

FOUNDATION  
GREAT PLAINS

CONSERVING AND RESTORING RURAL HABITATS



# FROM THE FIELD

## LATEST IMPACT UPDATES FROM OUR GREAT PLAINS INITIATIVES

As you will read here today, our work is almost evenly divided between conservation and community projects because we fundamentally believe that this is the partnership that works and will be vital going forward into the future. To have healthy communities in healthy environments.

Everything we do is strategic and according to a well laid out plan; to enhance wildlife habitat and numbers to protect them, to lift up communities and encourage the youth to get involved in nature. It's a simple philosophy with a range of work we can do with these boundaries, but sticking to what we know best and replicating it and scaling it has worked for the best impact for our budget.

I'm pleased with the Foundation, its work, our people, but most of all the ideas that flow in and our agility in being able to act swiftly.

Your support allows us to do that, so, many thanks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dereck Joubert".

Dereck Joubert,  
Chairman of Great Plains Foundation

## 2024 Q3 IMPACT REPORT | JULY – SEPTEMBER 2024

The Great Plains Foundation's work in uplifting rural communities and conserving 1.1 million acres of natural habitats continues. Our dedicated wildlife rangers across Botswana and Zimbabwe continue to improve their biodiversity monitoring methods from vegetation data to elephant movement patterns, while seeing significant progress in using artificial intelligence for monitoring efficiency. The Female Rangers have been focussing on their fitness and teamwork this quarter, while also engaging with community groups with conservation messages. The support of education across Kenya, Botswana and Zimbabwe has expanded, with the first Zimbabwe kids camp being held, and the school food program reaching 5.5 million meals donated in Kenya. And our Big Cats Initiative and Project Ranger grantees are moving the needle in conservation initiatives across the world from Tanzania to Brazil.

# CONSERVATION

Biodiversity • Healthy Ecosystems • Endangered Species






## FEMALE RANGERS

*Training and hiring Female Wildlife Rangers from local communities*

The female rangers across Botswana and Zimbabwe have had a successful quarter with time spent in the field, training and engaging with the community. One of our female rangers was selected to enrol on the Braveheart Leadership Course at the South African Wildlife College. The course hosted 13 students from across Africa in leadership, conservation ethics, law enforcement, community engagement, technology, communication and combatting corruption. Agonneone Botshelo, fondly known as 'One', was one of only two female rangers on the course. She was not alone in representing Botswana, with Great Plains Foundation Ranger and Team Coordinator, Onkgopotse Maboga joining her. Despite the course being challenging, 'One' came away with the 'Best Student in Theory' award.



Drawing enthusiasm from the Botswana Olympic gold medallist Letsile Tebogo, our ladies have been working hard in their fitness program and look forward to taking part in their first half marathon next quarter. On the 21st of September, our female rangers ran in solidarity with rangers around the world for the Wildlife Ranger Challenge. Our female rangers also took part in the Great Plains Foundation community sports tournament 'Conservation Goals' in Botswana where they engaged 200 youth in conservation discussions. They also took part in a kids conservation education camp in Zimbabwe engaging with more than 60 school children from their communities on the importance of conservation.

 **6 NEW FEMALE RANGERS**  
**23 FEMALE RANGERS**   
**TRAINED IN TOTAL**   
**416 HOURS AND 2,769KM PATROLLED**

# BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

*Innovating biodiversity monitoring and protection in Kenya, Botswana and Zimbabwe*

Last quarter you will have read about the aerial survey the team conducted in Botswana, using mounted cameras on the aircraft to take aerial images for analysis. The aerial survey was coordinated not only to provide a baseline index for biodiversity monitoring in the ecosystem but also to contribute to ongoing AI based data processing, providing more images for a range of animals across different habitats. The images contribute to the AI machine learning of, for example, a vulture nest or an elephant. Additionally, the survey provided an incredible platform to train our team to conduct and process these surveys.

This quarter the team, working with a survey lab in Tanzania, spent time tagging the images for machine learning to be able to identify and sort through the aerial survey images and identify animals going forward. During the next quarter, the team will be duplicating the aerial surveys in Botswana to capture dry season data. Next year we hope to be able to take the setup over to our teams in Zimbabwe, as well as set up our own lab to be able to process the images and results of these surveys.



**“We were thrilled to capture image of numerous sleeping elephants, not only because it is an unusual sight but also because it meant that these animals were unperturbed by the plane’s presence. Other sightings such as sitatunga, sleeping lions and wild dogs entertained us, while the incredible clarity of images opened up another realm of opportunity with the identification of bird species, something we were not expecting to be able to do with these images. Currently, we are collecting additional images of perched vultures, vulture nests and ground hornbills to be able to train the AI software to identify these ‘objects’ in the aerial survey imagery.”**

Robyn Hartley, Monitoring and Research

**📍🕒 4,154KM & 624 HOURS ON PATROL**  
**27,000** ✨📷  
**AERIAL SURVEY IMAGES PROCESSED**

# SAPI RESERVE RESTORATION

*Conservation of the 128,000-hectare Sapi Private Reserve in Zimbabwe*

The Sapi Reserve encompasses 128,000-acres of highly diverse, delicate and at times threatened habitats and animal species. The Great Plains Foundation team require real-time monitoring of wildlife and habitats to make informed decisions. Using Earth Ranger, a conservation technology platform that is capable of collecting, integrating and displaying historical and live data, combining it with field reports to provide a unified view of collared animals, rangers, enforcement assets, and infrastructure, our team increases their capacity day by day. Two of our rangers, including one female ranger, attended an Earth Ranger workshop held in Lusaka, Zambia in September and returned with skills and knowledge to share with the team.



The Sapi team were pleased to host an ichthyology research team as part of their Zambezi River expedition. The team collected extensive data on eDNA, river macroinvertebrates, water quality, and DNA samples from fish. They also gathered information on human activities along the Zambezi River and conducted a hippo count. The entire team was shown the process of extracting DNA samples from fish, as well as processing sampling for eDNA testing, an incredible tool for conservation efforts. Two of our female rangers joined the team on a section of the river expedition and learnt about data collection processes and the team's day-to-day activity.

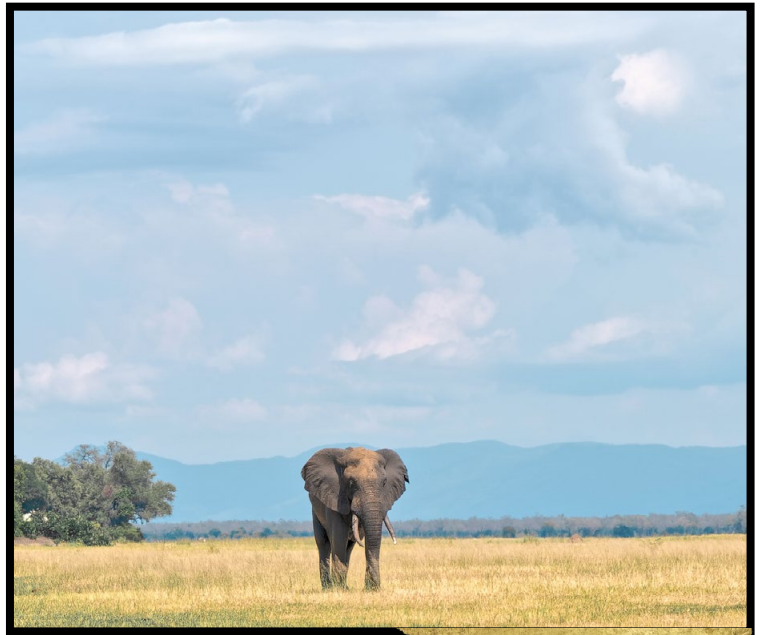
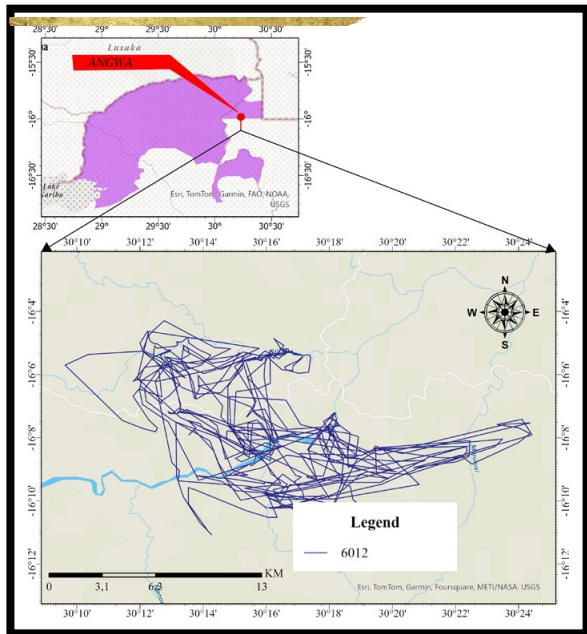
**815 HOURS**  
**2,916KM PATROLLED**



# PROJECT REWILD

## *Translocations of wildlife and post-translocation monitoring*

In 2022, Great Plains translocated 101 elephants into the Sapi Reserve in the Zambezi Valley, Zimbabwe. Over the last quarter the focus has been monitoring the collared elephants, documenting their physical condition, overall well-being, social behaviours and movements. The collared herds (both resident and translocated) have been intensively monitored through VHF tracking and modern platforms, such as Earth Ranger.



From the data, we can see herds frequently ranging from the Mana Pools National Park area and across the Zambezi River into the Lower Zambezi National Park, in Zambia. One herd who moved over to the Zambian side was recently seen by our collaborators Conservation Lower Zambezi (CLZ) who reported the herd had a new calf with them. The observations highlight the dynamic nature of elephant behaviour and emphasize the importance of monitoring efforts across political boundaries.

Initial movement analysis between the translocated and resident herds show significantly higher daily movement in the translocated herds. It is only now after two years where we can see translocated herds appear to be exhibiting movement patterns tending towards an established foraging regime.

**“The management of translocated herds needs to be planned for the long term, with intensive monitoring for a minimum of two years, only then do we see that they begin to behave more like resident herds.”**

Dr Sven Bourquin  
 – Wildlife Projects Coordinator

**565KM PATROLLED.**   
**17 ELEPHANT HERDS MONITORED**

The text is in large, bold, blue font. To the right of '565KM PATROLLED.' are three blue boot icons. Below this, '17 ELEPHANT HERDS MONITORED' is written in a very large, bold, blue font. To the left of the '17' is a blue silhouette of an elephant herd consisting of an adult, a smaller adult, and a calf.

# CONSERVATION ROOTS

*Planting indigenous trees for ecosystem restoration and carbon sequestration*

The ongoing planting of indigenous tree species continues, with 790 trees planted this quarter. The team planted a variety of indigenous trees from Ficus Sycamorus, Croton Megalocupas, Acacia Kirkii, Olea Africana and the threatened Warburgia Ugandensis. The planting of indigenous species aims to strengthen river banks, reduce soil erosion and ultimately improve the resilience of the landscape to climate change.



While planting in ecosystems is important, it is equally important to partner closely with communities to host workshops on the value of trees and educate and inspire young kids in schools. Out of the 790 trees planted, 112 were donated to communities. Paul, head of Conservation Roots, visited schools in the Maasai Mara giving lessons in the importance of planting and protecting trees for today but also for the future. 14 trees were also donated to women of the Naboisho Womens Group, a women empowerment group in the Maasai Mara.

**“The donation and planting of trees in the community will bring the ecosystem back where the land is bare. This also encourages the local communities on the importance of tree planting in their surroundings and covering the bare ground.”**

Felix, Maasai Mara community liaison.

**790**    
**INDIGENOUS TREES PLANTED**  
**37,643** **TREES PLANTED**  
**IN TOTAL** 

# COMMUNITY

Education • Empowerment • Welfare



## CONSERVATION GOALS

*Engaging youth in conservation through sport*

The annual sports for conservation tournament 'Conservation Goals' was held this quarter. 200 sporting enthusiasts from the five Okavango Community Trust villages in Botswana came together to take part in netball and football tournaments. The mission of Conservation Goals is to engage the youth in conversations around wildlife conservation, life skills and confidence.



The tournament was preceded by training sessions for the players covering these topics. The tournament itself welcomed over 1,000 spectators from the community to cheer on their village and listen to inspiring speeches from our Great Plains wildlife rangers. The winners of the netball and football tournaments received cash prizes as well as a donation from Great Plains towards the primary school in their village, making the winning teams heroes in their villages.





# 200 YOUTHS ENGAGED IN SPORT, LIFE SKILLS & CONSERVATION

# NABOISHO WOMENS GROUP

*Sponsoring a women-led business in the Maasai Mara to support education and healthcare*

The Naboisho Womens Group have had an exciting quarter. Great Plains Foundation is a long-term sponsor of the group, which brings in supplemental household income for the 105 women in the group via crafts such as beadwork. This quarter the ladies welcomed a leather specialist who will allow them to expand the range of products. The group also welcomed their first guests to a brand-new visitor's pavilion. One of the challenges the ladies raised was the need to grow their market and customer base. As the centre is in a great location in the Maasai Mara, the Great Plains Foundation sponsored the build of a 'guest welcome' area inviting guests from all safari camps in the region to visit, bead with the ladies and learn about the Maasai way of life. The ladies were excited to welcome their first guests to the new shaded area at the centre.



 **105**  **LADIES SPONSORED**  
**100** **SCHOOL FEES PAID FOR**  
**450**  **KIDS BENEFIT INDIRECTLY**



# SOLAR MAMAS

*Empowering women using renewable energy in Botswana*

The Solar Mamas have been busy this quarter with household solar installations, business showcases and training. The ladies installed another 200 systems in their communities, bringing safe power and light to 200 more homes. Since starting the program, the Solar Mamas have seen a significant impact in their lives, managing to build houses, send their kids to schools, start other small businesses and improve their families' economic prospects. In September, a training workshop was held with the Solar Mamas on improving installation techniques and skills in how to fix issues using wiring and soldering.



**200** MORE FAMILIES WITH SAFE,  
SUSTAINABLE POWER

 **800** SYSTEMS INSTALLED  
IN TOTAL

# SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM

*Donating nutritious meals to boost attendance and progress in school*

The school food program continues across Kenya with just over 630,000 nutritious meals reaching students across 54 schools. The total number of meals donated has now reached 5.5 million since the program started. With upcoming exams in schools in Kenya, this term was an important one for the students. With nutritious meals supporting attention in class, focus and well-being, we are seeing great impact in the progress of each student, and consequently, their opportunities in life.



**“Due to the availability of food in school, our children have been able to be in school all the time. This has led to improvement in performance and in co-curriculum activities where the students qualified to National Levels as the best traditional dancers in the entire Rift Valley Region.”**

Deputy Head Teacher for Emukutan Primary School.

**5.5 MILLION**  
**MEALS DONATED IN TOTAL.**



# COMMUNITY AMBULANCE

*Responding to community priorities in healthcare*

For a long time in the Okavango Community Trust villages in Botswana there has been a need for an ambulance. Without a suitable ambulance, community members have had no means to get to the clinic in emergencies. This quarter Great Plains Foundation donated an ambulance, fully equipped with medical equipment including oxygen bottles, to help support the five rural communities we partner with in northern Botswana.



**1 NEW**  **COMMUNITY AMBULANCE DONATED**

# SCHOOL SUPPORT

*Supporting schools with sponsored teachers and educational supplies*

Great Plains continues to sponsor 37 teachers in Kenya to improve teacher-student ratios. By increasing the teacher-student ratio the school children experience a more personalised education and the teachers can support those who are needing extra help. By supporting 37 teachers across 17 schools, we are able to improve the education for 2,497 kids.



**37** TEACHERS SPONSORED  
**2,497** KIDS BENEFITING

# CONSERVATION EDUCATION

*Educational camps to inform and inspire the next generation of conservation leaders*

It was a busy quarter for conservation education with activities and programs held in Botswana, Kenya and Zimbabwe! The Great Plains Foundation team in Botswana hosted a mid-year conservation education refresher. The 75 kids who attended the December kids camp were reunited to enjoy a day bursting with conservation lessons. The team invited all student members of the in-school environmental clubs to join the activities, bringing the total number of students reached to 85. The day included lessons covering the importance of conserving natural resources, how to safely behave around wild animals, recycling and tree planting.



In Kenya, the Great Plains Foundation sponsored another conservation education camp in the Maasai Mara in partnership with The Maa Trust. The camp hosted both children and their parents and included lessons in sustainable livelihood practices such as crop rotation and organic farming, wildlife-friendly fencing to protect small kitchen gardens and sexual reproductive health and rights. Finally, we are pleased to announce the start of conservation education kids camps in Zimbabwe this quarter. In partnership with Wildlife Conservation Action, 59 school children from schools in the Mbire district joined the four-day camp filled with engaging lessons on ecology, wildlife crime, the importance of trees, conservation of natural resources and more. The WCA Team were joined by members of the Great Plains Foundation team in Zimbabwe including two female rangers and Thomas Mutonhori, our Ecologist based in the Sapi Reserve.

**“We would like to extend it’s heartfelt thanks to the organisers of the camp. Our kids got a rare opportunity to interact with other learners from the district and new frontiers. This will inspire and shape future leaders and environmental advocates. Thank you”**

Masoka Primary School Teacher.

**“I’m thrilled to be in camp. It is valuable and I am gaining experience, benefits and memories of living with animals. I hope to be a wildlife leader of tomorrow. This will foster a brighter future for our community.”**

Crazia Mashanda, pupil of Zimbabwe Kids Camp


**3 CAMPS HOSTED**  **134 STUDENTS ENGAGED**

# SPONSORED CONSERVATION STUDENTS

*Sponsoring the fees of Kenyan students in Conservation Diplomas*



The six students Great Plains has sponsored on the Kenya Wildlife Trust's Conservation Leadership Program are all doing well. This quarter the students spent six days camping in Embu and Nyeri exploring the region's irrigation schemes, water treatment plants, tree nurseries and learning about forestry practices in the Muringato Forest. The students then headed to Amboseli National Park where they participated in wildlife monitoring and assessments collecting data on mammals, raptors, birds and other species. Over the past year the students have gained invaluable insights into the positive impacts of conservation through their own indigenous tree planting project. The course has ignited the students' passion for their local environment and empowered them to advocate for change.

**6**  **STUDENTS  
SPONSORED**

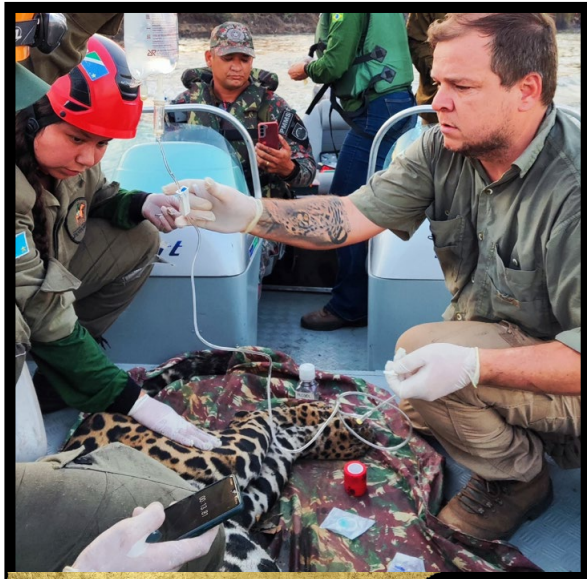
# GRANT PROJECTS

Big Cats Initiative • Project Ranger



## BIG CATS INITIATIVE

*Grant funding to NGOs worldwide to projects with a focus in big cat conservation*



### INSTITUTO HOMEM PANTANEIRO (IHP) JAGUAR PROGRAM, BRAZIL

The IHP team were busy this quarter continuing with their dedicated protection of jaguars in the Pantanal region in Brazil. Projects included conservation education, environmental monitoring and rescue operations. 71 children and adults participated in the July Festival learning about the preservation of water resources and aquatic species and jaguars' natural prey populations. The technical team were busy conducting field trips using camera traps to identify animals that needed veterinary intervention. Due to the intensification of bushfires in recent months in the Pantanal the team were busy, including treating a jaguar with third-degree burns and respiratory complications.



## WASIMA, TANZANIA

WASIMA promotes human-lion coexistence in a healthy landscape by addressing human-lion conflicts and habitat degradation. This quarter WASIMA built 5 lion-proof bomas for livestock to remain safe from lions, securing 75 cows and 114 shoats worthy of over \$60,000. The Lions Conservation Ambassadors continue to monitor human-wildlife conflicts and over 4,520 people from local communities were reached and involved in various educational and outreach activities, including 17 children with physical disabilities. The team are pleased to report no lion was killed thanks to the dedicated team promoting coexistence, reducing losses from negative interactions in the landscape.



## COEXISTENCE FOR CATS, CATTLE & COMMUNITIES (C4), KENYA

Lucrecia Aguilar, as the Principal Investigator for C4's, has been working in the Laikipia region of Kenya researching lion-human conflict. Lucrecia reports that C4's lion collaring efforts have been well received by communities as it helps prevent conflicts by knowing the locations of the lions. The research is starting to show indications of which lions predate on livestock and why. This quarter also saw Lucrecia starting to conduct social surveys with local communities in Laikipia, to further understand attitudes towards lions in the landscape, as well as looking at solar-powered GPS ear tags for livestock to track locations of herds in the landscape with collared lions.



# PROJECT RANGER

Granting funds to NGOs across Africa specialising in anti-poaching



## CONSERVATION LOWER ZAMBEZI, ZAMBIA

*Project Ranger Grantee*

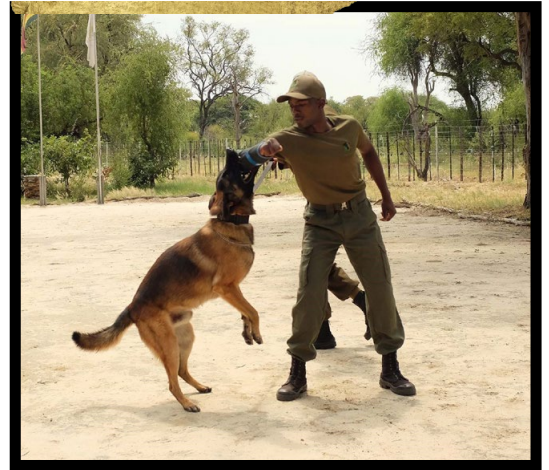
Conservation Lower Zambezi (CLZ) is committed to protecting wildlife and the sustainable use of resources in the Lower Zambezi in Zambia. The protected area is home to an abundance of wildlife including lions, leopards, wild dogs, birds and more. Great Plains Foundation's most recent Project Ranger grant to CLZ supported the Rufunsa Community Scout Unit, a team of rangers working in law enforcement, snare sweeps, antipoaching and attending to human-wildlife conflict. So far in 2024, the patrol teams have removed 125 snares from the environment. During this quarter, and thanks to the Great Plains Foundation grant, CLZ were able to successfully carry out 2.5 hours of aerial patrol activities, providing vital surveillance in hard-to-reach areas to detect illegal activity, bushfires and monitor wildlife movements.



# CONSERVATION WILDLIFE FUND HWANGE, ZIMBABWE

## *Project Ranger Grantee*

In the last quarter, nine new trainee rangers were hired, including three women. One of the women hired is passionate about community training programs such as family planning, transmitted diseases and more. The rangers have also been busy clearing roads to create natural fire breaks and reduce the dangers of wildfires. Conservation Wildlife Fund Hwange also host regular and ongoing training for rangers in navigation, communication, field craft, basic first aid and intermediate skills in fire safety and emergency response.



# BUMI HILLS ANTIPOACHING UNIT (BHAPU), ZIMBABWE

## *Project Ranger Grantee*

The hard work of Bumi Hills rangers is starting to show results. Last quarter 2,269 snares were removed, and this quarter there were only 205 found, reflecting the ability of BHAPU to act as a deterrent and discourage new efforts to join the bushmeat trade. 'Blondie' was a lion who was desperately ill a couple of months ago, but the Bumi Hills team took to looking after him and ensuring a strong recovery. During the quarter the Bumi Hills rangers managed to patrol 7,085km, and make 10 arrests, both considerable contributions to the region's conservation efforts.

As you can see all of our programs have increased and we have plans to enhance most of these in the next quarter with your kind support. Each is important to us, to the wildlife and community partnerships and to Africa.



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