission. Project Ranger supported grants to four organisations in 2024, totalling 15 grants to ranger units in 9 countries since 2022.



CONSERVATION LOWER ZAMBEZI (CLZ), ZAMBIA

Conservation Lower Zambezi (CLZ) works to protect wildlife and promote sustainable resource use in Zambia's Lower Zambezi. CLZ focuses on law enforcement, antipoaching patrols, snare sweeps and human-wildlife conflict. The team also conducts aerial surveillance in hard-to-reach areas to detect illegal activities, bush fires and monitor wildlife movements. In 2024, the Project Ranger supported team removed 239 snares and deconstructed 24 drying racks and 8 poachers' camps.



BUMI HILLS ANTIPOACHING UNIT (BHAPU), ZIMBABWE

Bumi Hills APU in Zimbabwe continues to patrol 24/7 on the shores of Lake Kariba in Zimbabwe, removing snares, making arrests, and protecting wildlife. Bushmeat poaching remains the largest threat, with 9 out of 10 snares not checked by the person who laid them, leaving the animals caught to suffer needlessly. The unit's efforts give wildlife another chance and serve as a deterrent to further illegal activities. Their work is crucial in maintaining the ecological balance and reducing unnecessary wildlife deaths in the region.



CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE FUND HWANGE (CWF), ZIMBABWE

Project Ranger's funding to CWF-Hwange contributed to the organisation hiring 9 new trainee rangers, including 3 women. The rangers have worked on clearing roads to create natural fire breaks, reducing wildfire risk. The fund also provides ongoing training in navigation, communication, field craft, first aid, and emergency response. These efforts strengthen ranger capacity and improve wildlife protection in the Hwange area.



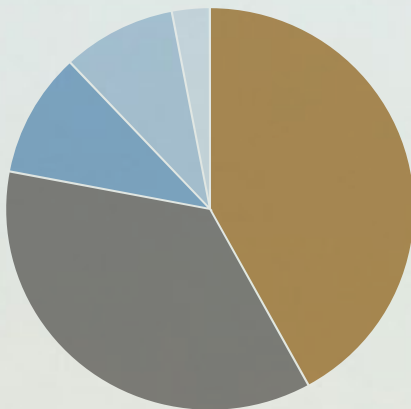
ANTI-POACHING TRACKING SPECIALISTS (ATS), ZIMBABWE

ATS rangers protect 25% of Zimbabwe's black rhino population, along with white rhino, elephant, pangolin, painted dog, and other key species. Through the course of 2024, the ranger and K9 team removed hundreds of snares, made arrests, and helped reduce poaching. They also received training in First Aid and legal procedures, including arrest and court protocols. ATS also launched its first all-female Community Ranger Team, who focus on reporting human-wildlife conflict, poaching, and other illegal activities.

FINANCIALS

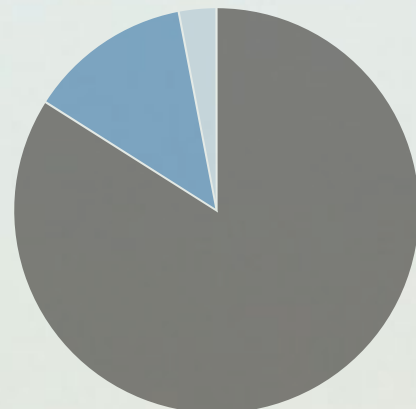
In 2024, Great Plains Conservation Foundation recorded \$5.2 million in revenue and maintained low administrative costs at just 13% of expenses (9% of funds raised). The funds come from multiple avenues, with 42% from conservation levies applied from Great Plains Conservation tourism camps being a significant and steady inflow for us. Other fundraising efforts, from institutions and high net worth individuals via their foundations or donor advised funds sits at 36%.

The Foundation utilised its revenues earned by directing \$2.7 million towards programs last year; both our programs and via our granting making programs- the Big Cats Initiative and Project Ranger. We spent minimal amounts (\$0.1 million) on fundraising activities and \$0.4 million on management and administration. Strong year-end fundraising allowed us to close 2024 with a positive net operating income, setting the stage for greater impact in 2025.



2024 REVENUE
TOTAL \$5.2 MILLION

Foundations, Trusts and Donor Advised Funds	42%
GPC Conservation and Community Levy	36%
Individuals	10%
Investment Income	9%
Corporate Partners	3%



2024 EXPENSES
TOTAL \$3.2 MILLION

Project Costs	84%
Administration	13%
Fundraising	3%

FOUNDATION GREAT PLAINS

CONSERVING AND EXPANDING NATURAL HABITATS

PROUD PARTNERS



THANK YOU

In 2024, the Great Plains Foundation increased its impact across Africa's wildest regions. Continuing our mission of restoring landscapes, protecting biodiversity, and significantly investing in people that call these places home. This year was made possible because of you.

We want to thank you for your support, this means we are protecting habitats across 1.1 million acres, ensuring over 14,002 students have meals to fuel their learning every school day, we have planted thousands of indigenous trees, and trained and equipped 35 rangers, who are now safeguarding ecosystems and species on the brink. We launched new conservation education camps in Zimbabwe, we built bridges in Kenya, empowered Solar Mamas in Botswana, and supported small-scale farmers adapting to environmental challenges due to climate realities.



Ours is a model of balance and built on coexistence, between people and wildlife, between tradition and innovation, between immediate action and long-term impact. The communities we partner with are co-creators of our shared vision for the future.

Your generosity didn't just fund projects; it nurtured potential, resilience, and most importantly brings hope.

Thank you for standing and partnering with us, and for choosing to be part of our movement that values life in all its diversity, complexity, and beauty.

*With heartfelt appreciation,
The Great Plains Foundation Team*





HOW TO GET INVOLVED

PARTNERS

Great Plains's mission is ambitious and we believe in collaboration in protecting the wild landscapes. We are always looking for partners along the way to collaborate with, please reach out to info@greatplainsfoundation.org

JOIN OUR MISSION



DONATING ONLINE:

www.greatplainsfoundation.com/donate

DONATING BY CHECK:

Donations can be made by mail within the US. Contact info@greatplainsfoundation.org for our mailing address.

DONATING BY WIRE TRANSFER OR GIFTS OF STOCK:

Email info@greatplainsfoundation.org

GIFTS IN HONOR / IN MEMORIAM:

Make a donation in honour of or in memory of someone special. For donations of \$50 or more, Great Plains can send an acknowledgement to the honouree or family member.

PLANNED GIVING:

Legacy planning is one of the best ways for you to support important causes that matter the most to you in your life.

Email info@greatplainsfoundation.org to explore the ways you can make a difference today.



At Great Plains Foundation, conservation and community development are more than a mission; it's a partnership. Large-scale ecosystem conservation and biodiversity protection are ongoing tasks that require ongoing support from partners. Great Plains Earth Partners is a community of monthly donors dedicated to protecting Africa's iconic wildlife, wild spaces, and the communities that safeguard these ecosystems, which sustain us all.

Great Plains, spearheaded by National Geographic Explorers Dereck and Beverly Joubert, are on a mission to expand and protect natural habitats for the health of the planet. Large-scale ecosystem conservation and biodiversity protection is an ongoing task that needs ongoing supportive partners. Great Plains Earth Partners are a community of monthly donors dedicated to the protection of our planet's wild spaces and communities safeguarding these ecosystems.

FOUNDATION GREAT PLAINS

CONSERVING AND EXPANDING NATURAL HABITATS

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

GREAT PLAINS FOUNDATION

GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION FOUNDATION IS A US 501C3 NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION (TAX ID: 45-5494919)
AS WELL AS CHARITY REGISTERED WITH THE CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND & WALES (CHARITY
NUMBER 1189136).

JUPITER, FLORIDA, USA

INFO@GREATPLAINSFOUNDATION.COM, VISIT [GREATPLAINSFOUNDATION.COM](https://www.greatplainsfoundation.com)



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GREAT PLAINS FOUNDATION



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THE FOUNDATION PROJECTS