



Kenya Wildlife Conservation Project

What is the Kenya Wildlife Conservation Project?

The Kenya Wildlife Conservation Project is implemented by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to strengthen the management of Kenya’s national parks and reserves and to promote community-based wildlife management. The KWS is the Government of Kenya’s authority for wildlife conservation and management. KWS manages 8% of Kenya’s total landmass, including 27 National Parks, 32 National Reserves, and four National Sanctuaries, four Marine National Parks and six Marine National Reserves.

The current project builds upon a successful partnership between the American people, KWS and the African Wildlife Foundation called the Conservation of Biodiverse Resource Areas Project in which USAID/Kenya provided KWS technical assistance, training, and equipment to develop a viable extension service for communities adjacent to the parks and reserves. By coupling economic projects with social dialogue, KWS’s extension service has improved perceptions about wildlife among the rural communities around Laikipia, Samburu, Kajiado and Coast.



Elephant beginning the translocation process from Narok North back to the Maasai Mara National Reserve

Project Duration and Budget

Conservation of Biodiverse Resource Areas Project
1992 - 2004

USAID Contribution: \$16,500,000

Government of Kenya Contribution: \$7,394,150

Kenya Wildlife Conservation Project
2006-2013
\$1.85 million

Who implements the Kenya Wildlife Conservation Project?

Kenya Wildlife Service

www.kws.go.ke

Where does the Kenya Wildlife Conservation Project work?

The greater Amboseli (including the Nairobi National Park ecosystem); Laikipia-Samburu; Mt. Kenya; the Coast

What does the Kenya Wildlife Conservation Project do?

The project engages local communities in wildlife conservation. Human-wildlife conflict continues to pose a great challenge to KWS management; conservation outside protected areas cannot be sustainably achieved without addressing the needs and rights of communities hosting wildlife on their lands. The American people support KWS as it engages Kenyan communities bordering national parks and conservation areas. KWS is testing and implementing legal and economic tools for conservation including land trusts and easements programs, beginning with programs in Kitengela in the Nairobi National Park.

The project enhances combined monitoring of habitat and species, including biomass monitoring in Nairobi National Park and aerial photo interpretation and map digitization to create a baseline for long term monitoring.

The project is assisting with the implementation of national conservation strategies for black rhinos, cheetahs, wild dogs, lions, spotted hyena, sea turtles, and the economically attractive aloe vera plant.

How is the Kenya Wildlife Conservation Project making a difference?

KWS has developed an integrated management, information, ecological monitoring and Environmental Management System (EMS). KWS collects quality information to improve decision-making, ensuring a coordinated system to monitor both performance of management and ecological changes within and without protected areas, including the efficient information flow between the functions of KWS HQ and the field. Hundreds of park rangers, game scouts and sanctuary managers have been trained in data collection for the system.

The project has assisted with the successful implementation of the “Safari Card” smart system through a wide area network. The smart cards have modernized revenue collection, reducing revenue leakage, and integrated the monitoring system.

In partnership with USAID, KWS has implemented the wildlife Management Information System, a digital monitoring system for reporting and analyzing human-wildlife conflict and poaching incidents and wildlife movements.

Roughly 200 animals have been translocated from community and private sanctuaries to repopulate Meru National Park and expand tourism. Twenty one black rhinos were successfully reintroduced into Ruma National Park in Western Kenya between December 2011 and January 2012, making Ruma the country’s newest Rhino Sanctuary.

What key challenges does the Kenya Wildlife Conservation Project face?

Seventy-five percent of Kenya’s tourism revenue is derived from wildlife tourism and yet, Kenya’s abundant natural resources face challenges on diverse fronts. Climate change, habitat degradation and loss, poaching, forest depletion, tourism market volatility, and human-wildlife conflict are threats to preservation and good resource management.

The Kenya Wildlife Conservation Project in Action

John Keen and his family gave a generous gift to the people of Kenya when they signed the country’s first environmental easement. The easement protects important natural habitat adjacent to Nairobi National Park. It was facilitated by the African Wildlife Foundation through a grant from USAID, and can serve as a model for other landowners interested in conserving Kenya’s natural heritage.

A native Kenyan, Keen owns a 300 acre parcel of land adjacent to Nairobi National Park where the family runs a lodge. In recent years, wildlife has been unable to continue its movement patterns in and around the park, and human-wildlife conflict has escalated. The result has been a dramatic decline in wildlife in the region that also affected the livelihoods of the local Maasai pastoralists.

Keen and his family wanted to counter these alarming trends by securing their land for wildlife and future generations. The idea for the environmental easement grew out of the consultative development of the Kitengela Land Use Management Plan, the first such plan in Kenya, adopted by the Olkejuado County Council in 2010.

“I want this land to remain pristine today and in the future for wildlife and the generations to come,” said Keen. “We have destroyed so much of our land and wildlife; it is time to save this country of ours!”

Easements offer the ideal win-win situation, where private landowners retain ownership and a park is expanded. Kenya’s protected areas safeguard roughly eight percent of the country’s land for wildlife habitat, but these protected areas are unconnected and too small to support viable populations of wildlife. Creative solutions like easements can help secure Kenya’s remaining wild places.



John Keen signed the country’s first environmental easement, generously allowing his 300 acres of land adjacent to the Nairobi National Park to be included under park management.

For more information:

www.kws.go.ke

Munira Bashir, Assistant Director/
Head of Community Enterprise
Kenya Wildlife Service
Tel: +254 722 461 412
Email: munira@kws.go.ke

Patrick Omondi, Senior Assistant Director/
Head of Species Conservation and Management
Kenya Wildlife Service
Tel: +254 722 791 718
Email: pomondi@kws.go.ke

Azharul Mazumder, Team Leader
Environment and Natural Resources Management
USAID/Kenya
Tel: + 254 713 601 380
Email: azmazumder@usaid.gov

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