ELEPHANT POACHING
And what we are doing to stop it

IT’S TIME TO ACT
Let’s save the Great Migration of Africa!

CATTLE IN THE RESERVE
Why conservancies and the Reserve need to work together

VOICE OF THE MARA

15 BENEFITS
Jobs, guaranteed income and social development... What the Mara conservancies offer

MAASAI MARA
WILDLIFE CONSERVANCIES
OUR MISSION

The Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA) is a Kenyan commitment, to conserve the greater Maasai Mara ecosystem, through a network of protected areas (conservancies and conservation areas), for the prosperity of all – biodiversity and wildlife, the regional Maasai population, recreation and tourism for the nation of Kenya. We are a membership organization of all the Mara conservancies, open to any existing or upcoming wildlife conservancy whose land is part of or integral to the greater Maasai Mara ecosystem. We are a Regional Association of the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA): one of 12 regional associations across Kenya.
Welcome

Helen Gibbons
CEO Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA), I am honoured to represent a movement across the greater Mara region (outside of the Maasai Mara Game Reserve) that brings together tourism parties, landowners and civil society under one umbrella. This is the first time in the history of conserving the Maasai Mara, that one entity has been given the mandate to act as a guardian to the greater Mara region and it is a responsibility that we carry in our hearts and actions.

Unfortunately, there are many threats and challenges to the survival of the greater Maasai Mara ecosystem. The speed of change happens overnight: fences go up, tourism goes down and confused talk about the investment return from land under conservation, all causes chaos in the vision to protect the greater Maasai Mara. Such a predicament contradicts the history of the region - as one of my Maasai friends recently said: “we need to understand that the Maasai Mara has always been a free-roaming space for wildlife, livestock and people.”

Consequently, we took this issue as the main theme for this first edition of the Voice of the Mara, asking ourselves, what are the benefits of conservancies and do they pay as well or higher than other land use options?

On behalf of MMWCA, I would like to acknowledge the support and confidence of our existing donors, who over the past 12 months have made the existence of MMWCA viable and believed in the concept of a regional Mara entity. They are Asilia Giving, The Nature Conservancy, the Obel Family Foundation and the individual conservancies, who all pay a membership fee to be a member of MMWCA.

I trust you will enjoy reading this magazine and sharing it with your friends and family members, colleagues and travelling partners.
In February a child found a big bull elephant poached in a region called Pardamat in the Maasai Mara, with its tusks removed its faceless head made it hard to identify the cause of death; a poisoned arrow or a bullet from a gun. In the prime of its life, the bull elephant was strong and healthy – the death bringing it to a meaningless end - to feed the illegal, international ivory trade.

2010 to 2014

389
Elephant deaths in the Mara
58-76%
Illegally killed each year
The death of this big bull elephant, tells a sorry tale of elephant deaths across the Maasai Mara region. Between 2010 and 2014, 389 Mara elephants died with 58-76% being killed illegally each year. Párdamat (pg.6) is a particularly vulnerable region – an unprotected area surrounded by neighbouring Mara conservancies - Mara North, Motorogi and Naboisho. Unfortunately, it has some of the highest density of elephant poaching in Kenya, showing how far poachers can infiltrate in the absence of strong conservation management and security.

Alarmed at the sharp spike in elephant deaths in 2010, the Mara Elephant Project (MEP) was founded to understand the issue and address the rampant illegal killing. MEP’s key activities are to locate and follow elephants’ movements through collars, improve the security and their protection, respond to human elephant conflicts, like crop raiding or injured elephants.

“During the past four years, in collaboration with Kenya Wildlife Service, we’ve arrested 183 ivory dealers, middlemen and poachers. Plus elephant mortalities have decreased by 25% since 2012, with increased numbers of
convicted poachers”, the Chief Executive Officer of MEP, Marc Goss, explains. “Most of the illegal killing of elephants is outside of areas we call ‘safe’. MEP fills a gap in protecting elephants outside of conservancies and protected areas in the Mara ecosystem”.

In fact, elephants are known as a ‘landscape species’ requiring a large diverse area of habitat. In particular male elephants require ‘browse’ (bushes and trees) to feed their large bodies and high growth rates. That’s why the Mara elephants range over some 8,000km², much more than the government protected Maasai Mara Game Reserve (1,500km² under the management of the Narok County Government) and the operational conservancies (additional 1,000km² privately protected).

Back in 2011, ElephantVoices also responded, launching a citizen-science based project across the Maasai Mara ecosystem, to connect ordinary people to individual elephants, so that they can be protected through research, education and conservation. They asked the questions: how might we create an alliance of friendship around the elephants? How can we develop a sort of Facebook for the elephants and connect guides, scouts, researchers, tourists, conservation employees, photographers, volunteers and residents of the Maasai Mara, with the lives of individual elephants?

Using the latest in phone technology they created an ‘EleApp’: “it is amazingly simple to use,” Dr. Joyce Poole, co-founder of ElephantVoices guarantees. “When you spot an elephant ask yourself is he big or small? Are his ears smooth or ragged? Do they have notches? Are there any marks on his trunk? Are his tusks broken or still full length? Then you simply upload this information into your EleApp and it’s added to a searchable and publicly accessible database called Mara Elephants Who’s Who. Through this app, we have documented that at least 2,500 elephants utilise the Mara ecosystem”.

By the end of March 2015, more than 250 people had contributed data to the online ElephantVoices databases and over 4,000 records of elephant sightings, sick and wounded animals, signs of elephants and mortalities uploaded. Many of these contributors have been African Impact volunteers based in the Mara Naboisho Conservancy, under the guidance of Lincoln Njiru who heads up the project. Additionally, residents of the Mara, particularly those living within and working for the conservancies and a number of students have helped; like David Kimutai, a KWS Maasai Mara Research Scientist and Alfred Mepukori, an undergraduate student at Maasai Mara University.

Elephants as a landscape species, have specific habitat requirements, in both time and space, that make them particularly vulnerable to (as well as having impact on) the land-use practices of people. With the rapid changes across the greater Mara landscape caused by human activities, elephants now more than ever, require our efforts to protect and support them.

LEARN MORE
www.escapefoundation.org/projects/about-the-african-elephant-program/the-mara-elephant-project/
www.elephantvoices.org
MAASAI MARA WILDLIFE CONSERVANCIES ASSOCIATION

What do we do?

We Sustain, Develop and Create Conservancies and Conservation Areas: Assessing and making recommendations on their Economic Viability, with the African Wildlife Foundation leading this initiative.

Creating the Pardamat Conservation Area (formerly Block 3), partnering with the Mara Elephant Project.

Aiding the new Siana Conservancy – with the Siana community and WWF leading this initiative.

We Facilitate, Coordinate and Implement Conservation and Social Development:

Cattle enterprise: trial testing new routes to market and facilitating quality breeds and fattening programs across conservancies, with the conservancy boards, Rangeland Solutions, Mara Beef and Seiya Ltd.

Livestock Grazing: facilitating grazing principles and rangeland management.

Cultural & Natural Resource Conservation Plan: in development for the greater Mara region (outside the Reserve), partnering with The Nature Conservancy.

Land Value: working to boost the value through sustainable energy initiatives, carbon credits and integrating cattle management.

Anti-Poaching & Security: activities in the Pardamat region in partnership with Mara Elephant Project.

Mara-wide Applied Research: to monitor and assess ecological, community and development indicators across the Mara region.

Settlement & Population Growth: investigating the causes, consequences and potential solutions, with Olare-Motorogi Trust and Basecamp Foundation Kenya.

Mara North Conservancy: implementing a community programme to improve exam results and girl-child education, support wildlife clubs, develop the Aitong recycling centre and Mara Discovery Centre

Olare-Motorogi Conservancy: registration of land leases to conservation, a secured land loan system for landowners and agreement for the local airstrip

Leadership & Governance: working with conservancy management bodies, to improve their governance structure and operations

We Advocate for a Better Conservancy Framework:

Facilitation of the establishment of the Narok County Wildlife Conservation and Compensation Committee

Facilitation of Narok County input into the Subsidiary Legislation, 2013 Wildlife Act

Executive Committee member of Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association - coordinating their respective activities across the Mara conservancies

Tourism Lodges & Tourism Product: aiding conservancies to stop illegal property development and other adverse developments, like getting electrical power lines re-routed outside the conservancies

We Fundraise & Promote:

Maasai Home, Maasai Pride: engender and foster Maasai pride for managing and conserving the jewel of the crown of Kenya

Raising Funds: developing multiple funding proposals, with both individual and multiple conservancies, to raise funds for and on behalf of the Mara conservancies and their primary needs and requirements.

Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association team with African Wildlife Foundation, Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association and WWF
THE BENEFITS OF THE MARA CONSERVANCIES

It is widely questioned if the Mara conservancies pay enough to landowners, compared against other land uses, like agriculture, livestock or commercial development. In superficial terms, looking simply at how much money the landowner receives per hectare for his/her land, it’s easy to understand why some say that conservancies don’t pay. On average the Mara conservancies make a direct payment to landowners of US$30-50 per hectare per year, whereas livestock pays at least $40-50 per hectare and land under agriculture estimated up to $100. So to move this debate forward, we are asking: would landowners be better off putting their land under agriculture or turning the greater Mara ecosystem (outside of the Maasai Mara Game Reserve) into a cattle ranch?

Firstly, focusing only on the money is too simple an analysis. Both agriculture and livestock are heavily dependent on rainfall, which is increasingly unpredictable with the changing climate, causing heavy downfalls and long droughts, making both land uses risky and unknown. And owing to the soil quality and the amount of rock in the conservancies’ area, researchers agree that agricultural productivity would not be as high as other parts of the Maasai Mara ecosystem. Plus with a Reserve so close, crops are likely to be badly damaged by wildlife causing a high and untenable cost.

Finally, assessing the Mara conservancies on land lease payments alone, completely ignores all the other many benefits, both financial and non-financial, that the conservancies bring to the people of the Mara and its wildlife. To deal with this lack of knowledge and understanding, we’ve created a list of the top 15 benefits that the Mara conservancies provide.

1 Institutions & Governance
Thanks to the Conservancies, the community can self organize, enabling elective and accountable leadership, with Annual General Meetings for all members to attend. Nominated conservancy boards with both tourism parties and landowner representatives cultivate a common vision, a sense of communal decision-making and are a prerequisite for community development. Government and non-governmental actors use these structures as entry points for implementing and managing community based projects.

2 Guaranteed Payments
Currently almost 3,000 local landowners and their families (approx. 24,000 people) benefit directly from this guaranteed income. No other activity provides as much income to as many people as conservancies. Landowners can access loans, pay for education and health services, veterinary care for livestock, as well as survive extreme weather conditions, like droughts, where families use the money to buy food and move their cattle.

3 Legal Grazing of Cattle
Many operational conservancies allow managed grazing of landowner members’ cattle, at agreed times of year and agreed numbers, with a fine system for illegal grazing. With a lot of unprotected land under private title deed and at the risk of being fenced, some conservancies absorb herds of cattle under the stewardship of the conservancy management that would otherwise illegally graze in the Reserve.
THE MARA’S FIRST WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY
The Ol Chorro Oirowua Conservancy has a proud history. Established in 1992, with 16,000 acres set aside by members of Maasai families, it is the Mara’s first wildlife conservancy, changing the use of land from commercial wheat farming back to conservation. In the early years, they introduced White Rhino into a dedicated Rhino Sanctuary, making Ol Chorro the only area outside of the Maasai Mara Game Reserve where all of the big five can be seen, including the descendants of the original white rhino. 23 years later, the original three parcels of family land are now owned by 87 landowners: they continue to choose conservation as the best land use option. Members receive 100% of the daily visitors’ conservancy fee and Fairmont Mara Safari Club, the local tourism lodge, underwrites all the management costs.

Multiple Land Uses
Cultivation practiced in areas north of the conservancies exclude livestock, often degrade the land and increase soil acidity owing to fertilizers and herbicides, as well as trigger human wildlife conflicts. Unlike other land uses, conservancies are compatible with two or three simultaneous land uses at the same time. They can protect wildlife and land, plus provide grass for cattle and store carbon thereby potentially earning carbon credits.

Land Management
No intensive farming practice disintegrating the fertility of the land, no over-grazing and soil erosion caused by too many cattle and no commercial development turning the greater Mara ecosystem into a built up environment. Conservancy land has more grass cover and less bare ground, absorbs more rainwater thereby reducing flooding and has a higher diversity of plant species. Further, the no settlement policy being practiced ensures that the edges of the Reserve such as the Olare Orok area are not settled, avoiding the challenges currently experienced in other centres like Talek. This well-managed land primarily paid for by the tourism sector, has better value to the landowner lowering the risk of being sold to land speculators or households being dispossessed and the youth being dispossessed.

Diversified Tourism Products
Rather than competition to the Reserve, conservancies diversify the tourism product of the Mara, adopting low volume, often eco-rated and socially conscious tourism, with complementary products such as walking safaris and night drives. They provide more space so that lodges/camps are spread out over a larger area, decongesting the Reserve and improving the tourism experience. It is widely understood that a greater amount of tourism income reaches the community, as lease payments are paid directly to the landowners and conservancy management paid directly by the conservancy boards. For some conservancies tourism has the potential to produce a self-sustaining business model.

Local Employment
60%-70% of the staff working in camps and conservancies is drawn from the local community. Across the conservancies approx. 1,200 people are employed, with 700-800 being from the local community, all supporting their respective families. Initiatives such as Koiyaki Guiding School are particularly important in training the local youth with job skills. The tourism sector provides both skilled and unskilled work, thereby employing people with different levels of education.

Local Economy
Tourists visit cultural villages and enjoy entertainment by the local Maasai dancers, as well as buy beadwork and other locally produced curio items from Maasai women. Tourist operators hire vehicles, purchase water, buy food from the local markets and hire casual labour, to serve the needs of tourists, providing more income for many more families and communities.
Tourists need to move and visit the wildlife, so conservancies develop the road network, river crossings and water sources to aid the functioning of the conservancy. The surrounding community benefit from better access to the markets, schools and mobility of goods and services in areas where government infrastructure is insufficiently developed. This ease of transport means lower living costs and costs of trade for all.

Charitable foundations and tourism operators raise funds to establish the conservancies and undertake social community projects. Through initiatives of the lodges/camps and Trusts established by the conservancies, there has been a significant increase in charitable projects such as schools, health clinics, training, social enterprise and water provision for the local communities, as well as the related local employment and skill development.

Daily patrols by scouts and the back up and support from the county and national state security, ensure the areas surrounding conservancies are safe for tourists, local traders, the community and wildlife. Conservancies employ security teams, community scouts and create intelligence connections with Kenya Wildlife Service, Narok County rangers and the police personnel in the area. Illegal activities such as petty theft, poaching, cattle rustling, organised crime and other social ills are prevented or minimized.

Conservancies provide a strong incentive for communities to continue tolerating wildlife on their land owing to the multiple incentives. In doing so, it keeps land within the local Maasai community and enables grazing of their cattle, thereby continuing their ancestral practices and avoiding the syndrome of ‘selling land and buying poverty’. The conservancies honour the Maasai culture in terms of their dress, dancing traditions and practices like medicinal plants.

**A COMMUNITY CONSERVANCY**

The Olderkesi Wildlife Conservancy unlike all other Mara conservancies is a community conservancy – bringing together the 4,200 Maasai landowners of Olderkesi under a single land title deed covering an initial area of 7,600 acres, in which every member has an equal shareholding. There are no individual private plots and shares cannot be sold to outsiders, only transferred between members. This unique arrangement in the Mara has been the culmination of 13 years of work between the Cottar family and the local Maasai community.

Rather than the Maasai earning money through leasing their land to tourism partners, they have signed a 10-year ‘Payment for Environmental Services’ agreement that aims to outcompete the financial returns possible from agriculture and livestock, manage the conservancy and protect wildlife and habitat. Importantly, the Olderkesi region is the key to securing critical elephant migration corridors from the Reserve to an area east of Olderkesi called Nguruman. Up to 4,000 elephants a year, migrate across this area and are increasingly encountering farming and the fencing of land blocking their traditional routes. With the right type of support Olderkesi has the potential to expand to 66,000 acres in the next 5 years, thereby securing both the magnificent elephants as well as the livelihoods of approx. 33,000 individuals.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT calvin@kenyawildlifeconservation.org

285,000 acres of land protected by Mara Conservancies
Contributing to Kenya
Conservancies currently pay tax on income generated and therefore contribute to funding the state parks and reserves, providing a direct benefit from the Mara conservancies to the Maasai Mara Game Reserve. Further, conservancies currently pay tax on land rent payments paid and sometimes even on donations for conservation projects.

30% of Kenya’s wildlife is in the greater Mara ecosystem

Protecting the Nation’s Wildlife and Habitat
Approx. 30% of Kenya’s wildlife is in the greater Mara ecosystem. Conservancies create safe dispersal areas, wet season pastures, migratory corridors, breeding and feeding areas for migratory and resident wild grazers as well as carnivores. This increase in space, habitats and natural resources largely ensures a continuous landscape to protect a greater range of biodiversity and currently is undertaken at little financial cost to County or State governments. Together with the Reserve, conservancies are maintaining a global heritage for us and our children’s children.

Conservancies’ Pay
With all these additional benefits the true value of the land under conservation per hectare, is so much more than US$30-50 quoted at the start of this article. In fact, Dr Crystal Courtney in her research thesis: Sustainable Africapitalism? Grassroots Perceptions of Maasai Mara Conservancies and their Relationship with Development, 2014, concluded that with all the additional benefits provided, the true value of the land under conservation per hectare is US$ 112 (Ksh 10,000) for Olare-Motorogi and US$ 122 (Ksh 11,500), for Naboisho, per annum: (the two conservancies she studied). These figures are significantly higher than the rental payments alone: 2.5 to 3.6 times higher respectively, representing not only the direct land lease rental payment, but the money going into the local area more broadly.

Thus it is fair to conclude, that the Mara conservancies are in fact, the most beneficial land use option!

GROUP PRIVATE CONSERVANCY
Ol Kinyei, a pioneering and award-winning conservancy was established in 2005 through a partnership between 171 local private landowners (coming together as a group) and Gamewatchers Safaris & Porini Safari Camps.

An initial area of over 8,000 acres was set aside by the community for wildlife without the presence of human settlements and cattle and the small and exclusive Porini Mara Camp was set up with the objective of creating income for the community through employment and the leasing of land.

The conservancy is now 18,600 acres with an estimated 30 lions, 8 leopards and 12 cheetah. It operates at the density of 1 tent to 700 acres of wilderness and 1 vehicle to 1,400 acres, as laid out in its management plan. Porini Mara Camp has been awarded a Gold eco-rating by Ecotourism Kenya, which reflects its positive focus on the protection of the environment and support of the local economy. 171 landowners are paid per acre of leased land and per bed night occupied. Over 50 staff are employed from the community on a permanent basis and many hold the highest management levels including the camp manager, head chef, senior warden, warden and head guide.

Through its Corporate Social Responsibility the camp supports education and health initiatives; investing in schools through donations of desks, books, solar lamps and the building of a classroom.

36 camps and lodges in operational conservancies
7 camps in conservancies in formation
THE GREATER MARA MAP

The greater Maasai Mara – is a continuous landscape approximately the size of 6,000km² that forms the northernmost part of the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem. It is generally defined by the area used by the annual wildebeest migration and includes the Maasai Mara Game Reserve (MMGR), neighboring private and community lands and the adjoining Loita Plains.

The Migration Route

NYAKWERI
proposed, 7,068 acres
(image not to scale)

OLISUKUT
established 2011, 49,978 acres (image not to scale)
2 lodges and camps
approx.75 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
13 rangers and scouts
www.olisukutconservancy.org

LEMEK
established 2009, 18,278 acres
480 landowners and community members
3 lodges and camps
48 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
18 rangers and scouts

MASAI MORAN
proposed, 7,000 acres
(exact land coverage to be determined)

OLKINYEI
established 2005, 18,641 acres
177 landowners and community members
1 lodge or camp
91 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
20 rangers and scouts
www.porini.com/sub=ol.kinyei-conservancy

OLOLAIMUTI
established 1992, 15,993 acres
56 landowners and community members
4 lodges and camps
34 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
10 rangers and scouts

OLARRO
established 2009, 18,525 acres
153 landowners and community members
1 lodge or camp
80 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
22 rangers and scouts
www.olarrokenya.com

OLDERKESI
in formation 64,220 acres
850 landowners and community members

OLCHORRO OIROWUWA
established 1992, 15,993 acres
87 landowners and community members
4 lodges and camps
150 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
17 rangers and scouts

ENOKUSHU
established 2011, 5,928 acres
46 landowners and community members
2 lodges and camps
66 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
13 rangers and scouts
www.enonkushu.org

OLARE-MOTOROGI
established 2005, 36,556 acres
288 landowners and community members
5 lodges and camps
155 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
32 rangers and scouts
www.mmconservancy.com

OLKINYEI
established 2005, 18,641 acres
177 landowners and community members
1 lodge or camp
91 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
20 rangers and scouts
www.porini.com/sub=ol.kinyei-conservancy

OLABORO
established 2009, 18,525 acres
153 landowners and community members
1 lodge or camp
80 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
22 rangers and scouts
www.olarrokenya.com

OLARE-KIWIUNA
established 1989, 33,998 acres
180 landowners and community members
3 lodges and camps
115 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
18 rangers and scouts
www.olkwiunaconservancy.org

OLIRIONE
established 2011, 7,608 acres
4,500 landowners and community members
6 lodges and camps
60 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
15 rangers and scouts
www.olorioneconservancy.org

SIANA
in formation 28,652 acres (image not to scale)
3,500 landowners and community members
1 lodge or camp
61 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
16 rangers and scouts
www.sianaconservancy.org

OLKINYEI
established 2005, 18,641 acres
177 landowners and community members
1 lodge or camp
91 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
20 rangers and scouts
www.porini.com/sub=ol.kinyei-conservancy

NABOISHO
established 2010, 50,966 acres
554 landowners and community members
6 lodges and camps
142 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
33 rangers and scouts
www.maranaboisho.com

OLKINYEI
established 2005, 18,641 acres
177 landowners and community members
1 lodge or camp
91 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
20 rangers and scouts
www.porini.com/sub=ol.kinyei-conservancy

W FORUM
established 2005, 64,220 acres
1,000 landowners and community members
5 lodges and camps
200 jobs in hotel and conservancy management
50 rangers and scouts
www.wforum.org

THE GREATER MARA MAP

The greater Maasai Mara – is a continuous landscape approximately the size of 6,000km² that forms the northernmost part of the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem. It is generally defined by the area used by the annual wildebeest migration and includes the Maasai Mara Game Reserve (MMGR), neighboring private and community lands and the adjoining Loita Plains.

The Migration Route

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Who visits the Mara?

Home of the greatest wildlife spectacle on earth, the Maasai Mara draws in tourists from around the globe to see its vast wildebeest migration, fearless prides of lion and endless rolling plains of wild game. From nature enthusiasts to those putting a tick on their bucket list, Kenya attracted 270,000 tourists in 2011 with the highest numbers from the UK, USA, Italy, Germany and France, of which approximately 220,000 visited the Mara – 80%. However, by 2014 the tourist numbers had progressively plummeted to only 170,000. Why? Because the majority of tourists have a two-part holiday combining beach and bush safari and when the travel advisories warned against travel to the coast owing to security concerns, that meant a 37% decline in Kenya’s tourism, with only 140,000 visitors to the Mara in 2014.

Predominately, tourists visit the Mara from July to September, so there may be up to 8,000 tourists in the ecosystem on any one day during the migration season. With only 43 lodges/camps in all the Mara conservancies and 682 beds, one seldom sees other tourists on game drives. Strict codes of conduct are abided by, such that even in the busiest weeks, only a maximum of 4 vehicles may be at a wildlife viewing at any one time.

Walking safaris with bush breakfasts, fly-camping trips with dinners under the African stars, as well as night drives, are all experiences that the conservancies provide. 41% of lodges/camps are eco-rated, with 6 golds, 10 silvers and 2 bronze (www.ecotourismkenya.org), leaving a minimal footprint for the visitor who cares about both the existing and future quality of the wildlife experience.

As Gerard Beaton, Asilia Africa says, “We have exceptional wildlife inside the conservancies and we believe that this is a role model for Africa.”

We are pleased to write, that at time of print, the UK has just changed their travel advisory to the coast, removing their precautionary advice. So we can hope for tourist visitor numbers to improve once again for 2016 onwards, all other things staying equal.

“A good guide will plan the day, leaving early in the morning. He will move off a sighting when other vehicles arrive. He will encourage you to get away from the ‘Big Five’ mentality. Go and see the birds. Go and smell the flowers.”

Jackson Looseyia, the world-famous presenter of the BBC’s Big Cat Diary.
ON THE LIONESS TRACK

Nenkume is 7 years old and she is wearing a GPS collar. Learn how this technology can help her and the other lions of the Mara

The lioness strides the vast savannahs of the Maasai Mara. Her name is Nenkume and she’s at the adult age of seven and a half years old, a member of the Ol Kinyei pride. Her every movement, is captured on the collar around her neck, that gives scientists and conservation managers valuable insights into her life and the range of her whole pride.

The collar, is a specially designed Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite collar, that records and stores location data and when plotted against a map provides a good overview of the range and locality of Nenkume. It was attached in October 2013, weighs only 1.4kg (similar to a domestic dog wearing a collar), causes no harm or disturbance and will automatically drop off after two years, to be collected by a Mara Lion Project scientist. The information collected is vital for conservation efforts as it highlights the importance of specific areas for the lion prides, documents human-lion conflicts and records evidence related to deaths. The Ol Kinyei lioness’ collar reveals much. Nenkume has spent 50% of her time at a core range of only 25km² (even though her habitat is an area of 243 km²). Spending 89% of her time in Ol Kinyei and Naboisho Conservancies.

This clearly shows that she knows where is safe – the protected area of conservancies. Ol Kinyei conservancy accommodates this one permanent pride and its presence and stability is essential to the quality of the tourism experience and therefore the permanent employment of over 50 staff and land lease payments to 171 landowners and their families.

In the daytime Nenkume spends a lot of time resting at sites next to the rivers in her core range, hanging out at ‘luggars’ enjoying the cooler air. At night, her data shows that she sometimes moves into unprotected community land, where she could come into contact and conflict with local people. When she travels between Ol Kinyei and Naboisho she often crosses an area called Emurua Dikirr that has a number of human settlements, passing within 50 meters of the bomas….

Although contact with people is infrequent, it can be disastrous for either party. If lions are hungry or feel threatened, they can attack either people or livestock (cows, sheep, goats) and either party can end up maimed or dead. Consequently this data collection is critical in observing the movements of lions and how to protect both them and communities, so that each can tolerate the other. Projects are being undertaken across the greater Mara region to enable lions and people to coexist, examples of such projects are financial compensation and reward schemes, proofing Maasai ‘bomas’ so that lions or other carnivores can’t get inside the houses and villages and developing areas outside of conservancies for dual-use (wildlife and people living together).

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
niels@maralions.org
-82% decline in wildebeest migrating in the Mara’s community lands between 1977 and 2009.
WHAT IS IT?
East Africa’s annual migration is the largest and most species-diverse large mammal migration in the world, including 1.3 million wildebeest, 200 thousand zebra and hundreds of thousands of Thomson’s gazelle.
In the Mara, the migration spreads across private and community lands neighbouring the Reserve (the greater Maasai Mara ecosystem), following the rains, seeking good grass to eat.

WHY IS IT IN DANGER?
The Mara’s wildebeest migration is declining dramatically; between 1977 and 2009 the migration in the community lands reduced by 82% and the resident population by 66% owing to dispersal areas and migratory corridors becoming blocked, degraded and lost - caused by human population rise and related urbanisation, expanding agriculture, the distribution and numbers of livestock, land subdivision, poaching and fencing.
The number of cattle increased by a modest 8% but sheep and goats nearly doubled (increase of 79%) during the same period, especially during the past decade, thereby displacing wildlife. Further loss of the Mara’s wildlife and their habitats will jeopardise Kenya’s premier tourism destination with significant adverse repercussions on the local and national economies.

ACT NOW!
• To protect the wildebeest dispersal areas and ensure this great migration endures the test of time and human development.
• Support our fundraising appeal (on the back cover) to protect land under conservation and expand the reach of the conservancies to encompass the Loita plains, the Pardamat hills and the western escarpment.
• To enable local communities to trust and experience the benefits of conservation, creating a win-win for the Maasai, tourists and Kenya’s wildlife and biodiversity.
WHO ARE THE ILASHUMPAA?
The influence of tourism on social development

Across the greater Masai Mara you will find over 70 schools, 16 dispensaries (clinics) and multiple water projects - boreholes, wells and rainwater harvesting. But where do they come from and who pays for them?

When Dr. Crystal Courtney asked this question as part of her research studies, she got the answer ‘ilashumpa’, the white people in the Maasai language. On many occasions the local communities insisted that tourism and conservancies had nothing to do with all the social development in their village. Whereas in many cases, the truth is, without the conservancy or an associated Trust or tourism operator of the conservancy, the borehole, dormitory at the local school, medical supplies to the local clinic - simply wouldn’t exist.

Interestingly, children are more aware of the link between social development and the Mara conservancies than the older generations. Asked to draw pictures showing anything that they associated with the conservancies, they not only draw wildlife, camps and tourist vehicles but also social projects, particularly within their own school environment like dormitories, water supply, desks, chairs and books.

During these difficult times for Kenya’s tourism these additional benefits become increasingly important for the Maasai families in the greater Maasai Mara. In addition to schools’ and health initiatives, enterprise projects as those outlined in next pages bring in additional income for families and make a real difference.

Why is a tourist operator committed to the conservancy model? When it would be so much easier to have their camps on the border of the Maasai Mara Game Reserve like so many other operators do? An easy option where you do not have to pay monthly rent for the land around you, you do not have to liaise with hundreds of landowners and you can have direct access into the Reserve. Dr. Courtney contemplated the issue as an outsider and concluded that tourism partners within the conservancies have shown a genuine commitment to conserving the wildlife and land while sharing the benefits with their Maasai neighbours that is above and beyond the normal call of duty. So demonstrating a real long-term investment in the greater Mara region (with probably a short-term economic loss).
MEDICAL AND FAMILY CARE

The Kicheche & Cheli & Peacock Trusts, which are both charitable organisations of Mara conservancy tourism operators, have joined together these past three years to organize annual ‘medical camps’ that have provided free health care to over 1,600 patients, as well as training for local medical practitioners.

Why do you do this? “We strongly believe that healthcare is a basic human right”, says Nathalie Leen of Kicheche Trust. Donations made in the past include medicines, medical books, a maternity ward, a dental ward, a water pump, water tanks and the upgrading of the solar system for Aitong clinic.

In June 2015, the fourth annual medical camp was held, as a training event for clinical officers and nurses, selected from 10 health facilities in the Mara region. The clinicians were trained on Advanced Life Support for Child Birth, with examinations of competence. Collins Langat from Aitong Health Centre scored the highest market with an impressive 83%, followed by James Kombo and Duncan Nkoitoi, Clinical Officers at Ewaso Ngiro Health Centre both scoring 79%.

Congratulations to all 12 medical practitioners who will now provide their services to over 25,000 people.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Nathalie@Kicheche.com

SCHOOLS AND KIDS EDUCATION

Many camps in the Mara conservancies’ support the school nearest to them, Elephant Pepper Camp in Mara North conservancy is no exception supporting Ololomei Primary school located 45 minutes drive from camp. The school’s over 400 pupils shared cramped classroom conditions, with most of them sitting on the floor, until EPC provided desks and chairs.

Then thanks to a donation from Deepak Nagaraja and his family, each and every school child received a pair of shoes! But with hardly any textbooks, the children often shared one between 3-4 pupils, until recently 400 textbooks were donated, as well as bookshelves, exercise books, story books, stationery and sports kits, thanks also to the generous support of guests of EPC. Currently, the school is in great need of another classroom for the final year pupils who are sharing it with a younger year group. EPC hope in the next months to raise US$ 8,000 to build a simple but essential extra new classroom.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: communitytrust@chelipeacock.co.ke
Another organisation making a positive impact in the Maasai Mara, is African Impact, a community and conservation volunteer organisation which enables young volunteers from around the world to help wildlife researchers and scientists monitor wildlife in the Mara Naboisho conservancy, in collaboration with the Koyiaki Guiding School (KGS) that trains local Maasai to become fully qualified tourist guides. Volunteers with African Impact can find themselves doing a range of activities such as; conducting bi-weekly counts of wildlife, documenting big game sightings of endangered cats like lion, leopard and cheetah, uploading elephant sightings for ElephantVoices, interacting with the Maasai trainee guides and assisting in local Maasai schools – the latter causing a 70 per cent increase in participation by students in their school wildlife clubs - instilling a passion for wildlife in the next generation.

READ THE BLOGS OF THE EXCITING WORK OF WILDLIFE VOLUNTEERS www.africanimpact.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BUY LOCALLY CONTACT: admin@olaremotorogitrust.org

ENTERPRISE AND BEADWORK

When discussing life with the Maasai women and how they would like to see their lives in the future, the most common plea is a desire to find a way to sell their traditional Maasai beadwork. The OlareOrok-Motorogi Trust (OOMT) that exists because of the Olare-Motorogi conservancy, heard their plea and over the past two years have formed a collective of over 300 female Maasai beaders, with a beader from each local family from 12 communities bordering OlareMotorogi and Naboisho conservancies. All the beautiful handmade, traditional Maasai beading work, that the collective creates, is currently sold through three outlets: a Spanish shoe and handbag company (Pikolinos), local Mara shops and camps taking orders of coasters, jewellery and household decorations, and a small market at the Trust's HQ each week open to visitors.

So when you buy your curios and trinkets to take home with you, make sure it’s made locally in one of the Mara conservancies!

Volunteering in the Mara – African Impact

Volunteers playing with children at the Naboisho Primary School
credit: Joan Surber/African Impact
“The Maasai community should not lease their land to conservancies and at the same time keep large herds of cattle as it creates grazing pressure on the Reserve”.

Again and again, assertions about poor livestock grazing management and counter accusations on the cause of the high levels of illegal grazing within the Reserve are touted and tossed around across the Mara.

Despite the many modern-day developments within and across ‘Maasailand’, livestock are still the main source of income for many families living in the Mara. According to a 2010 study by Dr. Claire Bedalian, it can contribute up to 48% of household income and as well as being important economically, livestock are integral to the Maasai for social and cultural reasons – cattle is fundamental to the identity, status and beliefs of the Maasai.

The reality is, that the issue of cattle incursions in the Reserve dates back to a time long before the conservancies were established and similar problems exists in other parks and reserves in Kenya and not in the Mara alone.

“The Maasai Mara has always been a free-roaming space for wildlife, livestock and people.” Nkoitoi, Pardamat Conservation Area

The CEO of MMWCA, responds to the multiple accusations that the current problems of the cattle in the Reserve are caused by the Mara Conservancies.

The fact that there is no cattle grazing within the Mara Triangle, which is under separate management, indicates that the issue is less about the conservancies and more about stopping cattle entering the Reserve, the explosion of settlements and population across the ecosystem and particularly on the borders of the Reserve and the hosting tradition of the Maasai, allowing thousands of cattle to lie and wait for night-time grazing around the main trading centres like Talek.

The landowners, who were compelled to move their livestock from the newly formed conservancies of the past 5-10 years, generally were members of families that owned plots on a further 300,000 acres of land in the former ‘group ranches’ of the region. So they moved both their homesteads and livestock to other land that they at least partially owned or leased for new grazing areas.

The facts are, that currently the area set aside to protect wildlife in conservancies is only a small (albeit critical) percentage of the region, less than 20% of the total Mara ecosystem. So more than half the ecosystem (excluding the Reserve) is still available for grazing land and landowners.
Additionally, a number of the conservancies have a controlled grazing scheme, which enables rotational grazing by the landowners of a conservancy for their cattle. In 2014 alone, this allowed tens of thousands of cattle to graze in the conservancies, thereby removing the herds from the Reserve. Importantly, MMWCA is currently facilitating a process to encourage the landowners to destock and reduce the number of cattle they own, by promotion of quality breeding, fattening of cattle on the conservancies and then immediate sale to gain best market price.

And interestingly, for communities that border conservancies, legal and agreed grazing access has been most commonly cited as the ‘best’ benefit of conservancies.

Most importantly, whatever is causing the cattle in the Reserve, much stronger measures need to be put in place, some of which are outlined in the box below, to stop the incursions, both during the day and night. This will require collaboration between the MMGR management, the Mara conservancies and the residents neighbouring the Reserve to be successful and ultimately require a reduction in the numbers of cattle, sheep and goats, (most likely in return for improved quality and price,) as well as greater management of the unprotected areas in the Mara, neighbouring the Reserve and the Mara conservancies.

### How to reduce the number of cattle across the greater Mara ecosystem

- Better controls and higher penalties imposed by the MMGR management team and Narok County Government, for cattle grazing in the Reserve.
- Stopping the Maasai tradition of hosting families with cattle from other regions on their land.
- Improved allocation of the Maasai Mara Community Support Fund to the communities living in the greater Mara region, stated to be 25% of the total revenue collection from the Reserve.
- Management and reduction of human activity along the Reserve boundary at the towns of Talek, Mararianta, Sekenani and Oloolaimutia, including town planning and settlement management.
- Alternative investments for the Maasai, away from livestock into other options like bank savings’ accounts.
- Large-scale investment and management of the Maasai livestock, through a joint business venture across the ecosystem; incorporating grazing rangeland management, improved breeds, fattened cattle and commercial sales achieving best market price.

*Maasai mama milking her cow*

credit: Stock photo ©Britta Kasholm-Tengve
The Obel Family Foundation of Denmark investing in the Masai Mara Region

Since the start of the Bright Green Project in 2010 the Obel Family Foundation has been excited to support the important efforts to improve both education and nature preservation in the Mara North Conservancy (MNC). From abroad we have followed the ongoing progress in the project over the years and are happy to see how successful the Bright Green Project has been to date.

The Obel Family Foundation is a private Danish foundation based in Copenhagen primarily for supporting Danish projects. The donations mainly fund three areas: science, culture and social responsibility in Denmark. However up to 10% of the Foundation’s donations can be given to international projects in the area of social responsibility which is the reason why we supported the Bright Green Project for their schools and local community program in MNC from 2011-2014.

The fact that the Bright Green Project over the years expanded its area of engagement to livestock production and livelihoods, governance & training and job creation for the Mara North Conservancy Maasai community we further applaud.

In 2013 the Obel Family Foundation tightened its international strategy and focused on supporting sexual minorities and the mentally ill, which potentially could have meant the end of our support to the Mara Conservancies. However because of our great interest in the Maasai Mara and the progress being made, the board decided to go outside of our strategy and honor yet another application in April 2015 with a renewed donation over the next three years to the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA) to support the following initiatives:

**Improving Child Education**
- Tailored interventions to improve exam results in key Mara schools, so over time they compare well with County performance
- Specific interventions to lengthen girl attendance at school, so drop out rate is consistently reduced and formal education completed
- Passionate and active students in wildlife conservation in their school and villages

**Community Social Enterprises** investment in expanding the existing initiative – the Aitong Recycling Centre - to develop a self-sustaining social business model incorporating the waste from multiple Mara centres.

We are keen to follow the progress of the projects over the next years and stay very involved in the Mara conservancies including encouraging other donors to support the important work of MMWCA.

Yours Sincerely,

Sune Gylling Åsbelø
Head of Communication
The Obel Family Foundation of Denmark
The future of Africa’s greatest migration and the Maasai Mara ecosystem that supports it, is at threat. Owing to the rapid increase of human population and development neighbouring the Reserve. During the past 30 years the migration in the community lands reduced by 82%. In the past five years, the rate of decline has escalated – we could lose this migration in less than five years.

We are giving you the opportunity to stop this decline. A donation of US$ 100, US$ 1,000 or US$ 5,000 will make all the difference. It will fund essential equipment, such as patrol vehicles, digital radios, secure vital habitat by registering leases for conservation and increase much-needed ranger bases and boots on the ground.

Help protect the world’s largest mammal migration on earth today, Donate generously to the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association www.maraconservancies.org