AMBOSELI ECOSYSTEM TRUST

Amboseli Ecosystem State of Conservancies Report 2026



Amboseli Ecosystem: A UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve

Amboseli Ecosystem State of Conservancies Report 2026



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List of Acronyms

ACC	African Conservation Centre
AET	Amboseli Ecosystem Trust
AEMP	Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan
ALOCA	Amboseli Land Owners Conservacies Association
ANP	Amboseli National Park
ATE	Amboseli Trust For Elephants
ATGSA	Amboseli Tsavo Gamescout Association
ATGRCA	Amboseli Tsavo Group Ranches Conservation Association
BLF	Big Life Foundation
IFAW	International Fund for Animal Welfare
KWCA	Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association
KWS	Kenya Wildlife Service
MWCT	Maasai Wlderness Conservation Trust
NEMA	National Environmental Management Authority
OOGR	Olgulului - Ololarrashi Group Ranch
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

FOREWORD

By CEO, Amboseli Ecosystem Trust

I am profoundly humbled to present the *State of Conservancies Report 2026*, published at a defining moment for the Amboseli Ecosystem. This report is the culmination of extensive engagements and consultations with communities, partners, conservancy leaders, and stakeholders across the landscape.

Since the publication of the first State of Conservancies Report in 2020, the Amboseli landscape has undergone significant transformation. As the subdivision of group ranches continues to unfold across the ecosystem, communities have made remarkable strides in securing the future of their land, livelihoods, and biodiversity.

The rapid growth of conservancies, as presented in this report, is a strong testament to the immense commitment and collective effort of communities, together with conservation stakeholders and partners, who continue to provide critical support and guidance. Their collaboration has been instrumental in securing vital spaces for grazing, wildlife dispersal, and the long-term sustainability of the Amboseli landscape.

Despite this growth, conservancies continue to face challenges and gaps in investment, governance and leadership, compliance with legal frameworks, and persistent land use conflicts. Addressing these issues will require stronger collaboration, sustained support, and continued commitment from communities, government, and conservation partners to ensure conservancies remain resilient and continue delivering benefits for both people and wildlife.

This report presents a clear and practical conservation action plan that outlines the key challenges facing conservancies while providing strategic entry points for support from investors, conservation stakeholders, and development partners. It serves as a roadmap for strengthening community conservancies into viable and resilient institutions that can effectively drive economic benefits for local communities while sustaining wildlife conservation for future generations.



Amboseli Ecosystem Trust will continue working closely with conservancy leaders, conservation partners, and both county and national government agencies to ensure conservancies receive the support they need to overcome critical challenges affecting their operations and growth.

Together, we have the opportunity to build resilient conservancies that not only protect wildlife and critical ecosystems but also create lasting social and economic benefits for communities. We hope that this report will inspire stronger partnerships, informed action, and renewed commitment towards securing the future of Amboseli for generations to come

Ahsanti Sana!
Jackson Mwato

MESSAGE

From the Board Chair, AET

The Amboseli Ecosystem remains one of the world's most iconic conservation landscapes, a place where wildlife, people, culture, and nature continue to coexist across vast and interconnected rangelands.

For generations, the Maasai community has safeguarded this landscape through traditional stewardship that has sustained pastoralism and biodiversity.

This State of Conservancies Report 2026 reflects both the remarkable progress and the evolving realities of community conservation in Amboseli. It highlights the increasing commitment by communities to dedicate land for conservation, strengthen governance structures, attract responsible investment, and secure sustainable livelihoods linked to healthy ecosystems.

The rapid emergence of conservancies across Amboseli demonstrates that communities are not passive participants in conservation, they are leaders and decision-makers shaping the future of their landscape. Conservancies have become important platforms for protecting wildlife corridors, supporting pastoralism, creating employment, promoting tourism, and enhancing resilience against climate and economic shocks.

At the same time, this report clearly shows that the future of Amboseli cannot be taken for granted. Pressures arising from land fragmentation, incompatible land uses, climate change, and human-wildlife co-existence continue to threaten ecosystem connectivity and the sustainability of conservation gains. These challenges call for stronger collaboration, sound policy implementation, improved land-use planning, and long-term investment in community institutions.

At the AET Board, we recognise that the strength of conservation lies in partnerships and collaborations among all partners. The progress captured in this report has been made possible through the collective efforts and contributions of communities, conservancy leaders, county and national government institutions, conservation organisations, tourism investors, researchers, and development partners working together toward a shared vision for Amboseli.

We particularly acknowledge the resilience and commitment of local communities who continue to make sacrifices to conserve wildlife and maintain open landscapes that are globally significant. Their leadership demonstrates that conservation succeeds best when communities derive meaningful social, cultural, and economic value from protecting natural resources.



This report also presents an important opportunity for reflection and action. It challenges all stakeholders to strengthen governance, invest in sustainable enterprises, support emerging conservancies, and secure the ecological integrity of Amboseli for future generations. The ecosystem's success will depend on balancing conservation, development, and community aspirations in a rapidly changing environment.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I sincerely appreciate all partners and stakeholders who continue to support the work of AET and the broader conservation agenda within the ecosystem.

May this report inspire renewed commitment towards building a resilient, inclusive, and thriving Amboseli landscape for both people and wildlife.

Daniel Leturesh

LETTER

From the CEO, KWCA



01

Chapter 1

The Amboseli Ecosystem

Introduction

The Amboseli Ecosystem is one of East Africa's most important landscapes, covering about 8,000 square kilometres across southern Kenya and extending into northern Tanzania. It is bounded by Kenya/Tanzania border to the south, Chyulu Hills, Tsavo West National Park to the east, Athi Kapiti to the north and Magadi/Namanga to the west.

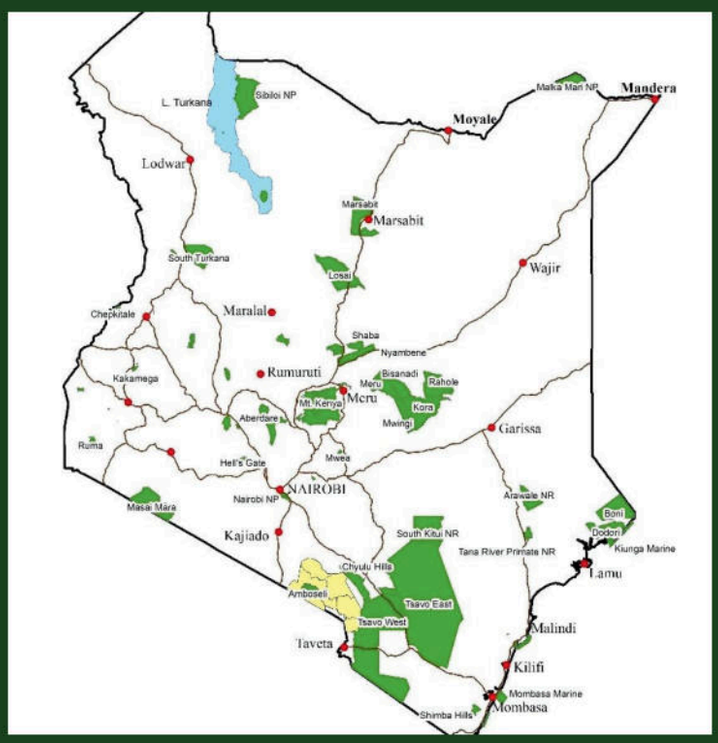
At its heart lies Amboseli National Park, but the wider ecosystem includes a network of community conservancies borne of the former group ranches of Kimana/Tikondo, Olgulului/Olararashi, Selengei, Mbirikani, Kuku, and Rombo.

Its most striking feature is the snow-capped peak of Mount Kilimanjaro, which, although outside Kenya, dominates the landscape. It influences local climate patterns and is a reference point, often used as an emblem of the ecosystem.

The ecosystem is mainly open savannah grasslands. The underground water flowing from Kilimanjaro feeds the swamps and springs that support rich biodiversity.

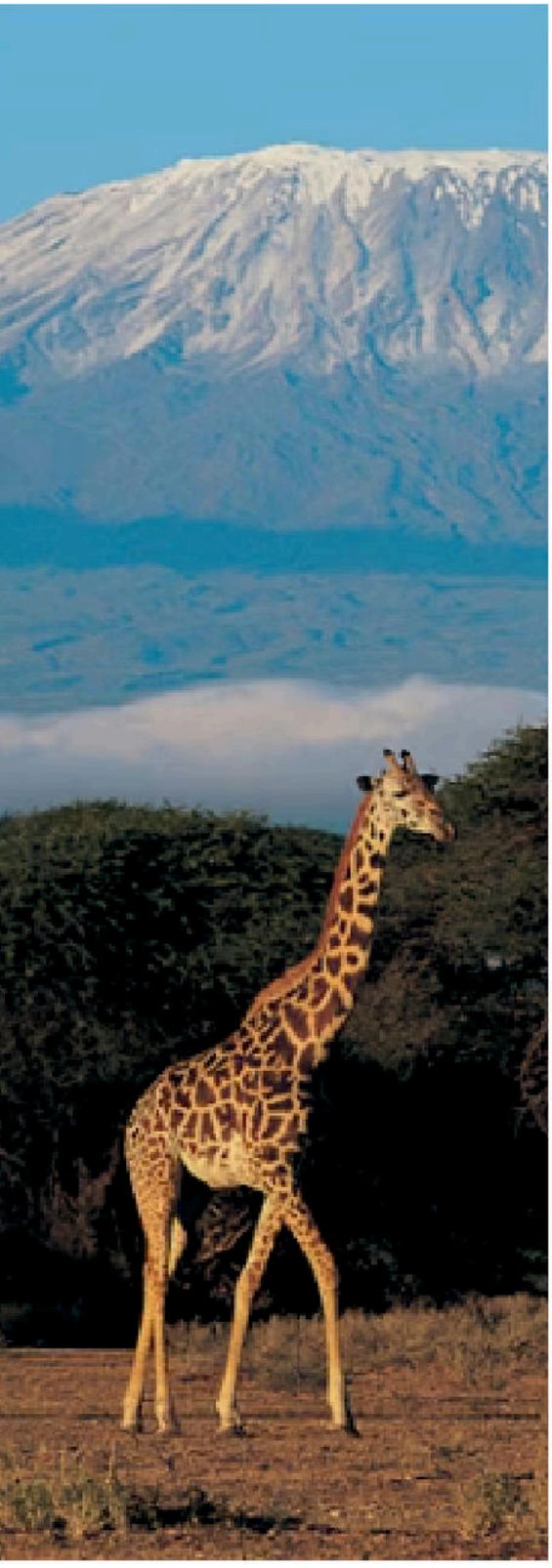
Land use within the Amboseli Ecosystem is a mix of conservation, pastoralism, and tourism. The Maasai community has traditionally practised livestock grazing in harmony with wildlife, allowing coexistence over generations.

Over the recent past, the area has seen the growth of cultivation as a land-use, concentrated in some sections where groundwater is available from rivers, springs, and swamps, making the ecosystem a leading food basket. I turn, it has also encouraged the spread of urbanisation and sedentary settlements, spurring complex ecological, cultural and economic dynamics in the populous ecosystem.



Map of Kenya showing the Amboseli Ecosystem

Outstanding Values of the Amboseli Ecosystem



Man and Biosphere Reserve

One of the most wildlife-rich savanna ecosystems in Africa. It hosts large populations of large African mammals and is also rich in bird life, for which it has international recognition as an Important Bird Area – IBA.

The unique intersection of wildlife richness with livestock and pastoralism earned the ecosystem a globally unique status as a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve in 1991.

The Elephant Kingdom

Amboseli is commonly referred to as the “Land of Giants” for its large herds of elephants, which are one of the greatest attractions of Amboseli National Park. The ecosystem was the home of Echo, reputed as the most researched elephant in the world and the subject of numerous books and documentaries from decades of study.
Recently, the ecosystem shot to fame when one of its most iconic elephants, Craig, died of natural causes in January in Olgulului.
He belonged to a special class of elephants known as “super tusker” bulls with heavy tusks that grow long enough to touch the ground.

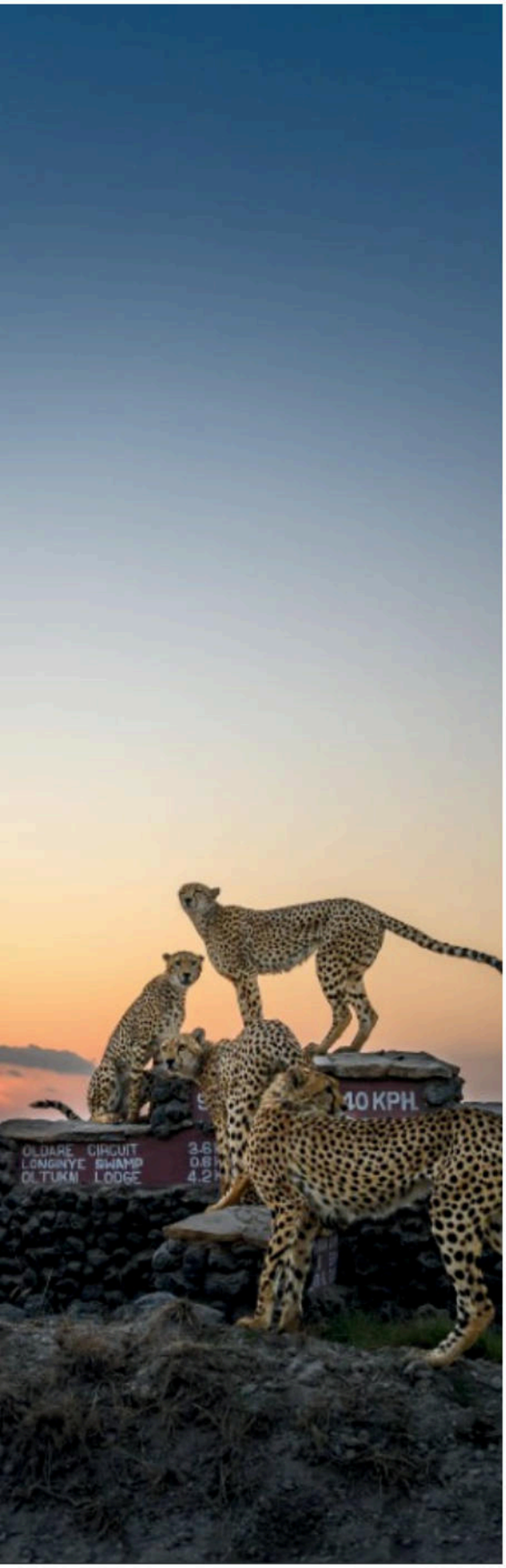
The Amboseli elephants have been the subject of one of the longest elephant studies in the world. Nowhere can one find elephants with such a long study. This makes Amboseli a research destination

Rich Culture and History

The local Maasai culture is the foundation of all ecosystem values. The nomadic grazing has shaped the ecosystem for millennia by preventing land degradation and accommodating wildlife in large numbers and diversity.
This authentic culture is world-renowned and revered, and is a long-sought tourism product on its own.

The rich culture is superimposed on a rich history centred on geographical features like Mt Kilimanjaro, whose imposing imagery is a subject of folklore. The perennial swamps in the ecosystem acted as a gathering point for slave traders on the Kilimanjaro slave route, which started from the Nairobi area, passing through Amboseli and Rombo, then to Mombasa.

Other cultural sites include the numerous Maasai Moran Manyattas and the Chyulu caves.



The Stunning Scenery

The snowcapped Mt Kilimanjaro is the emblem of the Amboseli Ecosystem. It adorns the marketing literature of local institutions and businesses, notwithstanding that the mountain is beyond the international border in Tanzania.

The landmark feature stands majestically at the southern backdrop of the ecosystem. At 19,340 feet above sea level, it is the highest free-standing mountain in the world and is the most imposing and popular geographical feature.

Besides Mt Kilimanjaro, there are other unique landscape features distributed across the ecosystem. They include the Chyulu Hills, Losoito, Lemipoti, Ilng'arunyoni, and Lemomohills, among others.
The rest of the ecosystem is relatively flat with undulating rangelands. The ecosystem is easily accessible from the rest of Kenya and Tanzania through all-weather roads and highways.

A True Safari Gem

The seamless integration of people, wildlife, and scenery makes Amboseli a quintessential East African safari destination.

Although the destination is most famous for large elephant populations, the ecosystem also supports a wide range of herbivores, which in turn support the large carnivores such as lion, leopard, cheetah, hyena, jackals, civets, and serval cats. Large aggregates of diverse ungulate species make Amboseli not only an important wildlife conservation area in Kenya but also a popular safari destination.

Anchored on the iconic Amboseli National Park, a safari in Kenya is almost incomplete without an Amboseli itinerary, for which the park is classified as a premium park by KWS.

Fact & Figures

AEMP 2020-2030

The first ecosystem management plan in Kenya

35+
Conservancies

256,474.5
Ha under conservancies

80,000
Household members

2,000
Elephants

1,800
Maasai Giraffes

200
lions

400+
Species of birds

0
Poaching of elephants in the last 10 years

The best studied elephant populations in the world



Education

Ksh 72,209,625
Value of scholarships

Ksh 33,141,274
paid in support of teachers' salaries

84,783

Visitors annually

Ksh 22,300,000

Earned from cultural tourism

Ksh 627,400,000

Tourism tax contribution

2,582

Bed night capacity

120

Curio Shops

Ksh 400,000,000

Sale of curios and beadwork

2,481 staff

Employed in the ecosystem.
71% from the local community

Ksh 54,465,100

Total compensation for wildlife-related losses

Ksh 340,700,000

Earned from ecosystem services

Ksh 1.2 m

heads of livestock

Ksh 396,904,202

Value of local procurement

Ksh 329,000,000

Earned from conservancy gate fees

50 Tonnes

annual sales of onions and tomatoes

Ksh 7 bn

Annual livestock sales



Challenges in the Amboseli Ecosystem

Violations of the AEMP

The gazettement of AEMP as a key milestone in the Amboseli Ecosystem. The management plan prescribed land use zones that aligned with the county government's spatial plan.

Amboseli Ecosystem is the first landscape in the country to successfully develop an ecosystem-wide management plan, the Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan 2020-2030.

The plan was conceived to become the central platform for the coordination of development projects in order to maintain and restore ecosystem integrity. This will ultimately lead to safeguarding the Amboseli ecosystem's wildlife and community livelihoods

Repeated violations of the plan have been reported in different sections of the ecosystem and are of great concern to the communities and stakeholders as they undermine livestock and pastoralism.

Violations of AEMP are manifested in two ways:

Agricultural Expansion

The Amboseli ecosystem has become famous for food production and is reputed as the food basket for Nairobi City.
Food crops such as tomatoes, onions and fruits have put Oloitokitok and Kimana trading centres on the Kenyan map.

The concerns about this are:

- There is intense irrigation from rivers and springs in the Kimana and Rombo areas. Left unregulated, this may cause ecological imbalance with negative impacts on people and wildlife. Efforts must be made to preserve fragile water points in the ecosystem
- The use of agricultural chemicals is suspected to pollute the rivers and springs, which are sources of water for wildlife and livestock
- Agriculture within critical wildlife corridors, especially the Kimana and Isinet Swamp and encroachment into the Motikanju Conservancy. These are the ecological lifeline of the ecosystem, playing a significant role in the primary land uses of pastoralism and conservation

Unplanned Developments

Settlement and construction of permanent structures in undesignated zones are disrupting wildlife movement and pastoralism. This is especially the case where there is immigration from outside the ecosystem, where buyers of land opt for conflicting land uses. This is fuelling land use and human-wildlife conflicts

Climate Change

There is a rising frequency and severity of drought, mostly due to the effects of climate change. This has a direct impact on the livelihoods of the local community and is especially aggravated by the restricted space and pasture available to livestock and wildlife.

The communities have a range of drought response strategies, including mobility and diversifying income sources. It is in this regard that some previously pastoralist people have resorted to rain-fed farming at the foot slopes of Kilimanjaro and irrigated cropping at perennial water sources. These arable areas also happen to be dry-season grazing areas for wildlife. Converting them to agriculture depletes the wildlife habitat and also intensifies human-wildlife conflict.

Land Degradation

Climate changes have also occasioned land degradation, the most significant of which is a marked loss of grassland vegetation. Environmental degradation is one of the greatest threats to the ecological integrity of Amboseli rangelands. Heavy grazing pressures, coupled with recurrent drought, expose the soils to wind and water. This weakens the ecological resilience of vegetation, whose ability to flourish after the rains is hampered, causing further degradation and exposing the land to invasive plants





Pictures – Big Life Foundation

Violations of land use plans are fueling land use conflicts and wildlife mortality



Picture – Porini Camp

Eselenkei residents undertaking the mechanical removal of the invasive Ipomoea herb. Land degradation is affecting several parts of the Amboseli Ecosystem

Human-wildlife Conflict

Human-wildlife conflict is manifested mainly in the form of livestock predation, crop-raiding, and human injury and death. The problem has been made worse by the expansion of agriculture and settlements, especially around important wildlife dispersal routes.

Human-wildlife conflict is a big danger to community conservation and coexistence between people and wildlife, and is very severe during the dry season as both people and wildlife search for scarce water.

Notwithstanding tremendous efforts by all stakeholders in the ecosystem and the attendant progress, human-wildlife conflict remains a major challenge.

The HWCC plays a central coordination role in reducing and managing human–wildlife conflict by bringing together government agencies, local communities, conservancies, and conservation NGOs to ensure timely support and coordinated responses when conflicts occur.
The efforts of the committee should be strengthened and supplemented with an ecosystem-level HWC mitigation programme, especially the enforcement of land-use plans and the regulation of settlement.

The communities and their leaders have called for streamlining of the consolation scheme to make it easier and faster to evaluate and access benefits.

Other measures to mitigate this include predator-proof bomas and elephant deterrent fences in selected hot spots.

Cross-border Conflicts

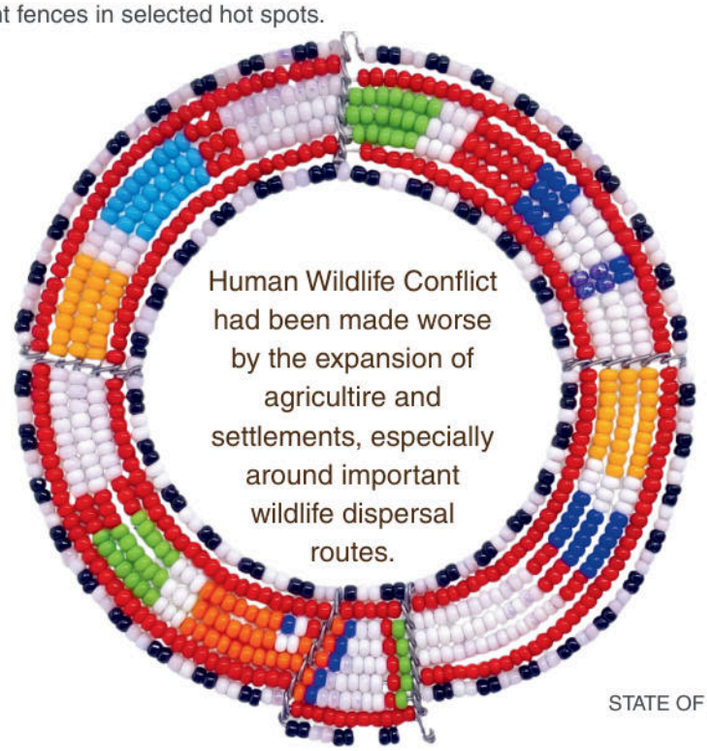
The ecosystem areas bordering Tanzania continue to experience cross-border challenges, such as poaching, livestock invasion and wildlife killing through sport hunting across the border.

A major policy difference has been sport hunting, which is legal in Tanzania but illegal in Kenya. In the Enduimet Wildlife Management Area that borders Amboseli, for instance, there are hunting blocks where super tuskers migrating from Kenya have reportedly succumbed to hunting.

In another recent incident, at least six lions were killed in the Kitenden area along the Kenya–Tanzania border through retaliatory poisoning linked to livestock predation incidents involving herders from Tanzania. The lions reportedly died after feeding on a poisoned cow carcass.
The incident also killed 34 vultures, making it one of the worst wildlife poisoning cases recorded in the Amboseli ecosystem. Investigations by Kenyan and Tanzanian authorities reportedly focused on suspects connected to Kitenden village in Tanzania.

In the Rombo area, poaching has been linked to herders from across the international border.

Resolving these conflicts at the local level is difficult, as it requires intergovernmental approach.





02

Chapter 2

The Amboseli Conservancies

Conservancies: Past and Present

With about 65 per cent of wildlife being outside protected areas, the role of community and private land in conservation in Kenya has been apparent for a while.
These conservation areas in private and community land are popularly called conservancies and are now institutionalised in the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, 2013.

Hence, conservancies are officially at the core of national conservation, land, and economic policies. Additionally, they incorporate and promote other community development programs such as livestock production, community governance, land use planning and zoning, and natural resources management.
This has, in turn, endeared them to the communities who now value conservancies not just for wildlife and livestock, but also as sources of livelihood support and economic development.

The model emerged in the mid-1990s, supported by conservation and development partners, as a way of incentivising landowners and communities to act as custodians of wildlife. Private tourism investors recognised the opportunity and began partnerships with communities.
This led to the successful establishment of Kimana as the first communally owned conservancy to be established in Kenya.

It is for this reason that the Greater Amboseli Ecosystem is recognised as the 'birthplace' of community-based conservation.

To date, Kenya boasts of 220 conservancies spread over 7 million hectares of land, equivalent to 18% of Kenya's land mass. They host some of the world's most endangered species, such as the Black and White Rhinos, Grevy's Zebras, Hirola, Wild Dog, Giraffes and Elephants and have been critical to the recovery of populations of large predators such as lions and cheetahs.

They directly benefit about 1 million households and employ over 5,000 staff.

Why the Status Report

The information about these vital assets is incomplete and fragmented. This status report has been developed to fill this gap by addressing the following objectives:

- Serve as a stakeholder reference document on the Amboseli Ecosystem conservancies
- Provide standardised information about conservancies
- Provide a platform for conservancy marketing – highlighting special sceneries and ongoing activities
- Update data on conservancies and community conservation to guide the partnership between the County Government and the community, especially in revenue sharing

"Wildlife conservancies have become critical engines for conservation and community development – safeguarding biodiversity, supporting local livelihoods and enabling landowners to co-exist with wildlife"

KWCA 2025



Amboseli Leading In Conservancy Growth

The foundation of ecosystem integrity and stability in the Amboseli Ecosystem is ecological connectivity. This is the greatest conservation value of the wildlife conservancies, which provide space, dispersal areas, habitats, and critical resources for wildlife while also serving as grass banks for livestock.

However, the main appeal of the conservancy model was not only to create more space for wildlife but also to extend direct wildlife gains to the communities. Historically, wildlife benefits have always been channeled to the central government leaving communities who host wildlife footing the high bill of hosting wildlife on their lands.

The integration of human activities and the promise of accessing wildlife benefits endeared the concept to the landowners who began the process of establishing conservancies by delineating substantial tracts of land that support the ecological needs of wildlife.

Since the establishment of the Kimana Community Wildlife Sanctuary in the early 1990s, many conservancies have been established in the ecosystem and Amboseli landscape remains the national leader in the growth of the movement.

The ecosystem was not only the cradle of community conservancies, but it remains the national leader in the growth of conservancies, with 35 conservancies to date, up from 20 in 2021.

Collectively, all Amboseli conservancies cover 650,000 acres of land, supporting 80,000 households and having a security network of close to 800 community rangers.

Amboseli is not only the leader in the conservancy movement, but it is also the true “north star” of conservation in Kenya.

Why Is Amboseli the Leader?

A cross-section of stakeholders weigh in:



Samuel Jakinda

Landscape Manager Kenya (Amboseli & South Rift) - Justdiggit Foundation

“It is due to the strong coordination of partners within the landscape. The Ecosystem Management Plan, being implemented through the coordination of AET, guided the actors to know how to relate with the ecosystem for the benefit of wildlife, livestock and people.
There is also the strong support from the County Government in the form of conducive policies, i.e. the land use plans or county spatial plans.”



Loise Sankaine

Vice Chair - Amboseli Conservancies Women Forum

“Land subdivision empowered people to make decisions. Having been sensitised to the emerging benefits of conservation and being naturally friendly to wildlife, many people have chosen to combine their individual lands into conservancies.

Also, climate change has made farming very fragile and unprofitable, and many people find conservation a more stable land use.”



Paul Wambi

Assistant Director - KWS- Amboseli

“The local people are natural conservationists. Hence, the most natural way forward after the subdivision of group ranches was the formation of conservancies.
It was easy to sell this model because of people’s long association with wildlife, which closely blends with livestock.

Amboseli also has many institutions that carry out advocacy and are heavily influential at the community and policy levels.”



Richard Bonham

Executive Chairman - Big Life Foundation

“It is very encouraging to see people allocating their land to conservation. This is very beneficial in the long term, and some landowners are already earning a reasonable income from lease fees.

Together with the national park transition back to the county, there will be funds to support conservancies to overcome the capacity handicap.
If the transition happens well, it will be transformational”



Samuel Kaanki

Chairman - Amboseli Conservancies Forum

“Kimana subdivision was a great lesson. It was done with little regard for ecosystem integrity, especially regarding wildlife and livestock movement.
With hindsight, the landowners have realised the mistake and are now joining their land to form conservancies.

This has led to new conservancies in the Kimana area”



Evan Mkala

Program Manager - IFAW Amboseli Project

“This partly attests to the effectiveness of AEMP and the county's spatial plan, where the majority of community members have seen the futility of using land outside designated zones.

Another important factor is the return of the Amboseli National Park management to the county government. One of the conditions of benefits access will be ownership of conservation land, which is a big incentive to form conservancies."



PARTICIPANTS AT THE STATE OF CONSERVANCIES REPORT STAKEHOLDER INPUT WORKSHOP

Values of Amboseli Conservancies

Conservancies in Amboseli Ecosystem are a central plank in ecological integrity – by extending space for wildlife dispersal, additional habitat and ecological needs of wildlife. Besides ecological benefits, conservancies have evolved to become vital engines of community development as summarized below:

Employment

Local staff employed as rangers, research assistants and managers in NGOs, and hotels

Land Protection

leased land protected from fragmentation and sale

Community Empowerment

mainstreaming of women in conservation and management. Sensitization of communities to take ownership and leadership of conservation

Development Projects

health centres, water, dams, classrooms

Education

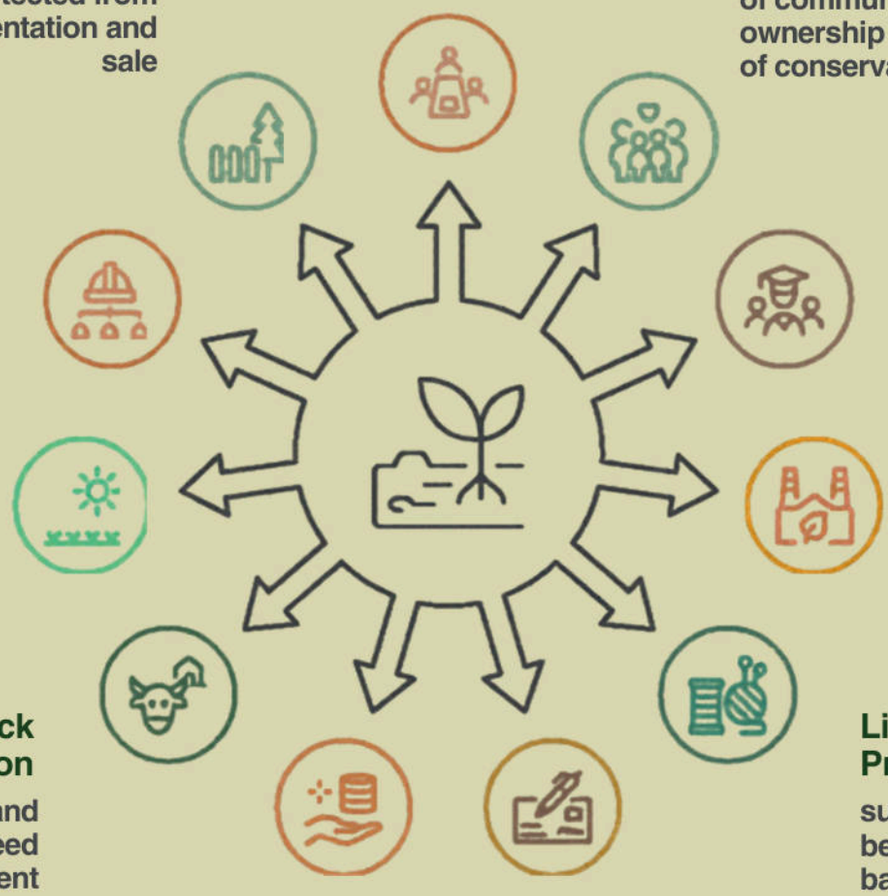
school bursaries, education scholarships and mentorship schemes

Grass Banks

access to pasture in the conservancies

Infrastructure

Many community projects, such as boreholes, clinics, solar power, etc., have been supported directly from conservancy-based programmes



Livestock Production

fattening and breed improvement

Livelihood Projects

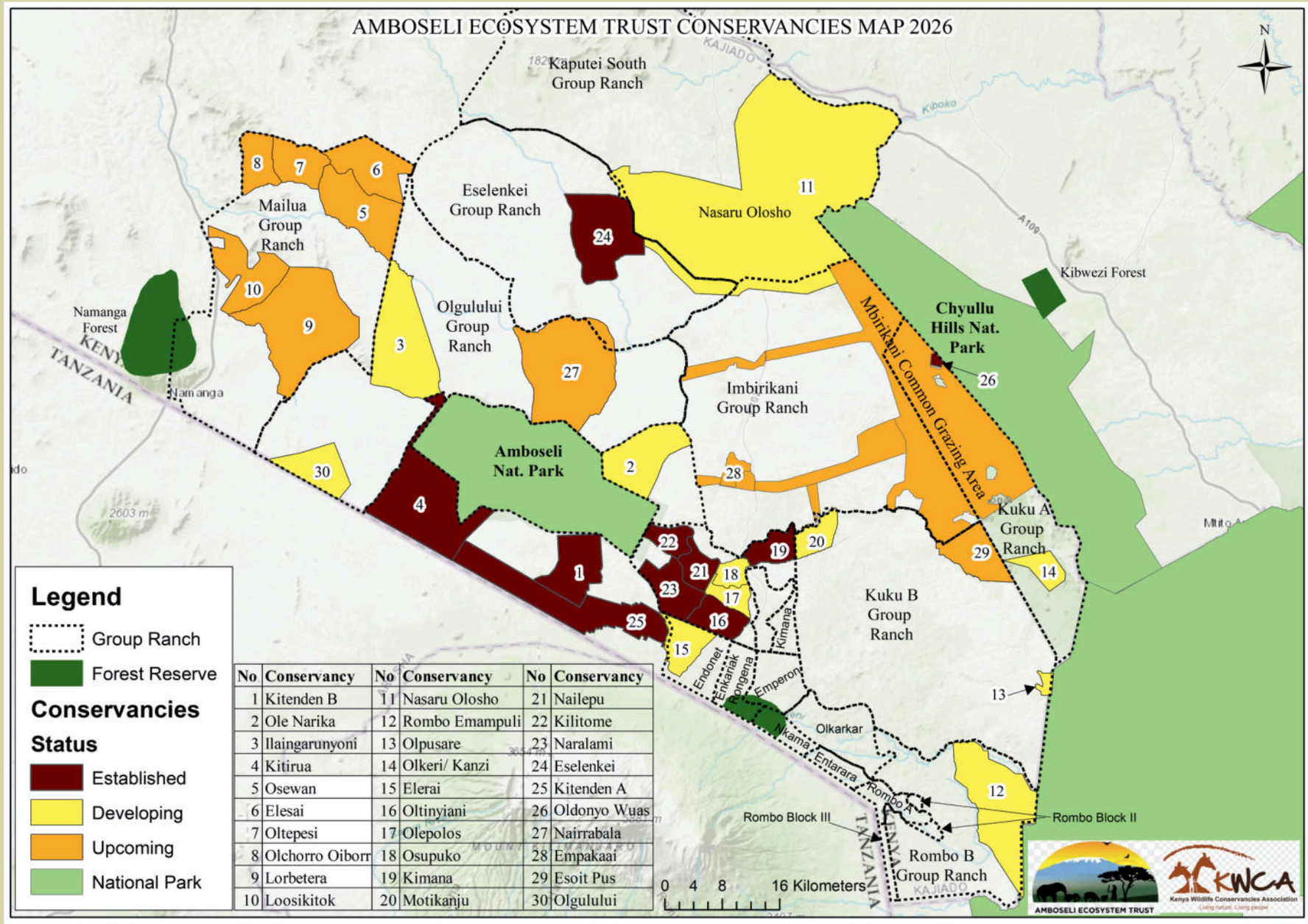
such as beekeeping, beading centres, grass banks and milk retailing to boost household incomes

Guaranteed Revenue

monthly lease payments by investors and donors

Consolation Schemes

compensation for livestock deaths via wildlife predation



No	Conservancy	No	Conservancy	No	Conservancy
1	Kitenden B	11	Nasaru Olosho	21	Nailepu
2	Ole Narika	12	Rombo Emampuli	22	Kilitome
3	Ilaingarunyoni	13	Olpusare	23	Naralami
4	Kitirua	14	Olkeri/ Kanzi	24	Eselenkei
5	Osewan	15	Elerai	25	Kitenden A
6	Elesai	16	Oltinyiani	26	Oldonyo Wuas
7	Oltepesi	17	Olepolos	27	Nairrabala
8	Olchorro Oiborr	18	Osupuko	28	Empakaai
9	Lorbetera	19	Kimana	29	Esoit Pus
10	Loosikitok	20	Motikanju	30	Olgulului

MAP OF AMBOSELI CONSERVANCIES

Updated Amboseli Conservancies Data

s/n	Conservancy Name	Year of Est.	Area (ha)	Members	Land Tenure	KWCA Reg.	KWS Reg.	Management Plan	Tourism Investment	Status
1	Kitirua Conservancy	1984	13,516	4,173	Group	Yes	No	In Progress	Elewana Ker & Downey A& K	Established
2	Kitenden A Conservancy	2013	14,969	3,144	Group	Yes	No	Yes	Conservation Equity	Established
3	Kitenden B Conservancy	2013	5,613	1,741	Group	Yes	No	No	No	Developing
4	Ole Narika Conservancy	2010	7,238	2,235	Group	Yes	No	No	No	Developing
5	Ilaingarunyoni Conservancy	2010	11,755	3,630	Group	Yes	No	No	No	Developing
6	Nairabala Conservancy	2021	15,176	1,784	Group	Yes	No	Yes	No	Upcoming
7	Olgulului Ranch Conservancy	2024	3,846	100	Private	Yes	No	In Progress	No	Upcoming
8	Entaisere Conservancy	2025	4,888	286	Group	No	No	No	No	Upcoming

s/n	Conservancy Name	Year of Est.	Area (ha)	Members	Land Tenure	KWCA Reg.	KWS Reg.	Management Plan	Tourism Investment	Status
9	Entemwai Conservancy	2025			Group	No	No	No	No	Proposed
10	Ngelesa Conservancy	2025	425	50	Group	No	No	No	Onboarding	Proposed
11	Risa Conservancy	2025	13,637	1604	Group	No	No	No	No	Upcoming
12	Kimana Sanctuary	1992	2,429	843	Community	Yes	Yes	No	Angama	Established
13	Oltiyani Conservancy	2012	1,748	75	Group	Yes	No	No	No	Established
14	Kilitome Conservancy	2008	2,744	71	Group	Yes	No	No	Lemara	Established
15	Nailepu Conservancy	2009	1,578	67	Group	Yes	No	No	Zebra Plains	Established
16	Nalarami Conservancy	2013	1,821	78	Group	Yes	No	No	Amboseli Bush Camp. Elephant Gorge. Sungura Camp	Established
17	Osupuko Conservancy	2008	1,214	52	Group	Yes	No	No	No	Developing
18	Olepolos Conservancy	2012	1,093	47	Group	Yes	No	No	No	Developing

s/n	Conservancy Name	Year of Est.	Area (ha)	Members	Land Tenure	KWCA Reg.	KWS Reg.	Management Plan	Tourism Investment	Status
19	Tawi Conservancy	2002	744	38	Group	Yes	No	Yes	Tawi Lodge	Established
20	Elerai Conservancy	2005	910	189	Group	Yes	No	No	No	Developing
21	Amboseli Pardiyo Conservancy	2023	445	250	Group	Yes	No	No	Sato	Upcoming
22	Eselenkei Conservancy	1997	5,263	3421	Community	Yes	No	Yes	Porini Camp	Established
23	Marete Conservancy	2024	7,671	403	Community	No	No	Yes	No	Upcoming
24	Tul-Olkaria Conservancy	2014	6,721	354	Community	No	No	Yes	No	Upcoming
25	Kanzi conservancy	2002	2,144	6,270	Community	Yes	Yes	No	Kampi Ya Kanzi	Established
26	Olpusare Conservancy	2010	182	225	Community	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Developing
27	Motikanju conservancy	2010	2,834	6,200	Community	Yes	Yes	No	No	Developing

s/n	Conservancy Name	Year of Est.	Area (ha)	Members	Land Tenure	KWCA Reg.	KWS Reg.	Management Plan	Tourism Investment	Status
28	Esoit – Pus Conservancy	2022	4,653	6,442	Community	No	No	No	No	Upcoming
29	Oldonyo Sambu Conservancy	2022	1,578	6,442	Community	No	No	No	No	Upcoming
30	Loloipongi Conservancy	2022	1,416	6,442	Community	No	No	No	No	Upcoming
31	Iltepai Conservancy	2022	2,509	6,442	Community	No	No	No	No	Upcoming
32	Ildoinyo Lolowuarak	2022	2,509	6,442	Community	No	No	No	No	Upcoming
33	Lotaa Conservancy	2022	1,861	6,442	Community	No	No	No	No	Upcoming
34	Koikuma Conservancy	2022	1,618	6,442	Community	No	No	No	No	Upcoming
35	Oldonyo-Wuas	2021	8,903	4,219	Community	Yes	No	In Progress	Great Plains	Established

s/n	Conservancy Name	Year of Est.	Area (ha)	Members	Land Tenure	KWCA Reg.	KWS Reg.	Management Plan	Tourism Investment	Status
36	Lenkiloriti Conservancy	2021	8,903	4,219	Community	Yes	No	In Progress	No	Upcoming
37	Noonkiyiaa Conservancy	2021	16,592	4,219	Community	Yes	No	In Progress	No	Upcoming
38	Olokurto Conservancy	2021	12,949	4,219	Community	Yes	No	In Progress	No	Upcoming
39	Empakaai Conservancy	2021	2,509	4,219	Community	Yes	No	In Progress	No	Upcoming
40	Loosikitok Conservancy	2021	2,509	4,219	Community	Yes	No	In Progress	No	Upcoming
41	Rombo Emampuli Conservancy	2010	7,894	6,000	Community	Yes	No	No	No	Developing
42	Nasaru Olosho Conservancy	2013	68,382	652	community	Yes	No	Yes	No	Developing

General Conservancy Data and Trends

(i) Standard Parameters

Parameter	Number	% of Total
Registered with KWS	4	9.50%
Registered with KWCA	30	71.40%
With approved management plans	7	16.70%
With management plans “in progress”	8	19.00%
Conservancies older than 10 years	20	47.60%
Conservancies below 5 years old	15	35.70%
With tourism investment	14	33.30%

Interpretation:

- With only 9.5% registered with KWS, institutional growth is faster than statutory compliance.
- With only 16.7% of conservancies with completed management plans, expansion has outpaced technical planning capacity

(ii) Number and Land Under Conservancies

The last decade has experienced significant growth in the number of conservancies, the area of land under conservancies, and the participating landowners.

Period	Number Established	% Growth in Number	% Growth in Area	% Growth in Members
Before 2010	7	16.70%		
2010 - 2019	11	26.20%	415%	139%
2020 - 2025	24	57.10%	84%	243%

Interpretation:

- With only 9.5% registered with KWS, institutional growth is faster than statutory compliance.
- With only 16.7% of conservancies with completed management plans, expansion has outpaced technical planning capacity

(iii) Economic Trends

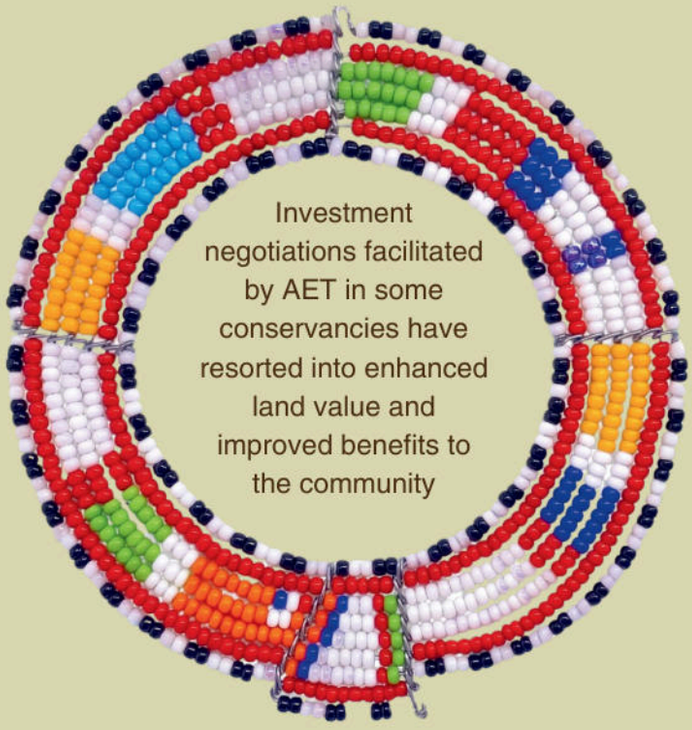
Common economic indicators have recorded significant growth over the last five years. This has been boosted by the investment negotiations facilitated by AET in some conservancies, which have resulted in:

- Significant growth in the commercial value of conservancy land
- Higher annual lease incomes for the landowners
- Bed night fees and conservancy fees are becoming vital revenue streams linked directly to tourism performance
- Growth in grant financing for conservancy management and community development

Economic Indicator	Growth Across Negotiated Conservancies
Annual lease fees	170 – 924%
Lease value per acre	167 – 426%
Bed night fees	32 – 329%
Grant revenue	Over K.Sh. 120 million

Interpretation:

- Well-structured tourism partnerships can transform conservancies into economically competitive land-use models and transform community livelihoods.



Challenges facing Amboseli Conservancies

Despite their growing importance in wildlife conservation, tourism, and community livelihoods, conservancies in the Amboseli ecosystem continue to face a wide range of social, economic, institutional, and environmental challenges. These challenges threaten the long-term sustainability of conservancies and call for coordinated efforts from all stakeholders, especially the communities, government agencies, conservation partners, and private investors to address effectively.

Some of these challenges are highlighted below:

Low or no financial returns—Many conservancies have no active investments or enterprises and have to contend with no income. This is a weak foundation. Conservancies must meet the socio-economic aspirations of the landowners and make conservation a competing land use, as the sentimental value of conservation alone will not sustain them.

Weak governance – Most conservancies start informally or with very weak legal foundations. This leads to weak management structures and administration. Although many established conservancies have management boards democratically elected by members, many others are yet to establish institutionally firm governance structures, which is a sustainability threat.

Coupled with governance structures is leadership capacity. sometimes, community members have taken up leadership and administration of conservancies. But are overwhelmed by a lack of capacity and skills in vital areas such as finance, business administration, etc

Cost of legal compliance – Legal compliance starts with the registration of conservancies with KWS as per the Wildlife Act. This is pegged on requirements such as management plans, whose expertise and costs are beyond the reach of many community conservancies. A multistakeholder approach is called for to make it easy for conservancies to become legally compliant.

Violation of County Spatial Plan – The zoning scheme outlined in the physical plan and ecosystem management plan is being violated in some parts of the ecosystem. This is causing rapid expansion of land uses that are not compatible with conservation and livestock pastoralism. It is a threat to conservancy because:

- It disrupts wildlife and livestock dispersal
- It will lead to land use conflicts, including HWC

Environmental degradation - Environmental degradation is one of the greatest threats to the ecological integrity of Amboseli rangelands. Heavy grazing pressures coupled with recurrent drought expose the soils to wind and water erosion. This weakens the ecological resilience of vegetation whose ability to flourish after the rains are hampered, causing further degradation and exposes the land to invasive plants.

Severe soil erosion cases have been recorded in Rombo, while Eselenkei conservancies have reported extensive spread of invasive species.

Unmet Community Expectations - When communities are sensitized to offer their land parcels to form conservancies, they are promised benefits of conservation that will accrue. Most of the time, however, they are not adequately prepared that conservancies may take long to attract investors to pay lease to the conservancy.

In other cases, where there are investors, many community members still have little knowledge of the terms of the lease.

These cases lead to frustrations due to unfulfilled expectations which undermines peoples' faith in conservancies.

Lack or poor infrastructure - Operations in many conservancies are hampered by inadequate facilities for administration and management. Those contiguous to the Amboseli National Park have reported rampant cases of illegal game drives by cheeky safari drivers. This is because the conservancies lack basic infrastructures such as gates and offices to regulate tourism.

Many others have no roads, ranger accommodation, signage, etc.

Over-reliance on tourism - Tourism in Kenya remains mainly wildlife-based. Conservancies are equally dependent on tourism, which generates 70% of revenue in all conservancies.

While tourism is a good land use, there are many conservancies with great potential in other sectors, such as livestock and non-wildlife tourism. But their exploration does not attract as much attention due to the historical bias towards tourism.

Inadequate Marketing - Conservancies are hinterlands of latent wealth. They host vital biodiversity resources, breathtaking sceneries and geographical features and vast cultural attractions. The best route to harness this potential is through private sector partnership, to link conservancies with capital, skills and markets.
However, these opportunities are not adequately marketed. The current efforts by KWCA ad AET will need extra impetus and support from more stakeholders.

Inadequate community rangers - Community rangers play a vital role in conservancies, mainly wildlife security and management of human wildlife conflict. There are many conservancies that have no capacity to employ rangers since they have no income to underwrite basic operations.

"Community conservancies in Amboseli provides a life line for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livestock production in a contemporary landscape, that was once pristine and contiguous. Compounded with human population growth pressure, subsequent infrastructural development and climate variability, one would appreciate that the people and the wildlife are equally resilient in continuing to navigate and maintain a tricky equilibrium of survival. Nevertheless, a subtle reflection on the Amboseli ecosystem growth journey, we are deeply encouraged by the community's commitment to advancing the conservancy narrative, as evidenced in the creation of more conservancies, demonstrating that conservation is a pathway for both environmental protection and community development.



Daniel Kaaka
Conservancies Coordinator; AET

Capacity Building Agenda

The growth of conservancies in the Amboseli Ecosystem is encouraging. The majority of the local community are, on their own volition, volunteering individual land parcels to form ecologically and economically viable spaces for wildlife, pastoralism and tourism.
This momentum and passion for conservancies should be harnessed through targeted capacity-building programmes in several aspects

Strengthening Governance

Establishment of conservancies should be followed by the development of strong governance structures to nurture them into strong institutions.

Of the 35 registered conservancies, fewer than 10 have reported having active management boards.

Capacity building needs:

- Community sensitization on governance
- Facilitation and support to form management boards
- Continuous education on best practices, such as regular AGMs and elections
- Community sensitization on the need to mainstream women in governance

Lead agencies: AET, KWCA

Legal Registration

The majority of conservancies are legally registered, while the upcoming and proposed ones are in the process of registration.

There is a need for close monitoring and sensitisation so that communities adopt the best legal entities for each conservancy.

Capacity building needs:

- Community education on implications of different legal entities
- Facilitation with legal paper work and how to navigate registration bureaucracy
- Safe custody of legal documents and official correspondence

Lead agencies: AET, KWCA

Governance and Leadership Training

The emerging conservancies requires support and training to equip them with effective leadership.

Capacity building needs:

- Employment and labour laws
- Financial accounting and accountability
- Fairness and conflict of interest in leadership

Lead agencies: AET, KWCA

Conservancy Management Plans

The Fifth Schedule of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (2013) require protected areas, including conservancies, to develop management plans to guide their effective management.

Capacity building needs:

- Resource and biodiversity assessments
- Management plan development process
- Facilitation to engage consultants to develop management plans
- Registration of the developed management plans with KWS.
- Gazettement of management plans
- Implementation of the developed management plans

Lead agencies: AET, IFAW, WWF

Legal Compliance and Professional Affiliation

Besides registration, conservancies ought to abide by regulatory compliance principles to become strong institutions.

Capacity building needs:

- Support and facilitation to be registered with KWS
- Sensitization and support to enlist membership with KWCA

Lead agencies: AET, KWCA

Conservancy Action Plan

Challenges and Priority Interventions

Conservancy	Challenges	Priority Interventions
Kitirua Conservancy	• Illegal game drives • Abandoned shallow wells left by community members in search of water • Human wildlife conflict, especially hyena predation • Migratory species succumbing to sport-hunting across the Tanzania border • Loss of wood vegetation due to elephant damage	• Chain link to control conflict incidences • Borehole to provide water and minimise the need to dig shallow wells • Management plan being developed to address the zonation of the conservancy • Research on elephant habitat utilisation and possible establishment of elephant exclosures • International collaboration with a view to synchronizing conservation policies
Kitenden A Conservancy	• Livestock invasion from Tanzania and related cross-border conflicts • Defiance of lease terms by some members, who have intruded into the conservancy • Lack of funds for maintenance of the electric fence • Cross-border wildlife killings, notably, retaliatory attacks on predators	• Streamline cross-border grazing and movement to ward off intruders • Review the old management plan to reflect current investor and management circumstances • Capacity building and sensitization of community members to appreciate and abide by the lease terms • Enhance cross-border collaboration on wildlife management
Kitenden B Conservancy	• Lack of investments to generate lease income • Lack of a management plan	• Registration of conservancy members and publication of the list • Conduct a feasibility study for rhino introduction to advance the proposal for the rhino sanctuary • Marketing to potential investor/s. Development of management plan

Conservancy	Challenges	Priority Interventions
Ole Narika	• Agricultural expansion at the periphery • Fences on private land outside obstruct wildlife movement. • Lack of investment	• Develop a holistic management plan to address threats to the conservancy boundary • Market the conservancy to investors
Ilaingarunyoni Conservancy	• Lack of a grazing plan • Land subdivision and land sales in the neighbouring Mailua area	• Develop a grazing plan to manage overgrazing and HWC • Conduct biodiversity assessment to guide development of a management plan • Market the conservancy to potential investors
Nairabala		
Olgulului Ranch Conservancy	• Lack of a functional management plan • Lack of an investor to generate lease income	• Support with the development of a management plan • Market the conservancy to potential investors
Taisere Conservancy	Formative stage. Management issues are being determined	Formative stage. Management issues are being determined
Entemwai	Formative stage. Management issues are being determined	Formative stage. Management issues are being determined
Ngelesa Conservancy	Formative stage. Management issues are being determined	• An investor is negotiating a lease with the conservancy (Dry Lakes Amboseli) • Management details are being determined
Kimana Wildlife Sanctuary	Increased settlement on the migratory corridor	Sustainable preservation of the corridor beyond Big Life lease

Conservancy	Challenges	Priority Interventions
Oltiyani Conservancy	• Defiance of conservancy rules by some members • Lack of a formal entrance to regulate visitation • Lease agreements skewed in favour of investors and NGOs • Potential incompatible land use on the unleased land outside conservancies	• Sensitisation about conservancy regulations • Develop a benefits scheme to encourage landowners outside the conservancy to lease their land • Review lease agreements with a view to improving lease terms in favour of communities • Erect gates at conservancy entrances to enhance revenue collection
Kilitome Conservancy	• Unplanned Settlement • Human Wildlife Conflict, especially due to the agriculture on the periphery	• Lease agreements to be reviewed to ensure optimal benefits for the landowners • Erection and maintenance of an electric fence on the side bordering farms • Employment of more rangers to enforce surveillance • Enhanced patrols and support with mobility and other equipment (e.g., vehicles). Night patrols to be introduced
Nailepu Conservancy	• Unplanned Settlement • Human Wildlife Conflict • Enforcement of grazing plan (All ALOCA conservancies)	• Lease agreements to be reviewed to ensure they favour land owners • Erection and maintenance of an electric fence on the side bordering farms • Employment of more rangers to enforce surveillance • Enhance patrols and support with mobility and other equipment (e.g., vehicles). Night patrols to be introduced
Nalarami Conservancy	Unplanned Settlement Human Wildlife Conflict	• Lease agreements to be reviewed to ensure they favour land owners • Erection and maintenance of an electric fence on the side bordering farms • Employment of more rangers to enforce surveillance • Enhanced patrols and support with mobility and other equipment (e.g., vehicles). Night patrols to be introduced

Conservancy	Challenges	Priority Interventions
Osupuko Conservancy	• Unplanned Settlement • Human Wildlife Conflict	• Lease agreements to be reviewed to ensure they favour land owners • Erection and maintenance of an electric fence on the side bordering farms • Employment of more rangers to enforce surveillance • Enhanced patrols and support with mobility and other equipment (e.g., vehicles). Night patrols to be introduced
Olepolos Conservancy	• Unplanned Settlement • Human Wildlife Conflict	• Lease agreements to be reviewed to ensure they favour land owners • Erection and maintenance of an electric fence on the side bordering farms • Employment of more rangers to enforce surveillance • Enhanced patrols and support with mobility and other equipment (e.g., vehicles). Night patrols to be introduced
Tawi Conservancy	• Unplanned Settlement • Human Wildlife Conflict	• Lease agreements to be reviewed to ensure they favour land owners • Erection and maintenance of an electric fence on the side bordering farms • Employment of more rangers to enforce surveillance • Enhanced patrols and support with mobility and other equipment (e.g., vehicles). Night patrols to be introduced
Elerai Conservancy	• Contentious lease contract, perceived to be unfavourable to the community	• Resolution of lease dispute. Subject of a court case, which must be allowed to conclude
Amboseli Pardiyo Conservancy	• Contentious lease contract that communities are not happy with	• Resolution of lease dispute. Subject of a court case, which must be allowed to conclude

Conservancy	Challenges	Priority Interventions
Eselenkei	• Agricultural expansion at the periphery • Spread of invasive species • Lack of a grazing plan	• Implementation and strict enforcement of the County Government Spatial Plan • Study and undertake control of invasive species • Develop a grazing plan
Marete	• Lack of a management plan • Lack of a grazing plan • Lack of leadership structure • Spread of invasive species	• Develop a conservancy management plan • Develop a grazing plan in consultation with the community • Establish a management committee to spearhead the development of the management board • Initiate capacity building programmes for the community
Tul-Olkaria	• Lack of a management plan • Lack of a grazing plan • Lack of leadership structure • Spread of invasive species	• Develop a conservancy management plan • Develop a grazing plan in consultation with the community • Establish a management committee to spearhead the development of the management board • Initiate capacity building programmes for the community
Kanzi	• Regular outbreak of wildfires • HWC, especially predation • Lack of conservancy management plan	• Development of a conservancy management plan that includes fire management • Establish a sustainable consolation scheme to reduce donor dependence
Olpusare		
Motikanju	• Agricultural expansion • Lack of investment • Poor road network • Lack of conservancy management plan	• Allocate land outside the conservancy for settlement • Development of a conservancy management plan that includes fire management • Market the conservancy to potential investors • Raise funds to support infrastructure development
Esoit - Pus	• Undergoing registration • Lack of conservancy management plan	• Support with the registration process • Development of a conservancy management plan that includes fire management

Conservancy	Challenges	Priority Interventions
Oldonyo Sambu	• Undergoing registration	• Support with the registration process
Loloipongi	• Undergoing registration	• Support with the registration process
Iltepai	• Undergoing registration	• Support with the registration process
Ildoinyo Loolowuarak	• Undergoing registration	• Support with the registration process
Loltaa Conservancy	Undergoing registration	• Support with the registration process
Koikuma Conservancy	Undergoing registration	• Support with the registration process
Oldonyo-Wuas	• Lack of a management structure • Rampant bushfires, especially during dry seasons • Poor infrastructure – roads, gates, communication • Wildlife accidents around the highway	• Implementation of a management structure to manage Mbirikani conservancies • Market the conservancies to attract more investors • Study infrastructure needs and action plan • Develop and implement a fire management plan • Development of connecting infrastructure to neighbouring conservancies • Development and implementation of grazing management plans • Engage government agencies to erect sign boards and speed bumps along Emali-Loitoktok highway

Conservancy	Challenges	Priority Interventions
Lenkiloriti	• Lack of a management structure • Rampant bushfires, especially during dry seasons • Poor infrastructure – roads, gates, communication • Wildlife accidents along the highway	• Establishment and operationalisation of a management structure to manage Mbirikani conservancies • Market the conservancies to attract more investors • Study infrastructure needs and action plan • Develop and implement a fire management plan • Development of connecting infrastructure to neighbouring conservancies • Development and implementation of grazing management plans
Noonkiyiaa	• Lack of a management structure • Rampant bushfires, especially during dry seasons • Poor infrastructure – roads, gates, communication • Wildlife accidents along the highway	• Establishment and operationalisation of a management structure to manage Mbirikani conservancies • Market the conservancies to attract more investors • Study infrastructure needs and action plan • Develop and implement a fire management plan • Development of connecting infrastructure to neighbouring conservancies • Development and implementation of grazing management plans
Olokurto	• Lack of a management structure • Rampant bushfires, especially during dry seasons • Poor infrastructure – roads, gates, communication • Wildlife accidents along the highway	• Establishment and operationalisation of a management structure to manage Mbirikani conservancies • Market the conservancies to attract more investors • Study infrastructure needs and action plan • Develop and implement a fire management plan • Development of connecting infrastructure to neighbouring conservancies • Development and implementation of grazing management plans

Conservancy	Challenges	Priority Interventions
Empakaai	• Lack of a management structure • Rampant bushfires, especially during dry seasons • Poor infrastructure – roads, gates, communication • Wildlife accidents along the highway	• Establishment and operationalisation of a management structure to manage Mbirikani conservancies • Market the conservancies to attract more investors • Study infrastructure needs and action plan • Develop and implement a fire management plan • Development of connecting infrastructure to neighbouring conservancies • Development and implementation of grazing management plans
Loosikitok	• Lack of a management structure • Rampant bushfires, especially during dry seasons • Poor infrastructure – roads, gates, communication • Wildlife accidents along the highway	• Establishment and operationalisation of a management structure to manage Mbirikani conservancies • Market the conservancies to attract more investors • Study infrastructure needs and action plan • Develop and implement a fire management plan • Development of connecting infrastructure to neighbouring conservancies • Development and implementation of grazing management plans
Rombo Emampuli	• Cross-border poaching • Land selling leading to conflicting land use • Land degradation • Human wildlife conflict. • Agricultural expansion • Lack of management plan	• Deploy more rangers and engage the local community in controlling wildlife crime • Develop a participatory land use plan to control fencing • Undertake rehabilitation of degraded areas and initiate conservation agriculture, such as agroforestry • Control of farming expansion, which leads to habitat destruction and escalation of HWC • Sensitise the community against land selling and provide alternative livelihoods. Review and update conservancy management plan

Conservancy	Challenges	Priority Interventions
Nasaru Olosho	• Uncontrolled settlements • Fencing obstructs dispersal • HWC • Uncontrolled sale of land leading to land use conflicts • Poor road network	• Explore community incentives to keep the conservancy free of fences • Fasten the compensation process by the government to manage HWC • Establish more water points to lessen competition between wildlife and livestock • Capacity building to employ more rangers • Seek support to deploy predator-proof bomas to control HWC • Assistance to have the management plan gazetted • Support with conservancy marketing to potential investors • Facilitation with community mobilisation and sensitization programmes • Resolution of conflict to ease connectivity with Chyulu National Park through Oloirien corridor



"We continue to walk the journey with our conservancies to strengthen their governance systems and capacity to become strong and sustainable institutions, capable of managing their own operations effectively while delivering meaningful benefits to the community"

Jessee Mwingirwa
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer; AET





"We are proud to witness the continued development of conservancies and partnerships that contribute to improved livelihoods, conservation outcomes, and institutional growth across the ecosystem."

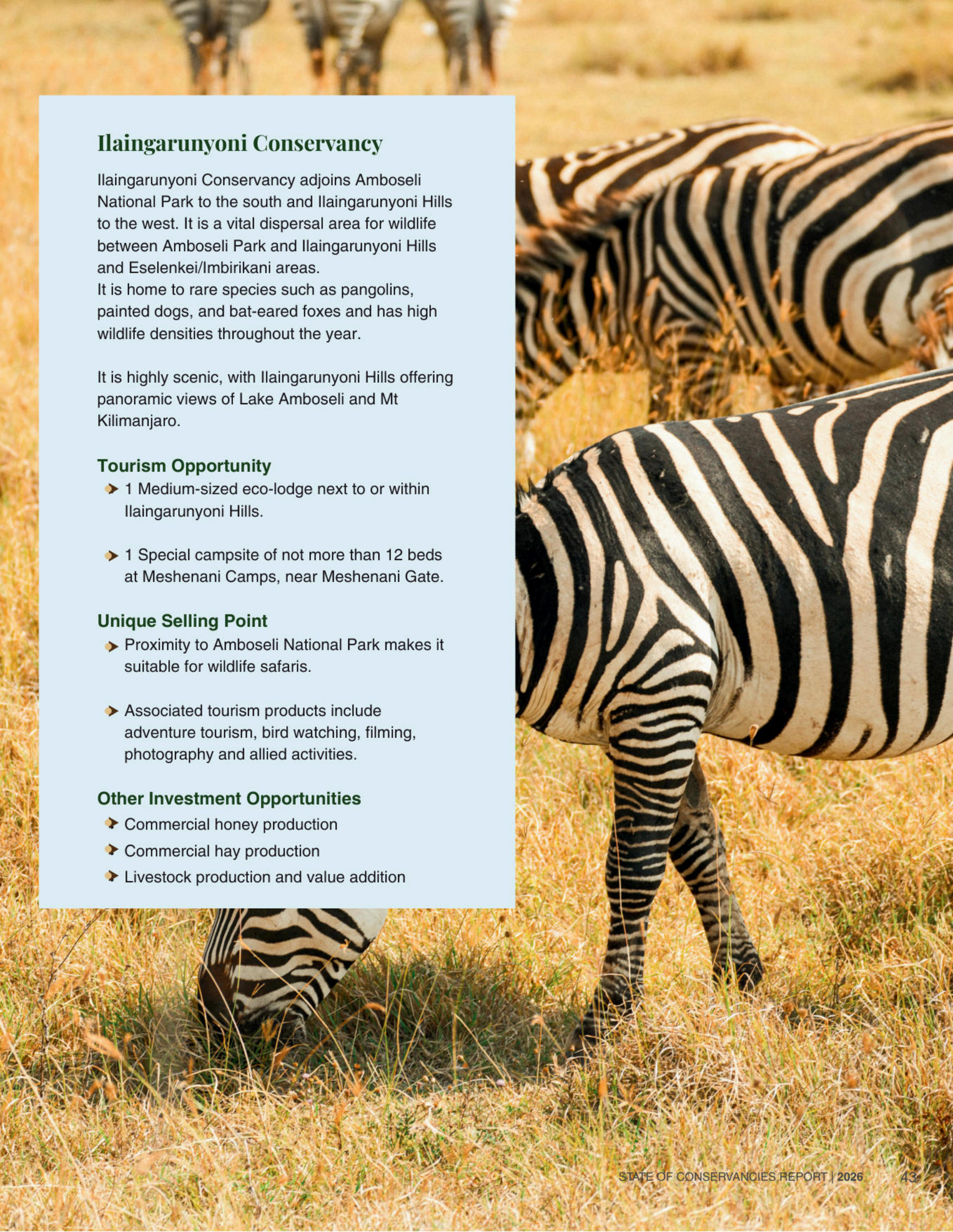
Susan Kinuthia
Finance and Administration Officer; AET

03

Chapter 3

Investment Prospectus

The Amboseli Ecosystem has the most conservancies in Kenya, offering diverse landscapes, wildlife, and cultural settings that suit a range of investments. This prospectus highlights key attributes of select conservancies, focusing on location, the main attractions, and potential investment opportunities.



Ilaingarunyoni Conservancy

Ilaingarunyoni Conservancy adjoins Amboseli National Park to the south and Ilaingarunyoni Hills to the west. It is a vital dispersal area for wildlife between Amboseli Park and Ilaingarunyoni Hills and Eselenkei/Imbirikani areas.
It is home to rare species such as pangolins, painted dogs, and bat-eared foxes and has high wildlife densities throughout the year.

It is highly scenic, with Ilaingarunyoni Hills offering panoramic views of Lake Amboseli and Mt Kilimanjaro.

Tourism Opportunity

- 1 Medium-sized eco-lodge next to or within Ilaingarunyoni Hills.
- 1 Special campsite of not more than 12 beds at Meshenani Camps, near Meshenani Gate.

Unique Selling Point

- Proximity to Amboseli National Park makes it suitable for wildlife safaris.
- Associated tourism products include adventure tourism, bird watching, filming, photography and allied activities.

Other Investment Opportunities

- Commercial honey production
- Commercial hay production
- Livestock production and value addition

Kitenden B Conservancy

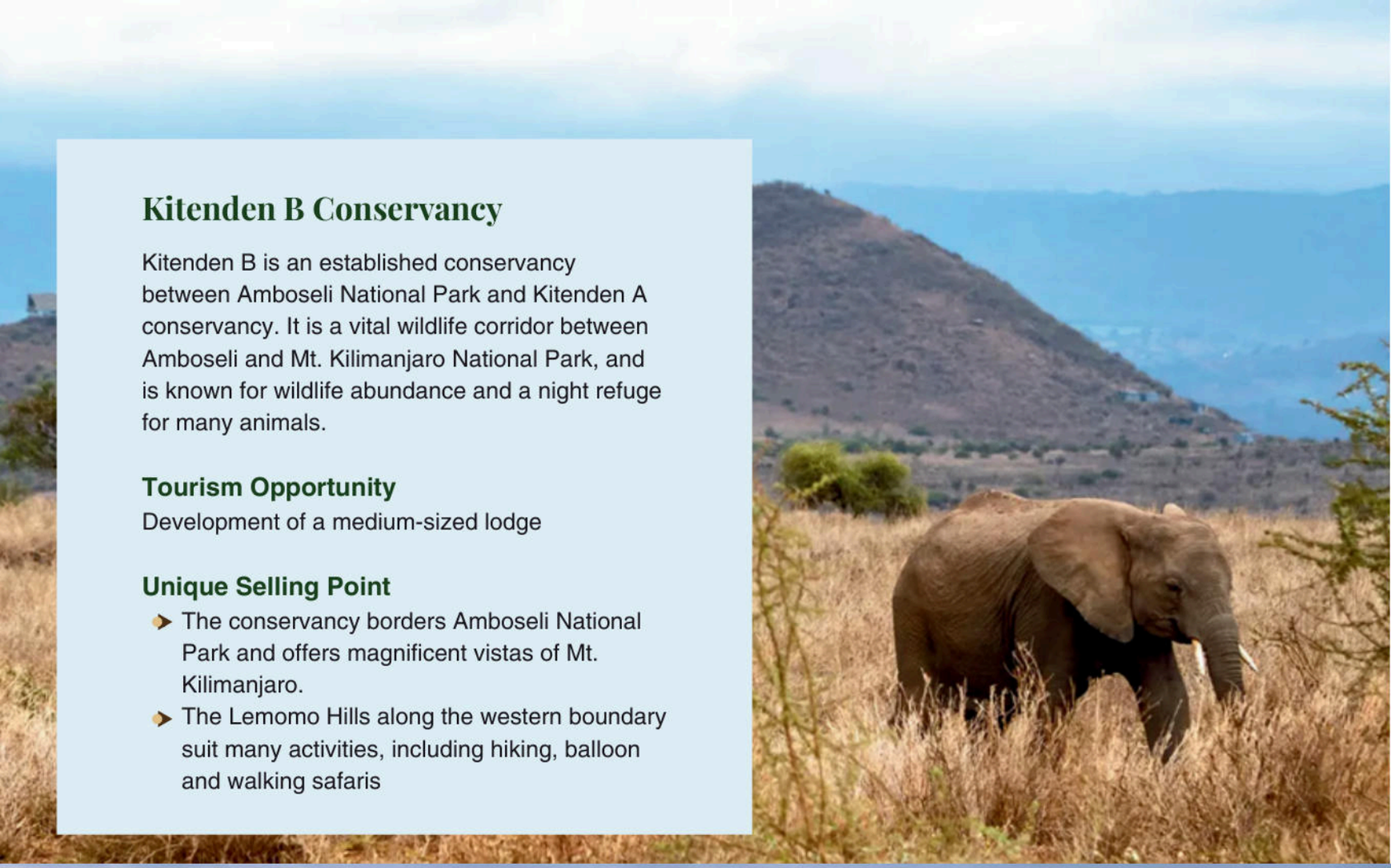
Kitenden B is an established conservancy between Amboseli National Park and Kitenden A conservancy. It is a vital wildlife corridor between Amboseli and Mt. Kilimanjaro National Park, and is known for wildlife abundance and a night refuge for many animals.

Tourism Opportunity

Development of a medium-sized lodge

Unique Selling Point

- The conservancy borders Amboseli National Park and offers magnificent vistas of Mt. Kilimanjaro.
- The Lemomo Hills along the western boundary suit many activities, including hiking, balloon and walking safaris





Olgulului Ranch Conservancy

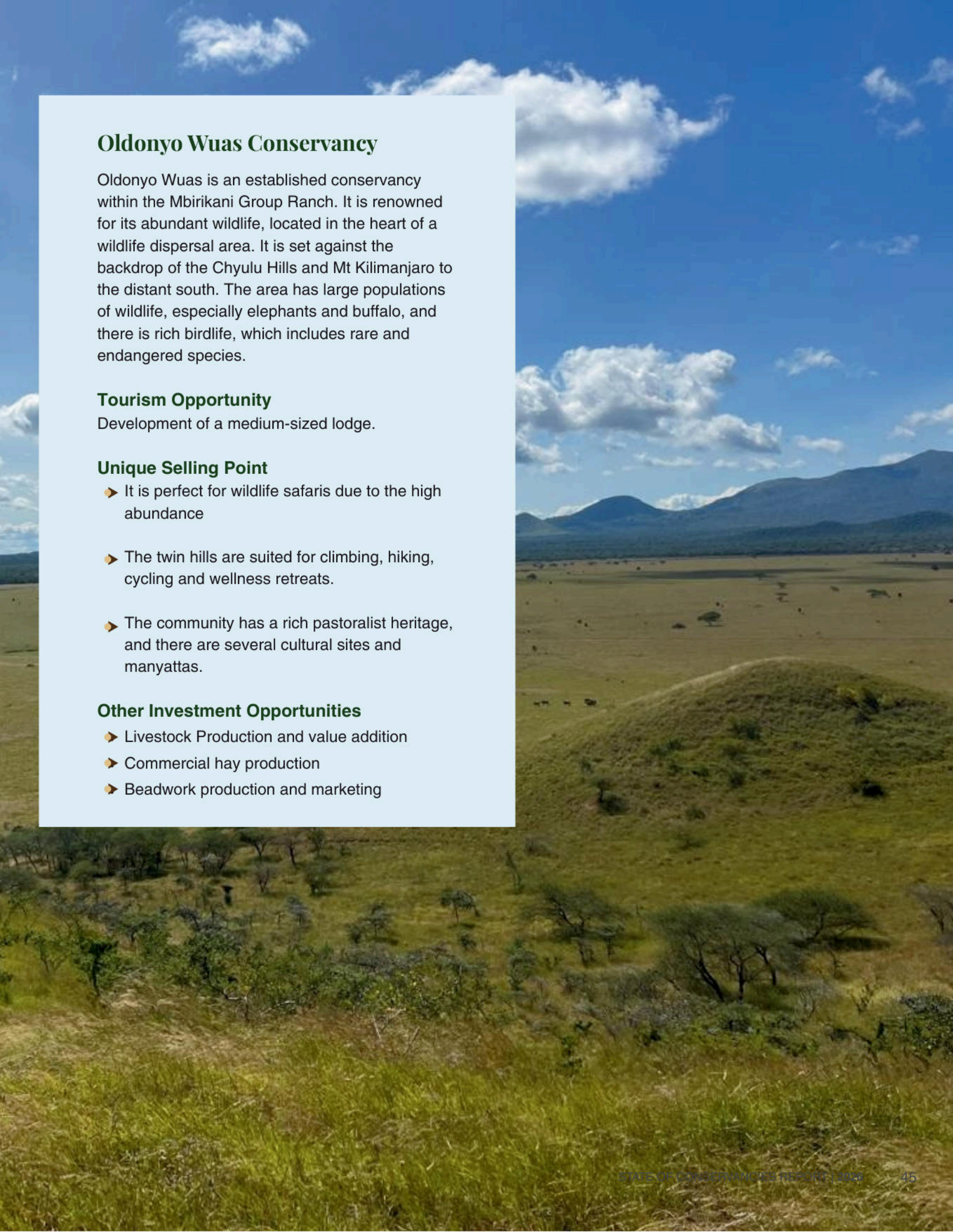
Olgulului Ranch Conservancy is a private ranch adjacent to the Amboseli National Park. It's a popular dispersal area for diverse wildlife and connects elephant corridors from adjacent community conservancies to the Enduiment Wildlife Management Area (Tanzania).

Tourism Opportunity

There are several sites ideal for the development of a medium-sized lodge.

Unique Selling Point

- It is centrally located in a prime wildlife area, making wildlife safaris an easy product
- The conservancy has stunning scenery with distant views of Oldonyo Orok, Longido and Mt. Kilimanjaro.
- It is accessible by road through the Nairobi – Namanga Highway and by air at the Namanga Airstrip.



Oldonyo Wuas Conservancy

Oldonyo Wuas is an established conservancy within the Mbirikani Group Ranch. It is renowned for its abundant wildlife, located in the heart of a wildlife dispersal area. It is set against the backdrop of the Chyulu Hills and Mt Kilimanjaro to the distant south. The area has large populations of wildlife, especially elephants and buffalo, and there is rich birdlife, which includes rare and endangered species.

Tourism Opportunity

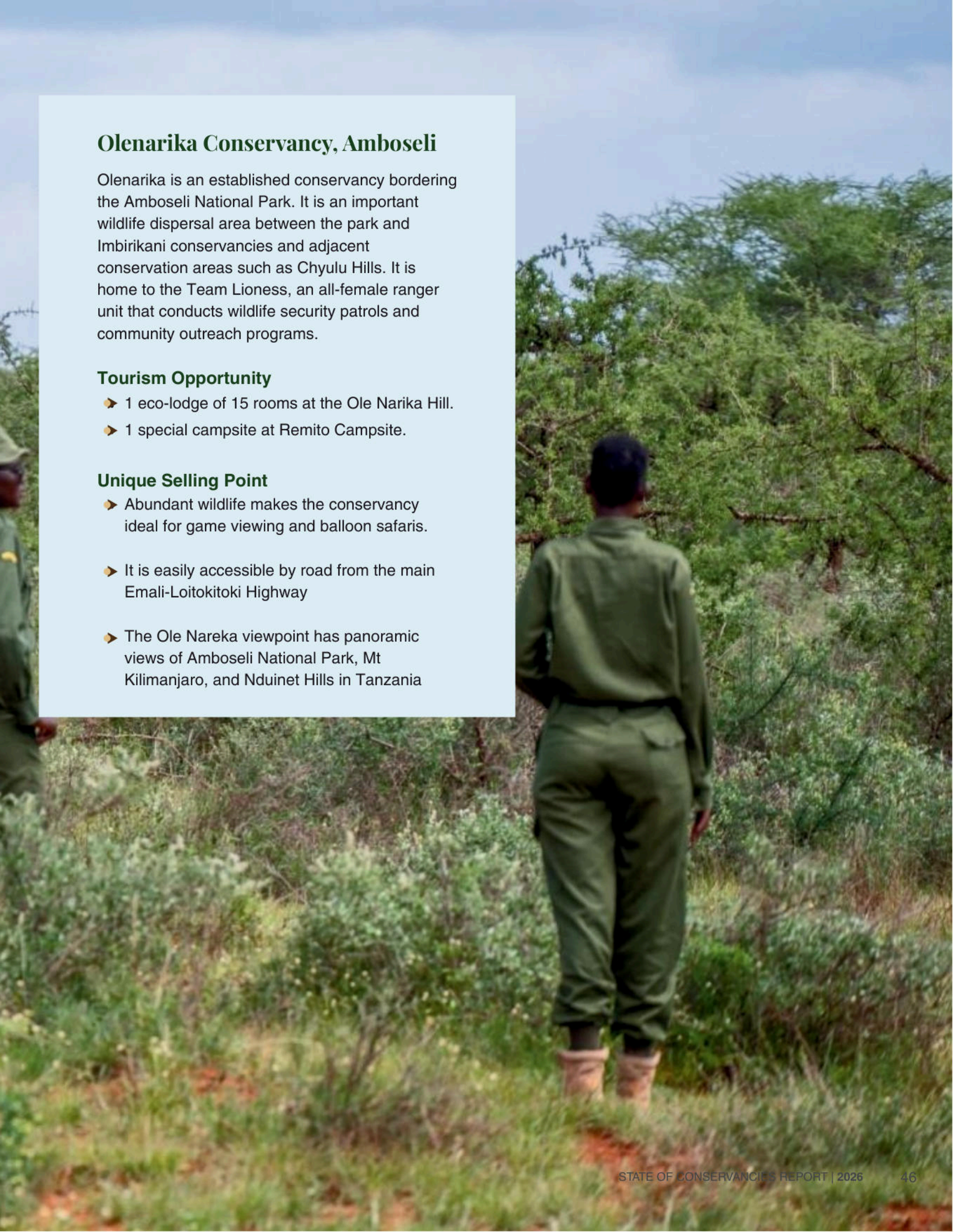
Development of a medium-sized lodge.

Unique Selling Point

- It is perfect for wildlife safaris due to the high abundance
- The twin hills are suited for climbing, hiking, cycling and wellness retreats.
- The community has a rich pastoralist heritage, and there are several cultural sites and manyattas.

Other Investment Opportunities

- Livestock Production and value addition
- Commercial hay production
- Beadwork production and marketing



Olenarika Conservancy, Amboseli

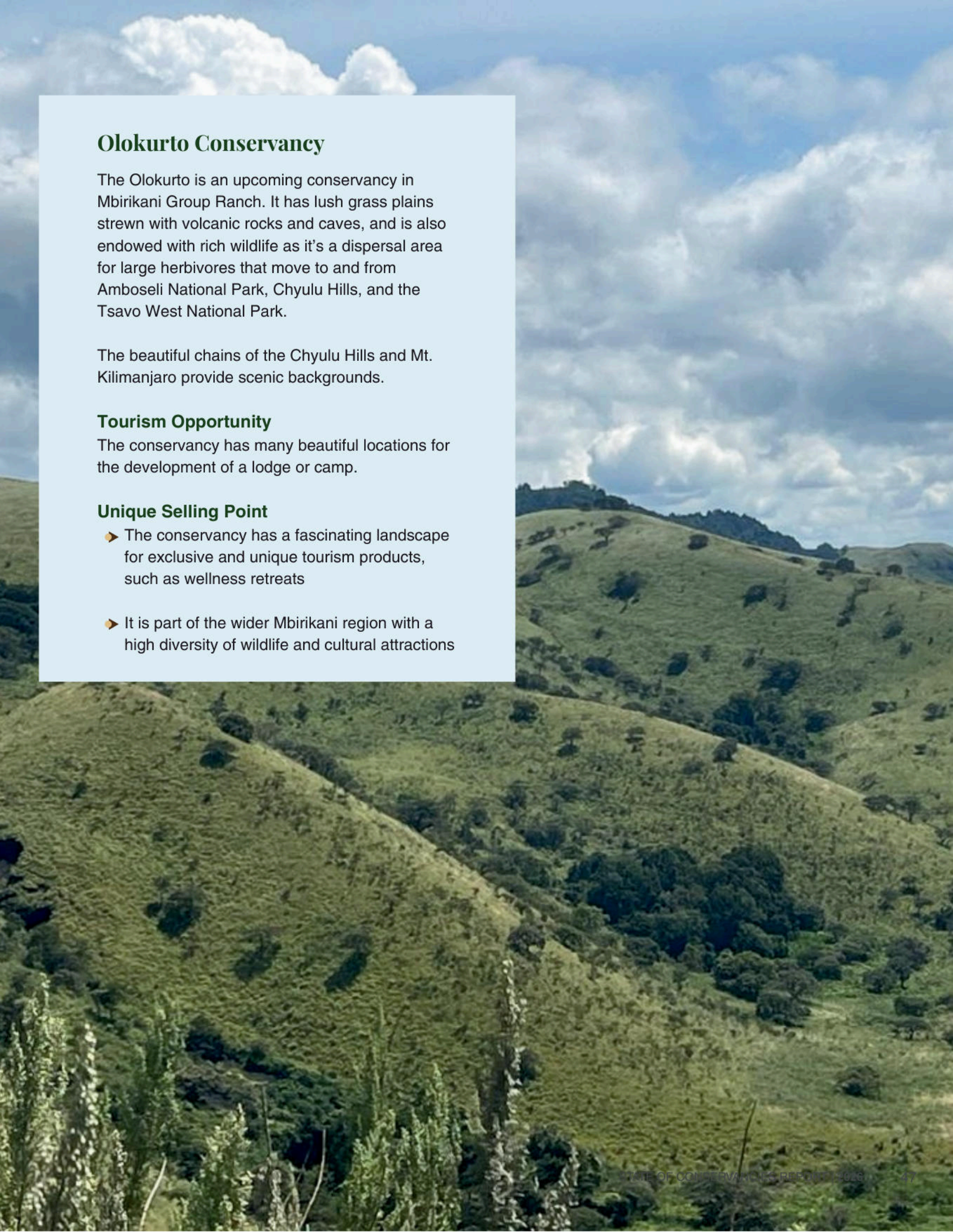
Olenarika is an established conservancy bordering the Amboseli National Park. It is an important wildlife dispersal area between the park and Imbirikani conservancies and adjacent conservation areas such as Chyulu Hills. It is home to the Team Lioness, an all-female ranger unit that conducts wildlife security patrols and community outreach programs.

Tourism Opportunity

- 1 eco-lodge of 15 rooms at the Ole Narika Hill.
- 1 special campsite at Remito Campsite.

Unique Selling Point

- Abundant wildlife makes the conservancy ideal for game viewing and balloon safaris.
- It is easily accessible by road from the main Emali-Loitokitoki Highway
- The Ole Nareka viewpoint has panoramic views of Amboseli National Park, Mt Kilimanjaro, and Nduinet Hills in Tanzania



Olokurto Conservancy

The Olokurto is an upcoming conservancy in Mbirikani Group Ranch. It has lush grass plains strewn with volcanic rocks and caves, and is also endowed with rich wildlife as it's a dispersal area for large herbivores that move to and from Amboseli National Park, Chyulu Hills, and the Tsavo West National Park.

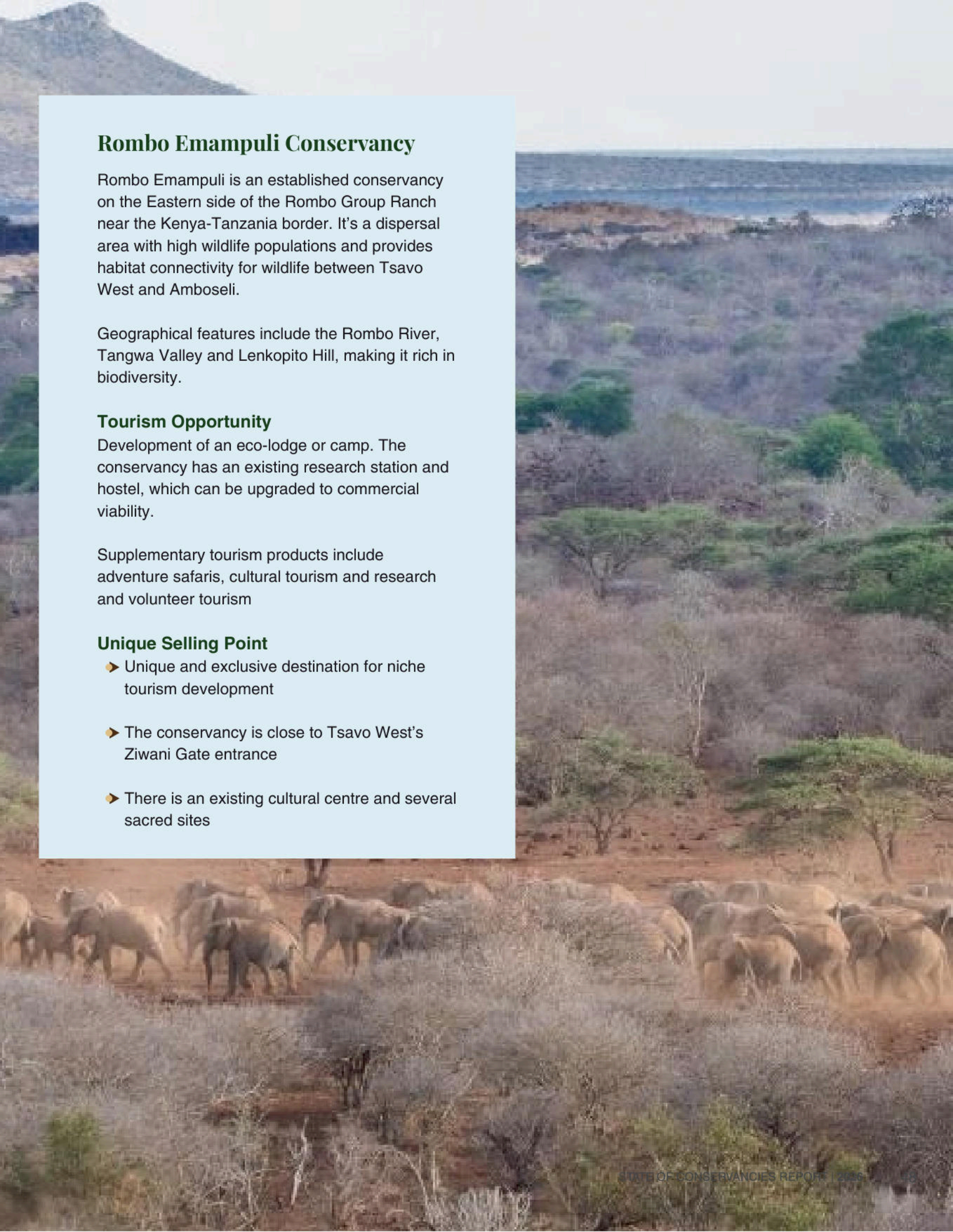
The beautiful chains of the Chyulu Hills and Mt. Kilimanjaro provide scenic backgrounds.

Tourism Opportunity

The conservancy has many beautiful locations for the development of a lodge or camp.

Unique Selling Point

- The conservancy has a fascinating landscape for exclusive and unique tourism products, such as wellness retreats
- It is part of the wider Mbirikani region with a high diversity of wildlife and cultural attractions



Rombo Emampuli Conservancy

Rombo Emampuli is an established conservancy on the Eastern side of the Rombo Group Ranch near the Kenya-Tanzania border. It's a dispersal area with high wildlife populations and provides habitat connectivity for wildlife between Tsavo West and Amboseli.

Geographical features include the Rombo River, Tangwa Valley and Lenkopito Hill, making it rich in biodiversity.

Tourism Opportunity

Development of an eco-lodge or camp. The conservancy has an existing research station and hostel, which can be upgraded to commercial viability.

Supplementary tourism products include adventure safaris, cultural tourism and research and volunteer tourism

Unique Selling Point

- Unique and exclusive destination for niche tourism development
- The conservancy is close to Tsavo West's Ziwani Gate entrance
- There is an existing cultural centre and several sacred sites

Nasaru Olosho Conservancy

Nasaru Olosho is a young conservancy on the north-eastern boundary of the Amboseli Ecosystem between Eselenkei and Chyulu Hills. It is a critical wildlife corridor connecting Amboseli National Park and the Tsavo and Chyulu hills conservation areas, hence rich in wildlife. Large mammals found in abundance include the Big 5, and it also has rich birdlife.

Tourism Opportunity

Development of suitable accommodation.

Potential tourism products include wilderness tourism, commercial filming, nature walks, cycling, paragliding and motorsports.

Unique Selling Point

- Abundance of wildlife makes it ideal for a wildlife safari
- It is close to the major highways – Mombasa and Oloitokitok.
- It has panoramic views from the scenic Oldonyo Sampu Hill

Other Investment Opportunities

- Pasture production and reseeding
- Livestock breeding enterprise
- Beekeeping investment

Lenkiloriti Conservancy

The Lenkiloriti is a developing conservancy in the Imbirikani Group Ranch area. Its vast grassland plains are strewn with volcanic rocks and hilly outcrops.

The area is a wildlife corridor teeming with large populations of wildlife and has a rich birdlife.

Tourism Opportunity

There are several sites suitable for a lodge or bandas

The area is suitable for a variety of tourism products, including wildlife safaris, rock climbing and related outdoor excursions

Unique Selling Point

- Remote wilderness, suitable for exclusive retreats and adventures

Noonkiyiaa Conservancy

The Noonkiyiaa conservancy is within the Mbirikani Group Ranch. It boasts stunning landscapes, with the beautiful Chyulu Hills to the north and Mt. Kilimanjaro in the distant south. It is also home to diverse wildlife and a rich Maasai culture.

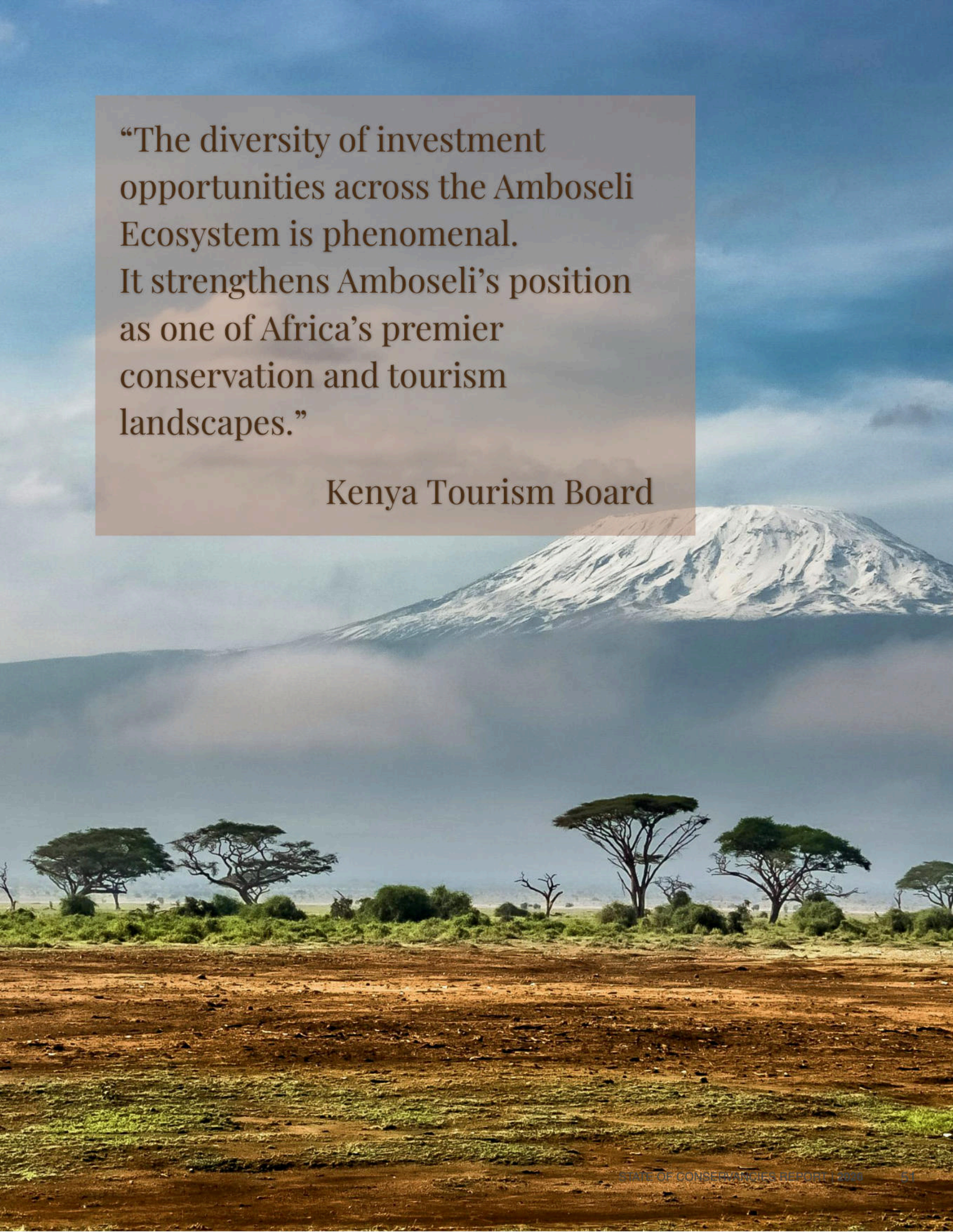
Tourism Opportunity

Numerous locations are ideal for a lodge or mobile camps.

Unique Selling Point

- The conservancy presents an authentic wilderness appeal that is great for nature walks, hiking, and cave visits

- The rocky outcrops host unique birds and reptile species. It is ideal for specialist safaris, such as birdwatching and research.



"The diversity of investment opportunities across the Amboseli Ecosystem is phenomenal. It strengthens Amboseli's position as one of Africa's premier conservation and tourism landscapes."

Kenya Tourism Board

Long-term Tourism Investments In Amboseli Conservancies

The Amboseli Ecosystem has benefited from sustained partnerships with tourism investors, whose long-term presence has strengthened conservation, supported community livelihoods, and enhanced the landscape's global profile.

The report acknowledges the following companies for their consistent presence, which has made them part and parcel of the ecosystem.



Porini Amboseli Camp

Management Company: Gamewatchers Safaris and Porini Camps

www.porini.com

Industry Profile: Specialist eco-tourism operator focused on low-impact, conservation-led tented camps

Local Setting: 10 guest tents in Selenkay Conservancy

Years in Operation: over 20 years

Porini Amboseli Camp has played a pivotal role in the establishment and long-term success of Selenkay Conservancy. Built on a low-density, high-value tourism model, the camp directly supports wildlife conservation by maintaining habitat under protection and limiting ecological footprint. Its partnership with local Maasai landowners has provided consistent lease payments and employment opportunities, strengthening community incentives for conservation.

Impact Highlight: Supports the conservation of approximately 6,000 ha of habitat and provides direct lease income to over 3,400 landowners. 95% of staff are from the local community, and the company supports several community projects, especially education.

Kampi Ya Kanzi

Management Company: Campi ya Kanzi

www.campiyakanzi.com

Industry Profile: Boutique, owner-operated safari lodge with a strong conservation and cultural integration model

Local Setting: 6 grass-thatched luxury cottages in Kuku Group Ranch

Years in Operation: Over 20 years

Kampi Ya Kaanzi is widely recognized as a pioneer of community-based conservation tourism in the Amboseli ecosystem. Its model blends cultural heritage, conservation, and high-end tourism. Its long-standing partnership with Maasai landowners has contributed to the preservation of large tracts of rangeland and facilitated sustainable income streams tied to conservation.

Impact Highlight: Contributes to the protection of over 2,000 ha of land in Kuku Group Ranch, supporting over 6,000 landowners through land lease and employment.





Elewana Tortilis Camp

Management Company: Elewana Collection

www.elewanacollection.com

Industry Profile: Member of an international portfolio of upscale safari camps under the Elewana Collection

Local Setting: 17 luxury tents in the Kitirua Conservancy

Years in Operation: Over 20 years

Elewana Tortilis Camp is among the most established safari properties in the Amboseli ecosystem, with a legacy spanning over two decades. The camp has contributed to the global visibility of Amboseli as a premier wildlife destination through its integration into an international hospitality brand.

Impact Highlight: Supports conservation of over 13,000 ha of land with long-term lease payments to landowners. The majority of staff are from the local community.

STATE OF CONSERVANCIES REPORT | **2026**



Tawi Lodge

Management Company: Tawi Lodge

https://www.tawilodge.com/

Industry Profile: Independent eco-lodge anchored in conservation and community partnership

Local Setting: 13 eco-cottages in Tawi Conservancy

Years in Operation: 15+ years

Tawi Lodge has been central to the development and operational success of Tawi Conservancy, one of the key wildlife dispersal corridors in the ecosystem. The lodge model combines ecological sustainability with strong community engagement. It has helped secure critical wildlife corridors and demonstrated how private investment can promote the resilience of conservancies.

Impact Highlight: Contributes to the conservation of approximately 700 ha of land through lease payments, employment, and select community programmes. The land has 33 beneficiary families

Ker & Downey Safaris

Management Company: Ker & Downey Safaris

www.kerdowneysafaris.com

Industry Profile: International luxury safari brand specialising in bespoke, high-end travel experiences

Local Setting: Variable setting. Operates small, exclusive camps often configured for private or semi-exclusive use.

Years in Operation: 10+ years

Ker & Downey operates premium, bespoke safari packages, targeting high-value, low-impact tourism. Its operations within Olgulului conservancies contribute directly to conservation financing and community benefits. It has strengthened Amboseli's positioning within the global luxury safari market, reinforcing the vital role of conservancies in tourism diversification.

Impact Highlight: Supports community conservancies in Olgulului, while generating high per-guest conservation revenue and sustaining local employment.



Ol Donyo Lodge

Management Company: Great Plains Conservation

https://greatplainsconservation.com/

Industry Profile: High-end conservation tourism operator within an international portfolio of eco-luxury safari properties

Local Setting: Chyulu Hills / Mbirikani Group Ranch

Years in Operation: Over 15 years

Ol Donyo Lodge is one of the most exclusive and conservation-focused tourism investments in the Amboseli ecosystem. Situated on Mbirikani Group Ranch in the Chyulu Hills, the lodge operates on a low-density, high-value model while maintaining critical wildlife corridors. It demonstrates the value of premium tourism as a driver of sustainable conservation financing.

Impact Highlight: Contributes to the conservation of approximately 275,000 acres within Mbirikani Group Ranch, supporting over 4,000 landowners through lease payments, conservation fees, and employment.
Has initiated several community programmes, including a school feeding project



“We have a long history with Amboseli and are proud of our relationship with the OOGR community and impact with Kitirua Conservancy.

But a little concerned with the mushrooming tourism developments with little to no landscape oversight. They may diminish value for us.

It is laudable to see the emergence of numerous conservancies. But there is a long way to go before they acquire firm legal structures that will guarantee their stability and attract investment”

Andreas Fox
Ker and Downey Safaris



Ol Donyo Lodge means a lot to us. We have been in the ecosystem for nearly 3 decades and have witnessed tremendous changes, including in wildlife populations and diversity.

To us, Mbrikani’s exclusivity makes it feel very special, even if there isn’t as much wildlife as in other areas.

Parting shot:

- Keeping the connectivity between the different conservancies and national parks is so important for wildlife and visitors.

- While it is important for conservancies to have investments, it is also important to learn from elsewhere, such as the Maasai Mara. **That more camps and lodges are not necessarily better; hence the need for a healthy balance.**

Graham McKittrick
Great Plains Conservation

NEW INVESTMENTS IN CONSERVANCIES

Karibu Amboseli!

The Amboseli Ecosystem continues to attract new investors in tourism, whose presence reflects growing confidence in the future of conservancies

Angama Amboseli

Company: Angama Ltd
https://angama.com/

Location – Kimana sanctuary
Setting – intimate lodge with 10 guest suites

Praro Zebra Plains

Company: Zebra Plains Collection
https://zebraplainscollection.com/

Location – Nailepu Conservancy
Setting - 46-room luxury lodge

Elephant Gorge Camp

Company: Atua Enkop Africa
https://www.atua-enkop.com/

Location – Elerai Conservancy
Setting – 12-room luxury lodge

Tulia Camp

Company: Tulia Amboseli Safari Camp
https://tuliacamps.com/

Location – Kilitome Conservancy
Setting - Luxury tented camp

Kilimanjaro Balloon Safaris

Company: Kilimanjaro Balloon Safaris Ltd
https://kilimanjaroballoonsafaris.com/

Location – Kitenden
Setting – Hot air balloon safaris

"Effective marketing is critical in showcasing the value and potential of our conservancies. This report will promote the Amboseli conservancies and their conservation successes, hence attract investments and partnerships that will create lasting benefits for local communities and strengthen conservation efforts."

John Kasaine
Communications Officer; AET



04

Chapter 4

Amboseli Ecosystem Trust

In Brief

Amboseli Ecosystem Trust (AET) is a not-for-profit umbrella organization that brings together the local community, governmental, conservation, and developmental stakeholders in the Amboseli Ecosystem to drive collective action and innovative collaborations for the well-being of the people, wildlife, and habitats of the ecosystem.

AET was initially founded to oversee the execution of the groundbreaking Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan (AEMP) 2008–18, the first ecosystem-wide management plan in the country.

Over the years, AET's operational scope has grown tremendously and is now also in charge of coordinating ecosystem stakeholders for the implementation of several programs that are pertinent to ecosystem integrity.

AET Programmes in the Ecosystem

Natural Resources Management

AET works to secure wildlife dispersal areas and corridors by championing the implementation of the Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan, establishment of new conservancies, development of conservancy management plans, rangeland restoration, and strengthening wildlife security through community ranger programmes. The programme also addresses threats such as habitat fragmentation, overgrazing, poaching, water abstraction, and unplanned land use.

AET works closely with communities to register conservancies, negotiate conservation leases, and safeguard key wildlife corridors linking Amboseli with Tsavo, Chyulu, and Kilimanjaro landscapes. It also facilitates governance and planning processes that guide sustainable land use while improving human–wildlife coexistence and supporting long-term ecosystem connectivity.

Important activities under this theme include:

- Ecological restoration
- Wildlife security and
- Conservancy development

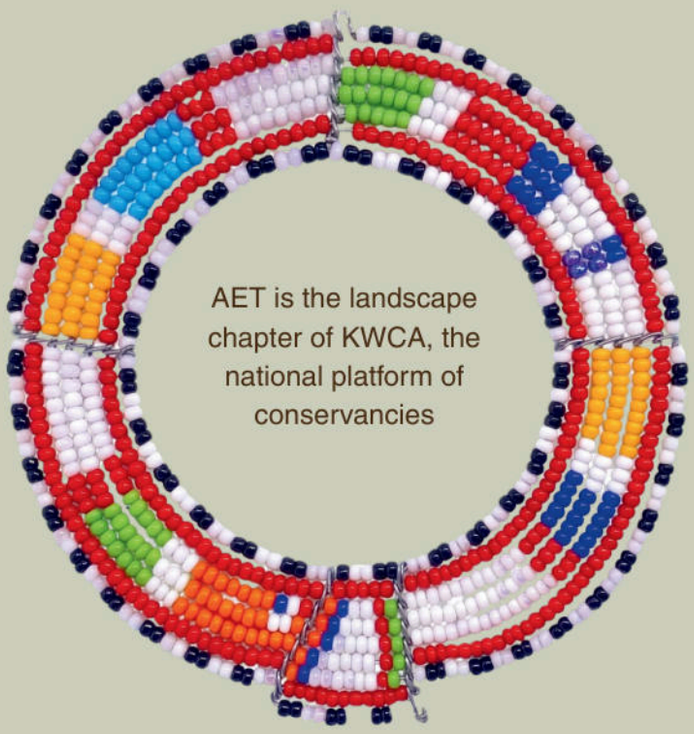
Ecological Restoration. Heavy grazing pressures coupled with recurrent drought expose the soils to wind and water erosion. This weakens the ecological resilience of vegetation whose ability to flourish after the rains are hampered, causing further degradation and exposes the land to invasive plants. AET works with partners and communities in carrying out ecological restoration.

Wildlife Security. Through the group ranches network and the investor/conservation partners, AET coordinates, monitors, and engages community rangers to ensure the security of wildlife in the ecosystem.
The success of this programme can be attested to by the fact that Amboseli ecosystem is one of the few wildlife-rich areas in the country where poaching has posted a significant decline, with zero elephant poaching incident in the last ten years.

Conservancy Development. Amboseli Ecosystem is setting the pace of community led conservation through establishment of conservancies. The emerging and developing conservancies are fragile entities which need to be nurtured to institutional maturity and stability.

AET is working with donor partners and like-minded conservation NGOs to build the capacity of these conservancies with a special focus on:

- Setting up strong governance structures
- Legal registration
- Support with development of management, grazing, and business plans
- Marketing investment opportunities to the private sector
- Support with development of favourable lease agreements with investors



Partnerships and Collaboration

AET is enhancing linkages between NGOs, Government, and the local community while playing a critical role in educating the local community on important national and county government policies and legislations.

An important policy event in the ecosystem is the transfer of management of Amboseli National Park to Kajiado County. AET has been closely following the process and continues to update the communities through conservancy leaders.

Other important legislation includes the Wildlife Conservation and Management Bill 2025, The Tourism Bill 2024, the Community Land Act of 2016, and the County Spatial Planning Act of 2016.

AET remains at the forefront in ensuring that pertinent issues are arising from new legislations are disseminated and discussed with communities and stakeholders.

Landscape Conservancies Forum

AET serves as the regional chapter of the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association, which is the national umbrella body for conservancies. The association is a powerful platform for individual conservancies and landowners to join the larger network of conservancies where members share experiences and best practices.

AET works closely with KWCA to organise capacity-building programmes for conservancies and communities and lobbying for local representation at the national forums

"Healthy rangelands are the foundation of resilient conservancies, sustaining wildlife, livestock, and community livelihoods. Through collaborative management and restoration efforts, we continue to support communities in protecting our land for future generations."

Kenneth Sokoine
Rangelands Officer; AET



AET Strategic Plan 2024 - 2028

AET operations are guided by the strategic plan 2024-2028, which has 4 programmes and 4 goals

Programme 1 - Ecosystem Planning

Goal 1: The Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan 2020 - 2030 is effectively implemented through coordinated partnerships

Desired Outcome - Ecosystem integrity

Programme 2 - Conservancies Development

Goal 2: Community conservancies and designated Rangeland Management areas are effectively managed to enhance habitat connectivity

Desired Outcome - Strong conservancies

Programme 3 - Enterprise Development and Tourism

Goal 3: Economic growth and community livelihoods are enhanced through viable community enterprises

Desired Outcome - Economic empowerment of communities

Programme 4 - Corporate Growth

Goal 4: AET's Institutional Capacity strengthened to deliver its mandate as a locally led umbrella body

Desired Outcome - Institutional effectiveness

Details of the strategic plan, plus other corporate publications and reference materials, can be read and downloaded at:

https://amboseliecosystem.org/document-library/

"Conservancy leadership has been very instrumental in supporting this process. We appreciate the continued cooperation, and we remain committed to working together to empower the communities that we serve"

Agnes Muntet
Accounts Assistant; AET



AET Mission and Values

Vision

An Ecosystem Where People and Nature Thrive in Harmony

Mission

To foster sustainable development through effective conservation in the greater Amboseli Ecosystem

Core Values

We are able to unite the dynamic conservation actors across the Amboseli Ecosystem for the benefit of all by embracing our diversity and being guided by our shared set of values.

Core values:

- **Collaboration** – Fostering an inclusive culture where communities, government, and other ecosystem partners are mutually engaged
- **Innovation** – Incorporating both local knowledge and scientific expertise, fully convinced that to overcome complex and evolving challenges, we must be adaptable and receptive to change
- **Accountability** – Acting with integrity and striving to be accessible, open and fair in all our operations and interactions with all the stakeholders that we serve
- **Respect for culture** – Cherishing and upholding the cultural norms, traditions, and customs of the communities that we serve
- **Teamwork** – Aspiring for all our staff to uphold the spirit of teamwork in the pursuit of all institutional endeavours



AET Impact Model

COORDINATION

Bring Amboseli stakeholders together to establish a shared vision and plan for landscape and ensure interests are aligned

OVERSIGHT

Ensure land and resource planning and use is done responsibly and sustainably

ADVOCACY

Ensure policies are favorable to Amboseli actors

SUPPORT

Ensure local institutions effectively manage their land and resources

PEOPLE BENEFIT

People in Amboseli own, manage & benefit from its land and resources

THRIVING ECOSYSTEM

Amboseli's ecosystem, wildlife and people are thriving

We Have Been Around:

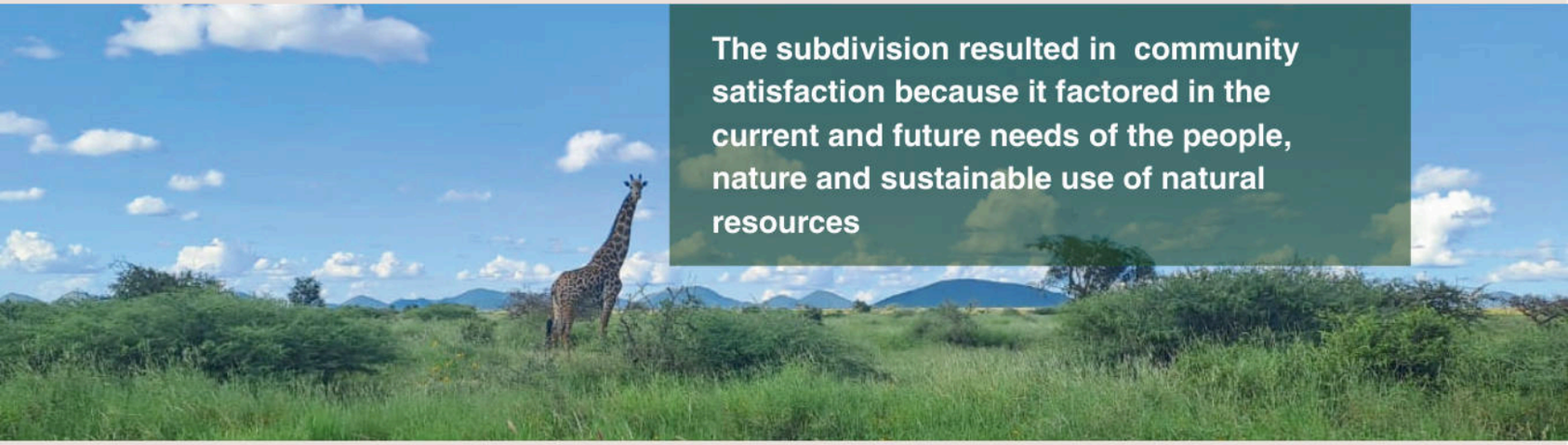
Reflections From AET CEO

05

Chapter 5

Special Reports

Mbirikani: A Land Subdivision Model



The subdivision resulted in community satisfaction because it factored in the current and future needs of the people, nature and sustainable use of natural resources

The subdivision of group ranches in the Amboseli Ecosystem started with trepidation. Previous subdivision occasioned rapid land degradation as pastoral land was converted to agriculture and urban development. Land-use conflicts escalated, and wildlife dispersal was disrupted.

This experience overhung other group ranches when subdivision started. However, it has proceeded remarkably well and is nearly complete in the entire ecosystem.

How Mbirikani subdivision stood out

Through participatory planning and zoning, they sought to balance individual land ownership with the need to preserve pastoral mobility, protect wildlife corridors, and sustain the ecological integrity of the Amboseli Ecosystem.

To guide the process, a task force was formed to assist the management committee and ensure the process would serve the community's long-term interests.

The task force was constituted mainly of community members with diverse technical expertise. They developed three principles of the subdivision model:

- Maintaining ecological integrity of the area to support community livelihoods, conservation and tourism
- Reduction of human-wildlife conflicts through holistic planning and zonation to optimize socio-economic development
- Fairness and equitable land allocation to all the members, ensuring there was no displacement of people from their original settlements

Community Expectations

At the start of the subdivision, the Mbirikani community expressed their desired outcomes as:

- A viable land system that allows the continuation of traditional pastoralism by supporting livestock and pasture for the socio-economic security of Mbirikani members
- Preservation of critical wildlife corridors to support landscape connectivity and free movement of livestock and wildlife across the ecosystem
- An investment blueprint for conservation, tourism, and mining of limestone as sources of revenue to be shared by community members

- Development of a zonation plan with 5 land uses factored in, some with restrictions on land use and others without. These land uses include settlement, agriculture, rangelands for livestock, conservation and tourism areas, and mining

From this, the technical committee developed a zonation scheme with the following sections

Settlement zone, where members were allocated land parcels with no land use restrictions. 70% of this is along the Emali–Loitokitok Road and the Namelok, Isinet, and Ilchalai waterways. Each landowner was allocated 10 acres in this zone with a freehold title deed.

Pastoral Rangelands, where livestock production is actively promoted. The zone is also important for wildlife conservation and dispersal, and the co-existence of livestock and wildlife is encouraged. Each landowner was allocated 31 acres in this zone with a title deed. However, it is restricted to 30 years, and there are restrictions on further subdivision, water drilling, permanent settlements, fencing, etc.

Conservation and tourism development zone, for wildlife conservation and tourism. Four new conservancies have been proposed in this zone section, and each landowner has 29 acres without a title deed. The whole zone has one title held in trust under Mbirikani Cooperative

Agricultural zone, where all forms of agriculture are permitted. The zone is dedicated to food production, and most of it is along the Isinet River, Namelok and Ilchalai areas. Each landowner was allocated 2 acres in this zone with a non-restricted title deed.

Mining and industrial zone, for limestone harvesting, cement manufacturing and other light industries. Each landowner was allocated 1 acre in this zone without a title deed. The zone has one title deed under Imbirikani Cooperative

Public utilities, amenities and urbanization zone, for the development of road networks, schools, water points, markets and other infrastructure to spur socio-economic development.

The Outcome

The outcome of the subdivision process by Imbirikani has been hailed as a leading model in the landscape and celebrated by the community due to the extent to which it took into account community livelihoods, social amenities, public utilities, investments and wildlife conservation.

Further, benefits from conservation and other enterprises will be managed transparently and equitably to avert potential mismanagement of resources, as witnessed in the previous governance structure.

After subdivision, the management transitioned from a group ranch to a cooperative society guided by the Cooperative Act. Resources from all revenue streams are consolidated into one kitty for equitable distribution to all bona fide members.

Key lessons

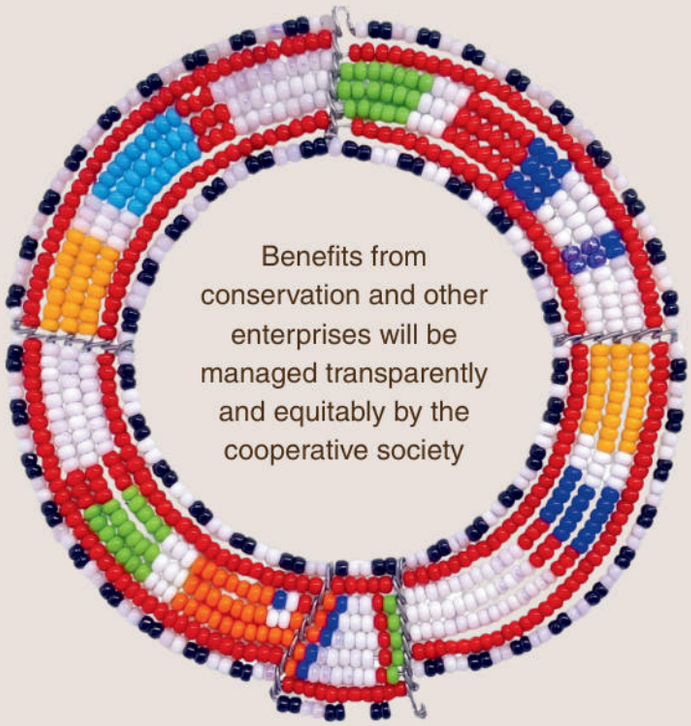
Richard Lamisi, a Mbirikani Resident, reflects on two key lessons.

- Subdivision needs to be influenced by the people's needs to realise compliance. To achieve this, it is important to involve experts and elites of the community.

- To eradicate abuse, land titles should be restricted. In Mbirikani, violations of land use plans are minimal because of title restrictions.

The Process Supporters

The Chairperson of Imbirikani Group Ranch Cooperative, Mr Daniel Metui, expressed his gratitude to the partners who supported the subdivision process. Notably, he commended the County Government of Kajiado, National Simba Cement Company, Big Life Foundation, Great Plains, Amboseli Ecosystem Trust, Chyulu REDD+ Conservation Trust and others who were instrumental in supporting the subdivision process.



County Government Fights Landuse Violations

Alarmed by rampant violations of the county spatial plan, the county government of Kajiado stepped in and issued a public warning against illegal land subdivisions and unauthorized sale of plots in designated rangelands.

The Department of Lands, Physical Planning, Housing, Urban Development, and Municipalities said it is the only lawful authority mandated to approve land subdivisions in Kajiado County. The directive was based on the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the Physical and Land Use Planning Act of 2019, which require all land subdivisions to receive official county approval.

This was in the wake of an increase in the number of land-selling companies that are subdividing land, advertising plots and selling them without approval from the county government.

It is these purchased plots that are being subjected to different land use that flout the zoning rules prescribed by the spatial plan

The county government also erected billboards in all the strategic locations in the ecosystem, alerting members of the public that there are land use regulations in place.



Back Home: Amboseli Officially Hand

The official handover of the management of Amboseli National Park to the County Government of Kajiado finally took place in November 2025.

The ceremony took place at the close of the Maa Cultural and Tourism Festival in Kimana and was presided over by Kenya's President, William Ruto. It was attended by representatives from national and county governments, community members from Kajiado, Narok, and Samburu counties, and stakeholders from the conservation and tourism sectors.

The event marked a historic milestone in Kenya's devolution journey and in community-led conservation efforts. It also symbolised the resolution of a decades-long debate over ownership, benefit-sharing, and the role of host communities in the stewardship of wildlife landscapes.

The handover was widely celebrated as a bold step towards empowering local communities to take a leading role in conservation, tourism management, and sustainable development within the Amboseli ecosystem.

The leaders and stakeholders at the ceremony emphasised that the transition recognised the Maasai community's historical connection to the landscape and its longstanding contribution to wildlife conservation. The transfer is expected to strengthen community participation, enhance local economic benefits from tourism, and provide a model for collaborative conservation governance in Kenya.



Words of the Historic Deed:

"We have transferred the management of Amboseli National Park to its host community under the leadership of the County Government of Kajiado.
This historic decision settles the long-standing issue of ownership and management, honouring our heritage and recognising the community's rightful place in stewarding this national treasure.

Our goal is to advance sustainable development by promoting inter-generational equity and empowering local communities to play a central role in conservation for the benefit of both the people of Kajiado and the entire nation"

William Samoei Ruto
President

ed Over to Kajiado County



"The transfer represents what Kenya must always stand for: justice, inclusion, and shared prosperity. It affirms a fundamental truth — that the people who live closest to wildlife are not enemies of conservation. This is not the end of conservation; it is its renewal. The people who have protected Amboseli for centuries will now be at the centre of its future."

William Ruto
President

"By handing over Amboseli National Park to the community, President Ruto has overturned a historical injustice."

Joseph Ole Lenku
Kajiado County Governor



No Easy Walk: A Recap of Amboseli's Storied Profile

Amboseli has a chequered history dating to precolonial times. It was first protected as the Maasai Amboseli Game Reserve in 1906, and later handed back to the local authorities in 1948.

Early into Kenya's independence, it was gazetted as a national park in 1974 and placed under the management of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Department, which evolved into KWS.

However, its ownership and management have long been a subject of dispute between the national government and the community, who have traditionally lived around and protected the ecosystem.

The Maasai have always regarded Amboseli as ancestral land, serving as a crucial grazing and cultural space long before colonial demarcations.

Following its gazettement as a national park, human activities and community access were restricted, sparking internecine conflicts and grievances over exclusion.

During a visit to Kajiado County in October 2023, President Ruto announced his intention to return the park to the people of Kajiado.

The announcement triggered a series of inter-agency consultations between the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Council of Governors, and Kajiado County Government.

The discussions centred on:

- Ensuring the handover complied with constitutional, legal, and conservation frameworks
- The need to amend gazette notices, establish a new management framework
- Working out a revenue-sharing formula, staffing, and conservation standards
- How to protect Amboseli's ecological integrity while empowering local governance.

On July 29, 2025, the final approval was granted after the Cabinet endorsed the handover and relevant legal instruments were gazetted.

Highlights of the agreement

Official transfer: It was formalized in Gazette Notice No. 15230 titled: "Deed of Transfer of Management Functions Relating to Amboseli National Park from the National Government to the County Government of Kajiado."

Effective Date: The transfer was finalized on November 8, 2025, following cabinet approval in July 2025. The decision follows a long-standing petition by the community

Management Model: The handover operates as a phased co-management model under Article 187 of the Constitution:
The County Government of Kajiado will take over daily operations and management of the park.
The national government, through KWS, will continue to provide technical and policy support, ensuring that conservation standards and ecological monitoring remain world-class

Phased Revenue Sharing: A 50:50 revenue-sharing ratio will be implemented for the 2026–2027 fiscal year. The county's share will increase in 2027–2028, reaching 100% in 2028–2029.

Duration: The agreement stands for an initial, renewable period of 15 years

Pomp, Colour, and Culture Converge at Historic Event

The handover of Amboseli National Park back to the Kajiado County Government coincided with the 3rd Edition of the Maa Cultural and Tourism Festival, which was proudly hosted by Amboseli Ecosystem.

The event took place in November 2025 at the Kimana Gate, Amboseli National Park, and attracted hundreds of culture enthusiasts, from community members, the business community, to the county and national government.

The week-long festival was cultural tourism at its best, spotlighting Amboseli as the ultimate blend of cultural richness and ecological beauty. It served to demonstrate that protecting wildlife, advancing sustainable tourism and preserving Maasai traditions go hand in hand.

As a confluence of culture and conservation, it could not have been more fulfilling.



AMBOSELI ECOSYSTEM TRUST

"The handover is significant. It heralds greater local control of conservation benefits within the Amboseli Ecosystem Communities have long borne the cost of conservation while receiving limited returns. The people give their land, conserve and protect wildlife, but the money goes to the national government. With this handover, wildlife and conservation benefits will be more directly oriented to the host community."

AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

"The handover is more than a governance shift; it signals a broader rethinking of how conservation is led, financed, and sustained in Africa. It raises urgent and exciting questions about community leadership, ecological stewardship, and how conservation can serve people as much as it serves wildlife."







BIG LIFE FOUNDATION

"The transition is an opportunity for more benefits from Amboseli's natural wealth to remain within local communities whose lands sustain the ecosystem."

LION GUARDIANS

"With Amboseli National Park now entrusted to those who have protected it for generations, the promise for the entire Amboseli ecosystem to be a shining example of sustainable conservation and harmonious coexistence between communities and wildlife is strong."

Forum Advancing Women Mentorship and Empowerment

The voice of women in the conservation of natural resources is getting louder across the country. In the Amboseli Ecosystem, the clamour was boosted by the establishment of the Amboseli Conservancy Women Leadership and Empowerment Forum in 2024, under the stewardship of the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust supported by the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association.

The Women's Forum was established to help demystify and challenge retrogressive cultural and social norms within the community that have disadvantaged women's socio-economic empowerment, leadership opportunities, and decision-making capacity. Through the forum, women are being empowered to actively contribute to conservation, community governance, and sustainable development initiatives.

The forum's main objectives include:

- Build the capacity and confidence of women to actively participate in conservation and conservancy leadership, empowering them to take up decision-making roles and strengthen women's representation in governance and community development.
- Strengthen and integrate women's perspectives in natural resource governance and benefit-sharing processes, ensuring more inclusive, equitable, and community-responsive decision-making.
- Confront cultural barriers and male dominance that relegated women behind in conservancy leadership
- Establish a platform for women from across the Amboseli conservancies to exchange experiences, amplify their collective voice, address shared challenges, and pursue opportunities for leadership, empowerment and sustainable development.

To further strengthen the work of the forum, AET, in collaboration with KWCA, has implemented a series of capacity building and community engagement fora, including leadership and governance trainings, social analysis and action (SAA) trainings, financial literacy trainings, as well as community dialogues engaging male gender champions as key allies in advancing gender inclusion and women's empowerment.

Although relatively new, the forum has demonstrated the potential to become a powerful voice for women within the Amboseli conservancies by driving visible behavioral and attitude change at both household and community levels. The platform is laying the foundation for long-term women's empowerment by actively fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for women to take up leadership and decision-making roles in conservation and natural resource governance.

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust is working to mainstream gender inclusion across its conservation and community development programs by promoting meaningful inclusion and participation of women in governance, leadership and livelihoods initiatives.

To guide this commitment, AET is implementing a Women's Engagement Strategy that seeks to address barriers that limit women's participation by creating pathways for their empowerment and representation. In key decision-making structures such as grazing committees, conservancy leadership and other community platforms, to ensure women's voices and perspectives are reflected in governance and benefit-sharing processes.

In addition, AET has designed and supported targeted initiatives aimed at strengthening the socio-economic empowerment of women through capacity building, leadership development and livelihood opportunities, recognising that empowering women is essential to achieving resilient communities and sustainable conservation outcomes.



Mwanamke Bora: Championing Women's Empowerment

The Mwanamke Bora Project is one of Amboseli Ecosystem Trust's flagship economic empowerment initiatives, designed to strengthen the socio-economic resilience of women and youth across the Amboseli landscape.

Supported by the Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF), the project brings together 400 conservancy women and youth organised into 13 groups engaged in diversified livelihood activities including Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLA), beadwork enterprises, livestock production and agribusiness.

Under the Mwanamke Bora Project, several conservancy women and youth groups across the Amboseli Ecosystem have received targeted support.

In Nairrabala conservancy, the Enduata women group received Gala goat breeds to strengthen their livelihood activities through goat fattening and resale. The initiative is designed to create a sustainable cycle of income generation where the women fatten the goats, sell them, reinvest the proceeds and gradually expand the enterprise and the individual share of the benefits to support their households' needs.

At the **Emampuli conservancy**, **Oltiyani conservancy and Ole Narika conservancy**, the Maasai Awareness Organization women group, Inkaisotuak women group and Namayiana Women group, respectively, received modern beads and beading tools to improve the quality and competitiveness of their craft to meet modern market designs. The support targets to support the women to transform their traditional beadwork skills into viable income-generating enterprises capable of accessing wider and more lucrative markets.

In addition, youth groups from **Kilitome Conservancy and Emampuli Conservancy** received farm inputs to strengthen their agribusiness initiatives, supporting youth-driven livelihood diversification and improving food production and income generation opportunities within the conservancies.

Through these transformative efforts, the Mwanamke Bora Project continues to demonstrate that empowering women and youth is not only strengthening household livelihoods but also building resilient communities, advancing inclusive conservation, and securing a more sustainable future for the Amboseli landscape.





"Women play a crucial role in conservancy management and community leadership. It is encouraging to see more women actively involved in conservancy governance and decision-making processes. At AET, we remain committed to advocating for inclusive conservation approaches that empower women and youth and strengthen community conservation efforts."



Purity Mwende
Project Assistant; AET

Curtain Falls on Craig

The Gentle Tusker Reigned in Amboseli Terrain for Half a Century

The Amboseli ecosystem recently lost one of its most iconic elephants.

Named Craig, the legendary “super tusker” died of natural causes early this year in Olgulului, bringing to an end an auspicious journey of life that spanned more than 5 decades, traversing the ecosystem.

Craig was beloved by conservationists, researchers, safari enthusiasts, and members of the public alike for his great charisma and imposing image.

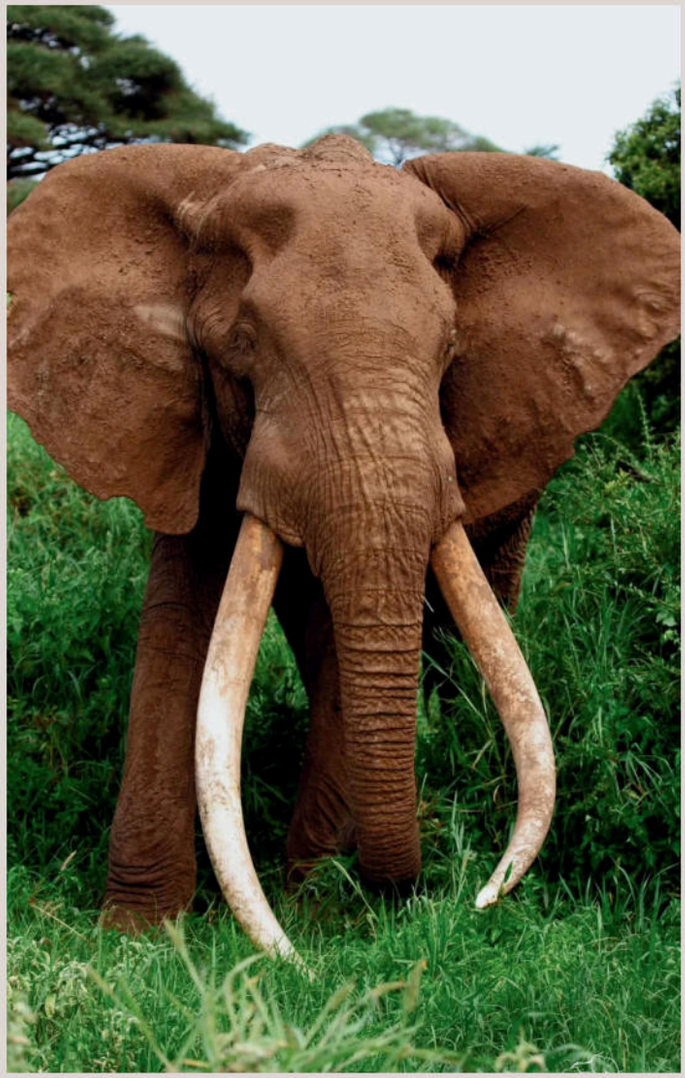
It was the end of an era for one of Africa’s rarest and most celebrated elephant lineages. He belonged to a special class of elephants known as “super tusker” bulls whose tusks each weigh over 45 kilograms and often grow long enough to touch the ground.

Historically, such elephants have been prime targets for poaching and are exceptionally rare. Hence, Craig’s survival to the age of 54 was widely seen as a conservation success story.

Born around 1972, Craig grew up in a well-studied elephant family within Amboseli, a landscape famous for its long-term elephant research. Over the years, he became a familiar and much-loved figure—recognisable not only for his enormous tusks, but also for his calm and gentle nature.

In 2021, Craig was adopted by East African Breweries through its popular Tusker brand. This was not only a testament to Craig’s prominence but also underscored the collaboration between conservation groups and the private sector in Kenya.

Visitors often encountered him moving slowly across the plains, seemingly unbothered by vehicles and cameras. This relaxed temperament made him one of the most photographed elephants in Africa and an important ambassador for wildlife conservation and tourism.



Posthumous

The Kenya Wildlife Service took custody of the remains of Craig for taxidermy. This is a process of preserving the animal for educational, scientific, and heritage purposes.

Craig's body will be displayed in a public exhibition at the Nairobi National Museum. He will remain a symbol of successful community-based conservation in the Amboseli ecosystem.

"Continuous monitoring, anti-poaching efforts, habitat protection and community stewardship ensured that Craig lived freely and safely -- demonstrating what collective commitment to wildlife conservation can achieve."

KWS – Amboseli National Park

"Special tribute to all those who helped Craig live out his life naturally."

Amboseli Trust for Elephant

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

The continued growth of conservancies across the Amboseli ecosystem reflects the enduring commitment of local communities to conservation and the protection of our precious landscape. Despite the challenges facing the ecosystem, the future of Amboseli conservancies remains promising, driven by community resilience, strong partnerships, and a shared vision for people, wildlife, and rangelands to thrive together.

We sincerely thank all community members, conservancy leaders, partners, and stakeholders who participated in the stakeholder input and validation workshops for their dedication, invaluable contributions, and willingness to share conservancy data and experiences that made this report possible.



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