

Protecting the next fifty

# THE EWWT'S FUTURE FIT STRATEGY

2025 - 2050

## **OUR VISION**

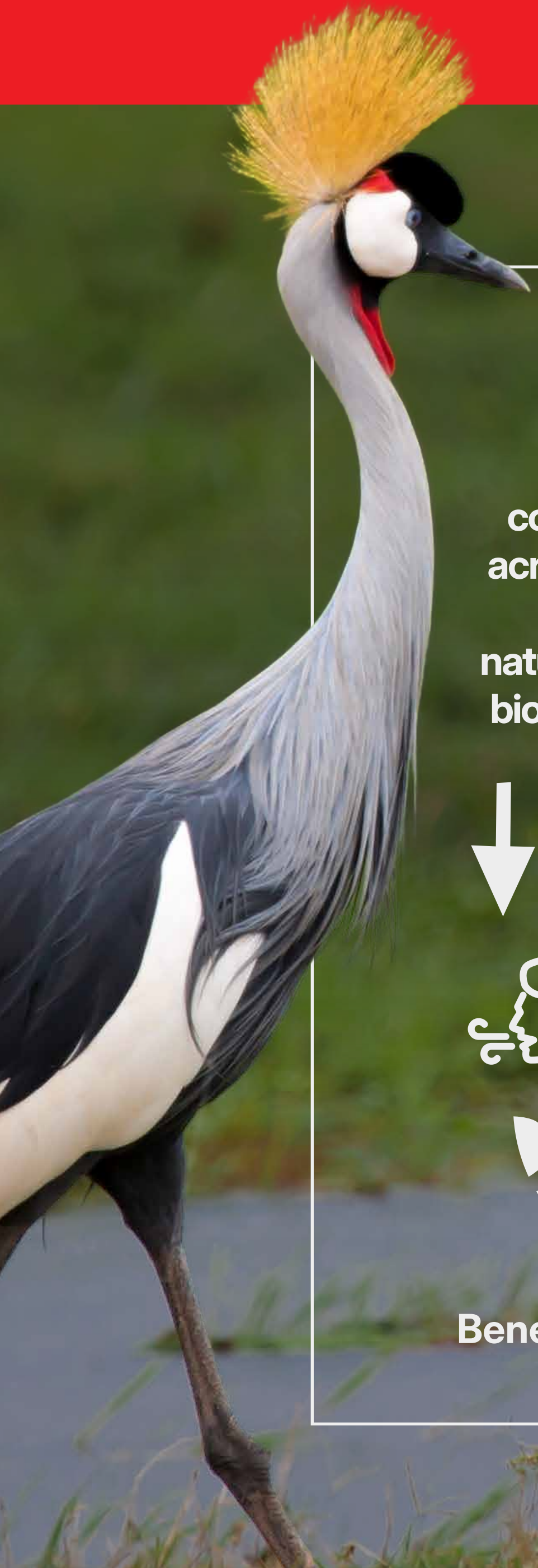
A healthy and equitable Africa that values and sustains the diversity of all life.

## **OUR MISSION**

The Endangered Wildlife Trust is dedicated to conserving threatened species and ecosystems in Africa to the benefit of all.

# WHAT WE DO

## WILDLIFE, HABITATS AND PEOPLE



Mainstreaming conservation principles across sectors to address threats and drive nature-based solutions for biodiversity conservation

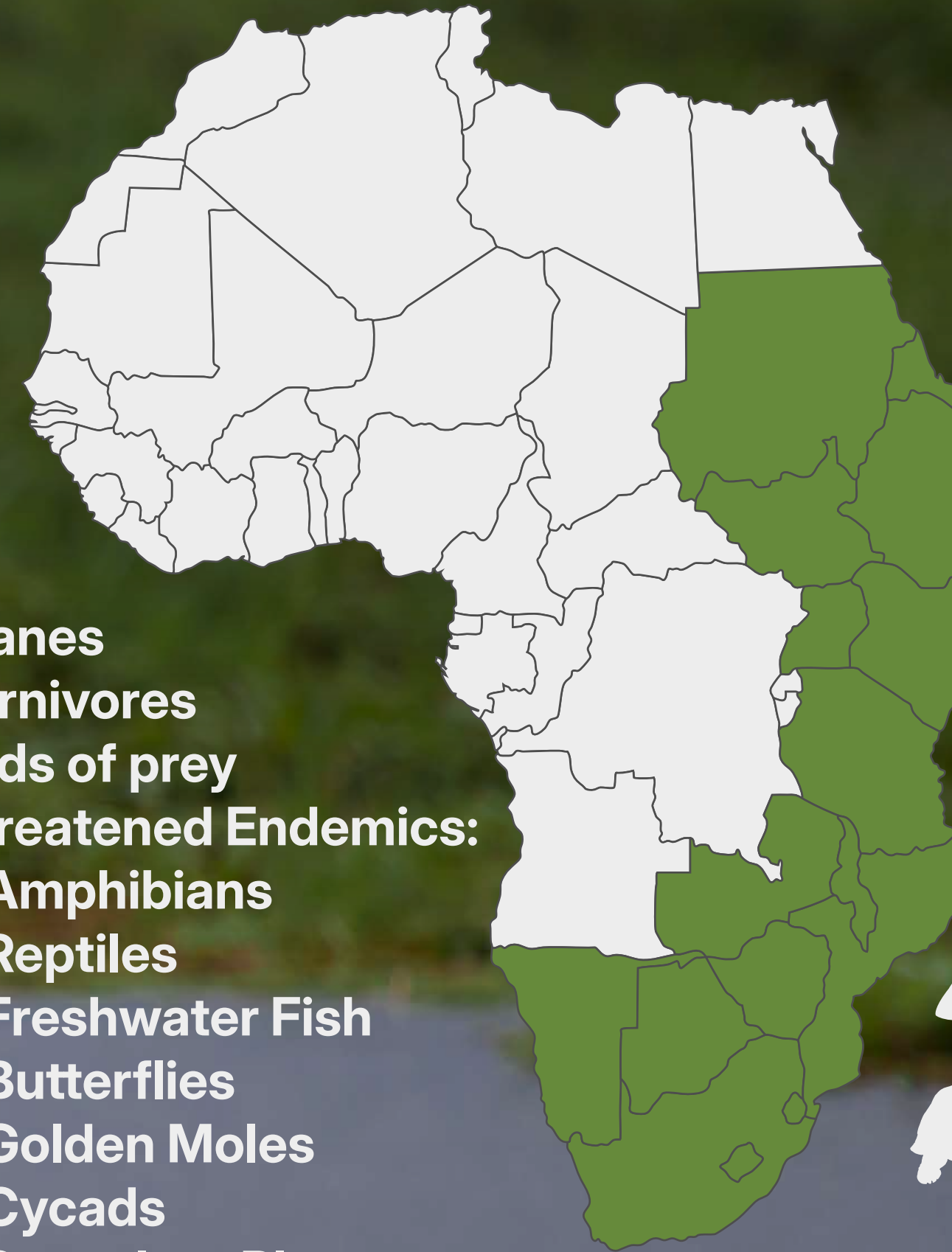


Benefits of Biodiversity



Human Well-being

### PRIORITY SPECIES GROUPS



- Cranes
- Carnivores
- Birds of prey
- Threatened Endemics:
  - ◊ Amphibians
  - ◊ Reptiles
  - ◊ Freshwater Fish
  - ◊ Butterflies
  - ◊ Golden Moles
  - ◊ Cycads
  - ◊ Succulent Plants



# WHERE WE WORK

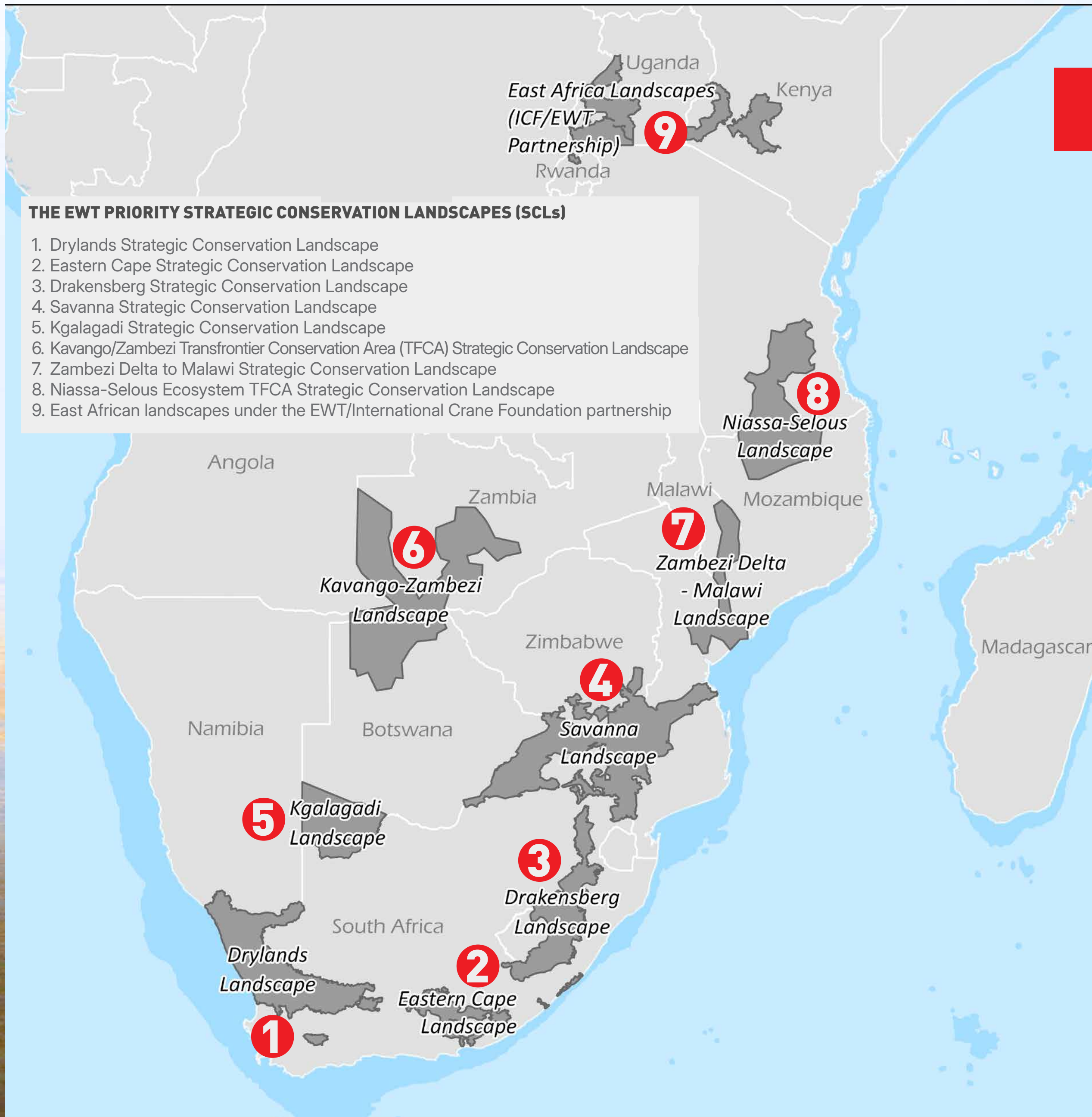
## THE EWT PRIORITY STRATEGIC CONSERVATION LANDSCAPES (SCLs)

The EWT's Strategic Conservation Landscapes have been identified through an additive overlay model, using extensive datasets that cover threatened species, at risk ecosystems, and existing landscape level features. These include the national Key Biodiversity Areas layer (2024) and the Strategic Water Source Areas (SWSA), the National Protected Area Expansion Strategy and the provincial Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA) in South Africa, as well as other prioritised layers. These include Key Biodiversity Areas, protected areas, targeted biodiversity distribution data and Transfrontier Conservation Areas across the region.

Through this data rich process, we have identified nine priority landscapes across East and southern Africa that will benefit from targeted conservation action in order to become a haven for conservation, climate change adaptation and ecological resilience in a rapidly changing world.

### THE EWT PRIORITY STRATEGIC CONSERVATION LANDSCAPES (SCLs)

1. Drylands Strategic Conservation Landscape
2. Eastern Cape Strategic Conservation Landscape
3. Drakensberg Strategic Conservation Landscape
4. Savanna Strategic Conservation Landscape
5. Kgalagadi Strategic Conservation Landscape
6. Kavango/Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) Strategic Conservation Landscape
7. Zambezi Delta to Malawi Strategic Conservation Landscape
8. Niassa-Selous Ecosystem TFCA Strategic Conservation Landscape
9. East African landscapes under the EWT/International Crane Foundation partnership





# HOW WE DO IT

## OUR CONSERVATION APPROACHES INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: ENABLE LARGE ECOLOGICALLY FUNCTIONAL LANDSCAPES TO THRIVE

- Formally secure core protected areas within large functional living landscapes for the benefit of biodiversity and ecosystem services. (Landscapes 1, 2, 3, 4)
- Drive the implementation of Nature-based Solutions, especially focused on habitat restoration towards climate adaptation and resilience, across critical ecosystems within the EWTs priority landscapes. (Landscapes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9)
- Drive the reduction and ultimate eradication of all critical threats facing species across critical landscapes, such as vultures and carnivores, in order to establish safe spaces for wildlife to thrive. (Landscapes 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

- At least **2.4 mil ha** of priority areas formally secured as **protected areas**.

- **20mil m<sup>3</sup>/yr** of **freshwater replenished** in key catchments, primarily through the clearing of at least **4,000 ha** of alien and/or invasive plants.
- **250,000 ha** of contracted priority habitat showing **carbon sequestration** additionality, equating to around **3.75 mill tons** of soil carbon **by 2050**.

- At least **8 mil ha** of priority habitat recognised as **ecologically safe** spaces for wildlife.





## PROTECT THE SPECIES THAT MAKE OUR LANDSCAPES FUNCTION

- Enable and implement range expansion activities focused on both meta-population management and trophic rewilding through strategic relocations, including, but not limited to, large carnivores. (Landscapes 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

- **Maintain and manage** at least **8 threatened species populations** to ensure population stability across the region, including re-wilding and active meta-population management

- Address targeted persecution, illegal trade and associated human-wildlife conflict impacts within priority landscapes, including, but not limited to, snare reduction, improving justice processes and illegal poisoning intervention. (All landscapes)

- **50% reduction** in losses of carnivores, cranes and raptors associated with **persecution, illegal trade and human wildlife conflict** in priority areas by 2050.

- Implement targeted sampling expeditions (bioblitz's) to assess the biodiversity richness of under-sampled and under-studied areas across East and Southern Africa, to inform priority conservation actions, and to concurrently share expertise with local conservation biologists. (Landscapes 4, 6, 7, 8, 9)

- Unlock our ecological understanding of **at least 50 understudied wilderness landscapes through bioblitz expeditions**, describing at least **5 new species** in East and southern Africa.



# SECURE OUR LONG-TERM CONSERVATION INVESTMENTS BY WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE AND WORK IN OUR PRIORITY LANDSCAPES

- Work closely with all Indigenous People and Local Community (IPLC) groups to drive and establish sustainable living lands that support human resilience and well-being linked to Nature-based Economy opportunities in priority areas. (All landscapes)
- Establish long-term strategic conservation partnerships with common goals to collaboratively drive ambitious conservation strategies across the Strategic Conservation Landscapes. (All landscapes)
- Develop local conservation leadership within IPLC groups and recognise species/landscape champions through support, training and the creation of career pathways. (All landscapes)
- Facilitate strategic partnerships between relevant sectors operating within and across large landscapes in Africa to enhance and support landscape functioning and the interface between socio-ecological well-being and biodiversity conservation. This includes supporting corporate accountability, eco-tourism, the wildlife economy, policy and legislation, nature-based solutions and climate mitigation and adaptation measures. (All landscapes)
- Facilitate and drive strategic skills transfer to enable conservation impact across all strategic regions. (All landscapes)

• Catalyse and co-develop **at least 10 large-scale climate smart nature-based solutions/economies** with IPLCs within our Strategic Conservation Landscapes. The key focus is on women and youth implementors to improve social and ecological climate resilience.

• An additional **10,000 response personnel and 50 veterinary experts trained** in wildlife poison response procedures.

• At least **400 conservation professionals and/or students** upskilled and trained in critical conservation skills.



## CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES THAT ENABLE EFFICIENT IMPACT AT SCALE

- Drive improved policy and practice linked to quantified biodiversity footprints of local and global businesses across Africa, leading to targeted conservation action across the EWTs priority landscapes, driven by the private sector. (All landscapes)
- Scale-up the development and implementation of innovative tools to enable conservation impact at scale, including but not limited to drone technologies, environmental DNA, legal and governance solutions and new interventions linked to renewable energy and linear infrastructure impacts. (All landscapes)
- Implement targeted conservation actions to reduce the impact of illegal wildlife trade on threatened species. (All landscapes)
- Implement targeted long-term monitoring systems to guide and inform conservation action. Including innovative technological solutions to improve functional efficiency. (All landscapes)
- Drive the establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms that enable the implementation of large-scale conservation impact over extended timescales. (All landscapes)

• At least **1 mil ha** of threatened ecosystems showing **increases in positive biodiversity** footprints through improved management.

• **At least 80% of Sustainable Landscape Management funding** (for both private and IPLC landowners) **supported** by sustainable financing mechanisms.



# WHY WE DO IT

We recognise the importance of conservation impact at scale. We also recognise that to achieve this requires collaboration, not only between conservation entities, but also through working closely with government agencies, Landowners and Indigenous People & Local Communities (IPLCs).

We will focus our attention on these nine carefully selected, large Strategic Conservation Landscapes (SCLs) in East and southern Africa through an integrated strategic conservation approach that will engage essential partners to create and secure safe spaces for threatened species, facilitate climate change adaptation, expand protected area corridors, reduce human-wildlife conflict and improve the well-being and ecological resilience of IPLCs.

## PROTECT BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity is the foundation of life and a critical measure of our planet's health. The EWT leads targeted, science-driven efforts to prevent extinctions, restore threatened species populations, and protect essential habitats. Our work includes direct conservation action, reducing human-wildlife conflict, addressing illegal wildlife trade, and reconnecting fragmented landscapes so species can thrive. By collaborating with local communities, private landowners, and decision-makers, we will create solutions that are practical and sustainable. Protecting biodiversity is not just about saving wildlife; it is about preserving the natural systems that support food security, clean water, and climate stability. By doing so, we will ensure healthy, functioning ecosystems that support both wildlife and people.



## SECURE VITAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICE

Healthy ecosystems are critical for our survival, providing clean water, fertile soils, and natural resources that sustain economies and communities. The EWT focuses on securing and restoring Africa's most threatened ecosystems, from wetlands and river systems to grasslands and savannas. Our work will include practical interventions such as rehabilitating degraded land, safeguarding key water catchments, and supporting climate-smart land-use practices. By protecting these natural systems, we will ensure that vital services, like flood control, pollination, and water purification, continue to support human and wildlife well-being. A future with healthy ecosystems is a future where people, wildlife, and economies can all prosper together, resilient to growing environmental challenges.

## EMPOWER COMMUNITIES

The EWT recognises that humans are an integral part of nature. The people living in and around our Strategic Conservation Landscapes are thus our most important stakeholders and partners. Our success hinges on the involvement and well-being of local communities. Community-centred conservation prioritises the needs and aspirations of local people and builds off codeveloped long-term Nature-based Solutions for living landscapes.

Human well-being is intricately linked to the health of the environment. Healthy ecosystems provide essential services like clean air and water, food security, and climate regulation. Conversely, environmental degradation can exacerbate poverty, inequality, and social injustice. By integrating human well-being into conservation planning, we will create a more equitable and sustainable future by recognising the intrinsic value of a healthy environment that supports human well-being in Africa's biodiversity rich areas.

## BUILD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Businesses are powerful drivers of change, and integrating biodiversity into their core strategies is key to a truly sustainable future. The EWT partners with companies to transform how they operate, helping them assess risks and opportunities, reduce ecological footprints, and deliver measurable positive impacts for nature. This work goes beyond compliance; it is about reshaping business models to align with global biodiversity goals and future-proof their operations against environmental and social risks. By embedding nature into decision-making, companies build resilience, strengthen stakeholder trust, and contribute to a thriving, balanced world. A sustainable future demands bold corporate leadership that values and actively protects the natural systems underpinning all economic success.



## IMPROVE CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Climate change poses a profound threat to biodiversity and human well-being, with impacts including rising temperatures, altered ecosystems, and increased frequency of extreme events. To mitigate these impacts, we will prioritise building climate resilience and adaptation into our landscape conservation and with our community partners. We will do this by protecting and restoring natural habitats, promoting ecosystem connectivity, and supporting natural wildlife movement. This will include socio-ecological resilience mechanisms like building capacity in climate-smart agriculture and adaptive management. By incorporating climate projections into our conservation decision-making, we aim to reduce the risk of conservation failure and promote long-term biodiversity persistence. By acknowledging and addressing the impacts of climate change, conservation efforts will remain effective and relevant in the face of a rapidly changing world.

## ENHANCE WATER SECURITY

Conserving water resources is crucial for Africa's future, as the continent faces severe and increasing water scarcity challenges. This is exacerbated by a growing population, climate change and increasing economic demands. Water scarcity affects not only human well-being but also agriculture, energy production, and ecosystem health. The EWT has prioritised critical waste catchment and freshwater systems in our planning and these are integral to our Strategic Conservation Landscapes. Our dedicated teams are to work extensively to protect and restore natural water sources and improve the management of catchment areas. By prioritising water conservation, we will ensure a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for Africa's people and environment.



# OUR VALUES

EVERYTHING THE EWT DOES IS UNDERPINNED BY FIVE CORE VALUES.  
TO HELP US KEEP THESE VALUES TOP OF MIND, WE USE THE ACRONYM "RIVER"

## R

### RESPECT

We believe in justice and equity

We are compassionate

We respect all life and each other

We value indigenous knowledge systems

## I

### IMPACT

We are proactive, tenacious and lead by example

We protect wildlife

We secure ecosystems for human well-being

## V

### VALUE ALL LIFE

We value nature as the foundation of human well-being

We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for, and integration of, women, the youth, people living with disabilities, and all races, religions and cultures into the EWT, and our work

## E

### ETHICAL

We are ethical, accountable and transparent

## R

### RELATIONSHIPS

We recognise the value of partnerships

We develop conservationists and strengthen indigenous resource management

We align ourselves with Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) values



# GLOSSARY

## **ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

A structured, iterative process of decision-making in conservation that allows for learning and adjusting strategies based on outcomes and new information.

## **ALIEN AND/OR INVASIVE PLANTS**

Non-native plant species that spread aggressively and disrupt local ecosystems, often outcompeting indigenous species and altering habitat structures.

## **BIOBLITZ**

Short, intensive biological survey events where scientists and volunteers record as many species as possible in a specific area, often to raise awareness and inform conservation planning.

## **BIODIVERSITY**

The variety and variability of life forms on Earth, including diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.

## **BIODIVERSITY FOOTPRINTS**

A measure of the impact that a person, organisation, or activity has on biodiversity, considering land use, resource extraction, and habitat disruption.

## **CARBON SEQUESTRATION**

The natural or artificial process of capturing and storing carbon dioxide, particularly by forests, soils, and oceans, to reduce greenhouse gas concentrations.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION**

Adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climate change impacts, to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

## **CLIMATE MITIGATION**

Efforts to reduce or prevent the emission of greenhouse gases through practices such as renewable energy use, reforestation, and improved land management.

## **CLIMATE PROJECTIONS**

Scientific models that estimate future climatic conditions based on various scenarios of socio-economic development and emissions trends.

## **CLIMATE REGULATION**

The natural processes and systems that maintain Earth's climate within a stable range, primarily through the exchange of energy between the atmosphere, oceans, and land.

## **CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE**

Practices that increase agricultural productivity and resilience while reducing environmental impact and enhancing long-term sustainability.

## **CLIMATE-SMART NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS/ECONOMIES**

Integrated approaches that leverage ecological systems to buffer communities and sectors from climate impacts while supporting sustainable development.

## **CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY**

The responsibility of businesses to ensure their operations and supply chains do not negatively impact biodiversity and ecosystems, and that they contribute to sustainable outcomes.

## **CRITICAL THREATS**

Major pressures or drivers that significantly endanger biodiversity and ecosystem health, such as habitat loss, pollution, or over-exploitation.

## **CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES**

Themes or strategies that span across multiple areas or sectors of conservation, such as education, governance, or equity.

## **ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE**

The capacity of an ecosystem to withstand disturbances and recover its structure, function, and dynamics.

## **ECOLOGICALLY FUNCTIONAL LANDSCAPES**

Landscapes in which key ecological processes—such as nutrient cycling, migration, and predation—continue to operate effectively, supporting long-term biodiversity.

## **ECOLOGICALLY SAFE**

Refers to areas, practices, or interventions that pose minimal risk to the structure and functioning of ecosystems and the survival of species.

## **ECOSYSTEM CONNECTIVITY**

The degree to which natural areas are linked in a way that allows for the uninterrupted movement of species and the flow of ecological processes.

## **ECOSYSTEM SERVICES**

The benefits that people obtain from ecosystems, including provisioning (food, water), regulating (climate, floods), supporting (nutrient cycling), and cultural services.

## **ENDEMIC**

Species that are native to and restricted to a specific geographic location or region.



### **ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION**

The deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources, destruction of habitats, and loss of biodiversity.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DNA (EDNA)**

Genetic material obtained from environmental samples (e.g., soil, water) to detect the presence of species without needing direct observation.

### **KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS (KBAS)**

Sites that are identified as being critically important for the global persistence of biodiversity, based on standardised scientific criteria.

### **MAINSTREAMING CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES**

Integrating biodiversity and ecosystem considerations into policies, practices, and decision-making processes across all sectors of society.

### **META-POPULATION**

A group of spatially separated populations of the same species that interact through human-assisted migration, aiding long-term survival and genetic diversity.

### **NATIONAL PROTECTED AREA EXPANSION STRATEGY (NPAES)**

A government-led framework aimed at guiding the expansion and consolidation of South Africa's protected areas to meet biodiversity conservation targets.

### **NATURE-BASED ECONOMY**

An economy that relies on and invests in biodiversity and healthy ecosystems for livelihoods, well-being, and sustainable development.

### **NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS**

Actions that work with nature to address societal challenges, such as climate change and disaster risk, while providing biodiversity and human well-being benefits.

### **PROVINCIAL CRITICAL BIODIVERSITY AREAS (CBAS)**

Areas within provinces that are essential for conserving biodiversity and maintaining ecological processes, often prioritised in spatial planning.

### **RESPONSE PERSONNEL**

Trained individuals who respond to environmental crises or conservation emergencies, such as wildlife rescues, pollution events, or poaching incidents.

### **SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL WELL-BEING**

A holistic state where both people and ecosystems thrive, recognising that human well-being is intertwined with environmental health.

### **STRATEGIC CONSERVATION LANDSCAPES**

Geographically defined areas identified as priorities for long-term, integrated conservation action that balances ecological integrity with human needs.

### **STRATEGIC SKILLS TRANSFER**

The deliberate sharing of knowledge and technical capacity between individuals, organisations, or sectors to strengthen conservation outcomes.

### **STRATEGIC WATER SOURCE AREAS (SWSAS)**

Regions that produce a significant portion of South Africa's surface water and are essential for water security, biodiversity, and socio-economic stability.

### **SUSTAINABLE FINANCING MECHANISMS**

Financial tools and frameworks designed to support long-term conservation initiatives, such as biodiversity offsets, trust funds, or green bonds.

### **SUSTAINABLE LIVING LANDS**

Landscapes managed to balance human use with biodiversity protection, ensuring ecological health and resilience over time.

### **TARGETED BIODIVERSITY DISTRIBUTION DATA**

Specific, spatially detailed information on the locations of species or ecosystems used to inform conservation planning and monitoring.

### **TARGETED CONSERVATION ACTION**

Focused interventions designed to address priority threats, species, or ecosystems with clear goals, timeframes, and monitoring plans.

### **TARGETED PERSECUTION**

The deliberate killing or harm of specific species due to perceived threats, cultural beliefs, or illegal trade, often leading to population declines.

### **THREATENED SPECIES**

Species categorised as Vulnerable, Endangered, or Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List, facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

### **TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREAS (TFCAS)**

Large natural areas that span across national borders and are managed cooperatively to conserve biodiversity and promote regional integration.

### **TROPHIC REWILDING**

The process of restoring missing or reduced species that influence food webs, in order to revive natural balances and interactions.

### **WILDLIFE ECONOMY**

An economic system based on the sustainable use of wild species and ecosystems, supporting livelihoods, tourism, and biodiversity conservation.





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The EWT is registered in South Africa as a Non-Profit Organisation, registration number 015-502 NPO and PBO registration number 930 001 777.

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