



TAITA TAVETA
WILDLIFE
CONSERVANCIES
ASSOCIATION

TTWCA BULLETIN

Issue 6 | June 2024



January – June 2024
Highlights

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January - June 2024

Highlights

Karibu!



Alfred K. Mwanake
CEO, TTWCA

Welcome to the sixth edition of the TTWCA Bulletin!

This issue highlights the significant achievements and activities undertaken in our continued efforts towards a unified, healthy, and connected Tsavo landscape.

From women and youth empowerment and successful community engagement initiatives to sustainable livelihood projects and habitat restoration efforts, TTWCA and her membership has been tirelessly working to create a safer and more sustainable environment for both wildlife and local communities.

We invite you to delve into the details of these initiatives and celebrate the progress we have made together. If you missed our [previous edition](#), it's an immense treasure of insights from late 2023, ready to be explored.

As you delve into our newest tales of conservation and community progress, we invite you to help us foster a cohesive, thriving, and interconnected Tsavo landscape that supports community well-being.

Thank you for being a vital part of our shared vision, where each move forward is a step towards a greener and more harmonious world.



Commemorating World Environment Day

TTWCA marked the 2024 World Environment Day on 5th June by bringing together more than 60 participants from various community groups and organizations in the region in a tree planting exercise at the TUI Forest Kenya project site in Taita Hills Wildlife Sanctuary.

The exercise, part of our ambitious target of planting 40,000 seedlings at the site, was a culmination of a series of tree planting and conservation education efforts to reverse the massive land degradation, increase forest cover, and explore forest-based tourism in the Tsavo landscape.

In the past few months, TTWCA has supported over 50 youths to plant 1,000 tree seedlings at the Taita highlands and over 160 households, planting over 1,200 hybrid macadamia seedlings in Iyale, Wundanyi sub-county. This follows the promising progress of the over 500 macadamia seedlings issued initially.

The fruit trees help restore water catchment areas while providing a means of livelihood to the communities.

Several conservation education outreaches in schools bordering protected areas, such as Kishushe and Mwashoti Primary Schools, were held. These forums help the learners appreciate conservation and their role in being conservation champions in their communities.



Developing a consolation fund

TTWCA is committed to protecting the communities living adjacent to wildlife and is currently developing a digital platform for the timely reporting and verification of human-wildlife conflict incidents.

The pilot phase started in January and consisted of identifying and training 100 households in Mwachabo and Ngolia locations to interact with the platform and give feedback.

The two locations were selected for piloting the new platform because they are among the most affected by human-wildlife interactions.

Development of the Consolation Fund has been made possible through the support of the Tides Foundation through the Binnacle Fund.



Four more grazing plans unveiled

Grazing plans are pivotal in maintaining the health of rangelands by improving forage for livestock and wildlife while preserving soil fertility, preventing erosion and enabling human-wildlife coexistence.

In the first half of the year, TTWCA's Rangelands team, through the Sustainable Management of the Tsavo Landscape project, supported Maungu, Mbale, Wushumbu, and Kutima ranches to finalize and launch their grazing plans.

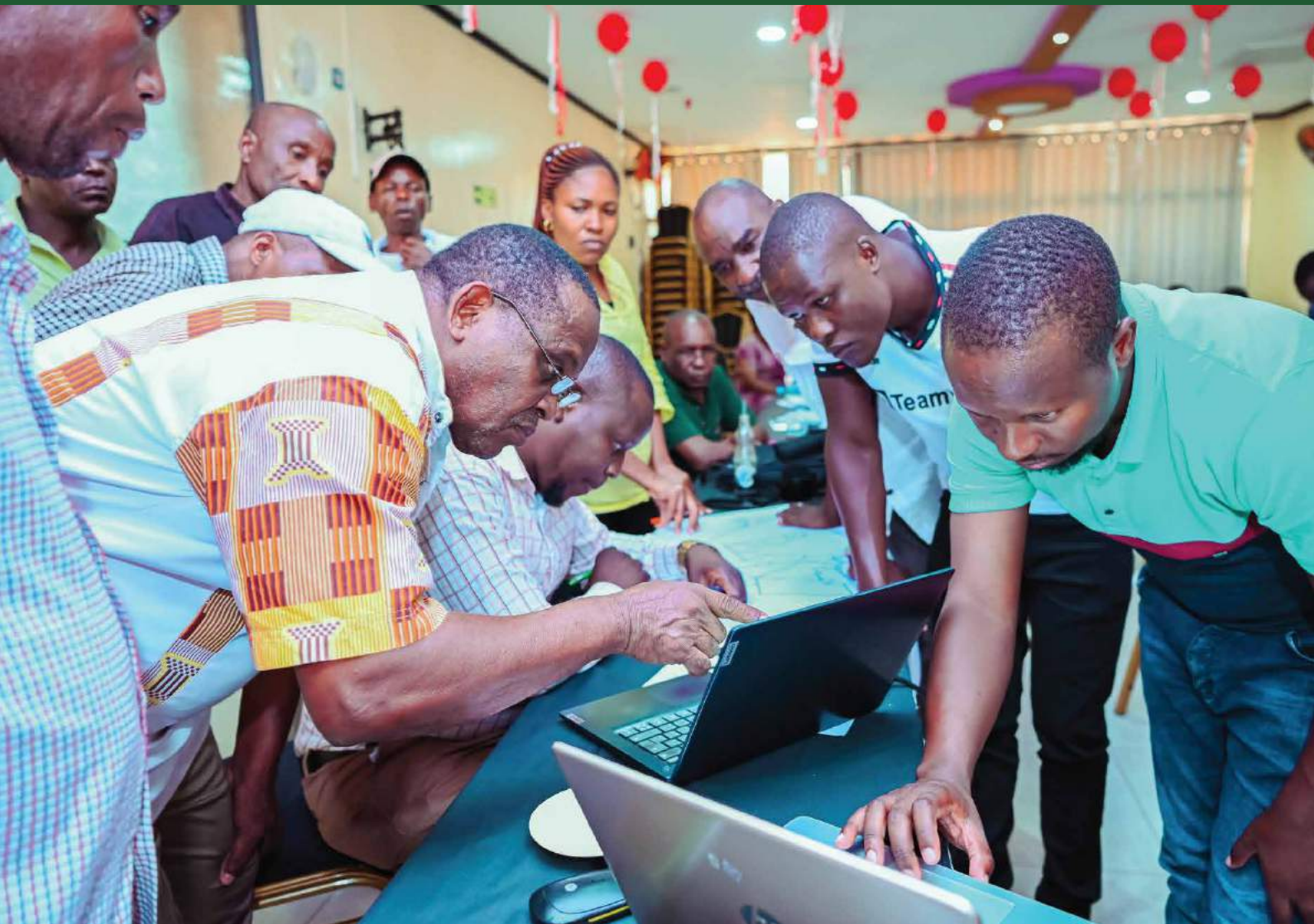
This brings to seven the TTWCA member conservancies and ranches that have operational grazing plans.

Integrating biodiversity risk management

As we work towards a unified, healthy, and connected Tsavo landscape, it is crucial to work on preventing losses and alleviating the impacts of disasters. TTWCA, in partnership with USAID Kenya and ifaw, has developed a community disaster and risk management plan. The plan outlines the common risks faced by TTWCA member conservancies and ranches. It also sets out prevention and mitigation measures, preparedness, response, and recovery in the event of disasters.

Some of these common risks include biodiversity loss as a result of drought, deforestation, climate change, wildfires, invasive species, pandemics, insecurity, El Niño, unplanned development, and human-wildlife conflict.

Additionally, disaster preparedness and risk management will reduce the impacts of climate change while maintaining sustainable development, not only in the conservancies but also across the Tsavo landscape. Therefore, reducing threats and improving biodiversity conservation. Since we cannot reduce the severity of natural hazards, the main opportunity for reducing risk lies in reducing vulnerability and exposure.



Facilitating engagement in policy making

TTWCA, through the RISE Project, had the honour of supporting the Taita Taveta county government in convening the County Gender Sector Working Group Workshop on 15th March.

The workshop was attended by participants from the Kenya Red Cross Society, Action Aid Kenya, National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF), Sauti Ya Wanawake, and Africa Heart among others.

It provided a forum to collaborate in mapping out ways to implement the sexual and gender-based violence policy recently launched by the county government.

The Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments (RISE) project aims to

advance gender equity and prevent gender-based violence within the Tsavo landscape through conservancies.

A week prior, on March 7th, TTWCA partnered with the county government to convene a meeting to review the county's Animal Health and Livestock Movement Control Act.

The meeting drew a diverse list of participants, ranging from ranch/conservancy managers to farmers' cooperatives, who were optimistic that their collective input in reviewing the Act would pave the way for a more organized and coordinated livestock business in the county.



Five more join the fold

TTWCA held a successful Annual General Meeting at Voi Wildlife Lodge, on 15th April.

The AGM registered a remarkable turnout of over 70 conservancy/ranch representatives who unanimously acknowledged the association's positive trajectory and explored potential areas of improvement in the subsequent year.

Five new members were officially welcomed into the TTWCA fraternity, namely: Kishushe Ranch and Kamungji, Shirango, Dakota, and Shumba Valley Conservancies.



IWD 2024: Celebrating women in conservation

TTWCA celebrated this year's International Women's Day (IWD) by amplifying the voices of women in conservation, who are breaking barriers, challenging stereotypes, and inspiring a more inclusive Tsavo.

Meet Pauline Wambugu, Izera Ranch Manager, who speaks to what it means to be a ranch/conservancy manager and its fulfilment: [watch the video](#).

Listen to Stella Mwasi, Marungu Hill Conservancy Manager, as she outlines how capacity building has elevated inclusion in conservation management in the region: [watch the video](#).

Catch up with Valentine Mkanyika, Wushumbu Conservancy Manager, as she highlights what inclusion in leadership means to her: [watch the video](#).

Listen in as Domitilah Wakesho, a community scout, shares her story on women who dedicate their lives to safeguarding our valuable biodiversity: [watch the video](#).



Advancing leatherworks in Tsavo

The 18th of March was a memorable day for the youth as they completed an 11-day hands-on training in leatherworks held in Mwatate and organised by TTWCA with support from TUI Care Foundation and African Wildlife Foundation.

The youth, drawn from Mwatate Subcounty Taita Taveta County, Kenya, exemplified exceptional commitment throughout the training, which covered various aspects of leatherworks, including producing dog muzzles and collars, key holders, and sandals.

The training also looked into how to support the women in basketry in the area to fetch better prices in the market by incorporating leather features in their products, comprising mainly of baskets and mats made from sisal.

To date, about 40 youths have gone through the TTWCA-supported leatherwork training, which commenced in 2023 with a session on how to turn skin into leather and de-fleshing, toggling, tanning, and dyeing.

The Tsavo region is a premier livestock production hub and such training forums are looking to explore and grow the leather industry in the region for local, regional, and international markets.

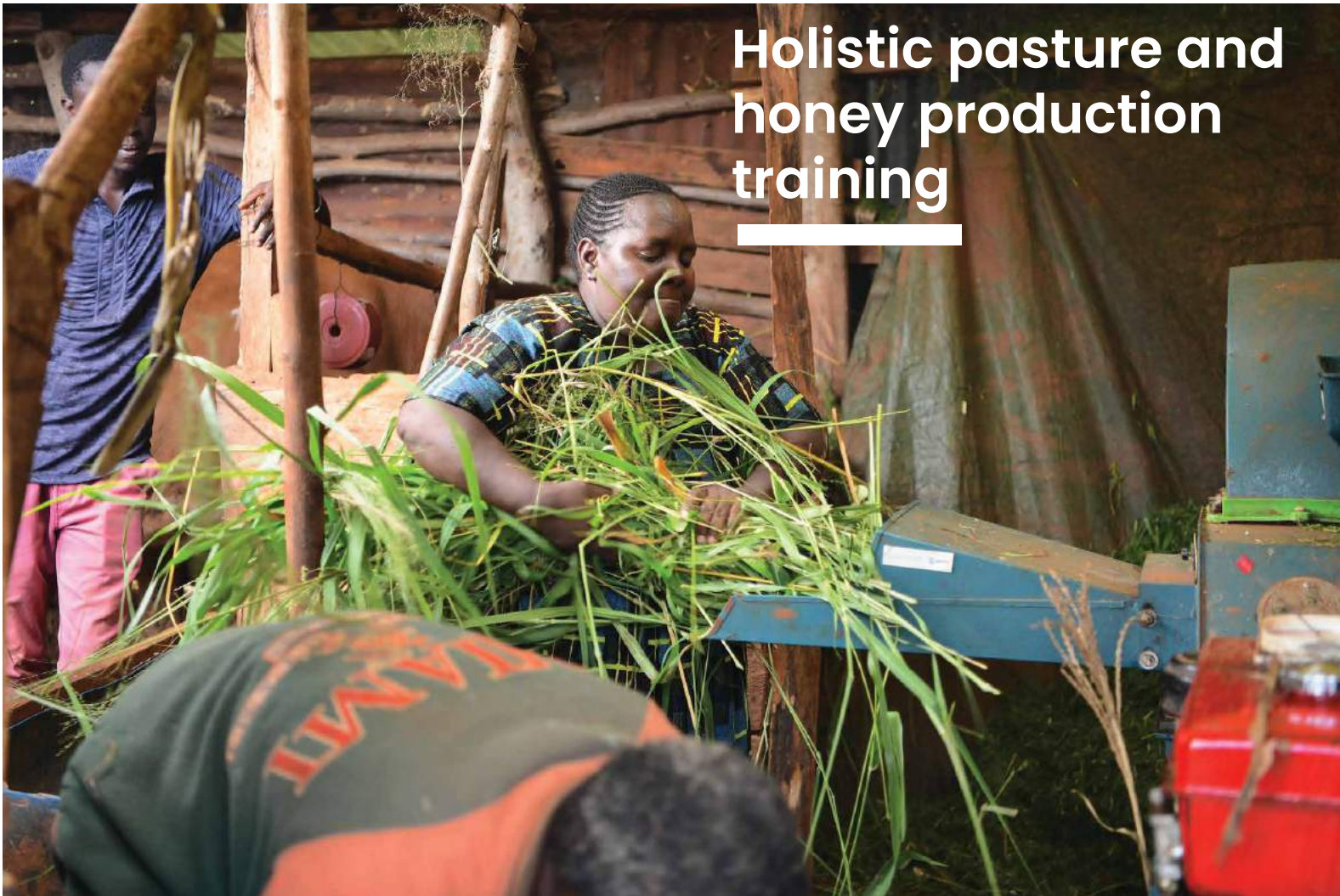
“This project has imparted us with the necessary skills to be business-minded. We can now make and sell belts, key holders, and dog muzzles, among other leather products. Therefore, well-positioned to make money for ourselves,” said Mathew Mghendi, a youth who benefited from the training.



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Mathew Mghendi, beneficiary

Holistic pasture and honey production training



Community-based adaptation to climate change involves building the capacity of local communities to plan for and cope with the impacts of climate change. In April, TTWCA conducted a training forum for 30 community members from seven beekeeping groups and seven pasture production groups.

In addition to hands-on sessions on the economics and production of quality pasture and honey, the participants were trained on how to regenerate and rehabilitate degraded rangelands through reseeding and natural regeneration.

Additionally, they learnt how to manage invasive species, water harvesting, and the different types of fodder, hay roll making, cultivation, storage, and value addition opportunities.





Economic empowerment through VSLAs

Women in landscapes such as the Tsavo grapple with various challenges, including limited access to economic opportunities.

TTWCA member Kasigau Ranch, through the RISE project, is helping women's basket weavers groups to establish Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs).

The VSLAs enable women to embrace saving, access micro-insurance, and invest in small businesses, all while fostering a sense of community and mutual support.

The first half of 2024 saw TTWCA in partnership with KWCA (Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association) organize workshops for the women weavers group to improve their financial literacy and also cultivate leadership skills and strengthen their collective voice.

Through the RISE project, the women are not just weaving baskets but also weaving a brighter future for themselves and generations to come by eradicating barriers to women's economic participation and creating a more inclusive and resilient community.



In the press

The Star

- Taita Taveta youth venture into **leather value addition**
- Lobby ropes in **women to debunk myths** in wildlife conservation
- **Taita rangers embrace tech** to combat poaching, human-wildlife conflict

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!



Publication information

Publisher: Taita Taveta Wildlife Conservancies Association (TTWCA)

Photography: Stanley Kadege & Emmanuel Mwamburi

Editorial and Production lead: Stanley Kadege, TTWCA

Design & Layout: Emmanuel Mwamburi, TTWCA



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