



Action for Cheetahs in Kenya

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20 December 2024

Dear Friends:

I would like to tell you “thank-you” for your continued support in 2024. This has been an exciting year of cheetah conservation with many changes in our team.. ACK had a lot of accomplishments which are highlighted in the attached pages. It is because of your support that we have been able to make accomplishments throughout 2024.

Have a blessed and safe Holiday season!!

Yours sincerely,

Mary Wykstra
Executive Director,
Action for Cheetahs in Kenya



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Action for Cheetahs 2024 Summary



WELCOME

ACK welcomed several new and returning employees to the family in 2024:

- (Top Left) Dr Mary Burak joins Noreen Mutoro as a technical and academic program consultants
- (Top Right) Jagnoor Singh began working as the ACK Administrative Consultant

Bottom left to right:

- Edward Malina – Technical IT Consultant
- Dasil Levela – Senior Research Scientist
- Oludina Evans – Canine Programme Consultant
- Aldina Lekuye – Education and Outreach Coordinator

JANUARY 2024

- Each year, ACK Field Officers complete over 700 patrols and 160 transects equalling to about 10,000 km walked annually. Our Canine team covers an additional 12,000km when training and conducting scat searches. Together we monitor the status and health of cheetahs for long term trend analysis.
- Canine searches were conducted in Machakos County but were cut short due to heavy rains – the dogs performed well on test samples but no cheetahs were in the area. Thus no wild stats were found.
- Mary Wykstra, ACK Director attended the first Global Cheetah Summit held in Ethiopia. The group created a declaration of actions to work together to save the remaining cheetahs throughout their range via creation of committees to share knowledge, technical skills and develop financial income to support our efforts

February 2024

- The annual *Ginger's Hope* vaccination and sterilization campaign included rabies and distemper vaccinations (1,512 dogs and cats), sterilization (60 dogs and cats) and sampling (111 dogs). Continued partnership with TNR trust, International Livestock Research Institute, Samburu County, Meibae Community Conservancy and volunteer veterinarians.
- Camera traps set at a playtree in Lpus area found the coalition of 2 males looking healthy
- ZCK Hired Benard Letoive as Education and Outreach Coordinator

March 2024

- Sadly, we lost two sub-adult cubs to vehicle collisions – offspring of a popular mother from the Samburu National Reserve. Staff worked with rangers and other partners to monitor mom and two remaining cubs and keep them safe.
- Additional accident of police hitting a giraffe brought much awareness to the plight of wildlife and the need for more focus on linear Development. Formation of the Green Technical Committee with special interest in highway hot spots replaced the previous Highway Mortality Monitoring team coordinated by Ewaso Lions.
- Four adult lions moved into the conservancy where we monitored in collaboration with Ewaso Lions until they moved into a safer area.
- Staff visited areas with Benard to introduce him to schools and community groups.
- Staff were issued with new phones and training on Cyber Tracker for online data collection

April 2024


- The rains blessed us for the second season in a row bringing flooding and a beautiful green landscape at the same time!
- Conflict Mitigation Toolbox presented to the Laikipia-Isiolo-Samburu (LIS) Carnivore Working Group – a group of conservationists and researchers created specifically to unite carnivore project research and mitigation efforts in the region.
- Field staff help community in conflict mitigation by finding lost livestock and assisting in bringing newborns home from the field
- We initiated camp renovations which will upgrade the facility – new restrooms and showers were completed.

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May 2024



- Mary attended and presented at the Zoos and Aquariums Committing to Conservation Conference with Holly Koppfleberger and former student Emily in Salt Lake. COOL Crafts were featured as a centerpiece to highlight community conservation initiatives through conservation commerce.
- ACK staff hosted Colorado State University students for a study abroad programme. Mary and Research Assistant, Timothy Maiyo co-hosted the animal behaviour safari while the rest of the team spent time with the students on their 3 day visit to the ACK Camp to teach them about field work and canine searches.
- Mary was appointed as a representative on the Kenya Wildlife Service **Carnivore Task Force** – an advisory team for carnivore management.
- Several appointments were made for ACK Consultants:
 - Noreen Mutoro (PhD Candidate) and Dr Mary Burak were appointed as **Program Consultants** to assist with project coordination and academic advice.
 - Edward Maina was appointed as an **IT Consultant** to assist with technology related to research and communications
 - Jagnoor Singh was appointed as **Administrative Assistant**

June 2024




- Timothy Maiyo, Chris Lentaam and Mary Wykstra visited **Maleko Conservancy** in the far northern part of Samburu County for a reconnaissance for a national survey site.
- Timothy assisted in co-leading the second **CSU study abroad** group. Again, the field team also taught the students about the methods used in field surveys, conflict mitigation and detection dog searches.
- Basil Lewela joined the ACK team as Senior Research Scientist.

July 2024



- Chris Lentaam and Mary Wykstra attended the second LIS Carnivore Group meeting to develop objectives that link research, outreach and conflict mitigation activities in the region
- Dominic Lokitanya was accepted to join the canine team as an intern – he will shifted from Samburu field officer to full time with the canine team after completing transects in August.
- Rachel Bean joined the canine team for a 2-week training on field medical care addressing issues from heat stroke and snake bites to trauma and breaks. Each staff member was issued with a certificate and updated medical kits.
- Intern Edwin Saiboko accompanied field officers on patrols and transects and led the team in interviews regarding knowledge of rabies, distemper and pet sterilizations to help develop awareness campaigns. He also learned about data entry before returning to his program at Masia Mara University.

August 2024



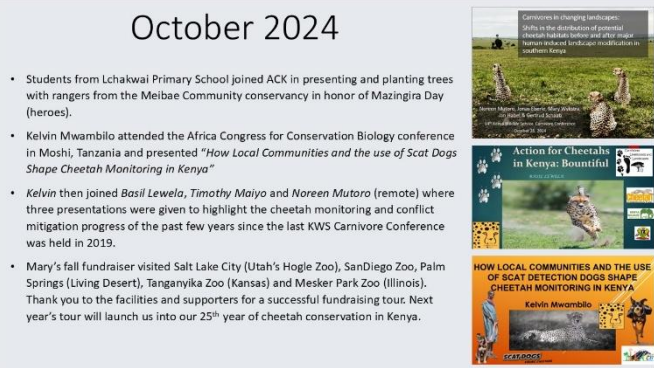
- Aldina Lekuye replaced Benard as the **Education and Outreach Coordinator**.
- The Takataka project has been embraced by the **Naramat Self-help Group** from the Ngutuk Elmuget community. ACK assisted them with garbage collection equipment to clean up the market.
- Two young male lions attacked a young mother cheetah in Samburu National Reserve killing one of her 3-month old cubs. This mother is the first litter daughter of the female who recently lost two cubs along the highway.
- Staff celebrated World Ranger Day thanking the rangers who assist and support our work.

September 2024



- Mary travelled to the US for the annual fundraising tour starting in August in Michigan, Virginia, Washington DC and Cleveland. In September presentations included Indiana and Kansas and attending the AZA conference in Calgary and the AAZK conference in Nebraska.
- Canine consultant **Leopold Slatta-Bachmeyer** completed "A Dog's Life in Samburu" co authored by Mary Wykstra and Noreen Mutoro and illustrated by Joshat Kiminwa – available soon for online purchase
- Edward Maina, Basil Lewela, Kelvin Mwambilo and Timothy Maiyo travelled to Laikipia to visit with ologi technical team to learn about implementation of a data coordination program called Earth Ranger.
- Internet is now installed as the next phase of improvements at ACK's Meibae field camp for improved communication and implementation of paperless data collection.

October 2024



- Students from Lchakwai Primary School joined ACK in presenting and planting trees with rangers from the Meibae Community conservancy in honor of Mazingira Day (heroes).
- Kelvin Mwambilo attended the Africa Congress for Conservation Biology conference in Moshi, Tanzania and presented "How Local Communities and the use of Scat Dogs Shape Cheetah Monitoring in Kenya"
- Kelvin then joined Basil Lewela, Timothy Maiyo and Noreen Mutoro (remote) where three presentations were given to highlight the cheetah monitoring and conflict mitigation progress of the past few years since the last KWS Carnivore Conference was held in 2019.
- Mary's fall fundraiser visited Salt Lake City (Utah's Hogle Zoo), San Diego Zoo, Palm Springs (Living Desert), Tanganyika Zoo (Kansas) and Mesker Park Zoo (Illinois). Thank you to the facilities and supporters for a successful fundraising tour. Next year's tour will launch us into our 25th year of cheetah conservation in Kenya.

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November 2024

- Our manuscript *Detection Dogs Working in Hot Climates: The Influence on Thermoregulation and Fecal Consistency* was accepted for publication in the journal *Animals*. The publication focuses on the well-being of dogs working in high temperatures.
- US volunteer Jessica Watters led the ACK Adventure Safari group on a great tour that included Lake Naivasha, Lake Nakuru, Ol Pejeta, the Masai Mara and Samburu National Reserve with 3 nights working with the ACK team and the Ngutuk elumget community to build an eco-bench from recycled plastic.
- Along with the rains, our staff have had some great wildlife sightings. Times of plenty provide increased opportunities for people and wildlife co-existence.
- The staff registered the teams for the International Cheetah Day Football Tournament and prepared the coaches, referees and the teams for the upcoming games being held at the Lpus Primary School.



December 2024

- The month started with the celebration of speed and elegance in our 4th annual Cheetah Day Football Tournament held in Meibae. Congratulations to the Super Eagles who took home the trophy for the 3rd consecutive year. Spectators enjoyed the pepeta and goal kick challenges and wildlife trivia. Everyone went home a winner!
- The month ends with visitors from Germany who have contributed greatly to ACK over the past 15 years. Gertrud Schaab is a professor from Karlsruhe University of Applied sciences. She has contributed her technical knowledge in GIS work to many of our team, including being an advisor on Noreen Mutoro's PhD. Maïke Bieber has volunteered with ACK since 2009, assisting with event planning, data entry and field work. Both have chosen to spend the Holidays working with our team on Story Mapping in Samburu.



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