

ACTION FOR CHEETAHS IN KENYA

NEWSLETTER



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

BY MARY WYKSTRA



It is so exciting to be a part of the amazing growth of Action for Cheetahs in Kenya. In the past year, we have shifted our data collection and analysis to digital formats. Our outreach has grown exponentially with our adaptations of technology. Many of our team have joined professional groups where meetings can be attended and presentations can be given remotely. Our National Survey team utilizes tracking devices and health monitors that quickly show us the effectiveness of the search and the health status of the dogs. The teams conduct more frequent meetings and weekly updates. These technologies save time and enable us to focus on our tasks while maintaining effective and efficient communications between departments. With all of the benefits, technology also has challenges and learning curves as well. Members of the ACK staff undergo external and internal training to ensure we are all capable of using the equipment and technology that we have implemented. We recently installed solar battery chargers for field staff working at home, and we carry a solar system in the field during our national survey. ACK's IT manager, Edward Maina, has attended several seminars in the past 6 months to help integrate and manage these technologies into our daily work..

Mary Wykstra
Founder and Director

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Research

FIELDWORK SAMBURU UPDATE APRIL- JUNE 2026

A total of 280 patrols were completed this quarter. Patrols documented 34 cheetah occurrences, including 17 community reports, 16 track observations, and one scat sample. Most track observations occurred in the Lbaa Ngiro–Lantare area, with additional activity recorded in Mpuyai and Nolkono. The field officers responded to 10 human–wildlife conflict incidents, primarily involving shoats (sheep and goats), and verified two cases of cheetah–livestock predation. Using ACK’s Conflict Mitigation Toolkit, field officers engage livestock owners directly, promote practical conflict prevention measures, discourage retaliatory killings, and reinforce the importance of reporting conflict incidents promptly to the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS).

Edwin Soibuko (ACK Intern) returned to assist ACK field officers in follow-up deterrent light evaluations and sensitization for the Ginger’s Hope vaccination campaign. Together with the field staff, he conducted household interviews to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of predator-deterrent lights installed between 2015 and 2019. To learn more about the deterrent light programme, visit [\(link to website\)](#). The team engaged livestock owners directly to document changes in predator activity, livestock losses, and the performance and reliability of the deterrent lights. The interviews identified maintenance challenges and captured community perceptions of the technology



Photo: Cheetah Track



Photo: Cheetah Track



Photo: Lion Track



CANINE DEMONSTRATIONS



Photo: Dog handler Kelvin Mwambilo doing a dog demo in Athi Kapiti

During the Athi-Kapiti National Survey pilot and the Colorado State University visit, the Canine Team took the opportunity to demonstrate the power of the dog's nose.

Each demonstration raises awareness of the power of scat detection dogs in predator surveys. During a demonstration, the team explains the training and the purpose of the dogs in locating cheetah scat as well as the care of dogs.

We use this opportunity to share the importance of positive reinforcement training and proper nutrition and veterinary care, including vaccinations.

National Cheetah Survey & Canine Team Update

APRIL - JUNE 2026

After March rain delays, the pilot for the National Cheetah Survey was initiated again in May. Interviews with 13 landowners, ranch managers, and security rangers across the Athi-Kapiti Wildlife Conservancies documented cheetah presence, recent sightings, and potential threats. Every property interviewed reported cheetah activity within the past decade, and the survey estimated that 15–20 cheetahs currently use the landscape.

ACK complemented these interviews with ground verification surveys and community consultations to confirm current sightings, evaluate habitat characteristics influencing cheetah movements, and document local perspectives on predators, prey availability, and human–wildlife conflict. The findings strengthened ACK's understanding of cheetah distribution and informed conservation priorities across the Athi-Kapiti ecosystem. 33 searches were conducted on 7 ranches for a sample adequate for achieving genetics of at least 50% of the area's cheetah range. 7 search locations were successful in finding 15 scats from 4 different ranches.



Photo: Research Scientist; Timothy Maiyo collecting scat

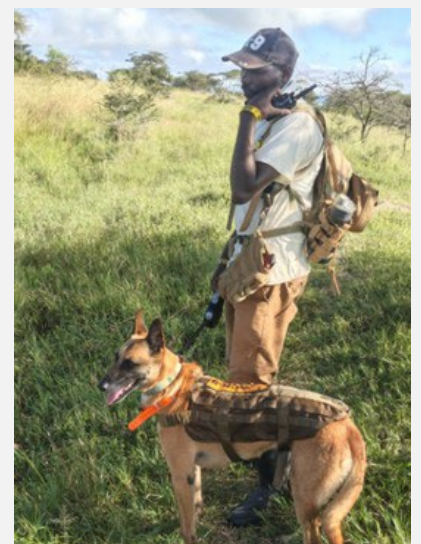


Photo: K9 handler Dominic Loltanya with Persie on a search.



Education and Outreach

FIELD PARTNERSHIP

APRIL 2026

ACK Education and Outreach Coordinator, Aldina Lekuye, and Senior Research Scientist, Basil Lewala, attended the launch of the Ewaso Lions children's camp in Samburu National Reserve. The event provided an opportunity to exchange ideas with conservation educators, explore innovative and interactive teaching approaches, and establish partnerships with organizations committed to youth environmental education, strengthening ACK's conservation education program with new approaches to enhance future outreach activities.

Photo: Ewaso Lions children in their new classrooms



GINGER'S HOPE

JUNE 2026

In preparation for the upcoming Ginger's Hope campaign - rabies and distemper vaccinations, and sterilization -, Sokomoto Images produced pre-sensitization videos that introduced key campaign messages in a clear, culturally relevant, and engaging format:

(https://youtu.be/YF9_4GkgiCQ,
<https://youtu.be/1VQsKC7XM1E>,
https://youtu.be/TuuvGoPQV_s).

The team worked closely with community members throughout production to ensure the videos reflected local experiences and priorities while encouraging participation in the campaign. The completed videos now serve as a core communication resource, delivering consistent messaging and strengthening community engagement across the campaign area. Thank you to the Foundation for International Aid for Animals (FIAA) for supporting this endeavour and to our team, Edward Maina, Aldina Lekuye and Chris Lentaam, for coordination and translation during the making of the videos.



Photo: Top - Teeku Patel shooting a video.
Bottom - Clara (assistant videographer) showing footage to participants



COLORADO STATE - STUDY ABROAD

MAY 20 THROUGH JUNE 1, 2026

ACK hosted students from Colorado State University for the 5th immersive conservation learning program. The students visited the Giraffe Centre, Lake Naivasha, Lake Nakuru, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, and Mpala before joining ACK field officers in Meibae for a hands-on wildlife monitoring experience. The program concluded with a cultural evening that celebrated knowledge exchange between students and local communities.

Photo: Field officers taking the CSU students through a monitoring exercise



SPORTS INSPIRE CONSERVATION ACTION MAY 2026

Aldina Lekuye, Education Coordinator at Action for Cheetahs in Kenya (ACK), presented the organization's Sports and Environmental Education Outreach Program during the Northern Kenya Educators Working Group meeting. She detailed how ACK uses football to connect with schools and local communities.

For instance, International Cheetah Day celebrations incorporate conservation messages through football tournaments, Eco-Village exhibitions, spectator challenges, and trivia; providing interactive learning opportunities that encourage environmental responsibility and wildlife coexistence.

A key driver of this initiative is ACK's collaboration with Alive and Kicking, which supplies custom conservation-branded footballs. By blending sport with targeted messaging, the program makes environmental themes accessible to diverse audiences. Ultimately, the presentation demonstrated how sport-based outreach complements traditional education by creating memorable, inclusive experiences, successfully sparking educators' interest in strengthening community conservation partnerships across northern Kenya.

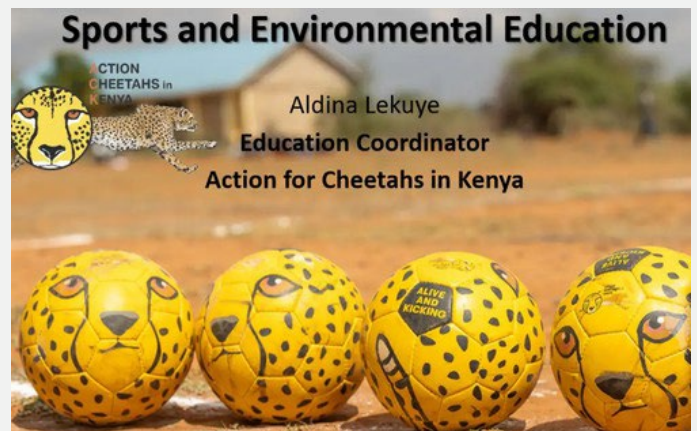


Photo: Aldina's presentation highlightings



Staff Updates

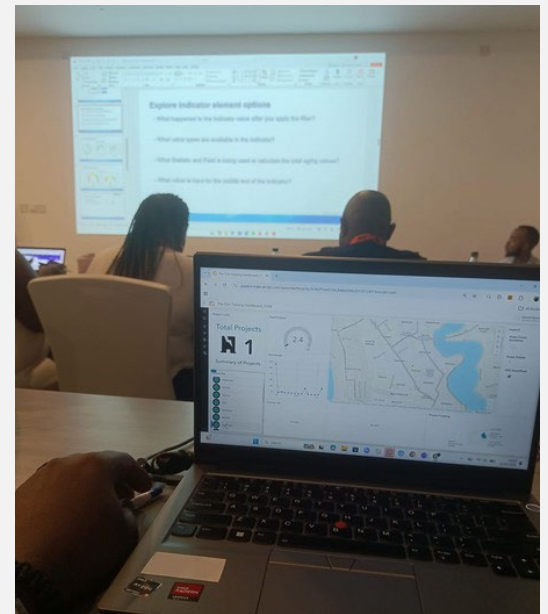
ESRI USER CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

MAY 2026

This quarter marked significant progress in staff development and technological innovation. Edward (Technical & Operations Manager) attended the 15th Esri User Conference from May 11–16, where he explored advances in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), artificial intelligence, and mobile field data collection. The conference showcased tools including ArcGIS Dashboards, ArcGIS GeoAI, and ArcGIS Survey123 that strengthen conservation monitoring through automated workflows, predictive spatial analysis, and standardized field data collection. Edward returned with practical knowledge that enhances ACK's capacity in human–wildlife conflict reporting, wildlife movement analysis, habitat mapping, and conservation data management, reinforcing evidence-based decision-making across the organization.



Photo: Edward (Technology & Operations Manager) attending ESRI's 15th East African User Conference.





Special thanks to our long-term partners - these partners have multi-year pledged support

- Cheetah Conservation Fund (25 years)
- Binder Park Zoo (25 years)
- Utah's Hogle Zoo (25 years)
- Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and Zoological Society (25 years)
- American Association of Zoo Keepers – Bowling for Rhinos (12years)
- Fresno Chaffee Zoo (12 years)
- Virginia Zoo (10 years)
- Foundation for International Aid to Animals (5 years)
- San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (3 years)
- Naturshutzhunde (2years)





Support our work to protect cheetahs and their habitats —
make a donation today through our website at
WWW.ACTIONFORCHEETAHS.ORG/DONATE

ACK accepts donations through Venmo!

@CALL- ACTION4CHEETAH



ACK Mission

ACK aims to promote the conservation of cheetahs in Kenya through research, awareness and community participation. ACK works closely with local wildlife authorities and land holders to develop policies and programmes which support wildlife conservation and human livelihoods for the long term development of sustainable human and wildlife zones.

ACK is a non-profit project working in affiliation with: Cheetah Conservation Fund, Kenya Wildlife Service, and the University of Nairobi.

P.O. Box 1611-00606, Sarit Centre, Nairobi 00606, Kenya
actionforcheetahs.org