



# FROM THE FIELD

## LATEST IMPACT UPDATES FROM OUR GREAT PLAINS INITIATIVES

The Great Plains Foundation has ramped up its conservation and community work plans. As our school feeding programs expanded, rewilding and translocation initiatives included adding zebras and giraffes in a spectacular move this past quarter.

I want to thank everyone involved in all projects but in particular Nick Le Grange and his capture team who moved giraffe, impala and zebra so efficiently. Rewilding is such an important part of conservation today and you will soon read about our efforts to move rhinos in Uganda and other really interesting translocation projects that we have taken on in various places. What is so inspiring to us all, is the way our Foundation team,

and the Great Plains staff and management in general, have embraced projects that have massive benefit to conservation, and communities, and yet we have no commercial footprint in many of them. A true selfless act that no one on our side questions.

Apart from keeping our supporters informed with this Q2 impact report, it is also to thank everyone who donates in blood, sweat, and tears.

Dereck Joubert,  
Chairman of Great Plains Foundation

## 2024 Q2 IMPACT REPORT | APRIL – JUNE 2024

Our efforts strategically cover three overlapping efforts; conservation, community welfare and education. This is because we fundamentally believe that partners around the conservation table make us all stronger, united, diverse and engaged in our approach to the ever changing landscape of conservation and the protection of our planet. Our approach is to take ACTION today to solve problems right in front of us (like rewilding and critical species monitoring, or feeding children during droughts) and to also take PRECAUTIONS, like educating children, using AI advances to manage landscapes better and supporting women in conservation and in commerce. Our efforts are always based on respect and affording dignity to those we reach.

It's been a busy quarter for the Great Plains Foundation team. The use of AI technology to monitor biodiversity using imagery and machine learning in Botswana has begun. In Zimbabwe, the movement maps of the translocated and resident elephant herds are yielding interesting insights, and our Wildlife Rangers continue to excel in all aspects from spoor surveys, to boat patrols and fitness training. Under our Impact through Education program, conservation education has been at the forefront of this quarter. The Great Plains sponsored students are progressing well in Conservation Leadership, two conservation education camps were hosted, and the team welcomed university students for field trips and in-practice conservation. Our Great Plains school food program continues to thrive with the total number of meals donated now reaching 5 million, alongside our other school support projects. We hope you enjoy reading our Great Plains Foundation Q2 2024 Impact Report.

# CONSERVATION

Biodiversity • Healthy Ecosystems • Endangered Species



## FEMALE RANGERS

*Training and hiring Female Wildlife Rangers from local communities*



In Botswana, our Female Rangers have been busy with their solo patrols and leading teams in the field. The team's fitness training this quarter kicked off with incredible enthusiasm and motivation, including challenges that we hope inspire the ladies to ensure they take care of their health and wellness. The ladies also took part in boat training and other upskilling courses, bringing the new recruits up to standards. Some of our female rangers had the opportunity to support the aerial survey training that took place in May. This was an eye-opener on some of the more advanced conservation skills being developed, and they were eager to get involved.



In Zimbabwe, we hired three new female rangers in the last quarter, including a female student on attachment from Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT). All three have settled into the system, and we hope to increase the number of female rangers in the next quarter in a joint collaboration with ZimParks. With more rangers, we can cover more ground for wildlife monitoring and security activities in the Sapi Reserve to ensure the protection and conservation of our landscape and wildlife, in particular those we introduce via our ongoing rewilding efforts. The ladies, together with the rest of our wildlife ranger team, have been integral to the biodiversity monitoring of the Sapi Reserve, conducting spoor counts, vegetation surveys, elephant monitoring and more. These tasks broaden their impact and skill set.



Our Female Rangers in Zimbabwe and Botswana were celebrated in the global awareness campaign of World Female Ranger Week in June. It has given them an incredible boost knowing that they are being celebrated and supported globally alongside other pioneering and brave women.

**3 NEW FEMALE RANGERS**   
**4,560 KM PATROLLED IN BOTSWANA & ZIMBABWE** 



# PROJECT REWILD

## *Translocations of wildlife and post-translocation monitoring*

The team in Zimbabwe is thrilled to report that the most recent phase of Project Rewild was completed between April and June this year with the successful translocation of 70 Southern giraffes. The animals were released into a non-hunting conservancy bordering Hwange National Park to bolster the declining number of giraffes in the Hwange region. Alongside the 70 giraffes, 68 zebras were released into the same area. The animals were moved in 13 round trips of 1500km each using a 30-ton truck designed specifically for moving giraffes. On each trip the truck was operated by two drivers and a Zimbabwe Parks (ZimParks) Ranger. This allowed the truck to drive continuously throughout the night, speeding up the trip to minimise the stress on the animals. On arrival in Hwange the animals were offloaded into a temporary boma with access to food and water for 48 hours before being released.

30 of the giraffes were tagged on release to allow for two years of monitoring. The post-release monitoring objective is to gain a better understanding of their integration and dispersal into the region, their browse preferences and any mortalities post-translocation. The project has been planned with animal welfare in mind and ethical implications carefully considered to ensure minimum impact and with all the required permissions and permits. For example, while fitting giraffe with ear tags has ethical considerations, risks to animal health and welfare were minimised by using a highly experienced project team. Using the latest technology, each miniature solar-powered satellite tracking ear tag weighs 35 to 150g, less than 0.001% of each animal's body weight.

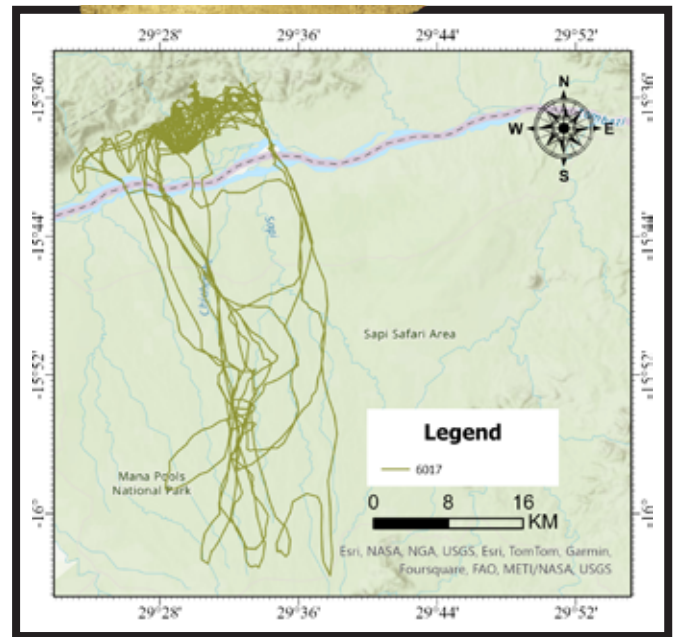
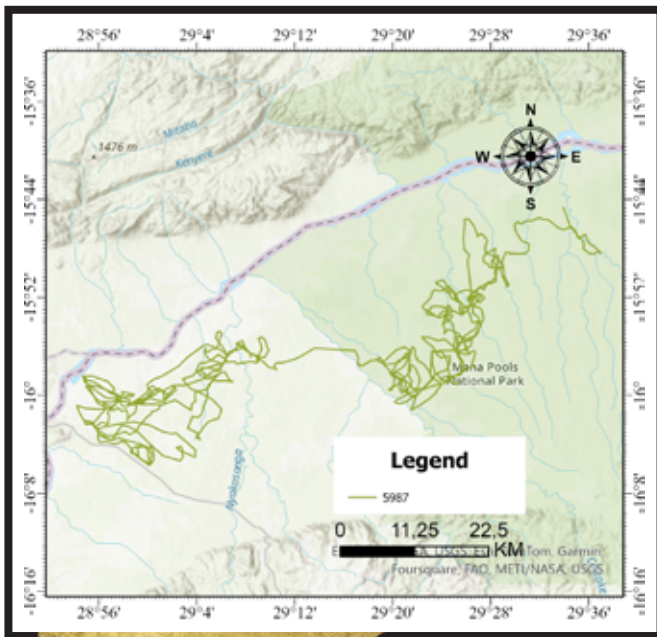


# 70 GIRAFFE AND 68 ZEBRAS TRANSLOCATED



Elephant monitoring has been an ongoing priority for our team. In 2022, Great Plains successfully translocated 101 elephants, organised into thirteen herds. Each herd's matriarch was collared before their release into the Sapi Reserve. Additionally, Great Plains collared 10 resident elephants in the same time period and area. Our primary focus has been to monitor these collared elephants, documenting their physical condition, overall well-being, social behaviours, and movements, comparing resident and relocated elephants.

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



# 16 ELEPHANT HERDS BEING MONITORED



# SAPI RESERVE RESTORATION

*Conservation of the 128,000-hectare Sapi Private Reserve in Zimbabwe*

Great Plains manages the 128,000-hectare Sapi Private Reserve on the Zambezi in Zimbabwe with ongoing monitoring of biodiversity and conservation efforts in the area. This quarter, in partnership with ZimParks, the team conducted large carnivore spoor counts in Sapi, Chewore North, and Chewore South, as part of a greater carnivore survey including Mana Pools and Hurungwe. The data from the spoor survey is important for estimating population trends. This will be continuously carried out in the wet and dry seasons every year, which will help management to estimate large carnivore population trends for the region.

Vegetation monitoring is ongoing to produce a detailed map of vegetation species diversity and habitat diversity of the Sapi Reserve. Soil samples are being collected as our baseline for various studies, as many ecological systems are influenced by soil type and structure.



In April, 23 students studying towards a BSc in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at Chinhoyi University of Technology in Zimbabwe, participated in a field trip to the Sapi Reserve for some practical experience. The field trip included field skills such as elephant tracking, identifying mammals based on morphology, dung and spoor, studying habitat occupancy, feeding behaviour, social organisation, and determining the sex and age of the animals. Other activities included wildlife tracking, carnivore monitoring, setting camera traps, data management, vegetation monitoring, bird identification, data presentation and ecological methods for determining population density and trends. Great Plains Foundation believes that exposure to field work is an essential part of developing capacity within those focused on conservation as a career.



**2,971 KM** PATROLLED FOR  **BIODIVERSITY MONITORING**  
**23** STUDENTS HOSTED  **FOR CONSERVATION EDUCATION**

# CRITICAL SPECIES PROTECTION

*Protecting endangered species through security and monitoring*

In addition to the post-release monitoring of species translocated as part of Project Rewild, patrolling and monitoring continue to be a top priority for our teams in Botswana as well. With the high water levels in the area, the team spent the majority of this quarter patrolling from either boat or helicopter, in addition to vehicle patrol. The team used the time to boost the skills of the rangers and increase the number of boat drivers in the team. The new boat drivers thoroughly enjoyed the training and are happily using their newfound skills on daily patrols as they gain additional experience performing water-based patrols.



Our team continues to grow and develop and we welcomed a new member to the Great Plains Foundation family, David Rubadiri, as Operations Manager. We also celebrated with Onkgopotse Maboga (Somalia), who has been with Great Plains Foundation since 2017, and was promoted from Team Leader to Team Coordinator. We congratulate them both and look forward to seeing both positions support and make the team even stronger.

**6,119KM**  
**PATROLLED**



# BIODIVERSITY MONITORING USING AI TECHNOLOGY

*Innovating biodiversity monitoring in the Okavango Delta, Botswana*



Accurate and on-demand animal population estimates are critical for wildlife conservation organisations worldwide. While the collection of image data from camera traps, satellites, and aircraft has served us well for decades Great Plains Foundation has invested in forward thinking AI technology to process data images, collected by our aerial surveys using a fixed-wing plane fitted with camera pods.

A complete survey of the Duba Plains Concession was performed, capturing just over 12,000 images for the relatively small area! The next stage includes data training, management and image analysis. This project not only includes performing the aerial surveys using this method but also providing data to train new algorithms to detect things like vulture nests, specific bird species and build on specific species algorithms already established but that require additional field data.







With the promise of advanced AI technology to process data images, our team conducted automated aerial surveys using a fixed-wing plane fitted with camera pods, following standardised transect flight paths. The team was trained and coordinated by Howard Fredrick, a well-known scientist in the aerial survey and AI data processing world.

**“We are eager to be at the forefront of advancing technologies to help conservationists and researchers monitor and manage wildlife and ecosystems with greater precision and efficiency, leading not only to adaptive but strategic management approaches”.**

Robyn Hartley

  
**12,405 IMAGES CAPTURED**  
**USING AUTOMATED AERIAL SURVEY TO**  
**BE PROCESSED USING AI TECHNOLOGY**

# CONSERVATION ROOTS

*Planting indigenous trees for ecosystem restoration and carbon sequestration*



Planting indigenous trees continues across the Maasai Mara and the Chyulu Hills ecosystem to expand forest cover, reduce soil erosion and protect habitats. This quarter the team took advantage of the rainy season in Kenya and planted 1,119 indigenous trees in the wild. A variety of local community engagements also took place with workshops on sustainable harvesting of certain medicinal species, such as Warburgia Ugandensis, to reduce the unsustainable harvesting and loss of the trees. The Conservation Roots team were also pleased to see the trees planted a few years ago are now tall and thriving. The total number of indigenous trees Great Plains have planted so far between Zimbabwe, Botswana and Kenya is 36,835.



# COMMUNITY

Education • Empowerment • Welfare



## SPONSORED CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS

*Sponsoring the fees of Kenyan students in Conservation Diplomas*

Great Plains continues to sponsor 6 students to attend the Kenya Wildlife Trust Conservation Leadership Program. The students are from the Maasai Mara, Tsavo/Amboseli and Samburu/Laikipia. Kenya Wildlife Trust’s mission is to protect vulnerable predator populations, empower local communities and educate communities and stakeholders about conservation and environmental stewardship. This quarter the students learnt about mentorship and leadership, communication, discipline and digital storytelling, and managed Green Projects to put their theoretical learning into practice. We are pleased the students are progressing well in their studies alongside other passionate young Kenyans with a mission to protect biodiversity for future generations.



**6**  **SPONSORED STUDENTS CONTINUE TO STUDY CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**



# GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION EDUCATION KIDS CAMP

*Hosting local school children in a Conservation Education Camp in the Chyulu Hills, Kenya*



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



Other activities included fire lighting, safety and hygiene lessons, and a last night 'cook out' dinner using camping stoves all together. The conservation camp hosted by the Great Plains team is a unique experience to learn about nature and have mentors in their communities. Each group had mentorship sessions on personal development and challenges they face, and were shown opportunities for their futures in careers in both tourism as well as conservation. In partnership with Micato Safaris & Huru International, each girl received a menstrual health package with information booklets, sanitary pads, soaps, storage bags and more.



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

Mr Lemiti, Teacher & Chaperon

**60 SCHOOL KIDS HOSTED FOR CONSERVATION EDUCATION**  
**30 GIRLS 30 BOYS** 

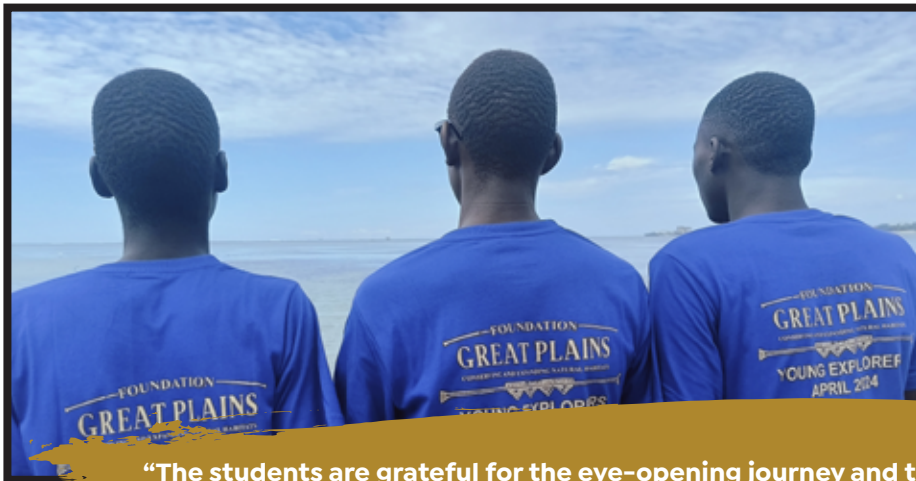
# MAASAI MARA KIDS CAMP WITH THE MAA TRUST

*Sponsoring conservation education in the Maasai Mara*



Great Plains sponsors the exciting and educational holiday camp hosted by The Maa Trust. In April, 27 students from the Maasai Mara travelled to Mombasa to learn about different cultures and environments. The majority of the students had never visited the coast or seen the ocean so this trip provided them with a unique learning experience.

The group learnt all about marine conservation and participated in the development of a conservation strategy including the planting of 150 mangrove trees and hosting a beach clean up.



**“The students are grateful for the eye-opening journey and the experience provided, and are more committed than ever to their studies and conserving our planet. Thank you, Great Plains Foundation for making this possible!”**

The Maa Trust

**27 STUDENTS FROM THE MAASAI MARA VISITED THE COAST FOR CONSERVATION EDUCATION**



**150 MANGROVE TREES PLANTED**



# NABOISHO WOMENS GROUP

*Sponsoring a women-led business in the Maasai Mara to support education and healthcare*


The Great Plains Foundation has increased and continued its support for the Naboisho Women’s Craft Group in the Maasai Mara; a women-led business of making beaded items and honey. This quarter the foundation completed an ablution block and guest welcome centre. The ladies are ready and excited to welcome guests to the centre and expand their market and business. The 105 women who make up the Naboisho Women’s Group generated \$4,262 in sales this quarter, positively impacting education and healthcare for 400 kids.



The group also produced stunning beaded awards for the prize winners at the 2nd annual Pridelands Wildlife Film Festival. The festival is sponsored in part by Great Plains Foundation and was held at the end of May in Nairobi.

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

Jane Ntika, Naboisho Women Group

**105 WOMEN SUPPORTED**  
  
**\$4,262 GENERATED IN SALES**



# SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM

*Distributing nutritious meals to rural schools in Kenya to boost education*

The School Food Program was established to boost attendance and progress in schools in rural southern Kenya. This quarter, we increased the number of schools we are supporting from 51 to 54, increasing the total number of daily meals delivered to students from 12,722 to 13,901. Each meal supplies critical nutrition, helping with children's focus, attention and learning.

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

Head Teacher Wilson, Maasai Mara

**“When we delivered food at Isinet Primary School, one day later we received a call from the Head Teacher informing us that almost 250 pupils who were not in school have reported upon hearing that the food was there at school.”**

Joel Sepere - Community Liaison

**“On behalf of Ilchalai Primary School pupils and the community, I extend our gratitude to Great Plains Foundation for the food they distributed in June. As a result of this our enrolment has risen by 221 pupils. All our candidates for this year are now in school and are preparing well for exams. The pupils are happy and concentrating in school. We appreciate your generosity and kindness towards our school.”**

Mr Momanyi, Deputy Headteacher, Ilchali Prima School, Mbirikani Group Ranch

# 13,901 SCHOOLKIDS SUPPORTED DAILY WITH MEALS



# TOTAL MEALS DONATED: 5 MILLION



# SCHOOL SUPPORT

*Supporting schools with sponsored teachers and educational supplies*



Great Plains works closely with local communities and, in particular, with the local schools. Education is essential for growth and our aim is to reduce barriers to education and boost opportunities for youngsters. Support for schools is tailored to each community when it comes to school supplies. Donations to a school in the Maasai Mara included printer, toner, portable solar units and stationary. This gift was part of Great Plains' wonderful on-going partnership with the Celestielle Charitable Trust. The items were donated with funds raised by students of Victory Boxing who traveled all the way from New Zealand!

Finally, the Great Plains Foundation supports 37 teachers in Kenya, benefitting 2,702 students with smaller class sizes and a more personal teaching experience.

**"Sylvia, our Great Plains sponsored teacher, is a very dependable and reliable teacher to the pupils. She is always in class with the pupils. A resource that we cherish in our school."**

Head Teacher, Imbaruetin Complex Primary School

**37**  **TEACHERS SPONSORED**  
**BENEFITING**  **2,702** **SCHOOL KIDS**  
**IN KENYA**

# GRANT PROJECTS

Big Cats Initiative • Project Ranger



## BIG CATS INITIATIVE

*Grant funding to NGOs worldwide to projects with a focus in big cat conservation*



### WATU, SIMBA NA MAZINGIRA (WASIMA), TANZANIA

WASIMA is a Big Cats Initiative grantee that aims to promote human-lion coexistence by reducing the cost to communities of living with lions and ensuring community engagement in addressing human-lion conflicts (HLCs) and habitat degradation. Between April and June 2024, the WASIMA team hosted local Natural Resources Management and Governance appraisals in three villages bordering Uyumbu Wildlife Management Area and Walla Forest Reserve in Tanzania. The workshop, attended by 170 participants, aimed to identify and assess local natural resources, involve community stakeholders, and set action plans for resource management, governance, and anti-poaching efforts in these important community-run wildlife areas. Finally, they completed ten predator-proof bomas in villages around the northern part of Katavi National Park benefiting 10 households and safeguarding 223 cattle and 37 goats and sheep, valued over \$70,000 and held wildlife club sessions in six primary schools involving a total of 472 students.



### THE LEO FOUNDATION, SENEGAL

In June 2024, the Leo Foundation held training in large carnivore survey techniques for local rangers and eco-guards in Niokolo-Koba National Park in the Southeast of Senegal. The national park was established in 1954 and it became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981. In 2007, its status was upgraded to a world heritage site “in danger” and is one of three major large carnivore strongholds in West Africa. It provides important habitat for the regionally critically endangered large carnivores including the West African lion and African wild dog. The course focused on basic ecological research and survey methods, recognising and identifying carnivore tracks, installation and use of solar-powered camera traps, use of software for analysis and recognition of individual animals, the sampling and analysis of carnivore scat and the application of DISTANCE software to calculate carnivore densities in the park. The Leo Foundation is happy to report that the initial training helped to bolster the rangers’ and eco-guards’ skills and improved their capacity to monitor and protect this essential habitat for the West African lion and other large carnivore species.





## INSTITUTO HOMEM PANTANEIRO (IHP), BRAZIL



The work carried out by IHP this quarter highlights not only the work of Felinos Pantaneiros, their Jaguar Program, but also their ongoing commitment to Environmental Education. During the months of April, May and June, three environmental education activities reaching more than 300 students were implemented at the Instituto Moinho Cultural Sul-Americano (IMC). These activities used play, arts and age-appropriate interactive lessons to assess and expand students' knowledge of jaguars, biodiversity and the importance of conservation. As for the Felinos Pantaneiros program itself, highlights from the quarter included the resumption of camera trap monitoring of wildlife moving using flow bridges to safely navigate BR-262, a major east-west highway running through the Pantanal, the organisation of the first Seminar on Integrated Action Strategies for Jaguar Conservation to improve the diagnosis of threats to jaguars and strengthen the actions of policing and inspection forces to generate positive results in conservation, and the monitoring of jaguar and puma on several farms and properties within IHPs area of operations.

## HUMAN-LION COEXISTENCE, KENYA



We received a nice update from past grantee Lucrecia Aguilar who is studying human-lion dynamics to promote coexistence. A Big Cats Initiative grantee in early 2023 partially funded the purchase of a vehicle to support Ms. Aguilar's work in Laikipia. This year, she and her team collared 11 lions and tagged 100 livestock with solar-powered GPS ear tags. They have found that both ranch-conservancies and the pastoralist communities have had very positive responses to the work thus far. The next phase of the project will include social surveys and phone location tracking with women and men in local communities to examine overlap with lions and lion scat collection to analyse livestock vs. wild prey in the diets of lions in the region.

# PROJECT RANGER

*Granting funds to NGOs across Africa specialising in anti-poaching*

Project Ranger issued its first three grants of the year in the second quarter, all to past grantees, including PitTrack K9 Anti-Poaching in South Africa, and the Bumi Hills Anti-Poaching Unit and Conservation and Wildlife Fund Hwange both in Zimbabwe. We look forward to providing grantee updates from all three organisations in our next impact report.



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