



TAITA TAVETA
WILDLIFE
CONSERVANCIES
ASSOCIATION

TTWCA BULLETIN

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2023 End of Year Newsletter



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Karibu!

Welcome to our fifth edition of the TTWCA Bulletin!

As we usher in 2024, we invite you to delve into our biannual tapestry of triumphs and transformation realized in the second half of 2023. Our journey over the past year has been a remarkable blend of community conservation and livelihood enhancement across the iconic Tsavo landscape.

At the core of these achievements is the unyielding support and commitment of our esteemed members, invaluable partners and donors. Together, we've embarked on a path of community development, intertwining the preservation of Tsavo's natural beauty with the prosperity of our local communities. Conservation is flourishing while the well-being of the community is evident.

If you missed our [previous edition](#), it's a trove of insights from the first half of 2023, waiting to be rediscovered. As you immerse yourself in our latest stories of conservation and community upliftment, we invite you to join us in nurturing a unified, healthy and connected Tsavo landscape that enhances community livelihoods.

Thank you for being an integral part of our shared vision, where every step forward is a stride towards a greener and more harmonious world.



Groundbreaking Ceremony

of TTWCA Office Complex

The groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the TTWCA office complex at Alia, Chawia Ward was held in August.

This pivotal step is part of the Sustainable Management of Tsavo Landscape Project funded by USAID-Kenya and implemented in collaboration with ifaw.

Speaking during the ceremony, Anna Gnouhly, Agreement Representative Officer from USAID-Kenya, highlighted the remarkable efforts of local organizations like TTWCA in preserving our precious natural resources.

"Kenya stands as a beacon of conservation not just within Africa but on the global stage. True conservation thrives when communities' lives flourish. I'm proud that USAID-Kenya stands by TTWCA, knowing that this project will empower communities and uplift livelihoods in various ways," said Gnouhly.

The event was attended by representatives from USAID-Kenya, ifaw and KWS as well as Chief Benard Kadari, Hon. Mabishi Kirubai - member of county assembly and the TTWCA Board of Management.



*Anna Gnouhly
ARO, USAID-Kenya*



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E-learning Hub Launched

LUMO Community Wildlife Conservancy, Lions Bluff Lodge, and Community Wildlife and Conservation (CWC) partnered to construct and equip an ICT hub at Mlugh Primary School in Bura Ward as part of their CSR programme that seeks to support communities living adjacent to the conservancy.

The facility, officially launched on 5th July, hosts 30 computers. It will serve pupils from not only Mlugh Primary school but also neighbouring schools across Bura and Chawia wards. This will enable the pupils to acquire relevant and necessary computer skills and capacity to utilize the digital world in their learning process.

The national and county governments as well as Brand Limited, Mombasa Cement, Liquid Telecom, Woodways, Metsec Cables Limited, Nationwide Electrical Industries Limited, Laxcom Hardware and Spares Limited also played a vital role in the successful launch of the hub.



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Community Conservation Forums

TTWCA in collaboration with USAID-Kenya and ifaw, through the Sustainable Management of Tsavo Landscape Project, conducted a series of community sensitization and discussion forums on environmental conservation in Talio, Zongwani, Ngolia, Mbololo and Wongonyi areas.

Talio and Zongwani border the Teri B Community Land and Mgeno Conservancies; residents of Ngolia and Mbololo are part of Maungu Ranch and Mbulia Community Land member shareholding; while Wongonyi hosts Mwambirwa forest, one of the county's largest forests that serves as a key water catchment area for hundreds of residents in lowlands of Mbololo and Mwatate.

The forums provide a vital platform to engage with the residents on the various interventions being implemented in their region, with a focus on initiatives aimed at enhancing livelihoods, such as the job opportunities created by the conservancies, along with the incorporation of nature-based enterprises, such as improved pasture production.

Also, the forest is known for its critically endangered and endemic bird species, such as the Taita Thrush (*Turdus helleri*), and borders the indigenous biodiversity-rich Mbololo forest.



Conservation Education

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The Sustainable Management of Tsavo Landscape Project also saw TTWCA conduct a series of conservation education sessions at Kambito Primary School in Mbololo Ward, starting in July, following successful outreach sessions at Gideon-Mosi and Makwasinyi Primary Schools in June 2023.

The education programme by TTWCA is designed for young learners at different stages in primary school, starting from grade 3.

It aims at instilling a sense of environmental responsibility in the hearts of the young minds by helping them understand the wildlife present in the region—and their significance in maintaining the delicate balance of the ecosystem.

Kambito, Kasigau, Maungu, Sagala, Bura and Chawia wards, important to the success of conservation efforts within the Tsavo Conservation Area, are all part of the transformative education programme.





TLC Sacco Launched

In July, TTWCA commemorated World Ranger Day 2023 at LUMO Community Wildlife Conservancy where the 454 rangers across TTWCA member conservancies and ranches were honoured.

The event was marked by the launch of the **TSAVO LANDSCAPE CONSERVANCIES SACCO**, whose aim is to economically empower the rangers.

The Country Director of the African Wildlife Foundation Nancy Githaiga graced the event. Also in attendance were representatives from TTWCA partners ifaw, WWF-Kenya, Office of the County Commissioner, The Taita Taveta County Government, River Jordan Medical Center and Kenya Wildlife Service.

September 2023 saw the SACCO hold its first Annual General Meeting where the members elected the leaders to steer the institution in its formative years.



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TTWCA together with community members participated in the nationwide jaza miti initiative during the National Tree Growing Day on 13th November 2023. Over 1500 indigenous trees purchased from community groups were planted to help increase the forest cover as well as restore our degraded rangelands.

Over
1500
Indigenous trees
planted

Peer Learning

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Business enterprises are one of the key aspects of conservancies. They range from beekeeping, livestock rearing, weaving, tourism lodges and beading.

In August, Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) in partnership with TTWCA, Amboseli Ecosystem Trust, Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) and ifaw organized a regional exchange peer learning visit to NRT for women from the Amboseli and Tsavo landscape.

The visit provided a platform for design thinking and learning about existing business and economic empowerment models employed by NRT Trading (the business arm of NRT).



“ After this learning trip I was able to start up Chaka Zuri Culture Center where different groups of women and youth gather to do business



*Edith Lewela,
Founder - Chaka Zuri Culture Center*

Creating Value

TTWCA in collaboration with the African Wildlife Foundation commenced the “Creating Value for Wildlife and People Living in Tsavo Landscape, Kenya” project, funded by the TUI Care Foundation. The project’s July–Dec highlights include:

(1) Engaged the services of a consultant to develop a **Tourism Circuit Plan**: a route on which at least three major tourist destinations are located, such that none of the main attractions are in the same area, but they are also not separated by a long distance. The goal of the circuit is to deliver meaningful experiences for both local and international tourists while fostering sustainable tourism and conservation initiatives in the landscape.



(2) Revived the **leather tannery for Mwachabo CBO**. The Taita people are weaving masters, known to use sisal fibers to create lampshades, table mats, flower vases and baskets. The leather tannery cottage will support local entrepreneurship and provide finished leather products. A 12-day training was organized to equip the more than 30 young individuals selected to work in the tannery with the intricate art of leather tanning. A demo sisal farm was also established at Kajire in Sagalla Ward where the basket weaving groups are expected to obtain the raw materials at a subsidized price once the sisal is ready.



Addressing Water Scarcity

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For years, residents of the Tsavo Ecosystem have been deeply committed to finding solutions to address the intensifying competition for water, between wildlife and local communities. To mitigate this, TTWCA CEO Alfred Mwanake, in collaboration with Senior Warden Constance Mwasho and Dr. Fedrick Lala of the Tsavo Conservation Area launched the construction of large-scale water pans in Wangala Ranch, Kishushe Ranch as well as Tsavo East National Park and Tsavo West National Park.

Reflecting on the devastating impact of last year's drought in the Tsavo landscape, which led to the tragic loss of more than 2,000 elephants and over 3,000 livestock, Dr. Fedrick Lala of the Kenya Wildlife Services – Tsavo Conservation Area affirmed the necessity of this initiative.

"We are here today to begin implementing measures that can provide water for our wildlife in parks, conservancies and livestock – a resource that has become increasingly scarce," said Dr. Lala.

Recognizing the vital role played by ranches as wildlife corridors, with animals traversing from Tsavo East to Tsavo West, KWS and the Ministry underscored the importance of this undertaking, as insufficient water within protected areas often compels wildlife to venture into human settlements in search of water, exacerbating human-wildlife conflicts.

The expansion of water resources in designated areas is expected to be a pivotal step in addressing and mitigating these conflicts.



About TTWCA

TTWCA is a regional membership organization established in 2013 with a purpose to unify and coordinate community-led conservation efforts in Taita Taveta County and larger Tsavo Landscape.

TTWCA comprises of 33 community ranches, with 10 registered as wildlife conservancies. These ranches and conservancies cover 4,046 km², which is 24% of Taita Taveta County's land area. This region includes wildlife dispersal areas and migratory corridors connecting Tsavo National Parks (Kenya) and Mkomazi National Park (Tanzania).

Our partners

TTWCA would like to thank our partners for their invaluable support.

ASANTENI SANA!



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