

ENDANGERED
WILDLIFE TRUST
Protecting forever, together.

2025-2026

# INTEGRATED REPORT

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# FIT TO PROTECT OUR FUTURE

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (the EWT) is a conservation organisation working across Africa to protect threatened species, restore and secure wild places, and create practical solutions that benefit wildlife and people. For more than 50 years, we have combined science, field-based expertise and partnerships to tackle complex conservation challenges. From recovering threatened species and restoring landscapes to reducing wildlife crime and strengthening sustainable livelihoods, our work delivers measurable results on the ground. We act with urgency where action is needed today, while taking a long-term view of what is needed to secure the future of Africa's wildlife and wild places. Our vision is a healthy and equitable Africa that values and sustains the diversity of all life.

Our mission is to conserve threatened species and ecosystems in Africa to the benefit of all. Conservation takes place in a rapidly changing world shaped by climate change, biodiversity loss, pressure on natural resources, technological advances, and shifting social and economic realities. Building on more than 50 years of practical, science-led conservation, we adopted our Future Fit Strategy in 2025 to guide and strengthen our long-term conservation action through to 2050. The strategy is a dynamic framework that is reviewed and refined as circumstances change, helping us remain agile, responsive, and equipped to address emerging conservation challenges and opportunities as we work towards a resilient and biodiverse Africa for all.

The Future Fit Strategy builds on our long-standing work to protect threatened species, restore ecosystems, reduce threats to wildlife, and work with partners and communities to achieve lasting conservation results. It strengthens the connections between this work through coordinated, landscape-scale action in nine Strategic Conservation Landscapes identified using biodiversity, ecosystem, and conservation planning data. **These are the Drylands, Eastern Cape, Drakensberg, Savannah, Kgalagadi, Kavango/Zambezi, Zambezi Delta to Malawi, and Niassa-Selous Strategic Conservation Landscapes, as well as the East African landscapes under the EWT/International Crane Foundation partnership.** Across these landscapes, we focus our expertise, partnerships, and resources where conservation need, ecological importance, and the opportunity for long-term impact come together.

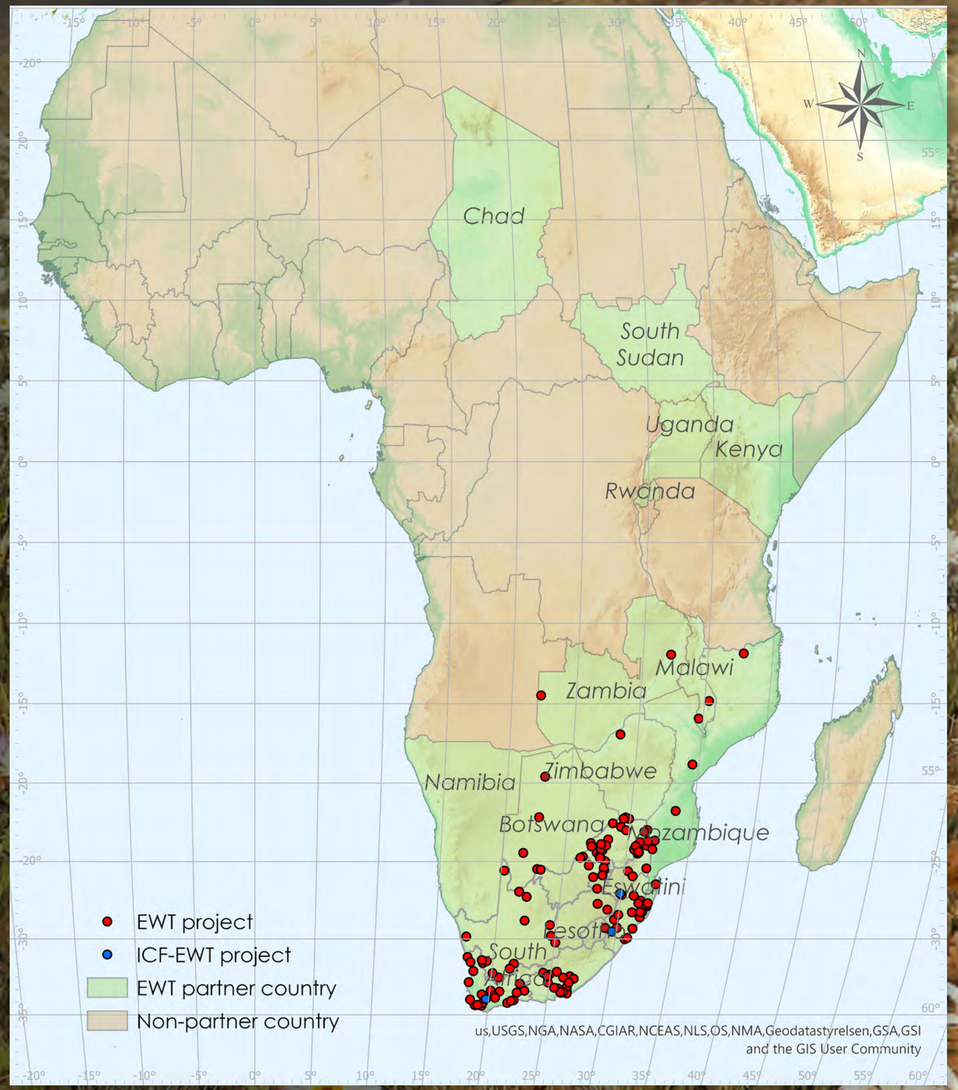
# WHERE WE WORK

These landscapes have been chosen because they contain some of Africa's most threatened species, critical water sources, climate refuges, biodiversity hotspots, and communities whose well-being is directly linked to healthy ecosystems, and who depend on natural resources being used sustainably. By restoring habitats, expanding home ranges, reducing threats to wildlife, supporting sustainable livelihoods, and building climate resilience, we are creating landscapes where people and nature can thrive together.

Looking back on the achievements and challenges of the 2025/26 financial year, we also consider our future role and impact in Africa, supported by the expansion of our global reach and support base.

Our growth into the United States funding market represents an important step in diversifying our income through new partnerships, strengthened funding resilience, and connecting new audiences to hands-on conservation in southern and East Africa. This expansion reflects our belief that the challenges facing biodiversity are global and that securing Africa's natural heritage requires international collaboration and shared investment.

This Integrated Report reflects an EWT that not only honours our past, but actively works to shape the future. We trust this report offers greater insight into who we are: an organisation that respects all life, values Indigenous Knowledge Systems and mainstream research, and is proactive in protecting wildlife and securing ecosystems, is ethical, accountable and transparent and recognises the value of partnerships in the protection and conservation of nature, the foundation of human well-being.



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR
## OF THE EWT BOARD OF TRUSTEES



As we reflect on another year in the journey of the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), I am reminded that conservation is ultimately about responsibility. Responsibility to our natural heritage, to the communities who depend on healthy ecosystems, and to future generations who will inherit the consequences of the decisions we make today.

The challenges facing biodiversity continue to grow in complexity and urgency. Climate change, habitat destruction, declining species populations and increasing competition for natural resources place extraordinary pressure on our environment. Yet, despite these challenges, I remain optimistic about what can be achieved when committed people, sound science and purposeful partnerships come together.

We continue to demonstrate that meaningful conservation is not simply an aspiration. It is the result of sustained commitment, courageous leadership and measurable action.

## CONSERVATION THAT DELIVERS LASTING IMPACT

At the heart of our work is a simple but powerful objective: ensuring the survival of threatened species and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

Our conservation programmes operate across diverse landscapes and species, addressing challenges ranging from habitat fragmentation and human-wildlife conflict to the impact of infrastructure development and environmental degradation.

What distinguishes us is not only our scientific expertise, but our ability to translate research into practical conservation solutions.

However, our success cannot be measured solely by the number of species protected or hectares conserved. We must also consider whether we are building sustainable systems that will continue delivering conservation outcomes long after individual projects have concluded.

This long-term perspective is essential. Conservation is not a short-term intervention; it is a commitment that must endure across generations.

# CONSERVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

One of the most important conversations we must continue advancing is the relationship between conservation and economic development.

Too often, these are presented as competing priorities. I believe this is a false choice.

Healthy ecosystems underpin economic prosperity. Agriculture, tourism, water security, food production and countless livelihoods depend on functioning natural systems.

Equally, conservation cannot succeed if communities living alongside wildlife do not experience tangible benefits.

Our approach recognises this interconnectedness. By working with communities, businesses and government, we can develop solutions that protect biodiversity while creating economic opportunity.

The private sector, in particular, has an increasingly important role to play. Biodiversity should not be viewed merely as a corporate social responsibility initiative, but as an essential component of long-term business sustainability.

We must continue building bridges between the conservation and business communities, demonstrating that environmental responsibility and commercial success can reinforce one another.

# BUILDING A RESILIENT ORGANISATION

From a governance perspective, our long-term sustainability remains a central priority for the Board.

The non-profit sector operates in an increasingly challenging funding environment. Competition for donor resources, economic uncertainty and rising operational costs require organisations to be disciplined, innovative and adaptable.

Our responsibility is therefore twofold: to ensure that we deliver meaningful conservation outcomes today, while building the financial and institutional resilience required to sustain its mission tomorrow.

This means maintaining strong governance, prudent financial oversight, diversified funding relationships and a culture of accountability.

It also means being willing to challenge traditional approaches, embrace innovation and continually evaluate how we can achieve greater impact with the resources available.

Technology, data and artificial intelligence present opportunities to improve conservation monitoring, decision-making and organisational efficiency.

As these technologies evolve, we must remain open to harnessing their potential while preserving the scientific integrity and human expertise upon which our reputation has been built.



“Conservation is ultimately an investment in our collective future. The choices we make today will determine the natural world inherited by generations yet to come.”

**MUHAMMAD SEEDAT**

## THE POWER OF PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS

Behind every conservation achievement are people who care deeply about making a difference.

Our scientists, field teams, researchers, administrators and leadership work in environments that are often demanding, unpredictable and resource-constrained.

Their dedication is the foundation of our success.

I also wish to acknowledge the importance of our partners and supporters. Conservation requires collaboration across sectors, disciplines and geographical boundaries.

No single organisation, regardless of its capabilities, can address the scale of the biodiversity crisis alone.

Our ability to build trusted relationships and align diverse stakeholders around common objectives will remain one of our greatest strengths.

## LOOKING AHEAD

As we look beyond 2026, the urgency of our mission has never been greater.

We must continue strengthening our position as a respected conservation leader, delivering measurable outcomes, influencing policy and demonstrating innovative approaches to protecting biodiversity.

We must also remain ambitious. The scale of the environmental challenges confronting us demands bold thinking, decisive action and an unwavering commitment to results.

My aspiration is for the EWT to be recognised not only for the important work we undertake, but for the enduring difference we make.

## A WORD OF APPRECIATION

On behalf of the Board, I extend my sincere gratitude to our leadership team, staff, donors, partners and fellow trustees for their continued commitment.

To the communities who work alongside us, thank you for your trust and collaboration.

Conservation is ultimately an investment in our collective future. The choices we make today will determine the natural world inherited by generations yet to come.

Let us continue making those choices with courage, wisdom and purpose.

**Muhammad Seedat**
Chairman
Endangered Wildlife Trust







# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO OF THE EWT

The Endangered Wildlife Trust occupies a distinctive place in African conservation. Few organisations work across such a diverse range of threatened animals and plants, and fewer still combine specialist science, practical field delivery, landscape protection and community beneficiation in the way that we do. For 53 years, we have responded where extinction risk is greatest and where our expertise can shift the trajectory of a species or ecosystem. What began with urgent action for Cheetahs and vultures has grown into a formidable, Africa-focused conservation organisation: one that protects the charismatic as well as the overlooked, from large carnivores and cranes to frogs, reptiles, trees and a host of endemic species found nowhere else on Earth.

Our niche goes beyond identifying the species most at risk. It is knowing what to do next. Our field staff, scientists and managers turn evidence into action: they design recovery plans, find and monitor elusive species, restore damaged habitats, negotiate protection for critical new protected areas, relocate Endangered species to expand their ranges through new viable populations, reduce poisoning and snaring threats, support our partners, protect water sources and work alongside communities to build solutions that last. Their work is rigorous and often difficult, taking place in remote wetlands, rugged mountains, harsh drylands, hostile farms, dense villages, protected areas and industrial development corridors. It demands patience, courage, technical excellence and the ability to build trust. Above all, it demands people who can visualise a different future and then do the painstaking work required to make it real. This is what sets us apart: our relentless drive to Protect Forever, Together.

During the year under review, our remarkable teams grew again, following an ongoing year-on-year trend of upward growth, expanded expertise and a broader diversity, as we embarked on translating our Future Fit Strategy into visible, measurable impact. The Strategy blends more than five decades of proven conservation practice together with frontier science, new technology and long-term committed action for nine Strategic Conservation Landscapes across southern and East Africa. It integrates species recovery and biodiversity protection with habitat restoration, water security, climate resilience and human well-being. Over the next 25 years, we have committed to these Strategic Conservation Landscapes, in which we will scale up our impact through a connected portfolio of EWT specialist interventions that protect ecological processes and enable wildlife and people to thrive together.



> “It proves that loss is not inevitable, and that plans can become action, action that can change the future for wildlife and communities across Africa.”
>
> **YOLAN FRIEDMANN**

The achievements described in this report show what that integration looks like on the ground. In the Savannah Strategic Conservation Landscape, our groundbreaking Eye in the Sky system used information from tracked vultures to provide early warnings of poisoning and snaring events, where rapid responses helped to prevent casualties for at least two sites, uncovered five poaching camps and supported the removal of 158 snares. To proactively secure the futures of even more of our highly threatened vultures across Africa, we led the declaration of ten additional Kalahari properties as Vulture Safe, adding more than 50,000 ha of safer habitat for these birds with cascading benefits for a myriad other species that coexist in this landscape.

Our carnivore specialists coordinated the strategic movement of 43 Cheetahs across 21 reserves, supported the return of Cheetahs to uMkhuze Game Reserve and helped recover approximately 40,000 ha of vital Cheetah range. They also supported African Wild Dog reintroductions in Zimbabwe, Malawi and South Africa, while a newly established Threat Reduction Ranger Team responded to human-wildlife conflict incidents in real time and prevented retaliatory action and livestock losses to the benefit of both communities and wild predators.

In the Drakensberg Grasslands, our teams recorded 84 Critically Endangered Wattled Crane nests, monitoring 75 of them by drone, and they ringed eight chicks: the highest number in almost a decade. They cleared and began rehabilitating 620 ha of critical grassland, wetland and riparian habitat in the headwaters of the Vaal River, while creating and developing skills for 32 previously unemployed local people. Working with community partners, they protected three springs and installed water infrastructure for 140 households, benefiting 1,162 people. The EWT/ICF’s pioneering grassland carbon project covering 90,000 ha, issued credits representing 805,971 tonnes of carbon dioxide sequestered and generated almost USD 1 million for participating landowners and project implementers, with the EWT/ICF share being reinvested in conservation.

Our Threatened Endemic Species work ensures that we never leave the lesser-known behind. The team completed a three-year assessment of more than 230 southern African amphibian species, strengthening the evidence base for national and regional conservation priorities. They helped secure the 712 ha Mount David Nature Reserve, the first amphibian-focused stewardship site of its kind, and they cleared more than 341 ha of wetland and catchment habitat for the Critically Endangered Rough Moss Frog. Detection dogs, environmental DNA, acoustic monitoring and inventive field methods revealed previously unknown breeding pools and extended the known ranges of highly localised skinks, frogs and insects. In the Drylands, our teams helped to secure more than 15,500 ha through five new nature reserves, supported a 4,500 ha conservation servitude for the Endangered Speckled Dwarf Tortoise, assisted with the first recorded release of 98 confiscated Armadillo Girdled Lizards, and documented the first Augrabies Flat Lizard record in Namibia.

This work is only possible through the extraordinary EWTers who form our “Pack”. Our specialist teams build on decades of best practice and evidence-based interventions that are impact-driven and ethically sound. Our field staff collect data, respond to emergencies and maintain strong relationships with our partners, on which successful and sustainable conservation depends. They hold complex portfolios together, secure resources, manage risk and turn ambitious plans into measurable outcomes. Our support teams make safe, accountable and sustained field delivery possible. Together, our people ARE the EWT, working across Africa to safeguard a single breeding pool or protect an entire landscape, to the benefit of both people and nature.

In order to meaningfully step into our Future Fit Strategy, our Executive Management and Board decided to invest in additional management capacity and leadership, with a focus on landscape-scale conservation, partnership development and bold targets for income generation. Building on the registration of EWT USA as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation, we established the EWT USA Board, and recruited the support of a part-time donor relations and philanthropy expert. EWT USA will ramp up the visibility of our work, impact and profile in the USA and engage new donors and partners to join forces with us to implement our Vision for an Africa in which both nature and people thrive.

The investment into our strategic growth also took the form of bolstering our leadership team and investing in additional planning and development resources for scaling our work at a landscape level and deepening our science-based work on elusive species. We are exceptionally pleased with how this has strengthened the performance of our teams this past year and with this, our ability to rapidly scale our impact across the region. This investment explains the small deficit recorded in this past financial year, but the success of previous financial years in establishing a solid Fund for the Future has ensured that we have the resources to cover this and keep investing in this critical phase of the EWT’s life. Over the next year, we intend to keep investing in a strategy that is designed to boldly tackle the most pressing conservation issues facing Africa and to urgently safeguard a future for multiple species for which we cannot afford to waste one more year. Our Fund for the Future will cover this initial investment, allowing us to achieve greater impact, faster.

The year was not without its challenges and, amidst global turmoil, financial pressure, environmental catastrophes, a heating planet, market instability and escalating social safety concerns, we prioritised staff well-being and safety by introducing an additional work-from-home day a week and a weekly staff meal at our Conservation Campus to cut personal expenses; we advanced well-being support systems, increased our Occupational Health and Safety training, improved in-field communication systems and we invested in team building, coaching and mentorship. Our staff retention rate is extremely high, and this stability helps us all achieve our goals and progress as a team.





I am profoundly proud of the EWT people who make this possible. To our field staff, scientists, project leaders and managers: thank you for your imagination, persistence and professionalism, and for the care you bring to every species, place and person with whom you work. To our communities, landowners, governments, research institutions, conservation partners, donors and supporters: thank you for trusting us and for sharing in the work. The impact recorded in these pages belongs to you all. It proves that loss is not inevitable, and that plans can become action, action that can change the future for wildlife and communities across Africa. This report details the past year of the EWT at its best, whilst setting the tone for the years to come. Join us as we Protect Forever, Together.

**Yolan Friedmann**
Chief Executive Officer
Endangered Wildlife Trust

# OUR FUTURE FIT STRATEGY

## OUR VISION

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

## OUR FUTURE FIT STRATEGY 2025–2050

Twenty-five years. That is the horizon of our Future Fit Strategy, because recovering threatened species, restoring ecosystems and building lasting resilience within communities require sustained commitment. The decisions made today will shape the Africa that future generations inherit.

# CONSERVATION FOR WILDLIFE, LANDSCAPES AND PEOPLE

For more than 50 years, we have conserved threatened species and ecosystems across Africa to the benefit of all. We protect wildlife, secure and restore habitats and work with communities to sustain the healthy landscapes upon which species and people depend.

The Future Fit Strategy 2025–2050 builds on this experience with an ambition matched to the scale of the challenges ahead. Habitat loss, biodiversity decline and climate change demand coordinated action across entire landscapes. Securing a species' future means protecting its habitat, reducing the threats to its survival and working with the people who share that landscape.

# NINE STRATEGIC CONSERVATION LANDSCAPES

We focus this effort within nine Strategic Conservation Landscapes, selected through scientific analysis of biodiversity, ecosystem importance, climate vulnerability and water security. Here, species recovery, habitat protection and restoration are brought together with solutions developed alongside Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Partnerships with governments, landowners, businesses and conservation organisations extend our collective reach and strengthen the foundations for lasting impact.

# OUR VALUES

Our strategy is guided by five core values that shape our decisions, our partnerships and how we deliver conservation impact.

**RIVER: Respect · Impact · Value All Life · Ethical · Relationships**




1. *Drylands*
2. *Eastern Cape*
3. *Drakensberg*
4. *Savannah*
5. *Kgalagadi*
6. *Kavango/Zambezi*
7. *Zambezi Delta to Malawi*
8. *Niassa-Selous*
9. *East African landscapes under the EWT/International Crane Foundation partnership*

# OUR STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES



## Protect Biodiversity

Through targeted, science-driven conservation action that prevents extinctions, restores species populations and safeguards critical habitats.



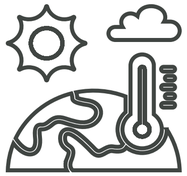
## Empower Communities

By co-developing long-term, nature-based solutions that support livelihoods and enhance well-being.



## Enhance Water Security

By prioritising the protection and restoration of critical freshwater systems and catchments within our strategic landscapes.



## Improve Climate Resilience

By restoring habitats, maintaining ecosystem connectivity, and supporting natural wildlife movement and adaptation.



## Secure Vital Ecosystem Services

By protecting and restoring threatened ecosystems, including wetlands, rivers, grasslands and savannahs.



## Build a Sustainable Future

By partnering with businesses to reduce ecological footprints, manage environmental risks and deliver measurable benefits for nature.

# MEASURABLE LANDSCAPE-SCALE OUTCOMES

Our Future Fit Strategy aims to achieve measurable, landscape-scale **outcomes by 2050,** including:

### 2.4 million ha

Priority areas formally secured as protected areas.

### 8 million ha

Priority habitat recognised as ecologically safe spaces for wildlife.

### 1 million ha

Threatened ecosystems under improved management.

### 250,000 ha

Habitat delivering additional carbon sequestration benefits, contributing approximately 3.75 million tonnes of soil carbon by 2050.

### 50% reduction

Losses of key species such as carnivores, cranes, birds of prey, amphibians and reptiles caused by persecution, illegal trade and human-wildlife conflict.

### 20 million $m^3$ annually

Freshwater replenished through restoration initiatives, including clearing at least 4,000 ha of invasive plants.

### At least 10 nature-based economies

Large-scale climate-smart nature-based economies developed with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, with a strong focus on youth and women.

### 10,000 · 50 · 400

Response personnel, veterinary experts, conservation professionals and students trained in critical conservation skills.



# WHO ARE OUR LEADERS?



**Yolan Friedmann**
Chief Executive Officer



**Kishaylin Chetty**
Head of Sustainability



**Dave McCullough**
Chief Financial Officer



**Kerryn Morrison**
Head of the ICF/EWT Partnership



**Dr Ian Little**
Head of Conservation



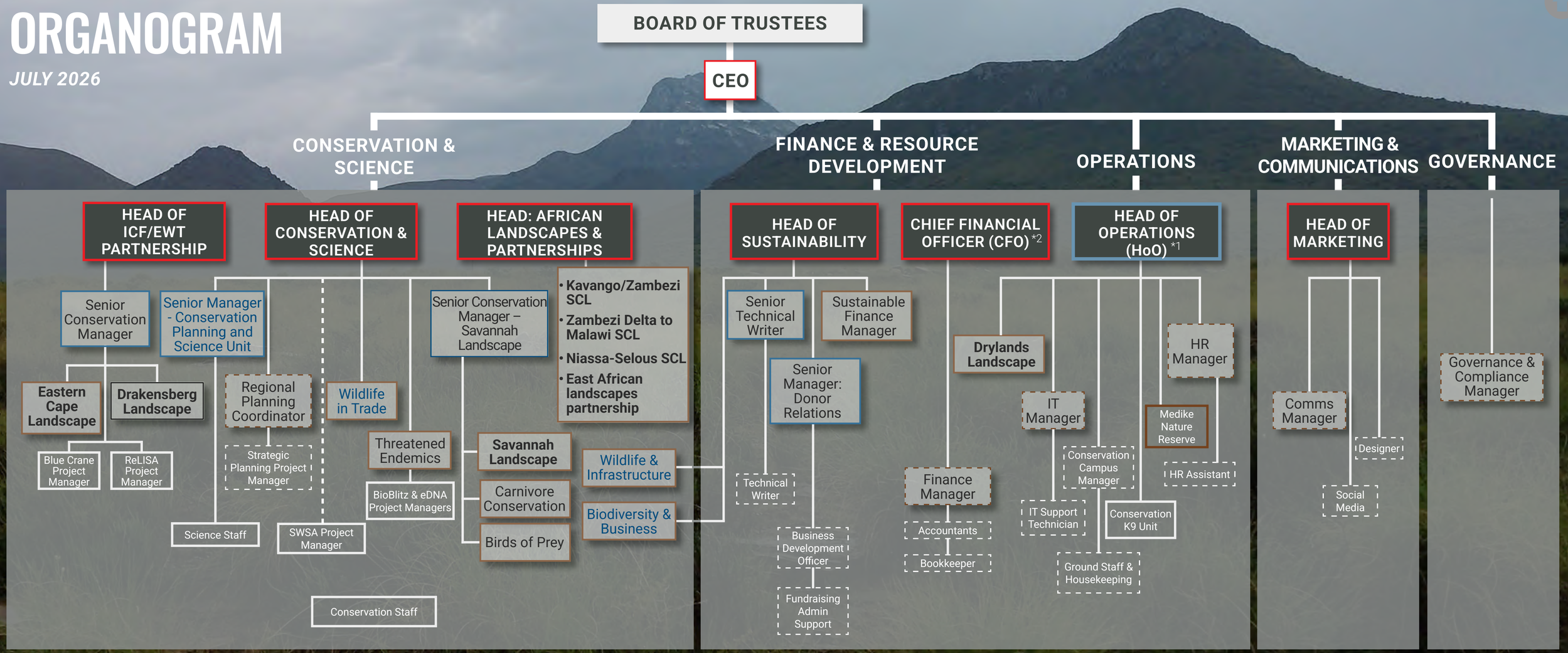
**Julia Levin**
Head of African Landscapes Partnerships



**Emma Dougherty**
Head of Marketing & Communications

# ORGANOGRAM

*JULY 2026*




## LEGEND

### Strategic Conservation Portfolio

- **Drylands Landscape**
- **Savannah Landscape**
- **Drakensberg Landscape**
- **Eastern Cape Landscape**
- **Kavango/Zambezi Landscape**
- **Kgalagadi Landscape**
- **Zambezi Delta to Malawi Landscape**
- **Niassa-Selous Landscape**
- **East African landscapes under the EWT/ICF partnership**
- Threatened Endemic Species Unit
- Bird of Prey Unit
- Carnivore Conservation Unit
- African Crane Conservation Programme

### Cross-cutting Units

- Conservation Planning and Science Unit
- Wildlife and Infrastructure Unit
- Biodiversity and Business Unit
- Sustainable Finance Unit
- Wildlife in Trade Unit

### Positions

- Conservation Position
- Support Services Staff

### Management Structures

- Executive Management
- Senior Management
- Management Team

*1 - Drone & Conservation K9 Units
- Fleet Manager

*2 - Risk & Insurance
- B-BBEE
- Procurement (incl. vehicles)

# HIGH-LEVEL INDICATORS

## GOAL 1

Improved knowledge of species and habitats, and the threats they face

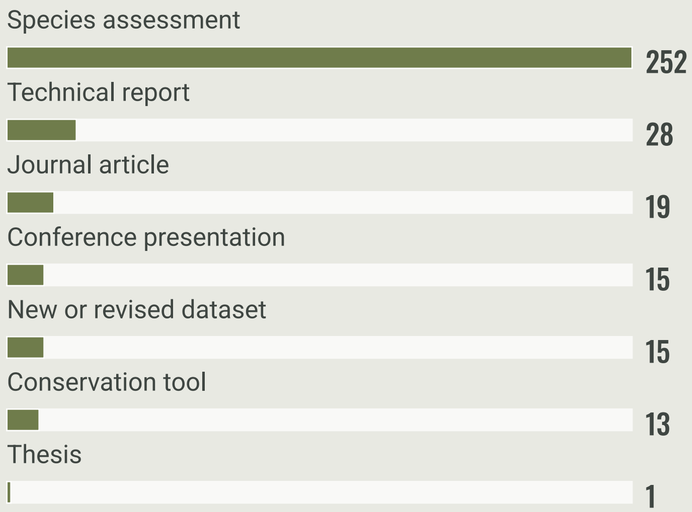
*Knowledge about natural systems and the threats to species and ecosystems is critical for designing and informing impactful conservation actions and formulating effective policies for biodiversity protection.*

### INDICATOR 1A

Number of research outputs (that inform conservation action)

**343** RESEARCH OUTPUTS

#### BY TYPE OF OUTPUT




## GOAL 2

Targeted interventions reduce the threats to species and habitats

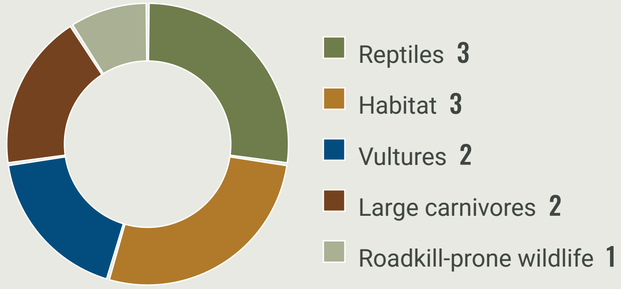
*This goal is measured through a direct reduction in a threat (Indicator 2a) or the implementation of a conservation strategy to reduce known threats (Indicator 2b). Direct improvements in the status of a species or habitat are captured under Goal 4.*

### INDICATOR 2A

Number of target populations and habitats for which threats have been reduced

**11** POPULATIONS AND HABITATS

#### BY POPULATION OR HABITAT TYPE




#### THREATS REDUCED

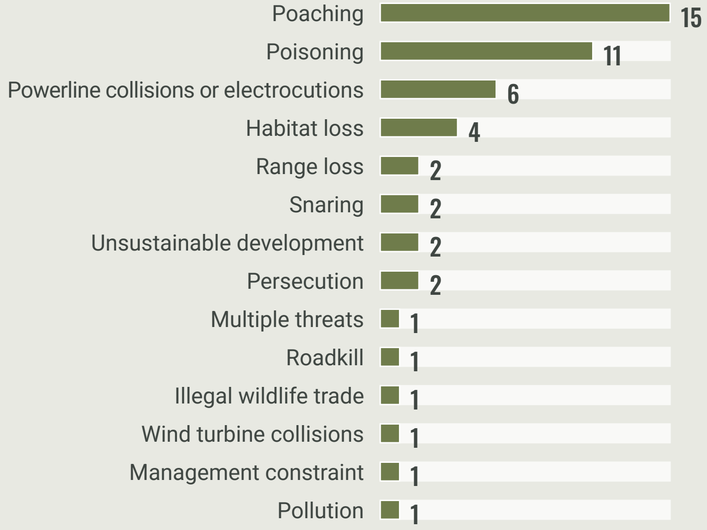
Bush encroachment (2) · Persecution (2) · Multiple threats (comprehensive Vulture Safe Zone certification) (2) · Predation pressure (1) · Habitat loss (1) · Roadkill (1) · Invasive alien plant threat (1) · Pollution (1)

### INDICATOR 2B

Number of proven interventions that reduce broad-scale threats to focal species or habitats

**50** PROVEN INTERVENTIONS

#### INTERVENTIONS BY THREAT ADDRESSED



# GOAL 3

## Formal protection of priority habitats

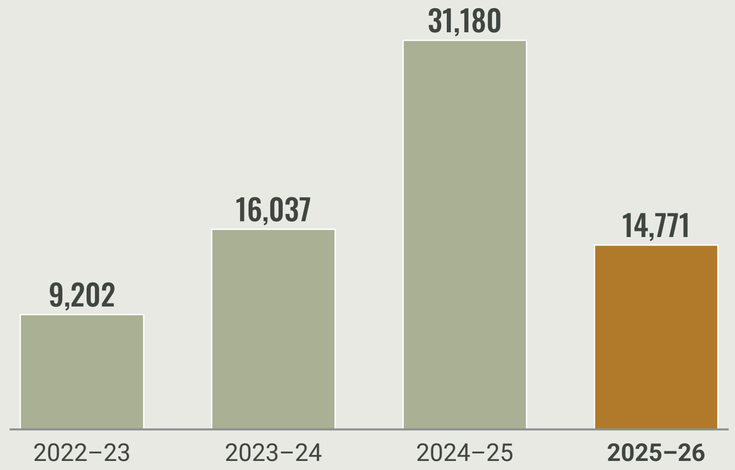
*Protecting and conserving natural places is widely recognised as one of the most important strategies for combating the effects of biodiversity loss and climate change across the planet. Through this goal, we contribute to national and global targets for protected area expansion.*

### INDICATOR 3A

Area of priority habitat with improved formal protection

**14,771** HECTARES

HECTARES BY REPORTING YEAR




*2025–26 protection type: Nature Reserve (14,771 ha)*

# GOAL 4

## Conservation actions lead to thriving species and resilient habitats

*This goal is focused on improving the status of biodiversity and rehabilitation of threatened or protected habitats.*

### INDICATOR 4A

Number of target populations with improved conservation status

**7** TARGET POPULATIONS



- Increasing or stable population **5**
- Range expansion **2**

**Species:** Cheetah, Cranes, Frogs, Reptiles, Riverine Rabbit, Vultures, Wild Dog

### INDICATOR 4B

Area of land with improved management

**1,001,575** HECTARES

| | |
|---|---|
| Improved land management for vulture conservation | 1,001,205 ha |
| Alien invasive plant management | 366.5 ha |
| Fire management | 3.5 ha |

# GOAL 5

## Conservation actions and impact drive meaningful change for the benefit of businesses and people

### INDICATOR 5A

Number of people whose well-being has directly improved

**1,527** PEOPLE

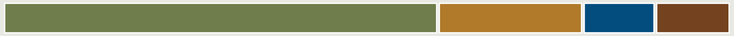


- Education **809**
- Environmental education (schools) **321**
- Training **307**
- Livelihood protection **85**
- Improved livelihoods **5**

### INDICATOR 5B

Number of businesses or agencies with improved environmental policies and/or operations

**30** BUSINESSES AND AGENCIES



- Improved environmental policies and operations **18**
- Improved operations and management of protected areas **6**
- Improved poaching screening operations **3**
- Improved species management **3**

# SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

We recognise that our sustainability credibility requires us to reflect on our own environmental footprint. In 2024/25 we formalised our sustainability initiative and identified three areas to monitor and improve: **climate, water, and biodiversity.**

## CLIMATE

We completed our first carbon footprint report, which gives us a baseline against which to measure future progress. Mobile combustion from our vehicles is our largest emissions source (Emissions Table), reflecting the field-based nature of our work.

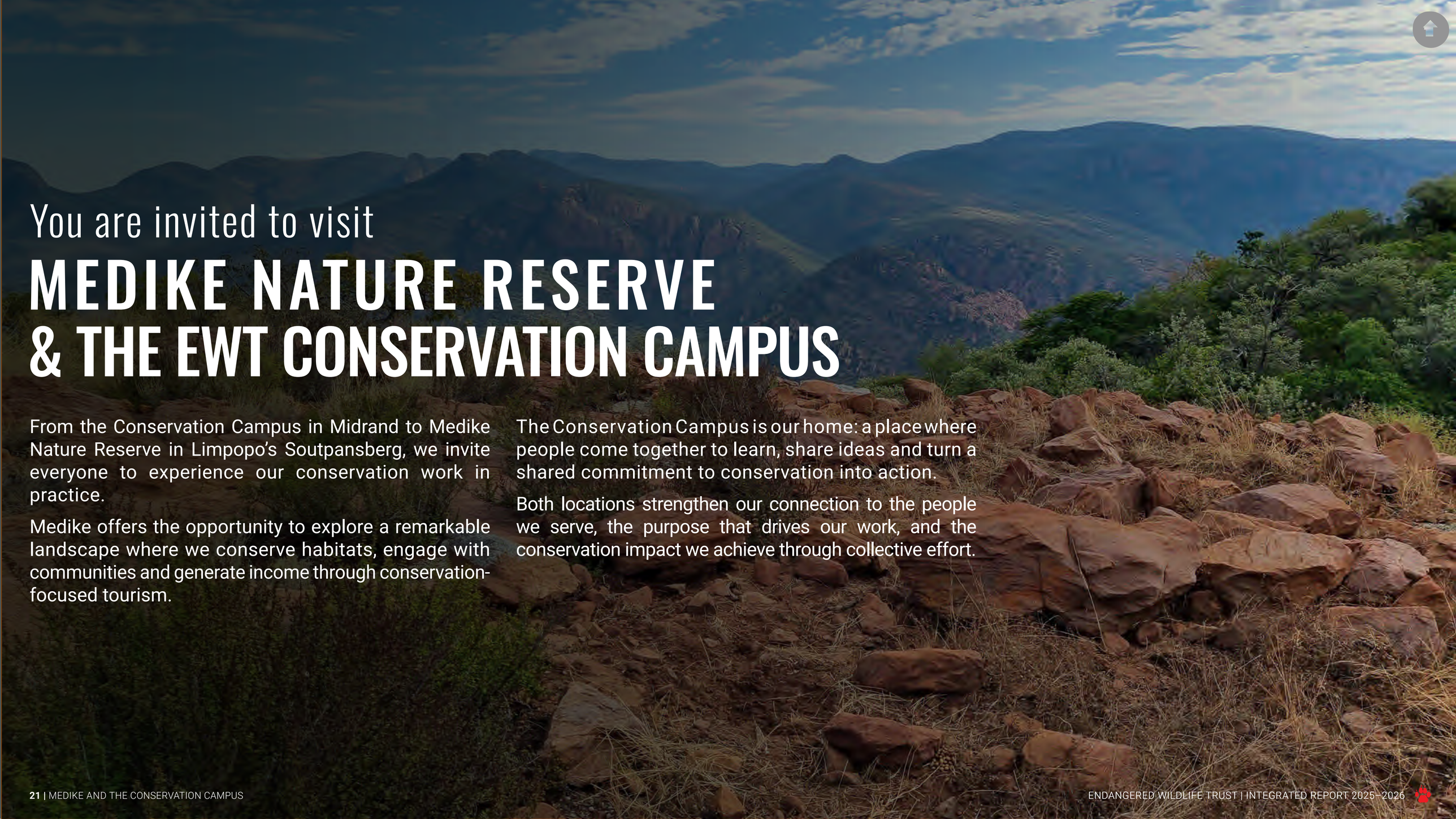
## WATER

We monitor municipal water consumption at the EWT Conservation Campus, and have installed a water meter to monitor borehole water use going forward. The focus in the near term is to reduce unnecessary water loss and improve our ability to measure consumption accurately.

## BIODIVERSITY

We monitor the condition of biodiversity and the extent of invasive alien plants on our two properties, the EWT Conservation Campus and Medike Nature Reserve. Our teams assess biodiversity condition through periodic footprint assessments, which will be updated every three years.

| Emission Category | Source of Emissions | 2024/25 Emissions (t $CO_2e$) | 2025/26 Emissions (t $CO_2e$) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Scope 1**<br>Emissions from direct EWT operations | • Stationary combustion | 5.5 | 2.7 |
| | • Mobile combustion from EWT vehicles | 277.8 | 314.9 |
| | • Fugitive emissions | - | 3.8 |
| **Scope 2**<br>Emissions from purchased energy | • Electricity purchased from Eskom | 38.3 | 46.8 |
| **Scope 3**<br>Indirect emissions occurring within the value chain, outside our direct control but as a result of our activities | • Employee commuting for work | 19.9 | 19.5 |
| | • Employee commuting to work | - | 62.43 |
| | • International flights | 140.6 | 150.2 |
| | • Domestic flights | 34.6 | 49.1 |
| | • Laptops and monitors (Dell, Microsoft & Apple) | 14 | 1.8 |
| **Total Carbon Footprint** | | **530.72** | **651.39** |



You are invited to visit

# MEDIKE NATURE RESERVE & THE EWT CONSERVATION CAMPUS

From the Conservation Campus in Midrand to Medike Nature Reserve in Limpopo's Soutpansberg, we invite everyone to experience our conservation work in practice.

Medike offers the opportunity to explore a remarkable landscape where we conserve habitats, engage with communities and generate income through conservation-focused tourism.

The Conservation Campus is our home: a place where people come together to learn, share ideas and turn a shared commitment to conservation into action.

Both locations strengthen our connection to the people we serve, the purpose that drives our work, and the conservation impact we achieve through collective effort.



Click to listen

# MEDIKE NATURE RESERVE

As an EWT-owned conservation property, Medike Nature Reserve, which spans 2,733 ha, protects the rich biodiversity of the Soutpansberg while welcoming visitors to experience this remarkable landscape. During the year, work focused on strengthening biodiversity protection, improving visitor facilities, expanding eco-tourism offerings, supporting neighbouring communities and building partnerships that contribute to the reserve's ecological and financial sustainability.

## CONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND CONSERVATION



Our Soutpansberg community outreach programme brings together traditional leaders, public representatives, and other local stakeholders to encourage shared responsibility for the environment. During the year, we planted 55 trees at schools, churches, tribal council offices, sports grounds and a local clinic, helping to create greener, healthier community spaces.

These activities also provided valuable opportunities to discuss conservation challenges with community members, including the illegal harvesting of medicinal plants, wildlife poaching and illegal fishing with nets. We invited youth groups to Medike to learn about the ecological importance of indigenous plants and the need to prevent unsustainable harvesting and bark stripping.

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

We launched a cricket development initiative for underserved rural communities neighbouring the reserve. The programme is a partnership between Cricket South Africa (CSA), the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and the EWT's Medike Nature Reserve.



Cricket South Africa sponsored two groups comprising 75 young people, with each participant receiving a monthly stipend of R1,500 for six months. In addition to developing sporting and workplace skills, the initiative introduced participants to conservation, healthy outdoor activities and local economic opportunities. More than 90 participants, many of whom had never previously visited a nature reserve, visited Medike during the year.

By supporting youth development, skills building and environmental awareness, the programme contributes to wider efforts to address unemployment, poverty, poaching and deforestation in communities surrounding the reserve.

# GROWING NATURE-BASED TOURISM



We offer guided hikes in the Soutpansberg as both a visitor experience and a practical conservation tool. Revenue from hiking can support the reserve's long-term sustainability, while the trails connect visitors with the region's biodiversity, dramatic landscapes and rich birdlife.



Tourism also creates opportunities for local guides, cultural tourism operators, accommodation providers and other small businesses. By ensuring that neighbouring communities can benefit from conservation, responsible tourism can help build lasting support for protected areas and reduce pressures that contribute to human-wildlife conflict.

# THE OLD SALT TRAIL



The Old Salt Trail continued to grow in popularity and helped strengthen Medike's relationships with partner landowners. Three groups, comprising 20 hikers, completed the technical trail during the year. Strong-flowing streams following heavy rainfall, cool winter conditions and the Soutpansberg's exceptional birdlife contributed to a memorable experience for participants.

Medike expanded its tourism marketing through listings on LekkeSlaap, Airbnb, Tripadvisor and Mad Bookings. Over the year, the reserve welcomed 50 day visitors and 217 overnight guests.

# IMPROVING VISITOR FACILITIES



We completed several upgrades to enhance visitor comfort and strengthen Medike's tourism offering. We refurbished the Log Cabin and replaced its thatched roof with durable Harvey tiles, added a new ablution block at Marula Camp and installed new septic systems at the Main House and Stone Cottage.

Additional work included clearing drainage systems, upgrading campsites and buildings, and carrying out essential road maintenance. The infrastructure programme also created opportunities for skills transfer, with two community members and two Medike staff members receiving practical training in thatching and carpentry.

# STRENGTHENING ACCESS ACROSS THE RESERVE

We made significant progress in rehabilitating the Thomas Wilson Pass Road, one of Medike's most important infrastructure projects. We installed approximately 350 railway sleepers to improve road stability, strengthen connectivity across the reserve and provide more reliable access for emergency response teams. The work also created short-term employment for nine people from the surrounding community, demonstrating how investment in reserve infrastructure can deliver benefits beyond the reserve's boundaries.






## BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

We finalised a Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of Medike to support conservation and community development. This partnership has led to the establishment of a Tree Trail. During a visit in May, members of the Friends of Medike and the Johannesburg Hiking Club planted a Mahogany Tree and a Strangler Fig at Stone Cottage, and officially opened the reserve's Tree Trail and Medicinal Plant Display Garden. A further Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Venda is expected to support revenue generation and strengthen aquatic monitoring at the reserve in the coming year.

## PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Wildlife crime in the greater Medike area includes game poaching, snaring, illegal fishing and the unsustainable harvesting of indigenous medicinal plants. Addressing these interconnected challenges requires awareness, effective law enforcement and close cooperation among conservation authorities and local communities.

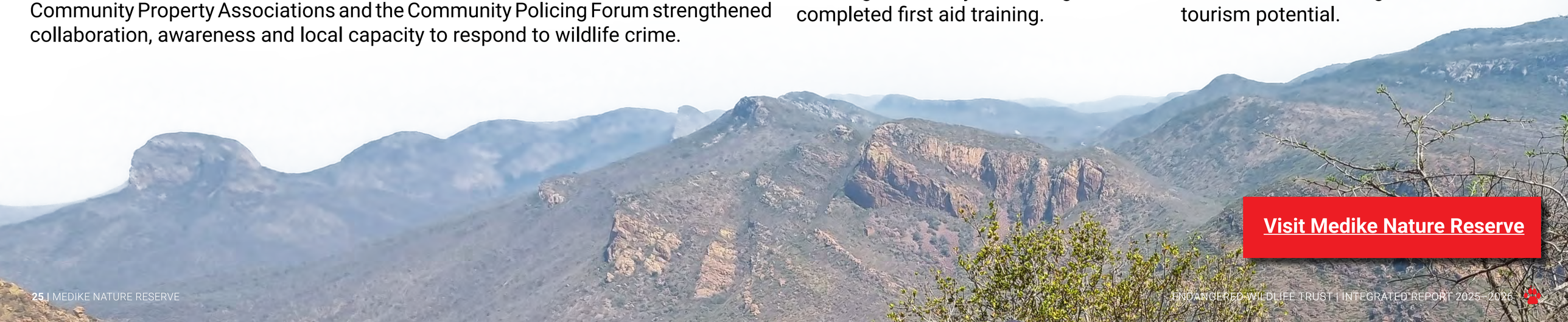
A Wildlife Offences Workshop involving the South African Police Service, local Community Property Associations and the Community Policing Forum strengthened collaboration, awareness and local capacity to respond to wildlife crime.

Medike's rangers continued to protect the reserve through monitoring and anti-poaching patrols. During the year, they removed 134 snares and two fishing nets, apprehended six illegal hunters, released 15 confiscated snakes, helped control three veld fires and continued work to remove alien invasive plants along the Sand River.

Investment in ranger development remained a priority. Three field rangers completed law enforcement training at the South African Wildlife College, while three received training in hazard identification and risk assessment, safety, health and environmental management, and legal liability. Six rangers also completed first aid training.

Ranger morale and well-being were supported through World Ranger Day activities and participation in the 21 km Wildlife Ranger Challenge, both sponsored by the Game Rangers Association of Africa.

These successes reflect Medike Nature Reserve's increasing impact, not only in conserving wildlife and habitats, but also in supporting local communities, strengthening livelihoods, and welcoming visitors through responsible tourism. The next chapter for Medike depends on sustained investment and strong partnerships to address remaining infrastructure needs and unlock the reserve's full ecological, social and tourism potential.



Visit Medike Nature Reserve



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# THE CONSERVATION CAMPUS
## FROM VISION TO REALITY

Nestled in the heart of Midrand, the EWT's Conservation Campus continues to evolve as more than a workplace. It is a refuge for conservation practitioners, a hub for collaboration, and a living demonstration of our commitment to sustainability, conservation, and people. Over the past year, the Campus has moved beyond planning and vision, delivering tangible improvements that strengthen operational resilience while creating a space where biodiversity and human well-being are both supported.

The Campus team has made significant progress towards creating a future-fit conservation facility. Continued investment in infrastructure, accessibility, renewable energy, water security, indigenous landscaping, and occupational health and safety has transformed the Campus into a more sustainable, functional, and welcoming environment for staff, visitors, and wildlife alike.

# OFF-THE-GRID AND ON PURPOSE

The Campus continued its journey towards greater energy independence through strategic investment in renewable energy infrastructure. Building on the success of the existing solar installation, we procured the solar power system components required to increase backup capacity from approximately 12 to 24 hours. Installation will take place in the coming year to significantly enhance energy security, reduce operational risks associated with power interruptions, and further strengthen the Campus's commitment to reducing its environmental footprint.

# BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE

The Conservation Campus continued to invest in strategic infrastructure improvements that enhance operational efficiency, accessibility, sustainability, and long-term resilience. We completed several major capital projects during the reporting period, strengthening essential services while improving the overall visitor and staff experience.

Key projects included the upgrade of the borehole electrical system and the installation of a water filtration system, significantly improving water security and reliability. The construction of wheelchair-accessible parking bays and ablution facilities further reinforced the Campus's commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. A retaining wall was also constructed at the main entrance, improving safety and protecting critical infrastructure.



We directed significant investment towards residential infrastructure, with RIVER Cottage undergoing a comprehensive refurbishment to enhance the quality and functionality of the residential facilities while protecting the value of Campus assets.



# LANDSCAPING THAT HEALS



A major focus during the year remained the restoration of the Campus landscape through the removal of alien invasive species and the expansion of indigenous planting. Building on the work initiated during the previous reporting period, further clearing of invasive vegetation has created additional space for habitat restoration and indigenous landscaping that reflects the ecosystems in which we work.

The vision of creating a sanctuary for both people and nature continued to take shape as indigenous vegetation became increasingly established throughout the property. Landscaped areas now provide enhanced habitat value, improve ecological integrity, and create attractive spaces where staff and visitors can engage with nature in their daily activities. The ongoing transformation of the grounds demonstrates how conservation principles can be integrated into a functional workplace environment.

# WATER SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Recognising the increasing importance of water security, we invested in improvements to both water supply and treatment infrastructure. The upgraded borehole systems and newly installed water filtration infrastructure have strengthened the Campus's resilience and reduced the impact of municipal supply interruptions. These improvements contribute directly to operational continuity while supporting our long-term sustainability goals.

Routine waste management through recycling programmes, landscape maintenance, and responsible resource use continue to support the organisation's objective of operating a conservation facility that reflects best-practice environmental stewardship.



# OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



The safety and well-being of staff, visitors, contractors, and residents remain a priority. Following the achievement of Occupational Health and Safety compliance, the Campus maintained its structured safety management programme throughout the reporting period. Regular inspections, preventative maintenance, fire equipment servicing, security system monitoring, and infrastructure assessments ensured high standards of compliance and operational readiness.

Monthly preventative maintenance was carried out across critical systems, including boreholes, solar installations, security infrastructure, floodlighting, fire protection equipment, and utility services. These have significantly improved reliability and reduced the likelihood of service disruptions.

# A CAMPUS THAT SPEAKS



The Conservation Campus is increasingly becoming a physical expression of our mission and values. What began as a vision of a sustainable conservation hub is steadily becoming reality through deliberate investment, practical action, and ongoing stewardship of the property. Enhanced infrastructure, improved accessibility, strengthened water and energy security, and continued ecological restoration have created a space that supports conservation work while demonstrating what responsible environmental management can achieve.

As the Campus continues to evolve, it serves not only as a workplace, but also as a living example of conservation in action, providing a safe, functional, and inspiring environment for staff, partners, visitors, and the wildlife that shares the landscape.

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

- Borehole electrical system upgraded.
- Water filtration system installed.
- Main entrance retaining wall constructed.
- RIVER Cottage fully refurbished.
- Solar backup components purchased for increased capacity.
- Wheelchair-accessible parking and ablution facilities completed.
- Continued alien invasive plant removal and indigenous habitat restoration.
- Ongoing preventative maintenance programme maintained across all critical infrastructure.
- Occupational Health and Safety systems maintained and strengthened.

# CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON FINANCE AND A BIODIVERSITY-POSITIVE FUTURE

## A CHANGING CLIMATE, A CONSERVATION IMPERATIVE

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Climate change is no longer a future threat. Across the globe, shifting rainfall patterns, rising temperatures, more frequent and severe extreme weather events, expanding deserts, increased wildfire risk, and accelerating ecosystem degradation are reshaping both natural and human systems. For biodiversity, these changes alter species distributions, disrupt ecological processes, and threaten the resilience of landscapes that sustain wildlife and people alike.

Since our establishment in 1973, we have evolved alongside growing scientific understanding of climate change. Today, climate resilience and adaptation are embedded within our conservation approach, recognising that biodiversity conservation and climate action are inseparable.

Many of the species and ecosystems we work to conserve are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Numerous threatened species have restricted ranges or occur in fragmented habitats, limiting their ability to adapt by moving to more suitable environments. At the same time, many of our conservation landscapes are located within South Africa's strategic water source areas, making them critical to the country's future water security. Southern Africa is expected to warm faster than the global average and faces increasing risks of drought, flooding, extreme heat, and ecosystem degradation. These impacts threaten biodiversity, agricultural production, livelihoods, and human well-being.



Our response focuses on two complementary objectives: reducing greenhouse gas emissions in ways that support biodiversity conservation and strengthening ecosystems as natural climate solutions that store carbon, regulate water, protect communities from climate impacts, and sustain economic opportunities.

# SHAPING THE CLIMATE AND NATURE AGENDA

During the year, we contributed to national discussions ahead of the 30th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP30) in Belém, Brazil. Through government-led preparatory processes and engagement with conservation, business, and policy partners, we have advocated for greater recognition of nature-based solutions as a core climate adaptation strategy and highlighted the need for increased and accessible climate finance for African landscapes. We also called for stronger alignment between the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and climate action agendas, emphasising the need for practical African case studies that demonstrate scalable and investable solutions across rangelands, water source areas, biodiversity stewardship landscapes, and energy infrastructure.



These engagements reinforced the growing recognition that climate and biodiversity challenges must be addressed together. They also highlighted the need for practical, high-integrity projects that can attract investment while delivering measurable conservation and social benefits, an area in which we are increasingly playing a leadership role.

# MITIGATION THROUGH A BIODIVERSITY-POSITIVE JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

We support the responsible expansion of renewable energy as a critical component of South Africa's Just Energy Transition, provided that development is planned and implemented in ways that avoid significant impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

During 2025/26, we reviewed and submitted technical input on 82 renewable energy development applications, helping to reduce biodiversity risks and improve environmental outcomes. Our work supports the renewable energy sector through the provision of biodiversity data and spatial planning tools, contributions to national environmental screening systems and the Threatened Species No-Go Mapping Tool, direct engagement with developers to minimise impacts, and collaboration with government on national mitigation strategies for wind energy developments.

Through our renewable energy infrastructure programme, we are helping to balance conservation, agriculture, and energy development priorities across the landscape. This work contributes directly to South Africa's progress towards the Global Biodiversity Framework's 30x30 target while supporting national renewable energy objectives and demonstrating that climate mitigation can be both biodiversity-positive and socially responsible.

# NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS, CARBON FINANCE AND SUSTAINABLE RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Alongside mitigation efforts, we are advancing nature-based climate solutions that strengthen ecosystem resilience while generating sustainable conservation finance. Carbon finance has become an increasingly important mechanism for supporting conservation and sustainable land management, while also contributing to diversified funding streams for biodiversity protection. These initiatives are guided by scientific integrity, equitable benefit-sharing, and robust governance.

## DRAKENSBERG CARBON PROJECT

Click to listen

The Drakensberg Carbon Project reached a significant milestone during the reporting period. Implemented in partnership with the International Crane Foundation (ICF) and carbon developer WeAct, the project secured the issuance of Verified Carbon Units (VCUs) under Verra's Verified Carbon Standard following four years of development, implementation, and independent verification. Covering approximately 90,000 ha of priority grassland landscapes, the project delivered verified sequestration of 805,971 tonnes of $CO_2e$ between 2018 and 2023.



In December 2025, the project sold its first carbon credits and distributed the proceeds to participating landowners and conservation partners. This marked the first tangible financial return generated through the project and demonstrated the potential of carbon finance to support sustainable agricultural production, grassland conservation, and the protection of threatened species, including Wattled, Blue, and Grey Crowned Cranes.

The partnership between the EWT, ICF, and WeAct continued to strengthen as the project entered its next phase. During early 2026, engagement with additional landowners commenced to explore participation in the second monitoring period, broadening the project's reach across the landscape. To support this growth, we expanded our technical capacity, strengthening our ability to implement carbon projects, promote regenerative rangeland management, and deepen stewardship engagement with participating landowners. These investments position us to link carbon project delivery more effectively with broader biodiversity and landscape conservation outcomes.



# ASSESSING FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH ReLISA

Through the IKI-supported Restoring Landscapes in South Africa (ReLISA) project, consortium partners assessed the feasibility of a large-scale soil carbon initiative in the Northern Drakensberg. A pre-feasibility study evaluated approximately 585,000 ha of grassland and agricultural landscapes and identified Verra's VM0042 Improved Agricultural Land Management methodology as the most suitable framework for a potential project.

Preliminary modelling indicated that improved land management practices could deliver net climate benefits of approximately 1.1 to 3.1 million tonnes of $CO_2e$ over a 20-year period. While these estimates do not represent verified sequestration or issued carbon credits, they highlight the potential scale of future climate and conservation benefits. The assessment also identified opportunities to contribute to food security, education, water stewardship, climate resilience, and stronger local institutions.

Farmer consultations and landscape assessments informed the study, followed by an initial round of soil sampling on selected farms in June 2026. The findings will contribute to a final feasibility report and strengthen the evidence base for evaluating future soil carbon opportunities in the region.



# STRENGTHENING ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE




Recognising the growing importance of carbon markets and climate finance, we established a Carbon Task Team to develop a coherent organisational approach to carbon opportunities aligned with the Future Fit Strategy. The initiative responds to the increasing number of carbon-related opportunities across ecosystems and the need to assess them consistently against scientific, social, financial, and reputational criteria.

Led jointly by the African Crane Conservation Programme and the Sustainable Finance Unit, the Task Team is developing a strategic framework and implementation roadmap to guide project selection, partnerships, financing mechanisms, and risk management. The framework will establish safeguards relating to carbon integrity, biodiversity outcomes, land and resource rights, equitable benefit-sharing, and organisational accountability. It will align our carbon portfolio with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and support South Africa's Just Energy Transition, positioning us to participate credibly in emerging markets for nature-positive climate finance.



# LOOKING AHEAD

In the coming year, we will continue to strengthen our role at the intersection of climate action and biodiversity conservation. Priorities include expanding the Drakensberg Carbon Project by a further 100,000 ha, reviewing the findings of the ReLISA feasibility assessment, advancing and finalising the organisational Carbon Strategy, and continuing to support a biodiversity-positive Just Energy Transition. As climate impacts intensify, our focus remains on delivering practical solutions that protect species and ecosystems, support landowners and communities, strengthen climate resilience, and secure sustainable funding for conservation. By integrating science, policy, innovation, and partnerships, we are helping to build a future in which both people and nature can thrive in a changing climate.

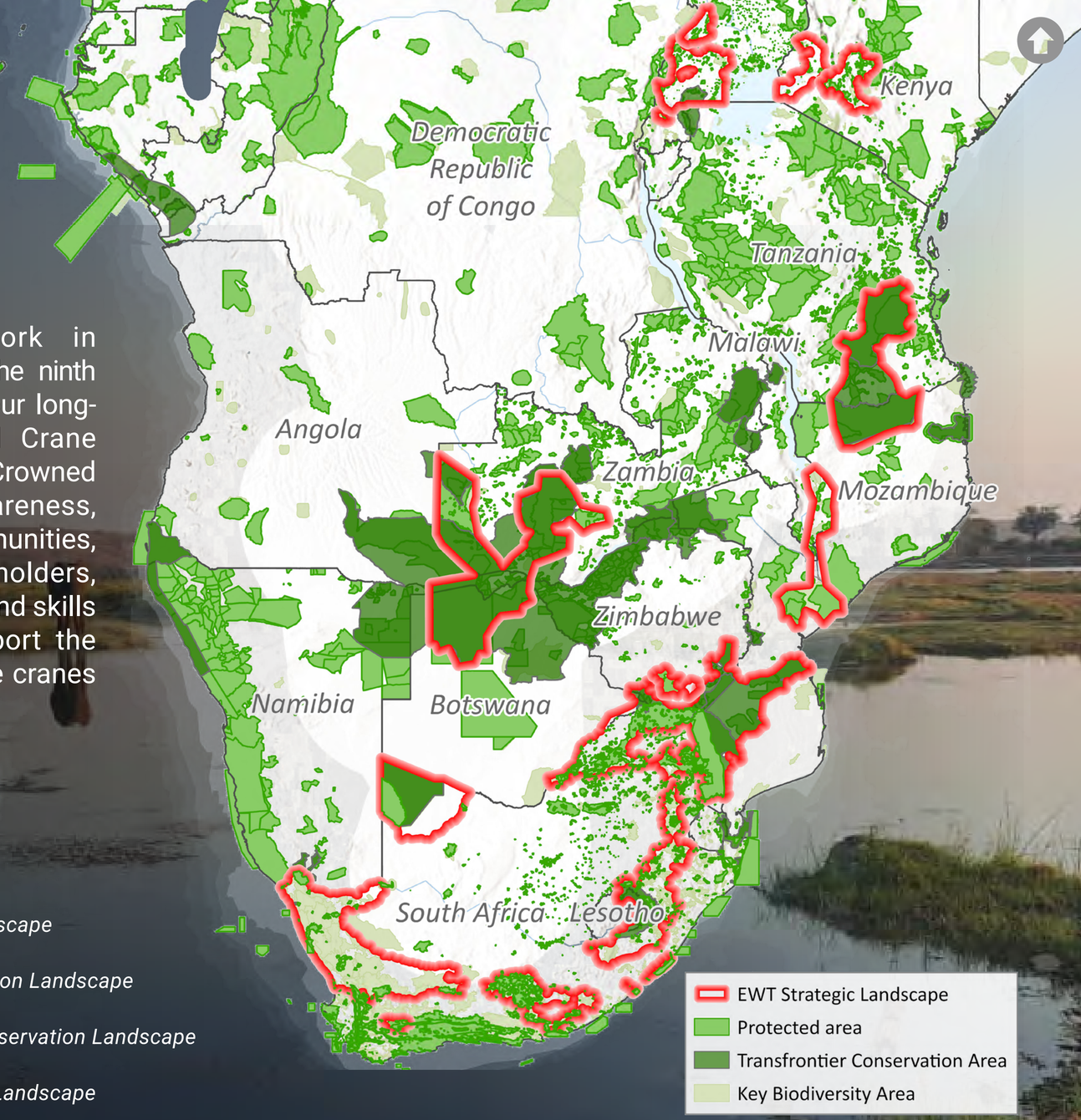
Expansion of our climate and carbon portfolio will continue to be guided by evidence of feasibility, delivery capacity, strong governance, and alignment with our conservation mandate.



# CONSERVATION
## ACROSS LANDSCAPES

Our Strategic Conservation Landscapes anchor our long-term conservation action across southern and East Africa. They allow us to bring species protection, habitat conservation and collaboration with people together at a scale that delivers lasting impact. Each landscape has distinct conservation needs and opportunities. We combine science, field expertise, local knowledge and partnerships to guide our response, drawing on our Strategic Conservation Approaches where specialist expertise is needed.

This report covers our work in eight of the nine landscapes. The ninth landscape reflects the work of our long-term partner, the International Crane Foundation, to conserve Grey Crowned Cranes, raise conservation awareness, secure partnerships with communities, governments and other stakeholders, develop sustainable livelihoods and skills in local communities and support the growth of rural economies where cranes survive.

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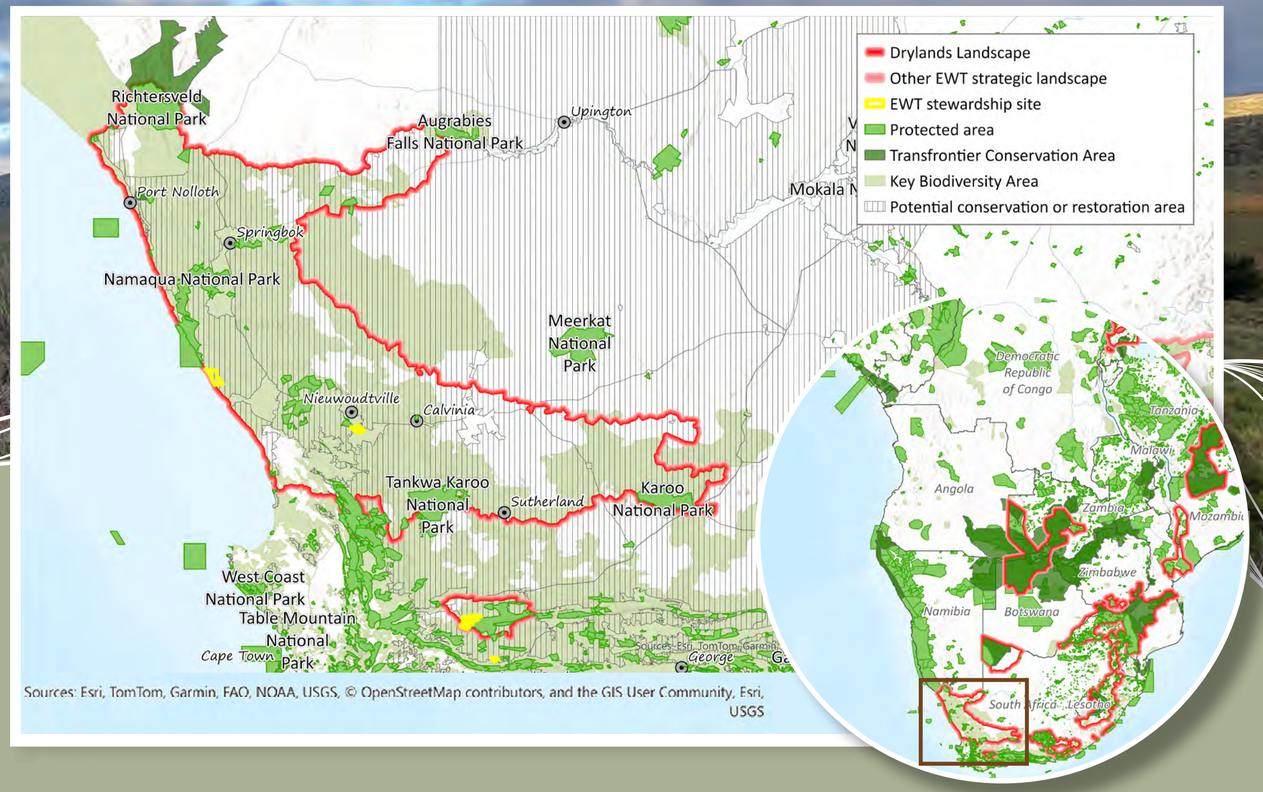
# DRYLANDS
## STRATEGIC CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE




Covering 11,026,792.09 ha (**110,268 km²**) across the Succulent Karoo, parts of the Nama Karoo, and South Africa's West Coast, the Drylands form one of the country's **most expansive and ecologically important landscapes**. Despite extreme heat, low rainfall, and water scarcity, these arid ecosystems are home to remarkable and often endangered species, ranging from Riverine Rabbits and golden moles to dwarf tortoises, birds of prey, freshwater fish, and rare succulent plants.

Our work here focuses on **building climate resilience, protecting threatened species, and supporting the natural systems that local communities rely on** for survival. We have worked closely with these communities to strengthen conservation-based livelihoods and land stewardship, benefiting both people and biodiversity. Cross-cutting strategies include efforts to **reduce the impact of expanding energy infrastructure on wildlife, inform and minimise the impact of destructive mining, improve legal protection for threatened species and habitats, and develop sustainable finance mechanisms to support long-term conservation.**

**11,026,792.09 ha**
Total landscape size

**15,500+ ha**
Declared as Nature Reserves

**98 Lizards**
Rescued and Released

**11,328 ha**
Proposed for Conservation Protection

## KEY SPECIES

- Dwarf Tortoises
- Golden Moles
- Succulent Plants
- Freshwater Fishes
- Birds of Prey
- Bustards
- Riverine Rabbit
- Reptiles
- Amphibians
- Invertebrates

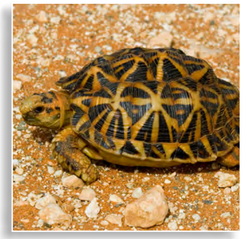
## THREATS

- Climate Change Impacts
- Land Degradation
- Invasive Species
- Unsustainable Development
- Water Security

# IMPACT



With our support, Lokenburg Farm registered a **4,500 ha conservation servitude**, providing additional habitat protection for the **Endangered Speckled Dwarf Tortoise**. The landscape team also implemented **Pied Crow population management** on the servitude and other properties to reduce crow densities. Crows have used structures, such as electricity poles, to move into the drylands, where they prey heavily on this Endangered species. The team visited additional sites in the Bokkeveld to identify other Speckled Dwarf Tortoise populations and to raise awareness of the species. A **five-day team-building and field survey excursion improved monitoring** of dwarf tortoises at two sites last surveyed in 2023. Ten skilled surveyors detected low numbers of live individuals at only one site, emphasising the critical status of these elusive, diminutive dryland tortoises.

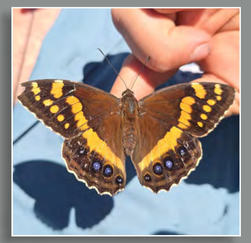


Using **DNA metabarcoding,** we are characterising the diet of the **Critically Endangered Geometric Tortoise** through an MSc study with Stellenbosch University. This is the **first study of its kind** for this species, and the research will help confirm important habitat for its protection. The species' precarious conservation status was further undermined by an **alarming number of mortalities**, with an extreme heat wave suspected as the cause. An emergency search and rescue was conducted to locate live tortoises in distress and ensure rehydration, while carcasses were collected to determine the cause of death.

With funding from Nature Connect, we sent three **Touws River youths** to attend **brush cutter and chainsaw skills development courses** in Cape Town.



The **conservation K9 team** collaborated on a **three-week biodiversity crime prevention operation** to combat the illegal trade in **succulents and reptiles**. The importance of these joint operations was showcased in the documentary *Vet Vannie Land* at the Silwerskerm Film Festival.



The team presented a *Fynbos and Butterflies* Table Mountain Fund project at the 2025 Fynbos Forum, enabling us to **highlight the importance of conserving** these otherwise overlooked localised and threatened invertebrates.



We assisted the Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform (DAERL) and other partners in **releasing 98 Armadillo Girdled Lizards**, confiscated from illegal pet traders, back into the wild. This was the first such release on record.



**Cape Stag Beetles** are among **South Africa's most threatened insects.** Through extensive multi-day field surveys, we confirmed a substantial **range extension of Nagai's Cape Stag Beetle**, with records at least **16 km west and 10 km east** of its previously known range in the Langeberg Mountains, indicating that its distribution is far broader than previously thought. A subsequent High-Altitude Species Workshop in the Langeberg allowed us to present these results to **15 landowners and discuss protected area expansion** options for those properties where Cape Stag Beetles were positively confirmed.



We partnered with the **Orange River Karoo Conservation Area** (ORKCA) to survey the northern bank of the Orange River in Namibia. Recording **212 invertebrate species**, we highlighted the **role of invertebrates in drylands conservation**. The team also documented the **first record of the Augrabies Flat Lizard in Namibia,** a species previously thought to be endemic to South Africa.



**Integrating advanced data analysis with field validation** ensures that protected area expansion targets in the Drylands can be refined to allow for more **targeted landowner engagements** in focal areas. Further field validation, through **BioBlitz assessments** across **six properties (11,328 ha),** allowed the team to present four of the candidate properties to the DAERL Stewardship Review Committee, recommending nature reserve status. Two of these properties have already been assessed and received **approval for nature reserve status.**



Two field trips targeting the **Endangered Kasner's Dwarf Burrowing Skink** produced **five new records**. These included the first record of this species in a nature reserve and the westernmost confirmed occurrence to date. We also recorded a **range extension for the Klipheuwel Caco**, another highly localised and threatened frog species from the West Coast near Malmesbury. These records allow us to **develop targeted conservation plans** for these threatened species.



We supported the declaration of five new nature reserves covering more than **14,771 ha in the Klein Karoo,** securing vital habitat and strengthening biodiversity protection. The team's protected area landowner extension support was strengthened through a dedicated training workshop, enabling more **confident engagement with landowners** to guide improved conservation practices within declared private protected areas.





We **launched the EWT Safe Space Project**. This community-led initiative will foster **cooperation among communities, partners, and landowners in priority succulent plant areas** to ensure successful project implementation. Through the Northern Cape Community Livelihoods Workshop, hosted by TRAFFIC, we helped develop a shared roadmap for stakeholders to explore **sustainable livelihood alternatives**, to reduce reliance on succulent plant poaching. This builds resilience through evidence-based, inclusive, and economically viable interventions. Linking this to the **Restorative Justice process,** a project scoping report was completed, highlighting existing entities that can serve as project partners. We also **reviewed and updated five awareness-raising restorative justice resources** (aimed at victims, law enforcement, prosecutors, communities, and general guidelines) that are being translated into Afrikaans and isiXhosa.



We expanded population monitoring of the **Endangered Riverine Rabbit**. In the Anysberg area, Riverine Rabbits were recorded on a property neighbouring those already protected, thereby confirming the species' presence and fostering community partnerships and involvement by encouraging **local youths and landowners to learn** about their environment.

# CHALLENGES

The Drylands SCL is making measurable progress, but climate stress, biodiversity crime, socio-economic pressures, and sustainability of stewardship remain the most pressing challenges.

### Species Vulnerability:

Threatened species such as the Riverine Rabbit, dwarf tortoises, golden moles and Cape Stag Beetles remain at high risk despite monitoring advances and targeted conservation actions.

### Community Livelihoods:

Reliance on unsustainable practices persists; alternative livelihoods are being piloted but need scaling.

### Climate Change:

Extreme heat, drought, and shifting rainfall patterns threaten species survival and water security.

### Monitoring Limitations:

Even with advanced tools like DNA metabarcoding and scent-detection dogs, surveys often detect low numbers of threatened species, complicating population baseline analyses.

### Illegal Wildlife Trade:

Succulents and reptiles are heavily targeted, requiring strong enforcement and community cooperation.

### Infrastructure Pressures:

Expanding energy and development projects fragment habitats and increase predation risks.

### Stewardship Sustainability:

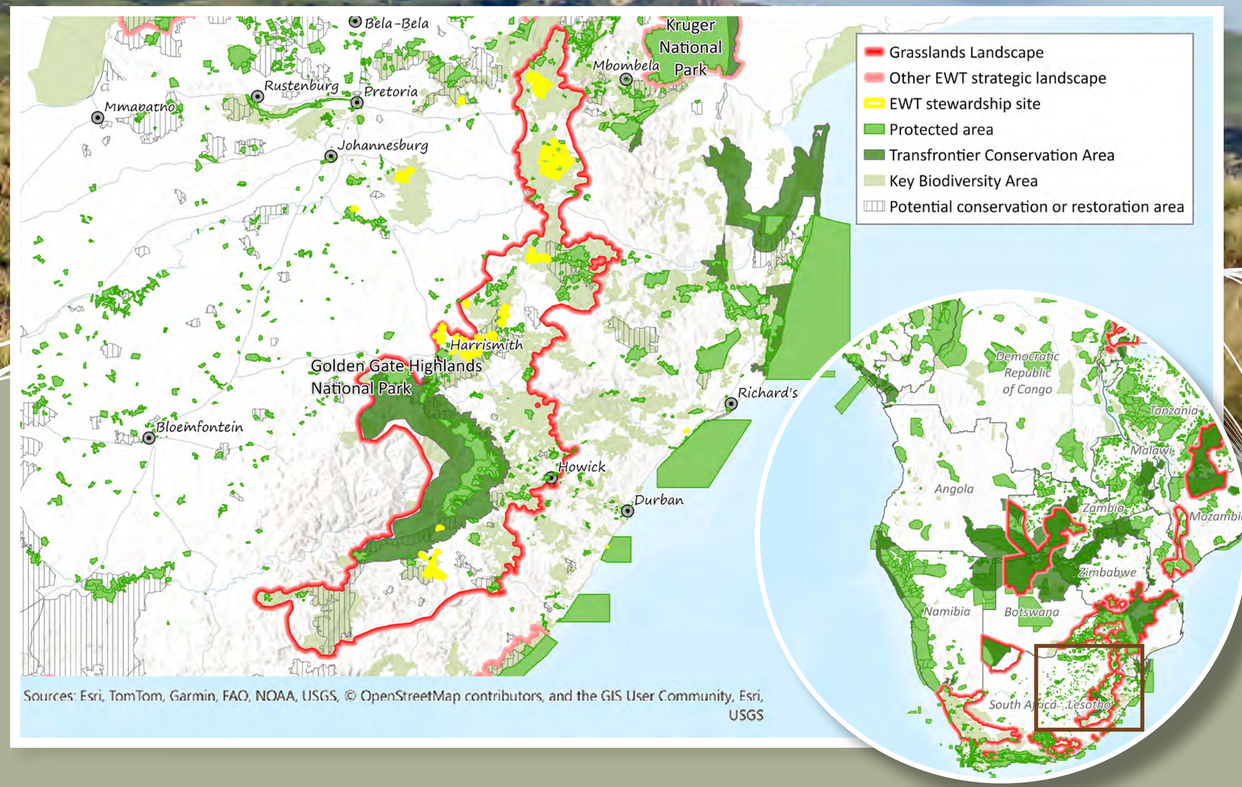
Securing land is a milestone, but maintaining long-term landowner commitment and financing is difficult.

### Policy and Enforcement Gaps:

Legal protection and enforcement capacity remain limited.

Click to listen

# DRAKENSBERG
## STRATEGIC CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE




The Drakensberg Grasslands Strategic Conservation Landscape spans 6,956,497.26 ha across the **mountainous regions of KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, the Free State, the Eastern Cape and eastern Lesotho**, and is one of the region's **most biodiverse and culturally significant areas**. These high-altitude grasslands are home to a suite of unique and threatened species, such as Bearded Vultures, Wattled Cranes, and Sungazer lizards. They also hold deep cultural value, from ancient San rock art to sacred Basotho sites. The region plays a vital role in **securing water for millions of people downstream, storing carbon, stabilising soil, and buffering the impacts of climate change.**

In this landscape we work to **protect grasslands and wetlands, restore ecological function, and support the people** who depend on these ecosystems. We collaborate with landowners, farmers, and communities to promote sustainable grazing, reduce invasive species, and strengthen land stewardship practices that benefit both people and biodiversity. **Conservation corridors and wetland protection** help safeguard threatened species while ensuring healthy ecosystem services. In addition to driving this work on the ground, we are working to **align biodiversity goals with agricultural livelihoods, strengthen environmental protections through legal support, and develop sustainable finance models that support long-term restoration.**

**6,956,497.26 ha**
Total Landscape Size

**805,971**
Tonnes of $CO_2$ Sequestered

**1,162**
People Benefiting

**100,000 ha**
Targeted for Restoration by 2030

## KEY SPECIES

- Cranes
- Birds of Prey
- Threatened Endemic Birds
- Reptiles
- Amphibians

## THREATS

- Habitat Transformation
- Unsustainable Development
- Climate Change Impacts
- Agricultural Mismanagement
- Mining

# IMPACT



Working with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, our annual Drakensberg aerial crane survey estimated the numbers of **Wattled, Blue, and Grey Crowned Cranes in the Drakensberg**. Of 48 Wattled Crane nests monitored to completion, 54% of pairs failed to produce a fledgling. A total of **14 fledglings were recorded**, yielding a fledging rate of only 0.3 fledglings per pair, similar to the 2024/25 season, but significantly lower than the 2018 to 2021 estimates (0.5). Results indicate an urgent need to expand landowner extension work to **reduce disturbance and other threats** to breeding Wattled Cranes in the agricultural landscape.



The team recorded **84 Wattled Crane nests** this season and of these, we monitored 75 nests in the Drakensberg using a drone. We also **ringed eight Wattled Crane chicks, the most in nearly a decade**, enabling us to collect resighting data to study survival, bird movements, and other aspects of crane population dynamics.



Our Sustainable Finance team **assessed biochar opportunities from cleared alien trees in the Drakensberg**. In viable areas, biochar can be an effective way to **sustainably fund ongoing clearing of alien trees and restoration work,** while providing local job opportunities and skills development.

In partnership with the International Crane Foundation and WeAct, we reached a significant milestone by implementing the **first carbon offset project**, for which Verra issued Verified Carbon Units (VCUs). The project covers **90,000 ha of grassland, sequestering 805,971 tonnes of $CO_2$** from the atmosphere and improving the condition of those grasslands. These VCUs have now been **sold for almost USD 1 million**, with proceeds distributed to the participating landowners and project implementers, while the EWT/ICF portion of earnings is being reinvested into the conservation of this landscape. Beyond its climate impact, the project supports climate resilience in key agricultural landscapes and improves habitat condition and resilience for threatened species and ecosystem services.





An aerial survey in **Mpumalanga** during the Wattled Crane breeding season found that **only two Wattled Crane breeding sites remain** in the province. We returned to the two nest sites and placed transmitters on the chicks and have been collecting movement data. No flocks were recorded, which is concerning, as this was formerly a stronghold outside of KwaZulu-Natal.

The ReLISA (Restoring Landscapes in South Africa) project started in February 2025 and formally launched in October 2025. This ambitious initiative aims to **restore 100,000 ha of degraded land** across the grassland, savannah and thicket biomes by 2030. We work with strategic support from the other consortium members, including UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO and CSIR. The EWT ReLISA team made good progress with landowners around the Sterkfontein Dam Nature Reserve in the Free State to **declare their properties as Protected Environments**. This will increase the Protected Environment footprint of the northern Drakensberg by **15,000 ha.** These farms provide habitat for several threatened species, including **White-backed Vultures and Sungazers.** C4 EcoSolutions and Unique's pre-feasibility report for the northern Drakensberg identified carbon project opportunities within the landscape, focusing on grazing and fire management to increase soil carbon sequestration, combat climate change, and help restore habitats.



In the Kiepersol Protected Environment, we developed an **alien plant-clearing plan for ReLISA** to support work through a small grants fund covering manual labour and drone operations, identifying **120 ha of alien invasive plant stands for removal.**







Through our targeted alien invasive plant clearing and restoration work in the eastern Free State, in the headwaters of the Vaal River catchment, our teams have **cleared and begun post-clearing rehabilitation of 620 ha of grassland, wetland, and riparian habitats.** We have employed and trained **32 previously unemployed local people across a range of disciplines,** from financial literacy to qualifications as chainsaw operators, and health and safety representatives. We are **testing agricultural drones** to spray high-density alien plant invasions as a cost-saving measure. Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa funds this work through the Global Water Challenge facility as a water offset for bottling plants sourced from the Vaal River catchment. The KwaZulu-Natal Biodiversity Stewardship Working Group approved **two new Biodiversity Stewardship sites.** These cover 3,900 ha of high-**biodiversity grasslands and wetlands** near Cedarville in southern KwaZulu-Natal, and include **nesting sites for Wattled, Grey Crowned, and Blue Cranes.** The landowners will include these properties in the existing carbon offset project. We presented four additional properties to the Working Group, representing an additional **4,610 ha expansion of protected environments,** and received approval to proceed with the protected environment declaration process.



Working with partner communities, we **protected three springs** and installed water reticulation infrastructure to lead the water from the springs to **140 households, benefiting 1,162 individuals.** One of the communities (420 people) was entirely reliant on a local farm dam for their water. The dam was shared with livestock and often had poor-quality water. This supply has now been replaced by clean spring water.

Our community partners in the KwaMkhize area of the Drakensberg are **independently applying spring-protection** techniques they have learned through the team's work with them. Natural springs provide **essential potable water to local residents** but often require protection from degradation that could compromise people's water security.



# CHALLENGES

This landscape is critical for freshwater production and the key challenges therefore link closely to the protection of intact ecosystem functioning. These include, but are not limited to:

### Species Vulnerability:

Threatened and habitat specialist species like the Yellow-breasted Pipit, Sungazer lizards and the three crane species remain at high risk despite targeted conservation actions.

### Unsustainable Agricultural Practices:

Progressive habitat degradation through overgrazing and overly frequent or unseasonal burning leads to long-term and irreversible ecosystem damage.

### Climate Change:

Extreme heat, drought, and shifting rainfall patterns threaten species survival and water security.

### Invasive Alien Plants:

Extensive stands of invasive alien trees cover key catchment areas and eradication of these large infestations is effectively impossible but targeted clearing of critical areas is feasible with adequate resources.

### Community Livelihoods:

Reliance on unsustainable practices persists.

### Infrastructure Pressures:

Expanding energy and development projects fragment habitats and increase predation risks.

### Stewardship Sustainability:

Securing land is a milestone, but maintaining long-term landowner commitment and financing is difficult.

### Policy and Enforcement Gaps:

Legal protection and enforcement capacity remain limited.



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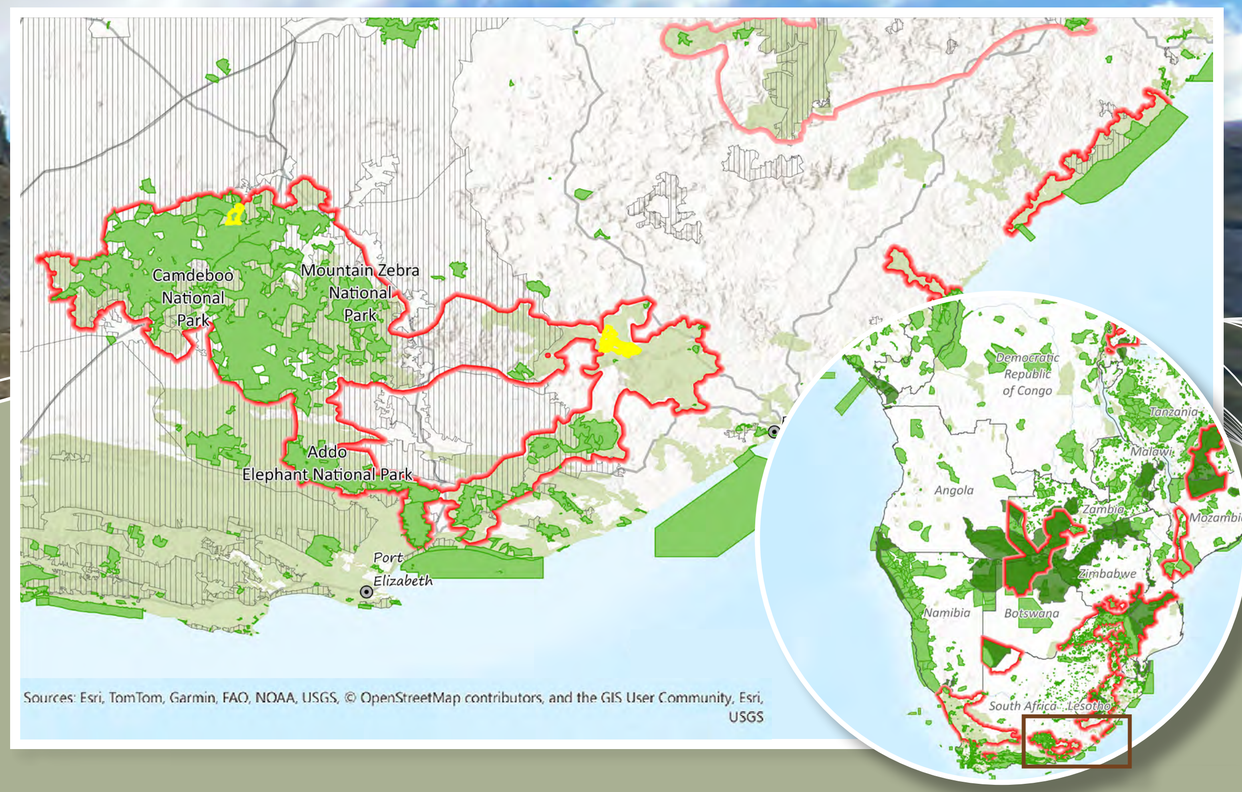
# EASTERN CAPE
## STRATEGIC CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE




The Eastern Cape Strategic Conservation Landscape is one of South Africa's most diverse and ecologically rich regions. Stretching across 3,184,468.72 ha from the semi-arid Karoo to lush forests and coastal grasslands along the Wild Coast, this landscape is home to more than 7,000 plant species and a wide variety of wildlife, including the Big Five, Cape Vulture, Amathole Toad, Hogsback Dainty Frog and the Endangered Albany Adder. These ecosystems support both people and biodiversity, but face growing threats from habitat loss, land degradation, and a changing climate.

Our work in this landscape is **rooted in collaboration with local communities**, landowners, and conservation partners. Together, we are working to **restore forest and grassland habitats, protect vital water sources, and help people adapt** to climate impacts. The focus is on approaches that strengthen livelihoods while caring for the land. This includes supporting sustainable farming, reconnecting fragmented habitats through conservation corridors, and improving the health of ecosystems that people rely on every day.

The Eastern Cape's ecosystems provide vital services like **water catchment, soil fertility, and carbon storage**, directly supporting a**griculture, eco-tourism, and thousands of jobs.** Water sources sustain urban and agricultural needs, while healthy soils bolster livestock and crop farming. Wildlife reserves attract international tourists, creating employment in guiding, hospitality, and conservation. However, habitat loss, climate change, and unsustainable development threaten biodiversity, natural resources, and livelihoods essential to human well-being.

**3,184,468.72 ha**
Total landscape size

**7 Cheetahs**
Relocated for Population Management

**735,000 ha**
Committed to Vulture Safety

**8,000+ ha**
Earmarked for Conservation Protection

## KEY SPECIES

- Birds of Prey
- Amphibians
- Carnivores
- Reptiles (Albany Adder)

## THREATS

- Habitat Fragmentation
- Unsustainable Farming
- Alien Plant Infestation
- Renewable Energy Development
- Unsustainable Harvesting

# IMPACT

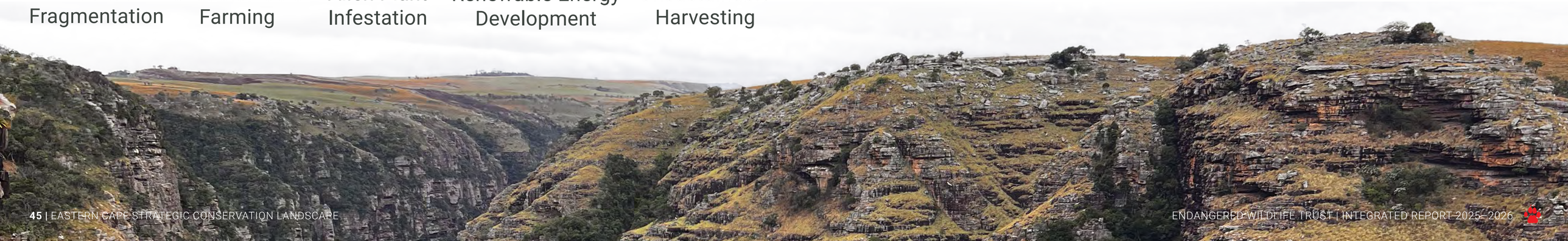



To help develop our landscape strategy, we met with stakeholders, including the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency, local conservation NPOs and local communities. **Conservation opportunities have subsequently been identified that we are uniquely placed to address**. This strategy will expand our strategic footprint in the Eastern Cape beyond our substantial existing investment into the Amathole and Great Karoo Wilderness regions.



In **the Amatholes**, we are in the final stages of declaring the **Sweetgrass Nature Reserve**, a crucial connective link within the landscape. The proposed nature reserve will cover some **1,631 ha, encompassing important grassland and wetland habitats** that support the **Critically Endangered Amathole Toad.** We also engaged five new landowners to discuss the potential for protected area declaration and habitat restoration. This nature reserve will be the **first formally declared area** in the Amatholes. These areas could add **more than 8,000 ha to the protected area network.** Notably, the proposed expanded area will **link the Elandsberg, Gaikaskop and Hogsback mountains.**

We are also exploring solutions, with landowners and the Nassella Research Group, to **strategically manage the invasive grass, Nassella Tussock,** which is negatively impacting the grasslands in the region.



Our team is engaging with landowners about the potential to **link the Amathole Conservation Landscape with the Great Karoo Wilderness**. To date, landowners covering **more than 10,000 ha** have shown a keen interest, and this engagement has only just begun.



We focus on **Protected Area Expansion** for the endemic and **Endangered Albany Adder** at the Grassridge site. Here, we are in extended negotiations with PPC Cement, the landowner, towards avoiding further development and securing this critical area as a **formal protected area for this unique snake** and the many other threatened and endemic species in this threatened habitat type.

As of February 2026, landowners have committed **735,000 ha to Vulture Safe Zones**, of which some 10,000 ha have been fully classified as 'Vulture Safe'. We regularly conduct **compliance audits** to ensure landowners continue to abide by their original 'Vulture Safe Zone' agreements.





We continue to be heavily involved in the **Bearded Vulture Task Force (BVTF)** and have assisted in the monitoring of **key nesting sites** within the Eastern Cape, as well as co-developing a **communications strategy** for more efficient and impactful community outreach, education and awareness drives.

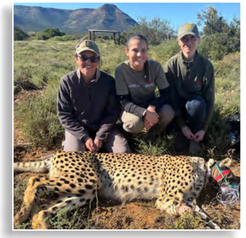
**Unsafe power line infrastructure** remains the **primary constraint on expanding Vulture Safe Zones**. We, therefore, prioritise municipal engagement and the development of incident heat maps to identify bird collision and electrocution hotspots. These guide the **deployment of mitigation measures** to reduce these impacts, such as **power line flappers and raptor protectors.** This includes establishing a working relationship with the Blue Crane Municipality on power line safety, moving beyond the successful EWT/Eskom partnership.







We continue to drive efforts to **reduce the threat of lead poisoning in vultures** through the Lead Task Team and the "Battle of the Bullets" awareness drive in collaboration with BirdLife SA. We hosted an event in Graaff-Reinet in April, following the original event in 2022, and have seen a **significant shift in mindset and practice** towards **lead-free ammunition** in the Karoo.



Our Carnivore Conservation Unit's **Cheetah metapopulation management** has contributed to **strengthening breeding populations** in the Eastern Cape whilst focusing on ensuring overpopulation does not result in lower tolerance of Cheetah by farmers within the wider landscape. Our team **relocated seven sub-adult Cheetahs** from Eastern Cape reserves, five of which were relocated to **strengthen populations within the Savannah** Strategic Conservation Landscape, helping to proactively manage growing populations and **reduce the potential for conflict** on neighbouring properties. As Cheetah populations in the landscape become increasingly related, a new coalition was introduced to an Eastern Cape reserve, **bringing new genetics into the regional population**. This forms part of a broader genetic and demographic management approach aimed at reducing inbreeding and overpopulation risks, while encouraging inter-provincial movements where possible. Increasing reports of Cheetahs moving through and breeding on farmland, particularly within the Great Karoo Wilderness, have highlighted the need for proactive conflict mitigation. In November, we convened a dedicated Cheetah Advisory Group meeting in the Eastern Cape and established a WhatsApp reporting line for metapopulation reserves to consolidate landowner reports and support appropriate, coordinated responses. The team engaged with landowners and reserve managers on potential management strategies.

# CHALLENGES

The major challenges facing this landscape are extensive, but through strategic conservation interventions, these will be systematically addressed across the landscape. The challenges include:

### Species Vulnerability:

Endangered species like the Amathole Toads, Albany Adders, Blue Cranes and Cape Vultures remain at high risk despite monitoring advances and targeted conservation actions.

### Unsustainable Agricultural Practices:

Progressive habitat degradation through overgrazing and overly frequent or unseasonal burning leads to long-term and irreversible ecosystem damage.

### Infrastructure Pressures:

Expanding energy and development projects fragment habitats and increasingly have direct impact through turbine and power line collision risk for large birds.

### Invasive Alien Plants:

Extensive stands of invasive alien trees cover key catchment areas and eradication of these large infestations is effectively impossible but targeted clearing of critical areas is feasible with adequate resources.

### Community Livelihoods:

Reliance on unsustainable practices persists.

### Climate Change:

Extreme heat, drought, and shifting rainfall patterns threaten species survival and water security.

### Stewardship Sustainability:

Formally securing land is a milestone, but maintaining long-term landowner commitment and financing is difficult.

### Policy and Enforcement Gaps:

Legal protection and enforcement capacity remain limited.



# KGALAGADI
## STRATEGIC CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE




**The Kgalagadi Strategic Conservation Landscape spans more than 5,913,514.57 ha across Botswana and South Africa, forming one of Africa's largest and least disturbed conservation landscapes**. This vast, arid region supports iconic wildlife such as Lions, Cheetahs, Brown Hyaenas, and more than 300 bird species, including birds of prey and regionally threatened and endemic raptors. It is also a **refuge for threatened species** such as the African Wild Dog and Temminck's Pangolin. The landscape holds d**eep cultural significance for the !Khomani San people**, whose traditional knowledge and sustainable practices are integral to the region's long-term survival.

The **The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (KTP) is a cornerstone of our landscape strategy, thanks to its relatively undisturbed ecosystem and exceptional biodiversity.** Our work in the Kgalagadi focuses on **monitoring and protecting threatened species, reducing the impact of illegal wildlife trade, and supporting protected area management.** We work with communities and partners to **promote nature-based livelihoods** that honour local knowledge, while strengthening eco-tourism models that contribute to both conservation and employment.

**5,913,514.57 ha**
Total landscape size

**107 Lions**
Recorded in Population Survey

**10 Wild Dogs**
Moved to Support Species Recovery

**2026–2027**
Lion Population Reassessment Planned

## KEY SPECIES

- Birds of Prey
- Carnivores
- Reptiles

## THREATS

- Climate Change Impacts
- Mining
- Unsustainable Harvesting
- Poaching
- Overgrazing
- Human-wildlife Conflict

# IMPACT



To assess the health of Kgalagadi's Lion population, we conducted the **first Lion survey in the Kgalagadi National Park in nearly 15 years**. The Carnivore Conservation Unit identified **107 adult Lions**, yielding a scientifically robust population estimate to guide SANParks' long-term management. Preliminary results indicate a **slight decline since the last assessment**. A follow-up assessment is planned for 2026 to 2027 to establish ongoing population trends.

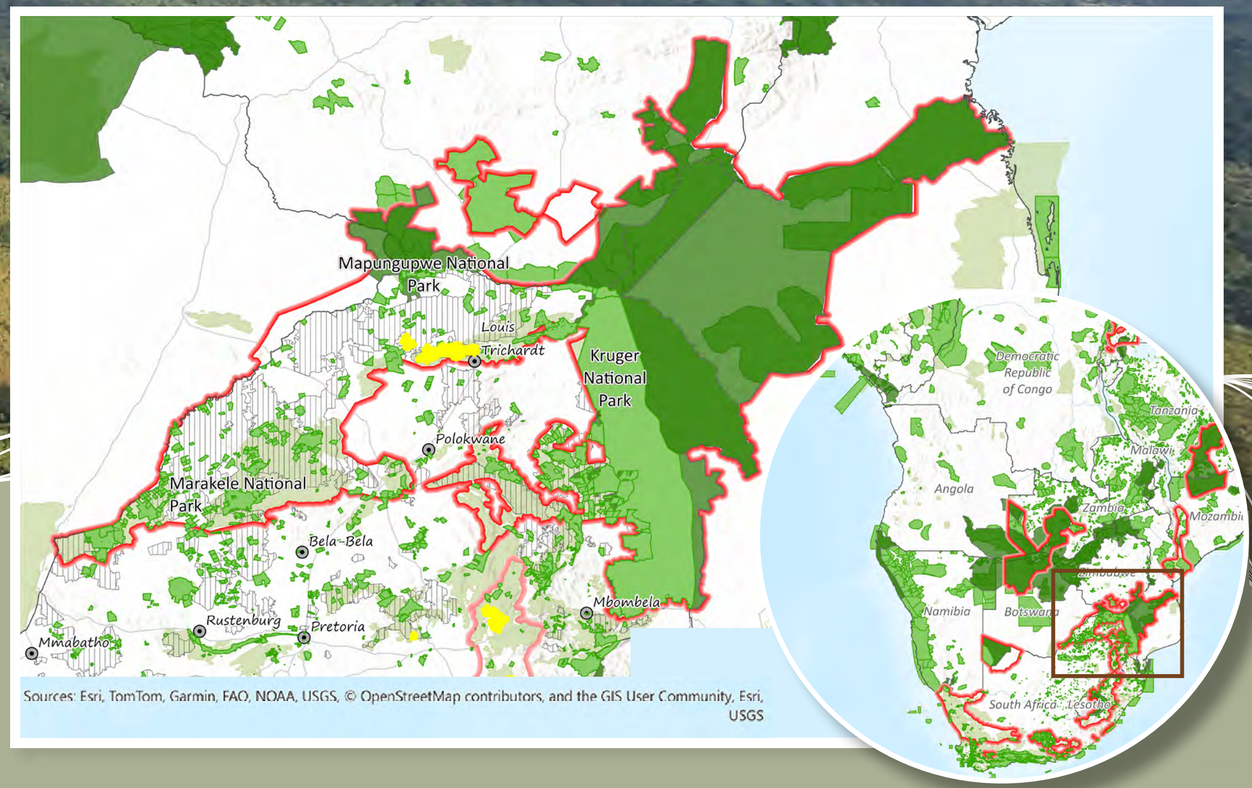


We supported a **high-impact Wild Dog intervention**. In Botswana, we worked with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks and the Limpopo-Lipadi Game Reserve to **relocate ten Wild Dogs to the Central Kalahari Game Reserve**. This strengthened regional collaboration within Botswana and with key partners integral to this landscape.



Ongoing **vulture and bird of prey surveys** provide a long-term understanding of population trends and threats to these iconic birds across this vast landscape. Linked to this, our **Eye in the Sky project** has the capacity to **inform rapid response mechanisms** across this vast landscape, and the expansion of this approach with strategic in-country partners will contribute significantly to achieving biodiversity outcomes in the region.

# SAVANNAH
## STRATEGIC CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE




The Savannah Strategic Conservation Landscape spans 19,274,424.47 ha across areas of South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Eswatini, and Botswana. It encompasses expansive grasslands, savannah, floodplains, wetlands, and vital river systems, such as the Limpopo and Olifants. At its core are protected areas such as the Greater Limpopo and Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Parks, which support a wide range of species of interest to us, from Lions, African Wild Dogs and Cheetahs to reptiles, cycads, birds of prey, and butterflies. These ecosystems are essential for both wildlife and the people who depend on them for water, grazing, and climate stability. Its open grasslands provide critical ecosystem services, including water regulation, groundwater replenishment, and soil erosion prevention.

Our work here focuses on protecting species and habitats while supporting the communities that share these landscapes. We collaborate with government, protected area authorities, landowners, farmers, and key conservation partners to promote sustainable farming, improve human-wildlife coexistence, and reconnect fragmented habitats via conservation corridors. We are building a vast savannah landscape that is better connected, more resilient, and better equipped to support both people and wildlife in the face of change.

**19,274,424.47 ha**
Total landscape size

**43 Cheetahs**
Relocated to Strengthen Conservation

**158 Snares**
Removed; wildlife protected

**20,000 ha**
Earmarked for Future Protection

## KEY SPECIES

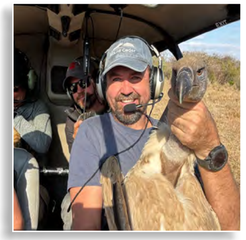
Carnivores | Birds of Prey | Cycads | Butterflies | Reptiles | Amphibians

## THREATS

- Climate Change
- Habitat Fragmentation
- Unsustainable Land Use
- Irresponsible Development
- Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade
- Understrength Protected Area Management
- Ecosystem Collapse
- Urban and Agricultural Expansion

# IMPACT

## BIRDS OF PREY



Our **Eye in the Sky System** (EITS) uses vultures' foraging behaviour to detect and provide **early alert to wildlife snaring and poisoning incidents,** with a focus on detecting carcasses that have been deliberately poisoned to kill wildlife. Using EITS, we detected **seven such events** in the year under review. Fortunately, and due to the immediacy of this warning system, two of these incidents were detected **before any wildlife casualties occurred.** Follow-up work uncovered **five poaching camps and led to the removal of 158 snares** from within protected areas. The team **released eight vultures, rehabilitated after poisoning,** thereby also expanding the tracked sample of vultures in the region.




After three years of work, **Mokala National Park will be formally declared a Vulture Safe Zone,** having completed its final measures to **reduce the threat from power lines**. Elsewhere, a **further ten properties in the Kalahari** area have also been declared Vulture Safe, adding **more than 50,000 ha** to the region.



As part of our broader **vulture nest monitoring** work across the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area, we have begun **integrating data from additional properties** across the GLTFCA, including Karingani Game Reserve, Letaba Ranch Game Reserve and Kruger National Park, into our database. An **aerial survey** of Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe is also planned. This update will allow the **assessment of the Park's vulture population** status for the **first time since 2019.**

# WESTERN SOUTPANSBERG NATURE RESERVE



In June, Phase 2 of the expansion of the **Western Soutpansberg Nature Reserve** reached an important milestone with the publication of the **Notice of Intent to Declare** 15 properties, covering approximately **10,800 ha,** thereby initiating the public participation process. Following this, the properties may be submitted for final declaration. If successful, the expansion could **double the size of the declared reserve**, significantly strengthening the region's conservation efforts. In parallel, pending Phase 1 properties of approximately **9,300 ha, including our Medike Nature Reserve**, have been submitted to the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) for internal review towards final declaration. Looking ahead, Phase 3 engagement is gaining momentum, with **14 new landowners expressing interest, representing a further 20,000 ha.**

The **Soutpansberg Camino Training Trails**, a new EWT initiative, are gaining momentum, with three successful weekend hikes. We are **exploring and mapping new routes,** and growing interest among **local hiking enthusiasts** supports the long-term vision of establishing a connected Soutpansberg Camino. This ambitious corridor initiative aims to **link conservation, community engagement, and sustainable tourism** across the entire Soutpansberg.





In the western Soutpansberg, our **alien tree-clearing team removed 10 ha of Eucalyptus** and undertook follow-up treatment (hand-pulling, chainsaw cutting, frilling and herbicide application) across **30 ha to prevent the regeneration** of the alien vegetation that had previously been cleared.

The team conducted a **drone-based cycad survey** in the Soutpansberg, as part of exploring drone-based deep learning for detecting and counting cycads. Our model achieved 90% accuracy in detecting cycads. After presenting these findings at the Global Conservation Consortium for Cycads workshop in Pretoria, we anticipate exciting collaboration opportunities.





# SOUTPANSBERG COMMUNITIES

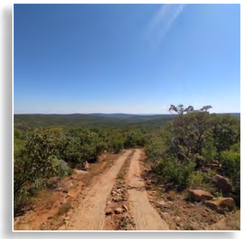


To build skills in land and natural resource management in the western Soutpansberg, we hosted five accredited training workshops to **build land management and Occupational Health and Safety skills** for 61 participants, including 29 youth, from two Communal Property Associations and a local community. In addition to herbicide application, brush cutting, and fire management, the workshops **improved awareness of health and safety responsibilities, hazard and risk assessment, and environmental legislation.** At least eight participants reported obtaining jobs where the skills they learned **enhanced their job profiles and capabilities.** In November, we conducted a five-day conservation agriculture training course, attended by 52 participants from the same communities. The 2025/26 season experienced unusually high rainfall that led to waterlogging and pest/disease outbreaks. Despite these challenges, **43 participants have successfully produced their first crops,** with a number also **generating additional income** through sale of surplus produce to local community members and retailers. **We are providing ongoing mentorship**, with a predicted extreme El Niño event providing a new set of challenges in the upcoming season.



The **Conservation Internship Programme successfully engaged four youths,** while additional initiatives included collaboration with the Waterberg Skills Academy and a hospitality training programme. A major collaboration with Cricket South Africa, the South African National Youth Development Agency, Kutama Tribal Council and our Medike Nature Reserve has led to **job creation for 75 cricket beneficiaries**. In April, 16 youth from the Midoroni community attended an environmental education programme where they **learned about protected and invasive plant species.**

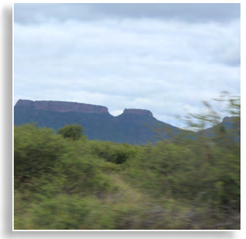
# WATERBERG AND WOLKBERG PROTECTED AREA EXPANSION



We have conducted **biodiversity assessments** on approximately **43,000 ha of private land as part of the Waterberg protected area expansion project**. A further **27,000 ha of private land is** under landowner engagement and viability assessment.

The team visited Marakele and Marataba reserves and surrounding areas in September to investigate the **establishment of corridors to connect this vast landscape**. All parties received the approach and concept very positively.

The Department of Water and Sanitation facilitated the establishment of the **Upper Mogalakwena Water Catchment Forum,** with an EWT representative elected to the committee, allowing us to contribute to informing and guiding the management of the catchment.





Consent letters are pending for approximately **20,500 ha of unsurveyed state land and approximately 17,000 ha of communal land** under the authority of the Mafefe Traditional Council. The private property of Rheebokvlei (1,479 ha) was also submitted for site assessment. In collaboration with the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve (VBR) and BirdLife South Africa, we helped assess the potential for sites to be recognised and registered as Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) within this biosphere, once this process has been formally adopted by the government. There is a good opportunity in the agricultural sector to incorporate OECMs into existing certification schemes (such as GLOBALG.A.P. and the Sustainability Initiative of South Africa (SIZA)), where **farmers are already implementing effective management.**

In the Wolkberg, we lodged an application with LEDET to include **9,467 ha of communal land as a nature reserve,** under the authority of the Sekororo Traditional Council.



Click to listen

# CARNIVORE CONSERVATION UNIT



We achieved a **major global conservation milestone** by participating in the **IUCN Cat Specialist Group Red Listing strategy session**, where we **secured the inclusion of the Cheetah metapopulation** in the IUCN global Red List assessment for the first time. The Red List assessment for the Southern African Cheetah has been completed, while the Luangwa Valley Reintroduction Plan, the **first Cheetah reintroduction plan to receive endorsement** from the IUCN Cat Specialist Group, further cemented our leadership in science-based carnivore reintroductions.



The Cheetah Conservation Team coordinated the **strategic translocation of 43 Cheetahs** to, from and within the Savannah Landscape, working across **21 private and government reserves.** These relocations help maintain the conservation value of Cheetah within closed systems by **facilitating dispersal and population management,** with a particular focus on **rebuilding breeding populations** within reserves in this strategic landscape.



In Limpopo, we worked with LEDET and SANParks on a **Lion recapture** after two groups returned to Letaba Ranch following an unsuitable relocation. Observations confirmed that **relocations under 250 km trigger return movement**, underscoring the need for a **national human-wildlife coexistence Standard Operating Procedure** and for considering the need for a **Lion holding facility in Kruger National Park.**



Our newly established **Threat Reduction Ranger Team** delivered **immediate conservation impact** during its first month of field operations. While undergoing training, the team **helped free a Lion suffering from a severe snare injury** and reunited a separated kudu calf with its mother.

Through **31 targeted interventions,** we **resolved several human-Wild Dog coexistence incidents,** including one involving a large pack of 21 individuals. Interventions included **real-time location sharing, intensive pack monitoring, deployment of natural deterrents, and support to landowners through fence reinforcement.** This proactive approach prevented retaliatory action and livestock losses, demonstrating a **scalable and effective coexistence model** in critical Wild Dog movement corridors. The Wild Dog team made significant advances in landscape-scale carnivore restoration across southern Africa. Working with partners in **Zimbabwe, Malawi and South Africa,** the team supported multiple Wild Dog reintroductions, including the release of the **first pack into Matusadona National Park**, the restoration of the Liwonde National Park population, the **return of Wild Dogs to Zimanga after a decade-long absence**, and the relocation of 14 Wild Dogs from Lapalala to our holding facility for **future reintroduction.** These interventions **strengthened regional metapopulation connectivity** and reinforced our leadership in transboundary carnivore restoration and rewilding.





Our **Livestock Guardian Dog (LGD) Project** continues to demonstrate the value of practical, community-based approaches to reducing human-wildlife conflict. During the reporting period, we placed **six LGDs with livestock farmers** across the Savannah landscape, with all dogs progressing well and **no reported livestock losses since placement.** Our team also **neutered eight working dogs in the field,** supporting responsible management of LGD populations while ensuring that working dogs remain with livestock and continue to fulfil their conservation role.

In the Waterberg, the project contributed to **conservation skills development by providing practical training to 22 Work Integrated Learning students** from Wonderkop Nature Reserve in camera trapping, LGD placement and monitoring, and basic human-wildlife conflict mitigation.




Our **technical leadership received significant international recognition** when we initiated the *IUCN Africa Carnivore Restoration Mapping Project*, which will provide critical products to guide long-term carnivore landscape strategies across Africa.

In addition, we **hosted Discovery Channel during the filming of *Return of the Cheetah*,** showcasing our landscape-scale conservation work to an international audience while creating opportunities for **future fundraising, partnerships, and public engagement.** Working with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the Cheetah Conservation Project has supported the reintroduction of Cheetahs to uMkhuze Game Reserve, with **three males and three females returned to this previously important Cheetah population** over the reporting period. This represents the **recovery of approximately 40,000 ha of Cheetah range** within the Savannah Landscape.



We signed a **three-year research agreement with SANParks** to help it **better understand the status, distribution, movements and population dynamics of Cheetah** across the Greater Kruger landscape. Following extensive stakeholder engagement, the project is now entering its **citizen science photographic census phase,** generating critical data to inform future Cheetah management and conservation planning across **47% of the remaining protected area range for the species** in South Africa, which **hosts approximately 17% of South Africa's remaining wild Cheetahs.**

# CHALLENGES

This extensive landscape is home to some of the region's most iconic wilderness areas and intact megafauna. It is also the centre of rapid infrastructure development and human population growth, creating significant challenges for the protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems. These challenges include but are not limited to:

### Species Vulnerability:
Threatened species such as vultures, Cheetahs, African Wild Dogs and cycads remain at high risk despite monitoring advances and targeted conservation actions.

### Unsustainable Agricultural Practices:
Progressive habitat degradation through overgrazing and overly frequent or unseasonal burning leads to long-term and irreversible ecosystem damage.

### Infrastructure Pressures:
Expanding energy, mining and development projects fragment, degrade and transform habitats. Irresponsibly placed wind energy also has direct impacts on large birds.

### Invasive Alien Plants:
Extensive stands of invasive alien trees cover key catchment areas and eradication of these large infestations is effectively impossible but targeted clearing of critical areas is feasible with adequate resources.

### Community Livelihoods:
Reliance on unsustainable practices persists; alternative livelihoods are being piloted but need scaling.

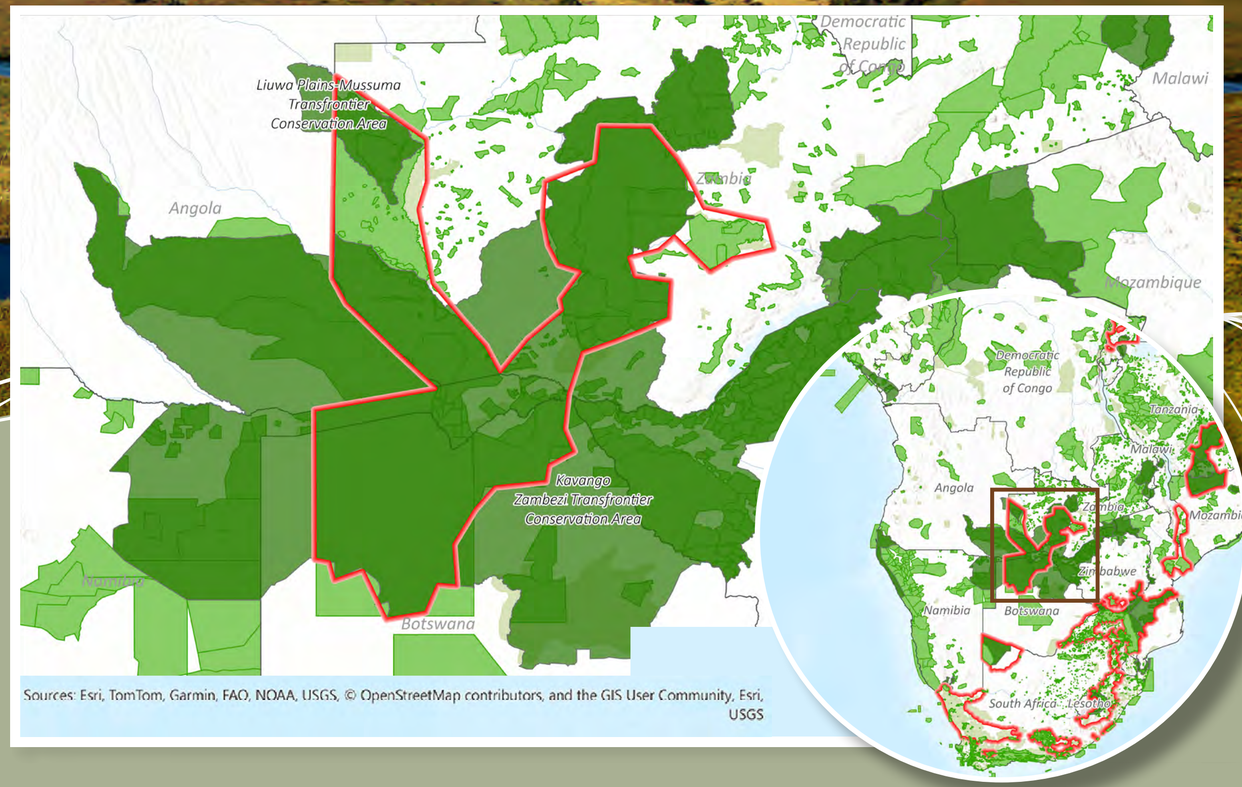
### Climate Change:
Extreme heat, drought, and shifting/extreme rainfall patterns threaten species survival and water security.

### Stewardship Sustainability:
Securing land is a milestone, but maintaining long-term landowner commitment and financing is difficult.

### Policy and Enforcement Gaps:
Legal protection and conservation enforcement capacity is an ongoing challenge, especially within our government partners.

### Illegal Wildlife Trade:
Poaching and unsustainable harvesting are a constant challenge across this landscape.

# KAVANGO/ZAMBEZI
## STRATEGIC CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE




The Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) spans **55,670,328.81 ha across Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe,** making it the **world's largest Transfrontier Conservation Area.** This vast region includes protected areas such as **Liuwa Plains, Matusadona, and Chobe National Parks.** It is home to an extraordinary diversity of life, including over **3,000 plant species, thriving floodplains, vibrant savannahs and forests, and some of Africa's most iconic wildlife.** KAZA supports the continent's largest population of Savannah Elephants, alongside Endangered African Wild Dogs, as well as Lions and Cheetahs, along with a wealth of other unique biodiversity. Its rivers, including the Okavango and Zambezi, provide essential water for people and wildlife.

**More than two million people live within the KAZA landscape,** relying on its natural resources for small-scale farming, eco-tourism, and day-to-day survival. Our work in this landscape focuses on b**uilding partnerships with communities, strengthening conservation-based livelihoods, and supporting sustainable land-use practices that protect biodiversity.** In a region facing growing development pressure, we have engaged with partners to **plan energy infrastructure that minimises harm to wildlife corridors and migratory routes.** Protecting KAZA means safeguarding a landscape of global ecological importance, and ensuring that both people and wildlife can c**ontinue to benefit from its resources for generations to come.**

**55,670,328.81 ha**
Total landscape size



**5 Countries**
Connected Through Transfrontier Conservation

**2 Million+ People**
Living Within the Landscape

**7 Species**
Targeted for Conservation Planning

## KEY SPECIES

Carnivores

Birds of Prey

Cranes

Reptiles

Amphibians

## THREATS

Habitat Fragmentation

Migration Route Disruption

Unsustainable Resource Extraction

Reduced Economic Opportunity

Human-wildlife Conflict

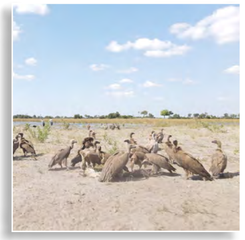
Irresponsible Development

Erosion of Cultural Heritage

# IMPACT



The **IUCN Africa Carnivore Restoration Spatial Prioritisation Project** will inform and guide strategic carnivore conservation opportunities across this landscape. This strategic, high-level assessment **across seven target species** is creating a new multi-criteria assessment approach for planning for multi-species conservation, restoration and recovery work. Target species relevant to this landscape **include Leopard, Lion, Cheetah, African Wild Dog and Savannah Elephants.** This planning work assesses species-specific indicators in relation to protected areas, critical corridors and enabling conditions for governance and investment.



Our **Eye in the Sky project** has demonstrated its capacity to **inform rapid response mechanisms** in parts of this critical landscape and the expansion of this approach with strategic partners will **contribute significantly to achieving biodiversity outcomes** in the region.



Our strategic partnership with the International Crane Foundation (ICF) is unlocking **collaborative conservation work, alongside existing crane conservation** interventions, focused on **wetland protection and biodiversity conservation** in the Kafue Flats.






# ZAMBEZI DELTA TO MALAWI
## STRATEGIC CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE

From the **floodplains of the Zambezi Delta to the forests and savannah systems of southern Malawi, this 4,896,723.62 ha corridor** connects some of the region's **most ecologically important and under-protected habitats**. It supports **large-scale wildlife movements, rich wetlands, and species found nowhere else,** such as Chapman's Pygmy Chameleon and several endemic amphibians. Gorongosa National Park, the Marromeu Wetlands, and forested mountain blocks like Mount Mulanje provide **anchor points for restoration while linking fragmented ecosystems across borders.**

Our vision for this landscape is centred on **rebuilding ecological connections and strengthening community-led conservation.** We aim to work with partners to **restore degraded habitats, support threatened species** including African Wild Dogs, vultures and Wattled Cranes, and ensure that **people who rely on these ecosystems help shape their own future.** Through our work, we aim to protect these resources while **building sustainable, nature-linked livelihoods.**

**4,896,723.62 ha**
Total Landscape Size

**4 Cheetahs**
Fitted with Tracking Collars

**21**
Park Staff Trained

**2 Parks**
Conservation Partnerships Strengthened

## KEY SPECIES

Birds of Prey

Carnivores

Cranes

Reptiles

Amphibians

## THREATS

Habitat Fragmentation

Dysfunctional Ecosystem Services

Climate Change Impacts

Habitat Transformation

Urban Expansion

Unsustainable Harvesting

# IMPACT



Our Bird of Prey Unit has worked closely with African Parks in Liwonde and Majete National Parks, Malawi, to strengthen the **detection of and response to illegal wildlife activity.** Across both parks, we have expanded vulture tracking networks and trained **21 park staff in wildlife poisoning detection and response.** Building on this work, we plan to extend our support to Marromeu in Mozambique, in collaboration with the Frankfurt Zoological Society. At the same time, our team is working with stakeholders to develop a **consolidated conservation approach for vultures in the Zambezi Delta region**.



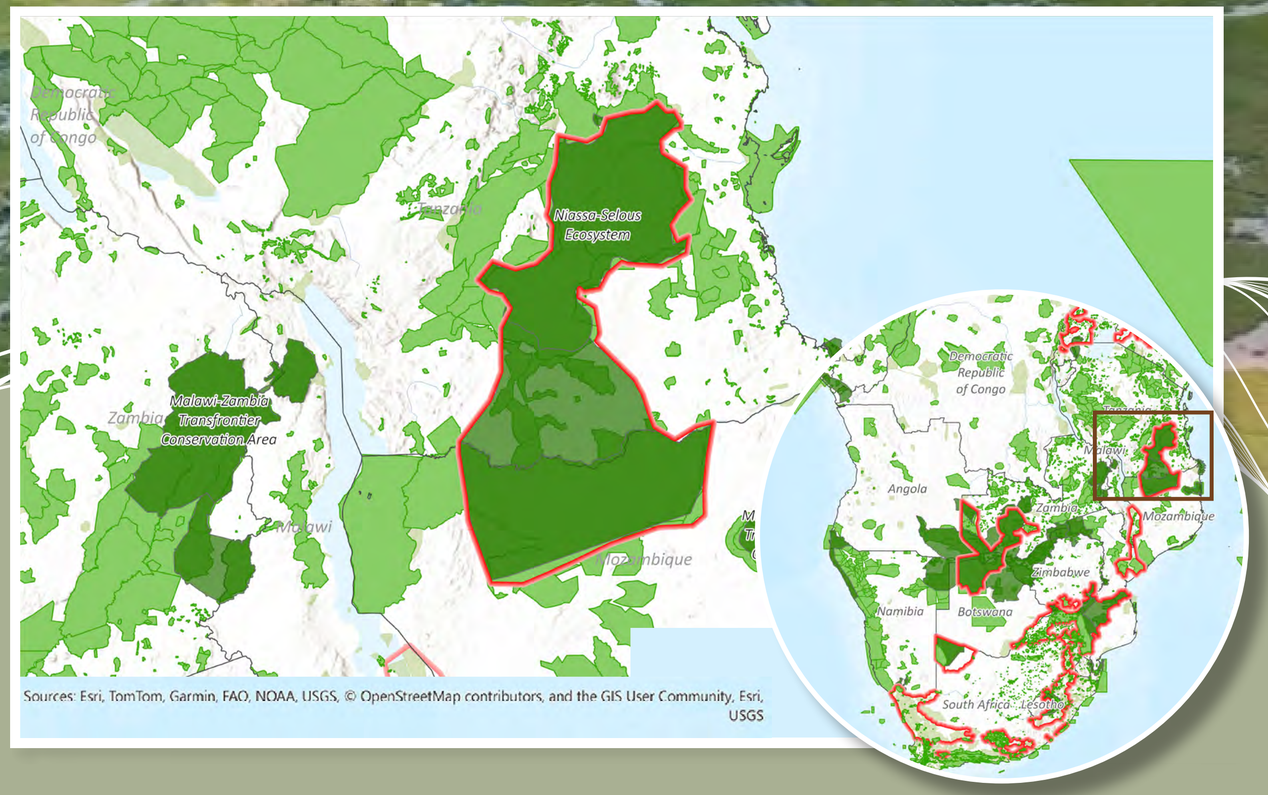
Our Carnivore Conservation Unit provided **Cheetah management guidance in Malawi,** particularly in Liwonde National Park, in response to several situations involving **orphaned Cheetah**. Following assessment, we prioritised intervention for two orphaned cubs with particularly valuable genetics to the metapopulation, and transported the **surviving cub to South Africa** in November for specialist care and rewilding. We also supported ongoing Cheetah monitoring in Liwonde by assisting in the **sourcing of four satellite collars,** strengthening the park's capacity to monitor Cheetah movements and **inform future conservation management.**



We continue to engage with the Gorongosa Project and Zambezi Delta Conservation towards **developing an MoU to guide collaboration** across key areas of this landscape.

Strategic planning in Mozambique is advancing through the **development of a partnership framework** between Gorongosa and Marromeu.

# NIASSA-SELOUS
## STRATEGIC CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE




The Niassa-Selous Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) spans 11,784,166.41 ha across northern Mozambique and southern Tanzania and is one of Africa's last large, intact wilderness landscapes. We are building on our partnerships in the region to help safeguard the wildlife and communities of this remote landscape. Over the past year, our focus has been on supporting local partners in the Niassa Special Reserve to detect and respond to wildlife poisoning and poaching, strengthening the frontline capacity needed to protect species such as Lions, vultures and other scavenging species.

We have also launched a new collaboration with Lipilichi Wilderness in the Chipanje Chetu community area, west of the Niassa Special Reserve. Together, we are building a dedicated conservation team and developing a long-term strategy that serves both conservation and community needs. This extends our footprint into a critical buffer zone for the wider TFCA.

Looking ahead, our vision is to build a long-term conservation presence across the Niassa-Selous landscape by supporting local partners, strengthening collaboration and advancing practical action for wildlife and people. Together, we aim to improve the protection of threatened species, strengthen ecosystem resilience and help secure the future of one of Africa's most important transboundary landscapes.

**11,784,166.41 ha**
Total Landscape Size

**1**
New Conservation Partnership Formalised

**1**
Conservation Officer Appointed

**650,000 ha**
Targeted for Community-Led Conservation

## KEY SPECIES

Carnivores

Birds of Prey

Cranes

Reptiles

Amphibians

## THREATS

Agricultural Expansion

Illegal Mining and Logging Activity

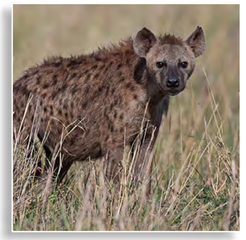
Habitat Fragmentation and Transformation

Human-wildlife Conflict

Illegal Wildlife Trade

Climate Change

# IMPACT



In Niassa Special Reserve, we have **continued to work with local conservation partners, including the Niassa Carnivore Project,** to improve the detection of and response to **wildlife poisoning and poaching.** This includes strengthening **local knowledge, technical capacity, tools and coordination** so that threats can be identified earlier and addressed more effectively. West of Niassa Special Reserve, in **Chipanje Chetu, a vast 650,000 ha community conservation area** of biodiverse African miombo woodland, we have formalised a **vital partnership with Lipilichi Wilderness** and the Yambone Association to establish and strengthen a local conservation team and strategy. This has included the appointment of a full-time conservation officer who will lead our work within this conservation area. Together, we aim to i**mprove understanding of the area's biodiversity, strengthen long-term monitoring** and help protect its remarkable wildlife and ecosystems.



# STRATEGIC CONSERVATION APPROACHES

The future of wildlife and wild places is shaped by how land is used, infrastructure is built, businesses operate and people live. Effective conservation therefore requires expertise that addresses these wider influences alongside the needs of species, landscapes and people.

Our Strategic Conservation Approaches provide that expertise. Specialists help identify areas for protection, guide conservation decisions through science, work with businesses to reduce their impact on biodiversity, support community participation, develop conservation funding solutions, apply technology, reduce risks from infrastructure and tackle illegal wildlife trade.

We bring these skills together according to the challenge, strengthening conservation across our Strategic Conservation Landscapes and supporting action elsewhere in Africa where expertise is needed.

## IN THIS SECTION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# CONSERVATION PLANNING AND SCIENCE

The Conservation Planning and Science Unit helps to **build the evidence base for good conservation practice** in the EWT and across the sector. We work along the conservation evidence value chain, starting with **good project design, data capture and documentation in the field, data curation and management, through to analyses, publication and dissemination of results.** We build capacity and provide technical expertise in conservation-relevant science, ultimately leading to **robust conservation practice in the field.**

## IMPACT



We strengthened the evidence base for conservation decision-making across South Africa and the region. Milestones included the 2025 revision of the Mammal Red List of South Africa, Lesotho, and Eswatini, for which **all 332 species assessments were finalised and uploaded to a dedicated online platform.** We then shared the assessments with the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and IUCN's Species Information Service. The team initiated the **first-ever national** IUCN Green Status of Species assessments for South African mammals such as Cheetah, Wild Dog, Riverine Rabbit and Samango Monkey. Working with both SANBI and the IUCN Red List Authority, we are coordinating equivalent assessments for **birds, reptiles and amphibians** with taxon specialists across and beyond the EWT.



We **delivered two major spatial planning tools** this year. The RSA Landscape Planning Tool, developed under the 30-by-30 Renewables Project, went live, enabling users to **optimise land allocation across conservation, renewable energy, and agriculture** at national, provincial, and user-defined scales. To promote its uptake, the team presented the tool at **national and international conferences** and workshops. Subsequently, we have been approached by conservation NGOs, renewable energy developers, biodiversity specialists, and provincial government entities who are actively looking to **incorporate the tool's outputs into their work plans.**

The second major spatial planning tool we launched with SANBI is the **Land-Use Decision Support Tool for Species of Conservation Concern** (LUDS-SCC). This tool sits on the same platform as the Threatened Species No-Go Mapping Tool, which we developed previously. The tool provides **spatial data on threatened terrestrial biodiversity** to help decision-makers, Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAPs), and developers **identify and avoid areas of high ecological sensitivity** early in the planning process.




The African Lion Database reached **new highs in population, distribution and mortality records**, and enabled the **first-ever Red and Green List** assessments for the northern and southern Lion subspecies. The database has since been transferred to the IUCN Cat Specialist Group to **increase its reach and transparency.** We will **continue to contribute data, collaborate on data interpretation and use the database's outputs** to inform and drive conservation action.

The team co-authored **eight peer-reviewed papers** this year, out of 18 in total for the EWT, **provided GIS, data and analytical support** to nearly every EWT unit, and delivered **critical strategic-planning support** to guide and inform the Strategic Conservation Landscapes.



As host of the IUCN Conservation Planning Specialist Group's (CPSG) Southern and East Africa Regional Resource Centre, the unit facilitated species planning workshops for the **Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphin, Kenya's sharks and rays,** a new southern African BirdLife partner collaboration framework, and a pilot Green Status of Species workshop that has already **produced 45 of a targeted 115 assessments.** These assessments will be used to **develop a national index** that will track species recovery. New assessments with Bats Without Borders and the Peace Parks Foundation, and for the Western Leopard Toad and White-naped Mangabey, are underway.




In the year ahead, and as key guiding support for our Future Fit Strategy, the unit will focus on **growing uptake of the Landscape Planning Tool** through regional workshops in Zambia and Kenya and accompanying journal publications, **expanding our DNA barcoding and environmental DNA work** to develop reference libraries for under-sampled countries in the region, **expanding Green Status assessments** across additional taxa, and advancing new CPSG-facilitated conservation planning processes for **bats, wildlife-crime strategy, and threatened amphibian and primate species**. We will further support the conservation sector in South Africa by **establishing an IUCN Centre for Species Survival.** We will also continue strengthening our data infrastructure, including the integration of EarthRanger data, to meet the steadily rising demand from internal staff and external partners for conservation science.









# CONSERVATION TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

By equipping conservation projects with cutting-edge tools and technology, we can do more with less, work with greater precision, access and implement actions in previously inaccessible areas and achieve greater impact.

## DRONE UNIT

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We added four drones to our fleet and maintained our UAS (Unmanned Aircraft System) Operations Specification with the South African Civil Aviation Authority. Three of these drones are now being flown by two new drone partners: Christo Reeders Attorneys and the Pilanesberg Wildlife Trust. We facilitate their legal operations, having registered their aircraft and pilots under our UAS Operating Certificate. The South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON) will also operate under our Drone Unit's flight authorisation for a year, providing much-needed administrative assistance, as we continue to support conservation partners in this space.

In February, the South African Civil Aviation Authority granted us permission for beyond-visual-line-of-sight (BVLOS) and night operations. This included night operations up to five km away and, crucially, above 1,000 ft from the pilot. This has dramatically improved our legal flight capabilities and conservation potential.

The Bushranger is a rugged, advanced vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) drone being developed by The Eye Above. Touted as a game-changer for wildlife protection, the prototype has passed flight testing and is now undergoing systems integration with high-power sensors and software. We will facilitate practical testing of the Bushranger under field conditions in Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park.





A strategic engagement with SANParks resulted in a plan to monitor cycad populations in Addo Elephant National Park. The team has also received requests for cycad monitoring in other parts of the Eastern Cape and in Mpumalanga, and has a confirmed operation in the Soutpansberg Mountains scheduled for August 2026.

The team completed the installation of overhead warning lights (OWL devices) and bird flappers on the municipal 11 kV power line crossing Swartvlei Lake near Sedgefield in the Western Cape. A landmark operation for us, it demonstrated the drone system's capability to mark difficult sections over water. It was also the first time that OWL devices were installed using the system.



# CONSERVATION K9 UNIT

Click to listen



The Conservation K9 Unit currently has five dogs trained to detect four of the ten succulent plant (*Conophytum*) species targeted by poachers. In July, the unit assisted SAPS in the Western Cape with vehicle searches at five roadblocks where the team screened 153 vehicles. They also screened parcels at eight postal hubs in Stellenbosch, Paarl, Robertson, Worcester, Vredendal, Garies and Springbok. In addition to bushmeat remains, the team identified a smuggled *Conophytum*.

During September and October, the Conservation K9 Unit supported the South African Police Service and the Border Management Authority with a variety of detection services. The unit screened luggage and cargo at Cape Town International Airport, OR Tambo International Airport, and Richards Bay Harbour, as well as vehicle searches at Groblersbrug and Ficksburg border posts. These excursions formed part of a large international operation (Operation Thunder), where conservation authorities and law enforcement agencies worked in a coordinated manner to target wildlife crime. Because of our unique scent library available for our K9s, the team was specifically requested to assist with detecting reptiles (tortoises, lizards), succulent plants, and rhino horn.



In March, we concluded a three-year project where the Conservation K9 Unit assisted Pilanesberg Nature Reserve with vehicle screening at the access gate. Our detection dogs screened vehicles entering and leaving the park, searching for ammunition, rhino horn, lion bone and ivory. The presence of the unit provided a visible deterrent to poachers and contributed to a marked decline in rhino poaching incidents in the reserve, with only three incidents reported during the work period compared to historically higher levels. Our focus has since shifted to Mozambique, where the Conservation K9 Unit is working with Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) and has deployed a detection dog in-country.



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# WILDLIFE IN TRADE

We work to ensure that wildlife is harvested, traded and used legally, sustainably and with minimal harm to threatened species.



## IMPACT



In November, we began work on the *Voices of Indigenous Communities on Environmental Sustainability* (VOICES) Project, partnering with Nature Speaks and Responds to host 15 provincial workshops with traditional healers to understand their views on wildlife use and sustainability. We hosted six fact-finding workshops in Gauteng (Pretoria, Ekurhuleni and Soweto), Limpopo (Polokwane), Mpumalanga (Mbombela), and North West (Rustenburg) provinces. The workshops provided a platform for over 70 traditional healers to voice their opinions on regulation and access to wildlife. We also published a project report titled *A review of national and international legal frameworks and case studies which successfully integrate traditional practices, including traditional healing, into environmental law*. The report highlights potential legislative changes to incorporate sustainable traditional wildlife use into South Africa's legal frameworks.



Our Wildlife in Trade team completed and submitted a crane trade study on behalf of the International Crane Foundation. The report is titled '*A trade assessment of Grey Crowned Cranes, Black Crowned Cranes, and Demoiselle Cranes in Africa and Eurasia*.'



Our Medicinal Plant Project aims to reduce harvesting impacts on wild plant populations by creating legal, cost-effective alternatives, partly through cultivation and partly by supporting communities to strengthen controls and governance of wild populations. We conducted 12 basic cultivation training courses in collaboration with the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), reaching approximately 650 Traditional Health Practitioners (THPs), traders, and harvesters. Participants received basic tools, seedlings, and other materials in starter packs, with ongoing support through social media and follow-up visits. We also conducted harvesting impact assessments of diverse medicinal plant species with two communities in a nature reserve in Limpopo. Although there was evidence of efforts to harvest sustainably, continued demand is likely to lead to even higher impacts on these critical biocultural resources over time unless alternative sources are found. The overwhelming support from project participants and frequent requests from additional THPs, harvesters, traders, and communities demonstrate the potential of this multi-pronged approach to address longstanding conservation challenges, while ensuring that those who depend on traditional medicine are still able to access it.



Responding to the ongoing surge in illegal plant harvesting and trade, we partnered with the Drylands Strategic Conservation Landscape and the National Institute for Crime Prevention & the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) to implement restorative justice in response to biodiversity crimes in the Drylands. This work falls under the broader Succulent Safe Spaces Project, which commenced in January, and focuses on the criminal justice response to biodiversity offences. Instead of focusing only on punishing the offender, this facilitator-led approach is victim-focused and aims to restore the harm caused by an offender, and to address the root causes of their offending in order to prevent recidivism. We have completed a scoping report to identify potential project partners in the Succulent Karoo region to support our restorative justice efforts under this project.







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# SUSTAINABLE FINANCE

We launched the Sustainable Finance Unit in 2025 to mobilise new financial resources to support conservation efforts. Its three priority mechanisms are biodiversity offsets (and credits where applicable), carbon credits and biodiversity economy initiatives such as invasive biomass beneficiation models.

## IMPACT



We are leading the full biodiversity offset process for several planned renewable energy facilities in Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces. This includes assessing residual biodiversity impacts, adjusting project layouts to avoid wetlands and critical biodiversity areas, and identifying potential biodiversity stewardship offset sites for the ecosystem types impacted by these facilities.

This offset work has greatly improved our understanding of the challenges in applying the mitigation hierarchy, particularly in the context of the renewable energy transition, and has led to a second project: a stewardship-based habitat bank that proactively secures habitat ahead of development impact. Our project was selected for the Conservation Finance Alliance's Global Incubator Program. Over the next year, we will use the programme to stress-test and pitch the habitat banking framework and begin piloting this forward-thinking concept on the ground.

Our team developed a pilot model to create a sustainable value chain in which invasive alien plant biomass, cleared by local community teams, is processed into biochar and wood vinegar. The model is designed to employ and upskill local community members, improve ecosystem function and soil health, secure market offtake for the biochar and wood vinegar, sequester carbon, and be scaled to generate carbon credits. Our immediate goal is to secure funding to establish the first pilot sites and kilns. Once multiple sites are operational in a social franchise model, we will explore generating carbon credits from the carbon sequestration and soil health benefits associated with biochar.





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# BIODIVERSITY AND BUSINESS

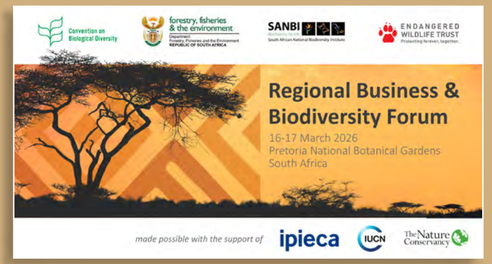



Our Biodiversity and Business Unit turns business into a force for nature. Every business depends on nature, and every business affects it. This unit helps businesses turn nature-related risk, responsibility and ambition into credible outcomes for nature and people, working directly with individual companies and with the wider institutions that make credible nature action by the private sector possible.

## IMPACT

We partner directly with companies to understand and act on their impacts and dependencies on nature. With Seriti Resources and Valterra Platinum, we assessed the biodiversity footprint of their operations, creating a baseline for strategic and operational decision-making. For the Clicks Group, we conducted a Biodiversity Readiness Assessment, identifying gaps and strengths and setting out practical next steps. We continue to work alongside Mondi, a partner since 2021, supporting its understanding and management of its nature interface.






As South Africa's representative on the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), we co-convened southern Africa's first Regional Business and Biodiversity Forum in March 2026, in partnership with the CBD Secretariat, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). The Forum advanced biodiversity mainstreaming in southern Africa by convening government representatives, businesses, financial institutions, conservation organisations and community members to share practical approaches across the mining, agriculture, infrastructure, finance and tourism sectors. It strengthened public-private collaboration, built capacity for corporate biodiversity action, and accelerated implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, particularly Target 15.




In partnership with the National Business Initiative, we delivered the Nature Action Accelerator, a practical capacity-building programme for South Africa's business and finance sectors. This public-good offering for South Africa was designed to accelerate practical nature action by the private sector and was structured around the globally used ACT-D framework: Assess, Commit, Transform, and Disclose. Run online in four modules over the first half of 2026, it drew more than 100 participants, combining expert presentations, peer learning from corporate case studies, and shared resources. The programme strengthened organisational understanding of nature-related risks and opportunities, with 76% of surveyed participants reporting improved organisational capability, and helped businesses progress from awareness towards practical implementation of nature-related strategy, governance and disclosure.



We contributed to business-facing law reform and standards development in South Africa and globally through the provision of technical commentary on the proposed Flexible Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) system, subsidiary instruments under the Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land Act, South Africa's adoption of ISO 17298:2025 (biodiversity in organisational strategy and operations), and sector-specific disclosure requirements in the IFRS Foundation's SASB Standards.

Contributing to and informing responsible development through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, we screen more than 1,200 development applications a year to flag high-risk projects in strategic conservation landscapes. Drawing on species and ecosystem expertise, we deliver targeted, evidence-based comments during the public participation process to guide responsible development. This year, we strengthened our approach by developing a new EIA Commentary Strategy, a screening and prioritisation system to identify high-risk developments, and a more rigorous commenting approach grounded in ecological sensitivity, species-specific risk, procedural gaps, and emphasising the application of the mitigation hierarchy. We advocate for development decisions that are underpinned by proactive biodiversity planning and responsible environmental stewardship, ensuring that biodiversity considerations are integrated early and effectively into project design and decision-making.





In the run-up to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP17), and as South Africa finalises its third National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), we presented the Biodiversity and Business Action Plan for South Africa, the product of two years' collaboration between business, advisory bodies and government, to the NBSAP Private Sector Focus Group as a practical reference for implementing Target 15 of the Global Biodiversity Framework, the global target on business assessment and disclosure of biodiversity dependencies and impacts. We continued supporting SANBI and the DFFE, including at the NBSAP Consultative Conference.







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# BIODIVERSITY EXPEDITIONS

During the 2025/26 financial year, our teams conducted several BioBlitz surveys across South Africa, Mozambique and Namibia, recording existing and undescribed species.

A BioBlitz is a rapid biodiversity survey undertaken to document as much of the biodiversity (species) present in a particular area within a relatively short space of time. BioBlitzes are not meant to provide an exhaustive list of species occurring in an area, as that would take years of continuous surveys to achieve. Rather, they provide a snapshot of the biodiversity that is present and provide baseline data for future conservation planning. It is generally assumed that most of the common species will be detected during a BioBlitz, and with a bit of luck at least some of the rarer and/or inconspicuous species will also be recorded.

The first BioBlitz Survey projects in 2025 demonstrated the value of combining targeted taxonomic expertise with intensive baseline biodiversity surveys. During surveys across three national parks in Mozambique (Limpopo, Banhine and Zinave National Parks), the team generated 43,418 occurrence records, representing 2,035 species. This included several significant range extensions and first country records. Along with this, we collected 50 environmental DNA (eDNA) samples from key areas across the parks to further supplement the species lists.



These findings demonstrate our capacity to generate critical new biodiversity knowledge in poorly surveyed landscapes, a crucial first step towards improved conservation planning. **Project highlights included:**



- Obtaining the first record of the Kalahari Worm Lizard in Mozambique, and extending this species' known range 255 km south-eastward.
- Recording numerous individuals of the recently described Mozambique Sand Frog, and also extending this species' known range significantly northward.



- Recording several undescribed beetle species, and two undescribed baboon spider species in Banhine National Park.
- Collecting DNA samples from three Limpopo Yellow Golden Moles in Banhine National Park. The Yellow Golden Mole is potentially a species complex, and these samples will be invaluable in addressing this taxonomic question.



- Recording a southern range extension from numerous Red Bush Squirrel records in southern Banhine National Park, and a significant westward range extension with a record from Limpopo National Park.
- Rediscovering the Blue-tailed Sandveld Lizard, with the first confirmed (vouchered) record since it was described in 1972. The only other record was a sight record in 2002.



- Recording FitzSimons' Blind Legless Skink for the first time in 18 years, and recording it in Mozambique for the first time. Up until now, FitzSimons' Blind Legless Skink was only known to occur in a small portion of the Kruger National Park that is not open to the general public, and this species' rediscovery probably has more to do with this distribution rather than the species having been truly 'lost'.



- The team also undertook a mid-winter survey of Magoe National Park in Mozambique, recording numerous mammal, bird, reptile and invertebrate species. At the same time, a different team undertook a survey of the Orange River Karoo Conservation Area in southern Namibia. This trip yielded several interesting finds, including an eastward range extension for the recently described Attenborough's Flat Lizard, and the first vouchered occurrence of the Augrabies Flat Lizard for Namibia. They also recorded several invertebrate species that appear to be undescribed, and also what appears to be an undescribed wasp genus.





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# WILDLIFE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Wildlife and Infrastructure Unit works at the interface between biodiversity conservation and infrastructure development, ensuring that Africa's energy and transport networks support economic growth while avoiding and reducing impacts on wildlife.

## IMPACT

The Unit completed the Mpumalanga Bird Flyways Research Project, generating critical information on the movement and flight behaviour of species including flamingos, Martial Eagles, Jackal Buzzards and Denham's Bustards. These results are informing environmental decision-making and renewable energy planning, to help ensure that future developments are better aligned with biodiversity conservation objectives. For instance, our flamingo flight tracks influenced wind turbine siting at the Phefumula Emoyeni Wind Farm.



Through our partnership with Eskom, which spans more than 30 years, we continue to advance research into wildlife interactions with power infrastructure. Findings highlighted opportunities to reduce collisions through innovative bird flight diverter options for priority species, strengthening the scientific foundation for future wildlife-friendly infrastructure interventions.





The Unit played a leading role in managing wildlife interactions with power lines. Working closely with the National Transmission Company South Africa (NTCSA) and Eskom Distribution, we investigated collision, electrocution, and entanglement incidents involving threatened species. Our work informed practical remedial measures, marking or installing bird diverters on 72,250 km of power lines, mitigating over 200 structures to prevent electrocution and undertaking targeted monitoring, while improving engineering standards and strengthening business practices. We also implemented the NTCSA Skills Transfer Programme to strengthen within-utility capacity for managing wildlife interactions.

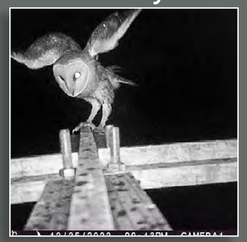
We broadened our regional impact through skills transfer and capacity-building work in Mozambique. In partnership with *Electricidade de Moçambique* (EDM) and the International Council of Swedish Industry, the Unit developed wildlife incident management procedures, produced training materials, and trained over 100 utility staff to reduce wildlife incidents on power lines. In parallel, we initiated a long-term avifaunal monitoring programme for *Sociedade Nacional de Transporte de Energia* (STE), which will also include further skills transfer in Mozambique. Over 15 months, this project will monitor birds likely to be impacted by the Maputo-Vilankulos power line to assess if there are any mortalities and the effectiveness of mitigation actions.





In recognition of our leading role in bustard conservation, we were commissioned to deliver, and successfully implemented, a research skills transfer initiative and provided technical support for a Denham's Bustard project in Chad. The project acknowledges our close involvement in developing and adopting the Multi-species Action Plan for African, Eurasian and Australasian Bustards.

The Wildlife and Infrastructure Unit's Wildlife and Transport Project continued to demonstrate how infrastructure can be adapted to reduce biodiversity loss. Monitoring of wildlife crossings and road mitigation structures along major toll routes showed increased use of under-road culverts by mammals and reptiles, while roadkill incidents in wildlife-modified sections declined significantly. Through camera traps the team recorded 14,102 animals (49 species) safely crossing the underpasses. These were from 11 culverts: five on the N3, four along the N4 and two along Bakwena routes. The project also expanded the use of raptor perch structures to improve habitat connectivity and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions. We recorded 151,000 bird visitations on raptor perches, including Spotted Eagle-Owls, Barn Owls, African Grass-Owls, Marsh Owls and Black-winged Kites. Birds also spent less time near the roadway when alternative perching sites were available.







# THREATENED ENDEMIC SPECIES

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The Threatened Endemic Species Unit anchors our role as a leader in conserving a suite of threatened and range-restricted species, including amphibians, reptiles, freshwater fishes, butterflies and small mammals, while laying the foundation for expanding this work from individual species and sites to larger landscapes. These species are some of the most threatened species in the world, but receive some of the lowest levels of conservation support.

## IMPACT

We completed the Southern African Amphibian Red List project, a three-year collaborative initiative that updated assessments for more than 230 amphibian species across southern Africa. The assessments provide an essential evidence base for conservation prioritisation across the region and have directly informed the identification of priority species requiring urgent recovery action.





Our amphibian and reptile research and assessments fed directly into the National Biodiversity Assessment (NBA), helping to ensure that the national biodiversity assessment status and conservation priorities are underpinned by the best available species-level information.

The team led the collaborative development of a Biodiversity Management Plan for the Endangered Western Leopard Toad, which will be finalised in 2027.



In Malawi, in partnership with Peace Parks Foundation, we used eDNA techniques to survey areas of Nyika National Park to guide conservation planning. We trained three local rangers in eDNA sampling methods, which has enabled the expansion of this project going forward.

The Unit continued to make tangible progress towards securing habitat for threatened endemics. Biodiversity Stewardship processes advanced at several sites across the country, including the gazetting of the 712 ha Mount David Nature Reserve. This represents the first amphibian-focused stewardship site (for the Endangered Moonlight Mountain Toadlet), but also safeguards many other highly threatened fynbos species.



We continued to develop innovative scientific approaches to monitor threatened species and build specialist skills. Work on the Critically Endangered Rose's Mountain Toadlet combined various survey techniques, including a novel mark-recapture technique to evaluate the population, monitoring environmental changes, detection-dog surveys and eDNA. Our detection dog quickly located previously unknown breeding pools, and eDNA confirmed the species at multiple breeding sites within the wetland.



The team completed acoustic spatial capture-recapture monitoring for the Rough Moss Frog on the Klein Swartberg, Caledon, Western Cape, providing a quantitative approach to tracking populations and assessing management interventions. These approaches are strengthening our ability to detect and monitor species that are difficult to locate using conventional surveys.



Working with partners, we cleared over 341 ha of wetland and associated catchments of invasive pines on the Klein Swartberg, Caledon, for the Critically Endangered Rough Moss Frog.

Surveys of two threatened endemic Burrowing Skink species occurring on opposite coastlines continue to yield interesting results. New records of Kasner's Dwarf Burrowing Skink, a localised resident of South Africa's West Coast, extended its known distribution, including the first record from a nature reserve and several new localities on private land. On the KwaZulu-Natal coast, monitoring for the Durban Dwarf Burrowing Skink has revealed a highly restricted activity window and will inform management of a key habitat fragment.



Long-term species conservation depends on people and local capacity. At wetland sites in Adams Mission, KwaZulu-Natal, ongoing environmental education, community engagement and waste management have addressed direct threats to wetland habitat. Waste Disposal Zones have provided alternatives to illegal dumping, and our staff gathered and removed thousands of bags of waste (from plastic to nappies) over the year. Partnerships with local authorities, traditional leadership, schools and waste-recycling organisations have strengthened community involvement, while training and collaboration have expanded local capacity for conservation and biodiversity monitoring.



# FOCAL SPECIES

Reptiles

Amphibians

Invertebrates

# THREATS

Invasive Species

Habitat Degradation

Illegal Development

Renewable Energy Development

Pollution

| Common Name | *Scientific Name* | Red List Status |
|---|---|---|
| Mistbelt Moss Frog | *Anhydrophryne ngongoniensis* | Endangered |
| Rough Moss Frog | *Arthroleptella rugosa* | Critically Endangered |
| Bilbo's Rain Frog | *Breviceps bagginsi* | Critically Endangered |
| Boston Rain Frog | *Breviceps batrachophiliorum* | Endangered |
| Cape Rain Frog | *Breviceps gibbosus* | Vulnerable |
| Klipheuwel Caco | *Cacosternum aggestum* | Vulnerable |
| Cape Caco | *Cacosternum capense* | Vulnerable |
| Cederberg Caco | *Cacosternum cederbergense* | Endangered |
| Thorin's Caco | *Cacosternum thorini* | Endangered |
| Rose's Mountain Toadlet | *Capensibufo rosei* | Critically Endangered |
| Moonlight Mountain Toadlet | *Capensibufo selenophos* | Endangered |
| Table Mountain Ghost Frog | *Heleophryne rosei* | Endangered |

| Common Name | *Scientific Name* | Red List Status |
|---|---|---|
| Pickersgill's Reed Frog | *Hyperolius pickersgilli* | Endangered |
| Micro Frog | *Microbatrachella capensis* | Endangered |
| Kloof Frog | *Natalobatrachus bonebergi* | Near Threatened |
| Western Leopard Toad | *Sclerophrys pantherina* | Endangered |
| Amathole Toad | *Vandijkophrynus amatolicus* | Critically Endangered |
| Cape Platanna | *Xenopus gilli* | Endangered |
| Albany Adder | *Bitis albanica* | Endangered |
| Durban Dwarf Burrowing Skink | *Scelotes inornatus* | Critically Endangered |
| Kasner's Dwarf Burrowing Skink | *Scelotes kasneri* | Endangered |
| Moorreesburg Opal | *Chrysoritis thysbe schloszae* | Critically Endangered |
| Arid Karoo Skolly | *Thestor dicksoni warreni* | Critically Endangered |
| Worcester Russet | *Aloeides lutescens* | Endangered |



# SUPPORT SERVICES

## Strengthening Our Work Across Africa

Lasting conservation impact requires a strong organisation. Our Support Services provide the systems, resources and expertise that enable our conservation teams to operate safely, effectively and efficiently as they protect threatened species, secure and restore landscapes, and work with people to achieve lasting conservation outcomes.

Finance, governance, fundraising, human resources, marketing and communications, IT and facilities management underpin this action. Together, these functions support our team, strengthen accountability and ensure that we have the capacity to sustain our conservation impact.

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# MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Effective marketing and communications help turn **conservation impact into awareness, engagement and action**. In 2025/26, we focused on growing our audiences, strengthening our position as a trusted conservation voice, **extending international reach**, and creating **stronger pathways for people to engage** with and support our conservation impact.

The year delivered **continued digital growth**, strong national and international media visibility, new broadcast and content partnerships, and growing engagement with audiences beyond South Africa.

## GROWING OUR DIGITAL REACH

Our **digital community grew 11% to 119,224 followers** across our social media platforms. Content generated **5.03 million impressions,** up 25% year on year, while **interactions increased 9% to 240,940**.



**Campaign-led and conservation-focused storytelling** consistently generated the strongest audience response, demonstrating the power of stories from the field to capture attention and deepen engagement with our conservation impact.

## CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH OUR CONSERVATION IMPACT



Our website recorded **243,598 page views, 128,394 visits and 113,967 unique visitors** during the year. South Africa remained our largest website audience, with 47,801 visitors (43.5%), followed by the United States with 20,402 (18.6%).

Traffic peaks closely aligned with major conservation announcements, campaigns and media activity, demonstrating how **integrated storytelling** across media, social and digital channels encourages people to seek out more information about the EWT and our impact.

# AMPLIFYING OUR VOICE

Our **media presence deepened significantly**, with 278 media placements across **national and international outlets**. Stories on Blue Cranes, African Wild Dogs, vultures, Cheetahs and Lions, alongside the Regional Mammal Red List, species rediscoveries, illegal wildlife trade and habitat protection, kept important conservation issues in the public conversation.






Our experts provided **interviews, commentary and opinion pieces** across online, print, radio and television, with coverage in leading South African and international media including Reuters, The Guardian, Euronews, ZDF, Mongabay, News24, Daily Maverick and Mail & Guardian. This sustained visibility reinforced our position as a **credible, science-led source of conservation expertise and solutions.**

# TAKING OUR STORIES TO NEW AUDIENCES

We continued to **expand our storytelling** beyond our own channels and traditional media. Collaboration with WildEarth brought EWT conservation stories to international audiences during the year, including two dedicated episodes featuring our Cheetah conservation impact.




New **collaborations with Discovery Channel and Rare TV** also created a pipeline of **international broadcast** content for 2026/27, with filming undertaken during the year on stories ranging from Cheetah relocations and African Wild Dog conservation to crane conservation.

We also expanded into immersive storytelling through **six virtual reality headsets** donated by Wildlife Protection Solutions, creating a **new way to bring conservation experiences directly to donors, partners and audiences.**



# GROWING INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES



Our **international audience continued to strengthen**, with the United States emerging as our second-largest digital audience after South Africa across both our website and social media channels. This provides a **strong audience base from which to build our presence and supporter community in this priority market.**

Importantly, this visibility also began to **translate into support,** with individual donors from the United States contributing to our work during the year. This marks an important progression from building awareness to **converting our growing US audience** into active support for our conservation impact.

# FROM REACH TO ACTION

Growing awareness is only valuable if we create opportunities for people to act. During the year, we tested how different conservation stories, audiences and calls to action translate engagement into support, with clear, species-focused conservation asks generating the strongest response. These insights are informing a more targeted approach to future campaigns and supporter acquisition.

We also began implementing a new Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) and donor management system to strengthen audience segmentation, supporter relationships and digital fundraising campaigns. Alongside the redevelopment of our website, this will create clearer pathways from awareness and engagement to action and long-term support.

Our corporate identity refresh also progressed, strengthening the consistency of our brand and how we communicate our conservation impact.



# STRENGTHENING CONNECTION ACROSS THE EWT

Internal communications continued to evolve to **connect our geographically dispersed teams**. Corridor Talk transitioned into a podcast format, providing a **more engaging way to share organisational news**, conservation stories and voices from across the EWT, while **Contact Week brought colleagues together** around learning, leadership, strategy and our collective impact.






Internal initiatives included a **Women's Day workshop** on unconscious bias, **Mandela Day litter clean-ups and World Ranger Day celebrations** recognising our Medike Rangers and KZN Eco Rangers. We also launched an **EWT Alumni WhatsApp group** to reconnect former colleagues and maintain relationships with the wider EWT community.

# LOOKING AHEAD

In 2026/27, our focus will increasingly move from reach to action: using stronger audience insight, compelling conservation storytelling and improved digital platforms to **deepen engagement, grow our supporter base and create clearer pathways** for people to support conservation.





We will also build on the international broadcast and content partnerships secured during the year, taking our **conservation stories to new audiences and strengthening the visibility, reputation and support needed** to Protect Forever, Together.

# IMPACT AT A GLANCE

**278**
MEDIA PLACEMENTS

**5.03 million**
SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

**25%** increase year on year

**119,224**
SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

**11%** increase year on year

**240,940**
SOCIAL MEDIA INTERACTIONS

**9%** increase year on year

**243,598**
WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

**113,967**
UNIQUE WEBSITE VISITORS

**20,402**
US WEBSITE VISITORS

**18.6%** of annual website audience

**US = #2**
DIGITAL AUDIENCE AFTER SOUTH AFRICA

**18.6%** across website and social media channels



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# STRENGTHENING THE HUMAN RESOURCES FOUNDATION

Our conservation impact rests on the people who deliver it. With our conservation work expanding across the region, we grew our team again this year, by 14% (22 people). To support this growth, we implemented new systems and ways of working: standardising how roles are defined and how performance is measured, deepening our commitment to transformation and employment equity, and expanding our investment in skills development and career growth, which we regard as one of the most important investments we make and a core organisational value.

## OUR HUMAN RESOURCE OPERATIONS

| Year | Total staff (n) | Programme staff | Support staff |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2020/21 | 104 | 81% | 19% |
| 2021/22 | 110 | 82% | 18% |
| 2022/23 | 102 | 80% | 20% |
| 2023/24 | 109 | 81% | 19% |
| 2024/25 | 155 | 86% | 14% |
| **2025/26** | **177** | **85%** | **15%** |

***Total staff employed by the EWT from 2020 to 2026, and the split between unit and support services roles.***

We closed the financial year with 177 people, 22 (14%) more than the year before. Growth was concentrated where the work is: field-based roles in the catchment units, particularly alien invasive plant control, and new specialist positions created through the partnership with the International Crane Foundation.

# WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

| Year | Male | Female | Black | White |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2019/20 | 50% | 50% | 46% | 54% |
| 2020/21 | 49% | 51% | 46% | 54% |
| 2021/22 | 49% | 51% | 49% | 51% |
| 2022/23 | 43% | 57% | 47% | 53% |
| 2023/24 | 46% | 54% | 50% | 50% |
| 2024/25 | 48% | 52% | 56% | 44% |
| **2025/26** | **51%** | **49%** | **57%** | **43%** |

***The demographic makeup of EWT staff each year between 2019 and 2026. "Black" reflects the designated groups under the Employment Equity Act: African, Coloured and Indian.***

Employees from the designated group now make up 57% of our team, the highest proportion the organisation has recorded and 11 percentage points up on 2020/21. African staff account for 50% of the complement, Indian staff 4% and Coloured staff 3%. Twelve team members, or 7% of staff, are people with disabilities. The gender split moved to 51% men and 49% women, the first year since at least 2019/20 in which men have been in the majority.

# TRANSFORMATION

Transformation is a social imperative and a competitive one: a diverse team gives us access to the full range of ideas, languages and lived experience that conservation in Africa demands. The Employment Equity Act exists to redress past exclusion by removing unfair discrimination and requiring measurable representation across every occupational level. For us, transformation is a core value, not a compliance target. A team that reflects the diversity of South Africa strengthens work with communities, landowners and partners, and it is how we grow the next generation of African conservation leaders.

Our 2025–2030 Employment Equity (EE) Plan, submitted to the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) on 27 February 2026, incorporates annual objectives in line with the Department's designated groups and Economically Active Population (EAP) targets.

Our EE Plan addresses the barriers to equitable representation identified during the Employment Equity Analysis and outlines the affirmative action measures we will implement to eliminate barriers and promote equitable representation across all occupational levels.



The approved five-year EE Plan will serve as our primary benchmark for monitoring and reporting Employment Equity progress. Annual workforce demographics and recruitment outcomes will be measured against the approved targets to assess progress towards achieving our Employment Equity objectives by 2030.



# BROAD-BASED BLACK ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

B-BBEE is a South African government policy aimed at broadening participation in the economy and redressing inequalities. We support these objectives as a natural extension of our own commitment to transformation.



Our B-BBEE verification audit was finalised in October 2025, and we retained our Level 4 contributor status. We continue to ask units to prioritise preferred suppliers and to participate actively in enterprise and supplier development.

# STRENGTHENING OUR HR FOUNDATION

Much of the year's work went into infrastructure that staff will feel over the next several years rather than headline numbers:



- We rewrote every position using a single terms of reference template, providing a consistent basis for job evaluation, recruitment and performance assessment.
- Building on that work, we developed a new performance assessment methodology and applied it in the 2026 appraisal round, with submissions due by 30 June 2026.
- We reviewed the full policy set and are consolidating it into a single online Employee Handbook on an easy-to-use platform.
- The Human Resources Manager role transitioned during the year, with Thylanu Ankiah appointed with effect from 1 March 2026.

# TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



Investing in the growth of our people is one of our core values. Every team member wants to see a clear future with us: where they can go, and how we will support them to get there. During the year we developed a Career Planning and Development framework to make this a reality for every employee, for rollout in 2026/27.

**Three principles shape the framework:**

- Growth is not only promotion. The framework sets out two equally valid paths: a ladder of vertical progression, and a lattice of sideways moves into other teams, stretch projects and broader specialisation.
- Development is planned on a 70:20:10 basis, so that on-the-job experience and mentoring carry the same weight as formal training rather than the plan defaulting to whatever a course budget allows.
- Conversations are held at least every six months in dedicated time, recorded on a shared form, and kept firmly separate from performance review.

A companion guide equips line managers to run these conversations without a coaching background. The framework also gives us an internal route to closing equity gaps by building people into professional and management roles rather than relying on recruitment alone.



Skills development at the EWT goes well beyond meeting statutory requirements. It is a deliberate, long-term investment in our people and in the future of conservation in South Africa. We submitted our Workplace Skills Plan and Annual Training Report to CATHSSETA ahead of the 30 April 2026 deadline, and CATHSSETA confirmed registration of our learnerships without delay. We supported five learnerships through the year for unemployed young people, with four learners being absorbed into the organisation.





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# ENSURING GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good governance is fundamental to our ability to deliver enduring conservation impact. During 2025/26, we continued to strengthen our governance framework, Board and committee oversight, legal and regulatory compliance, organisational systems, and international governance structures. This work supported transparent decision-making, responsible care of resources, and accountability to donors, partners, staff, regulators and the communities with whom we work.

We are registered in South Africa as a Trust in terms of the Trust Property Control Act 57 of 1988, under registration number IT 6247. Our Amended and Restated Deed of Trust remains our foundational governance instrument. The legal mandate of the Board is confirmed by updated Letters of Authority issued by the Master of the High Court on 15 April 2026. The Trustees serve voluntarily and provide strategic direction and oversight without remuneration.

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board continued to oversee the administration and strategic direction of the Trust during a year of both transition and consolidation. In October 2025, we mourned the passing of long-serving Trustee Mike Esterhuysen. We remember his enormous contribution to the EWT and its governance with deep gratitude. At the fourth-quarter Board meeting held on 4 December 2025, the Board appointed John Burke as a new Trustee. John subsequently joined both the Social and Ethics Committee and the Remuneration Committee.

To improve alignment between governance oversight, performance reporting and financial accountability, the governance calendar was revised to follow the EWT's financial year. As part of the transition, the Board's meeting originally planned for the third quarter in January 2026 (previously Q1) was combined with the fourth-quarter meeting held on 23 April 2026 under the old board calendar. A Special Board Meeting was also convened on 17 June 2026 to consider specific financial matters and approve the budget for the new financial year.

The Board undertook a field trip to the Waterberg from 17 to 19 February 2026. Visits to Welgevonden and Marataba provided opportunities to engage with conservation teams and partners on species protection, biodiversity stewardship and conservation security. Board discussions focused on strategy implementation, EWT USA, transformation, succession planning and risk oversight, placing these priorities in the context of conservation work on the ground.

# BOARD ATTENDANCE

Attendance remained strong across all Board meetings, as recorded in the governance records. Meetings were conducted in a hybrid format, allowing Trustees to participate in person or via Microsoft Teams.

**Board meeting attendance during the period 2025/26**

| Board of Trustees | 25 Sep 2025 | 4 Dec 2025 & AGM | 23 Apr 2026 | 17 Jun 2026* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Muhammad Seedat | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Dirk Ackerman | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Paul Smith | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Joanna Goeller | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Christo Reeders | A | √ | √ | √ |
| Abdul-Kader Mohamed | A | √ | A | √ |
| Barry Ackers | A | √ | √ | √ |
| Vikeshni Vandayar | √ | A | √ | √ |
| Sadiq Dindar | √ | √ | √ | A |
| John Burke | - | Appointed | √ | √ |
| Yolan Friedmann – CEO, ex officio | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Dave McCullough – CFO | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Dr Ian Little | - | - | √ | √ |
| Lesego Moloko – Secretary | √ | √ | √ | √ |

* Special Board Meeting. √ = attended in person or online; A = apology; - = not yet a Trustee.

# BOARD COMMITTEES

## AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Audit Committee (AC), chaired by Paul Smith, continued to provide independent oversight of our financial governance, financial reporting, internal controls, audit processes and related financial risks during the 2025/26 financial year. The Committee supports the Board of Trustees in ensuring that the organisation maintains appropriate systems of financial accountability and that resources entrusted to us are responsibly managed.

During the reporting period, the Committee met on 17 September 2025, 27 November 2025 and 16 April 2026. The governance calendar was adjusted during the year to align Board and committee meetings more closely with the EWT's financial year and reporting cycle.

Attendance by Committee members remained strong throughout the year, with all members attending the September and November 2025 meetings. Prof Barry Ackers submitted an apology for the April 2026 meeting, while the remaining Committee members attended.

# COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE

Audit Committee meetings were conducted in a hybrid format, allowing Trustees to participate in person or via Microsoft Teams.

**Audit Committee meeting attendance during the period 2025/26**

| Audit Committee Member | 27 Sep 2025 | 27 Nov 2025 | 16 Apr 2026 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Paul Smith – Chair | √ | √ | √ |
| Abdul-Kader Mohamed | √ | √ | √ |
| Prof Barry Ackers | √ | √ | A |
| Neil Morris – non-trustee | √ | √ | √ |
| Yolan Friedmann – CEO, ex officio | √ | √ | √ |
| Dave McCullough – CFO | √ | √ | √ |
| Lauren Bailey – Finance Manager | √ | √ | √ |

√ = attended in person or online; A = apology.



# SOCIAL AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Social and Ethics Committee (SEC), chaired by Joanna Goeller, continued to oversee our social and ethical responsibilities, including organisational ethics, stakeholder relationships, employment and transformation matters, environmental responsibility, and occupational health and safety. The SEC met on 17 September and 27 November 2025. In line with the revised governance calendar, its third- and fourth-quarter business was subsequently combined. Following his appointment to the Board, John Burke joined the SEC.

**Social and Ethics Committee meeting attendance during the period 2025/26**

| Social and Ethics Committee Member | 17 Sep 2025 | 27 Nov 2025 | 2026 Combined Q3/Q4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Joanna Goeller – Chair | √ | √ | √ |
| Paul Smith | √ | √ | A |
| Vikeshni Vandayar | √ | √ | √ |
| John Burke | N/A | N/A | √ |
| Mike Esterhuysen | A | Deceased | N/A |
| Yolan Friedmann – CEO, ex officio | √ | √ | √ |
| Lourens Leeuwner – Head of Operations | N/A | N/A | √ |
| Lesego Moloko – Secretary | √ | √ | √ |

√ = attended in person or online; A = apology; N/A = not applicable



# REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

The Remuneration Committee (REMCO), chaired by Prof Barry Ackers, continued to provide oversight of our remuneration framework and related people matters during the 2025/26 financial year. The Committee supports the Board in promoting fair and responsible remuneration practices aligned with the organisation's operational requirements and long-term sustainability.

In accordance with its annual meeting cycle, REMCO convenes twice a year. The Committee met on 27 November 2025, with a Special REMCO meeting held on 8 June 2026 to consider specific remuneration and financial matters.

Following his appointment as a Trustee on 4 December 2025, John Burke joined REMCO and participated in the June 2026 meeting.

| Remuneration Committee meeting attendance during the period 2025/26 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Remuneration Committee Member | 27 Nov 2025 | 8 Jun 2026* |
| Prof Barry Ackers – Chair | √ | √ |
| Dirk Ackerman | √ | √ |
| Muhammad Seedat | √ | √ |
| John Burke | - | √ |
| Yolan Friedmann – CEO, ex officio | √ | √ |
| Dave McCullough – CFO | √ | √ |
| * Special REMCO meeting. √ = attended in person or online | | |



# STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE CAPABILITY

Governance development remained a priority. Members of the Executive Committee (EXCO) and Conservation Executive (CONEX) participated in Institute of Directors in South Africa (IoDSA) governance training during the year. The training strengthened understanding of governance responsibilities, oversight, accountability and the practical application of sound governance principles across senior leadership.

The Governance and Compliance function also continued to build internal capacity. A governance intern joined us in December 2025 and left in March 2026 after securing permanent employment. A new governance intern commenced in June 2026, supporting governance administration, committee processes and the continuing development of compliance systems.

# GOVERNANCE, COMPLIANCE AND SYSTEMS

We continued to strengthen our compliance environment through annual statutory and governance processes. During the reporting cycle, we completed key submissions and assurance activities, including the Department of Social Development annual report and PAIA reporting.

To further enhance these efforts, implementation of the Corethix Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) system progressed during the period. The platform is intended to strengthen the management of policies, declarations, permits, incidents, certificates, and other compliance information, thereby improving organisational visibility and accountability.



# PARTNERSHIPS AND AGREEMENTS

Our conservation work depends on a broad network of funders, research institutions, government bodies, conservation organisations, service providers and community partners. Governance and Compliance supports these relationships by reviewing, drafting and recording the agreements that define responsibilities, protect the EWT and enable conservation delivery.

| Agreement category | Number |
|---|---|
| MoU / MoA / Collaboration Agreements | 16 |
| Contractor / Consulting Agreements | 18 |
| Grant / Donor / Sponsorship Agreements | 12 |
| Lease / Service Level Agreements | 11 |
| Research / Data / Project Cooperation Agreements | 7 |
| Non-Disclosure Agreements | 5 |
| Film Agreements | 2 |
| Logo Use Agreements | 2 |
| Canine Custodianship Agreements | 2 |
| Volunteer Agreements | 1 |
| Hosting Agreements | 1 |
| CRM / Fundraising Platform Agreement | 1 |
| TOTAL | 78 |

# EWT USA

We continued to strengthen our presence in the United States through Endangered Wildlife Trust USA (EWT USA), incorporated in Virginia on 4 December 2024. The Internal Revenue Service confirmed EWT USA's tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3), effective from the date of incorporation. This structure supports our international reach and provides an additional platform for donor engagement and fundraising in the United States.

During 2025/26, EWT USA held its first Board meeting and Annual General Meeting, marking an important step in operationalising the entity's governance arrangements. Lesego Moloko was appointed Deputy Secretary, supporting the administration and governance of the US entity.

EWT USA also established its US banking infrastructure during the reporting period, opening an account with JPMorgan Chase Bank, further strengthening its operational capacity to receive and administer funds in the United States.

# LEGAL MATTERS AND ORGANISATIONAL RISK

We continued to manage legal matters that affect both the organisation and the conservation outcomes we seek to protect. The Governance and Compliance function supported litigation management, contractual risk, regulatory engagement and the protection of our legal interests.

Key matters during the year included the continuing Mabola Protected Environment litigation and associated proceedings concerning Uthaka Energy's plans to mine in the Mabola PE and the enforcement of outstanding amounts due to the EWT. These matters were managed with external legal advisers where appropriate, with regular internal oversight of legal exposure, procedural developments and costs.






IN MEMORIAM:

## MIKE ESTERHUYSEN

14 MAY 1948 TO 4 OCTOBER 2025

*CEO/Director of the award-winning marketing agency, Lesoba Difference and* a founding member of the EWT's Social and Ethics Committee.

Mike championed the EWT's marketing needs for 23 years. During that time, he:

- Guided and supported 98 marketing projects and campaigns for the EWT.
  - Designed and produced brochures and signage, and a coffee-table book celebrating our 40th anniversary.
  - Played a large role in the redesign of our website in 2022.
  - Supported the production of several videos for the EWT, including training videos for the Soutpansberg and Karoo Drylands Conservation Programmes and a Mozambique border customs programme, as well as our 50th anniversary video celebrating half a century of exceptional work and achievements.

*Mike Esterhuysen had a lifelong love of nature. This deep-rooted passion led him to join us in 2002, with a commitment to supporting our work, growth and future. He often referred to this as his 'give-back to the universe' pledge.*

## LOOKING AHEAD

The focus for the coming year is to deepen the shift from governance administration to integrated governance, risk and compliance management. Priorities include embedding the GRC system, strengthening policy and obligation tracking, completing governance framework updates, improving Board and committee effectiveness reporting, continuing trustee and leadership development, and maintaining strong oversight of legal and contractual risk.

As we expand our conservation footprint and international partnerships, governance will continue to evolve with it. Our objective remains to ensure that strong systems, ethical leadership, sound oversight and transparent decision-making create the institutional foundation from which we can deliver lasting conservation impact.



# ABRIDGED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Independent auditor's report to the Trustees of the Endangered Wildlife Trust

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**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**
**To the trustees of the Endangered Wildlife Trust**

**Opinion**
The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2026, the summary statement of comprehensive income, summary statement of changes in equity and summary statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and related notes, are derived from the audited financial statements of Endangered Wildlife Trust for the year ended 30 June 2026. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on those financial statements in our report dated 12 November 2026.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements, on the basis described in Note 1.

***Summary Financial Statements***
The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the trust accounting policies. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

**The Audited Financial Statements and Our Report Thereon**
We express an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated 12 November 2026.

**Management's Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements**
Management is responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements on the basis described in Note 1.

**Auditor's Responsibility**
Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with the International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised), Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

Signed by:
Deloitte & Touche
16D775DF4A074DA...

**Deloitte & Touche**
Registered Auditor
Per: Marlise Hedder
Partner
12 November 2026

MAKING AN IMPACT THAT MATTERS since 1845

Managing Partner: ML Tshabalala

A full list of partners and directors is available on request

**B-BBEE rating: Level 1 contribution in terms of the DTI Generic Scorecard as per the amended Codes of Good Practice**

Associate of Deloitte Africa, a Member of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited

# ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## Statement of the EWT's financial position
as at 30 June 2026

| | Notes | 30 June 2026 R | 30 June 2025 R |
|---|---|---|---|
| ASSETS | | | |
| *Non-current assets* | | | |
| Land and Buildings | 2 | 26,855,043 | 24,377,448 |
| Vehicles and equipment | 3 | 13,139,812 | 10,756,292 |
| ***Total non-current assets*** | | 39,994,855 | 35,133,740 |
| *Current assets* | | | |
| Accounts receivable | 6 | 6,224,361 | 2,482,771 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 7 | 73,026,340 | 83,415,137 |
| ***Total current assets*** | | 79,250,701 | 85,897,908 |
| **TOTAL ASSETS** | | 119,245,556 | 121,031,648 |
| **FUNDS AND LIABILITIES** | | | |
| *Trust funds* | | | |
| Accumulated funds | 1.8 | 13,382,996 | 13,382,996 |
| Fund for the Future | 1.8 | 11,759,969 | 12,625,053 |
| ***Total Distributable Reserves*** | | 25,142,965 | 26,008,049 |
| Non-distributable reserves | 4 | 36,506,580 | 34,234,230 |
| ***Total Trust funds*** | | 61,649,545 | 60,242,279 |
| *Current liabilities* | | | |
| Accounts payable | 5 | 5,041,461 | 2,890,200 |
| Funds held on behalf of other organisations | 8 | 1,751,806 | 3,549,830 |
| Deferred revenue | 10 | 49,831,747 | 53,344,114 |
| Leave Provision | 9 | 970,997 | 1,005,225 |
| ***Total current liabilities*** | | 57,596,011 | 60,789,369 |
| **TOTAL FUNDS AND LIABILITIES** | | 119,245,556 | 121,031,648 |

## Statement of comprehensive income
for the year ended 30 June 2026

| | Notes | 30 June 2026 R | 30 June 2025 R |
|---|---|---|---|
| Revenue | | 129,318,452 | 117,479,540 |
| Expenses | | (130,183,536) | (104,689,719) |
| **Total Comprehensive Operational Surplus for the year** | | **(865,084)** | **12,789,821** |
| Income-Programmes | | 118,564,775 | 89,508,143 |
| Project income | | 111,285,059 | 78,234,368 |
| Income transfer from Support Services | | 4,217,582 | 5,926,935 |
| Income from National Lotteries Commission | | 175,458 | 800,000 |
| Interest earned on Project funds | | 2,886,676 | 4,546,840 |
| Expenses-Programmes | | | |
| Direct Project Expenses | | (106,302,134) | (81,727,957) |
| *Projects contribution for Support Services* | | (12,262,641) | (7,780,190) |
| Income - Support Services | | 23,016,318 | 35,751,587 |
| Support Services Levy received from Projects | | 12,262,641 | 7,780,190 |
| Donations | 1.8 | 8,276,444 | 21,139,633 |
| Bequest Income | | 872,862 | 8,658,255 |
| Less Income transfer to Projects | | (4,217,582) | (5,926,935) |
| Functions & Eventing Income | | 3,357,929 | 2,463,783 |
| Interest earned on own funds | | 2,464,024 | 1,636,661 |
| Expenses - Support Services | | (23,881,402) | (22,961,766) |
| Direct Support Services Expenses | | (24,719,574) | (23,473,562) |
| Internal Professional Services rendered to Projects | | 838,172 | 511,796 |
| **Total Comprehensive Operational (Deficit)/Surplus for the year** | | (865,084) | 12,789,821 |
| *After charging:* | | | |
| Depreciation - owned and leased assets | | | |
| - charged to income | 3 | 443,180 | 643,751 |
| - charged to non-distributable reserves | 3 | 4,842,311 | 3,908,273 |
| | | 5,285,491 | 4,552,024 |
| and after crediting: | | | |
| Interest received – bank deposits | | 5,350,700 | 6,183,501 |
| Accumulated funds at beginning of period | | 26,008,050 | 13,218,229 |
| **Accumulated funds at end of period** | | **25,142,965** | **26,008,050** |

## **Statement of changes in trust funds** for the year ended 30 June 2026

| | Fund for the Future Reserve | Accumulated Funds | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | R | R | R |
| **Balance at 30 June 2024** | - | 13,218,229 | 13,218,229 |
| Total comprehensive operational surplus for the year | - | 12,789,820 | 12,789,820 |
| Fund for the Future Reserve transfer | 12,625,053 | (12,625,053) | - |
| **Balance at 30 June 2025** | 12,625,053 | 13,382,996 | 26,008,049 |
| Total comprehensive operational deficit for the year | - | (865,084) | (865,084) |
| Fund for the Future Reserve transfer | (865,084) | 865,084 | - |
| **Balance at 30 June 2026** | 11,759,966 | 13,382,996 | 25,142,965 |

# NOTES TO THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## DEFICIT

During this financial year, we continued to invest strategically in the organisational capacity required to deliver on our ambitious Future Fit Strategy, and support sustainable growth in conservation impact. This investment is aligned to the purpose of our Fund for the Future, which was established to enable us to invest in our future sustainability and growth. Despite not receiving budgeted funds from USAID, programme income still grew by 32.4% year on year. The small deficit in Support Services funding for the year therefore reflects, in part, the deliberate deployment of resources to strengthen the organisation for future growth and impact, together with lower unrestricted income than was originally budgeted for. The Fund for the Future provides us with the capacity to support this planned investment while maintaining a long-term focus on organisational sustainability.

## TREATMENT OF US INCOME ENTITY

EWT USA, a section 501(c)(3) USA-registered non-profit organisation, was established in the prior financial period. This is a separate standalone entity, established to attract new donor funding to support conservation projects and programmes in Africa. Where EWT USA receives donor funding specifically designated for EWT projects, these funds are considered due and payable to us and are recorded as Accounts Receivable.

## FUND FOR THE FUTURE

Our objective is to secure the long-term sustainability of the organisation through the establishment of an investment fund called Fund for the Future. During the prior year, a large donation from the Elizabeth Wakeman Henderson Charitable Trust was received, totalling R12.6m, which set up this fund. The fund was used to cover the small deficit in Support Services in the current financial year.

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# WHO WE WORK WITH:
# DONORS




*Want to know more?*
*Contact Senior Manager Donor Relations,*
*Alison Janicke: alisonj@ewt.org*

Our support services are funded by our Framework Donors, including Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust, Rand Merchant Bank, Plum Foundation, Relate, Rhino Peak Challenge, and Speedspace.

We are fortunate to partner with a wide range of donors who share our passion for protecting biodiversity and ensuring a sustainable future for both people and wildlife. These partnerships are at the heart of our ability to deliver impactful conservation programmes across southern and East Africa. We measured a healthy 10% year-on-year increase in income, the fourth successive year we have boosted our income by 10% or more.

Our donor base is diverse and includes individual philanthropists, corporate partners, trusts and foundations and international development agencies. Each donor brings unique value, whether through financial support, strategic collaboration, in-kind contributions, or by amplifying our message. From long-standing legacy donors to first-time contributors, we are grateful for every act of generosity that fuels our mission. Our income was more evenly spread across streams than in many previous years, reducing our reliance on any single source.

| Income (percentage) | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Foundation | 47.4 | 30.7 | 44.0 |
| Bilateral | 9.8 | 17.7 | 21.0 |
| Consultancy | 17.9 | 14.1 | 6.7 |
| Individual | 4.0 | 13.0 | 2.4 |
| Corporate | 3.9 | 8.1 | 17.9 |
| Bequest | 5.3 | 7.6 | 0.7 |
| Interest | 5.8 | 5.5 | 4.3 |
| Events | 2.1 | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| CRM | 3.2 | 0.9 | 0.7 |
| Other | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.5 |
| Retail | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.0 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

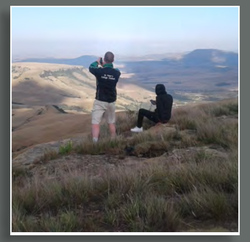
In recent years, we have strengthened our relationships with donors by ensuring alignment between our work and their strategic focus areas, including climate, landscape restoration, community empowerment, species conservation, and youth development. This has allowed us to co-develop funding models that are both impactful and sustainable, while also fulfilling a shared vision of lasting change. Many of our donors have shifted from transactional support to becoming co-investors in long-term conservation solutions and thought leadership.

We prioritise transparency and accountability in our donor relationships. Through regular reports, site visits, updates, and compelling storytelling, we keep our partners informed and engaged. Our dedication to monitoring, evaluation, and learning ensures that we can demonstrate return on investment and report on tangible outcomes achieved through our work.

Our donor community continues to expand both geographically and in scope. In 2025/26, we gained support from over 40 international donors and welcomed new philanthropic foundations, as well as corporates aligned with the green economy and local South African trusts. International contributions now make up 70% of our income. This represents a steady upward trend from 63% the previous year, and 53% the year prior. Initiatives such as the “Fund for the Future” campaign and various matched-funding models have helped us open new support channels.

Above all, donors are part of the EWT family. Together, we are building resilient ecosystems, transforming lives, and ensuring future generations can inherit a thriving natural heritage. We thank each and every donor for believing in our work and walking this journey with us.

# EXPANDING OUR PAWPRINT



We have extended our reach globally, with EWT USA now formally registered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation. This milestone enhances our ability to connect with supporters and partners in the United States, strengthening international collaboration and unlocking new opportunities for investment in conservation across Africa. This represents an evolution of our long-standing relationships, enabling friends and supporters abroad to engage more directly in our mission. Through this step, we continue to build a truly global community dedicated to safeguarding the natural world for generations to come.

# OUR GENEROUS FUNDERS

Our conservation impact would not be possible without the generous support of our funders, whose investments enable us to protect threatened species, restore and safeguard critical habitats, conduct vital scientific research, support local communities, and respond to emerging conservation challenges. We also thank the landowners who have partnered with us over the past financial year, and whose collaboration and commitment continue to make meaningful conservation possible. As a non-profit organisation, we depend on the commitment of individuals, foundations, corporates, government agencies, and international partners who share our vision of a future where people and nature thrive together. Their support provides the resources needed to turn conservation strategies into measurable action on the ground and ensures that our work can continue delivering lasting benefits for biodiversity and society. We extend our sincere gratitude to all our funders for their trust, partnership, and unwavering support of our mission.

- &Beyond Ngala
- Abax Investments
- Africa Geographic
- Africa Massive
- African Wild Dog Survival Fund
- Almar Container Hire
- Animal Trust
- Applus Steel Test
- Arthur and Elaine Foundation
- Atlegang
- Auto Glen Motors
- Bakwena N1N4 Toll Concession
- Barloworld
- BlueSky Society Trust
- Boland Risk Solutions
- Boleng Trust
- Boston Associates Urban Planners
- Brett Horley Safari Company
- Business for Nature
- Carroll Hutchings
- Caspar Jebsen
- Cennergi (Amakhala)
- Charl van der Merwe Trust
- Chris Sutterman
- Christo Reeders Attorneys
- Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr
- Conservation Strategy Fund
- Cotton Road
- Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
- D. Graaff Foundation
- Davies Foundation
- DERTOUR Foundation
- Desilets
- Dream Resorts and Hotels
- Esri South Africa
- Estatal Consej Agency
- Estate Late C.E.A. Le Brocq
- Estate Late Gail Levin
- Estate Late H.C. Boots
- Fondation Franklinia

- Ford Wildlife Foundation
- Forever Wild
- Frame the Wild
- Frankenfield Family Foundation
- French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM)
- Gaie Fergusson
- German Federal Government's International Climate Initiative (IKI)
- German Postcode Lottery
- Gillespie Foundation
- GJ Scorer
- Global Affairs Canada
- Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme
- Global Conservation Force
- Go2Africa
- Hankuzi Explorations
- Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust
- HawkWatch International
- Hermans Truck Accident Repairs
- HMJ Investments
- Hot Cares
- Indwe Risk Management
- Information Security Architects (ISA)
- Inkululeko Wildlife Services
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR)
- International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ)
- Investec
- IPIECA
- IUCN Netherlands
- Ivan Carter
- JRS Biodiversity Foundation
- Kevin Richardson Foundation
- KLB Engineering & Mechanical
- Kysela Père et Fils
- Lankester White Safaris
- Leiden Conservation Foundation
- Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust (WWF South Africa)
- Levego Environmental Services
- Lion Recovery Fund
- Livingstone Experience
- Livingstones Garden & Home
- Makalali
- Mapula Trust
- MetroFibre
- Millstream Farm
- Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund
- Moody's Foundation
- Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA)
- MSD Animal Health (Bravecto)
- Munich Re
- N3 Toll Concession
- Nelson Mandela University (FBIP)
- National Lotteries Commission
- Oak Foundation
- One&Only
- Painted Dog Conservation
- Painted Wolf Foundation
- Painted Wolf Wines
- Palabora Copper
- Parc de Branféré
- Paul King
- Peace Parks Foundation
- Peter Brinkman Trust
- Philagro
- Philip Moore Family Trust
- Platinum Life
- Puy du Fou
- Rainforest Trust
- Rand Merchant Bank
- Return Africa
- Re:wild
- Relate
- Rhine Ruhr
- Rhino Peak Challenge
- Rogz
- Royal Canin
- Royal Malewane
- RSAdvisors
- Sabi Sand Wildtuin
- Safari Creators
- Sahara Conservation Fund
- Shaun Schneier
- Singita Lowveld Trust
- Smartworks
- South African National Parks (SANParks)
- Speedspace
- Stafford Bros & Draeger
- Sylvania SA (Pty) Ltd
- Table Mountain Fund
- Tandy Foundation
- Tania Ihlenfeldt
- The Giving Foundation (TGO)
- The Plum Foundation
- The Travel Industry Golf Club (TIGC)
- Thea Erasmus
- Tim Gregory
- Tourvest
- Tony and Lisette Lewis Foundation
- Touching Dreams
- Trans African Concessions (TRAC N4)
- Trappers
- The Nature Conservancy
- Turtle Conservancy
- UK Government (Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund)
- University of Maryland
- VAL Grain Company
- Volunteer and Explore
- Welgevonden Game Reserve
- Whitley Fund for Nature
- Wildscapes Veterinary Services
- Zoological Society for the Conservation of Species and Populations (ZGAP)

# PUBLICATIONS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# AFFILIATIONS

## THE EWT AND THE IUCN

*(The International Union for Conservation of Nature)*

We are a long-standing member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the world's oldest and largest global environmental organisation comprising approximately 1,400 government and NGO members. During the year under review, our staff held the following IUCN roles:

**Dr Ian Little:** IUCN South Africa National Committee member and EWT vote holder; Regional Chair for East and southern Africa for the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM); CEM Temperate Grasslands Specialist Group, Biosphere Reserves Thematic Group and Ecosystem Restoration Thematic Group; and the Privately Protected Areas and Nature Stewardship Group of the WCPA.

**Eugene Greyling:** IUCN WCPA Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group.

**Catherine Kuhn:** IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) and the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).

**Kerryn Morrison:** IUCN Biodiversity and Family Planning Task Force.

**Kishaylin Chetty:** IUCN WCPA Protected Area Sustainable Finance Network, Biodiversity and Protected Areas Network, Climate Change Network, Sustainable Finance Specialist Group for East and southern Africa; IUCN CEM Nature-Based Solutions Thematic Group, Climate Change and Biodiversity Policy and Practice Thematic Groups, IUCN WCPA East and southern Africa.

**Lourens Leeuwner:** IUCN Power Lines Working Group.

We are particularly active in the IUCN Species Survival Commission, with staff presently contributing to the following specialist groups and bodies under this commission:

- Afrotheria Specialist Group (Dr Samantha Mynhardt (Theron) – Golden Mole Section Head)
- Bustard Specialist Group (Matt Pretorius)
- Cat Specialist Group, and its subsidiary, the African Lion Working Group (Dr Samantha Nicholson)
- Conservation Planning Specialist Group (Dr Christie Craig)
- Crane Specialist Group (Dr Christie Craig, Lourens Leeuwner)
- Lagomorph Specialist Group (Esther Matthew)
- Pangolin Specialist Group (Dr Darren Pietersen, Dr Lara Jordan (Fuller))
- Penguin Specialist Group (Dr Lauren Waller)
- Skink Specialist Group (Dr Darren Pietersen)
- Snake Specialist Group (Dr Darren Pietersen)
- South African Species Specialist Group (Dr Ian Little, Dr Oliver Cowan, Dr Joshua Weeber, Dr Tamanna Patel, Dr Lizanne Roxburgh)
- Southern African Plant Specialist Group (Dr Jenny Botha)

- Species Monitoring Specialist Group (Dr Lizanne Roxburgh)
- Vulture Specialist Group (Dr Lindy Thompson)
- Power Lines Working Group (Lourens Leeuwner)
- Firefly Working Group (Renier Basson)
- Amphibian Specialist Group Regional Working Group (Southern Africa) (Dr Joshua Weeber)
- South African Regional Reptile Specialist Group (Dr Joshua Weeber)
- Terrestrial and Freshwater Invertebrate Red List Authority (TIRLA) (Dr Oliver Cowan)

## OTHER AFFILIATIONS

**Yolan Friedmann:** Ford Wildlife Foundation Advisory Panel; Global Change Institute Advisory Committee; Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Advisory Committee; IUCN Species Survival Commission member; CPSG member; SANParks Board member (until 30 September 2025)

**Dr Ian Little:** Board Member Biodiversity Law Centre, Advisory Panel Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate, Evidence Advisory Group; Advisory Panel eARTh Agency, National Biodiversity Stewardship Technical Working Group

**Kishaylin Chetty:** National Vulture Task Force, International Association of Impact Assessment, South African Council for Natural and Scientific Professions, Institute of Directors in South Africa

**Oscar Mohale:** Advisory Group: AMCHAM Energy, Climate Change and Sustainability Forum, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) of Wild Animals Energy Task Force, Working Group: Material and Test NRS 114: Requirements for Bird Mitigation Interaction Devices for use on overhead electrical infrastructure, BARESG Task Force, National Vulture Task Force, CIGRE Southern Africa Working Group, African Conference for Linear Infrastructure and Ecology

**Dr Darren Pietersen:** Reptile Expert Reference Group

**Dr Lauren Waller:** Small Pelagic Scientific Working Group, DFFE Seabird Technical Team (a scientific WG set up under DFFE's Top Predator WG)

**Bradley Gibbons:** Sungazer Working Group, Botha's Lark Working Group

**Dr Samantha Nicholson:** Wild Dog Advisory Group, EWT Ethics Committee, African Lion Working Group, South African Lion Management Forum, National Action Lion Task Force

**Lourens Leeuwner:** Birds and Renewable Energy Specialist Group, South African Bat Association Assessment Panel, Global Conference for Infrastructure and Ecology Committee, African Protected Areas Congress, Mondi/NBBN Partnership Steering Committee

**Esther Matthew:** Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) Future Leaders of Amphibian Conservation programme, African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement's International Grey Crowned Crane Working Group; National Geographic Society: Explorer Community Committee, National Geographic Society Explorer, National Geographic Society Southern African Hub Coordinator; Dog Scent Technology (Pty) Ltd steering committee

**Kerryn Morrison:** African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement's International Grey Crowned Crane Working Group

**Dr Jenny Botha:** SANBI Medicinal Plants Working Group

**Dr Gareth Tate:** Bearded Vulture Task Force, National Vulture Task Force, South African Bird Ringing Unit (SAFRING) Steering Committee

**Cole du Plessis:** Wild Dog Advisory Group, Committee member of the KZN Wild Dog Management Group, Cheetah Advisory Group

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**Catherine Kuhn:** Youth for the Environment Board Member

**Dr Kerushka Pillay:** Zoological Society of Southern Africa

**Dr Christie Craig:** Coordinated Avifaunal Roadcounts (CAR) Working Group

**Dr Lara Jordan (Fuller):** Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife Honorary Officer (Lions River), Karkloof Conservancy

**Dr Emile Honiball:** Project Hope Africa NPO, Coetzer De Beer Attorneys

**Derek van der Merwe:** Waterberg Wild Dog Initiative, Snaring National Advisory Group

**Christopher Hooten:** KZN Biodiversity Stewardship Working Group

**Zanne Brink:** Conservation-Outcomes LHSKT Steering Committee, CapeNature Landscape East LHSKT Steering Committee, EWT LHSKT Steering Committee

**Renier Basson:** Author, Penguin Random House

**Carina Bruwer:** Illegal Plant Trade Coalition (IPTC) Task Force

**Dr Damian Walter:** South African Wetland Society Board, Ramsar STRP (Scientific and Technical Review Panel)

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## AFRICA

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

## USA

EWT USA is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit conservation organisation (EIN 33-2261884) supporting conservation and community development in Africa.



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