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The WILD mobile app allows rangers in 10 conservancies in Kenya and Tanzania to collect and share data on wildlife sightings, poaching, human wildlife conflict and other activities. Nadine Sunderland/USAID

EAST AFRICA

COMBATING WILDLIFE CRIME

East Africa has made significant strides in reducing poaching of iconic wildlife species, but the demand for wildlife products and use of sophisticated poaching methods continues to threaten the security, economy, and biodiversity of East Africa. International networks for poaching, transit, and sale of illegal wildlife products target wildlife populations across borders, creating a complex problem that transcends national boundaries. East Africa's tourism industry depends heavily on wildlife and protected areas, and prior to the pandemic, brought over $6 billion to the region each year. Reducing or eliminating wildlife crime also contributes to supporting stronger cross-border security, stability, and resilience in the region. In line with the U.S. National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking and the U.S. Eliminate, Neutralize and Disrupt Wildlife Trafficking Act, USAID is taking urgent action to enhance wildlife management and the enforcement and prosecution of wildlife crime in East Africa.

ACTIVITY AREAS
LANDSCAPE-LEVEL PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT

In Kenya, the community conservancy approach to conservation is now widely recognized as the best solution for managing wildlife outside of government protected areas. Local communities create governance structures and benefit-sharing agreements that ensure everyone has a stake in protecting wildlife, preventing trafficking, and reducing conflict and insecurity. In 2004, USAID and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) helped pioneer the community conservancy model through the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT). Today, NRT's anti-poaching network works closely with KWS and the Kenyan police to achieve results: no elephants were poached for ivory in 2021 compared to 103 in 2012.

TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT AND PROSECUTION

In partnership with the United Nations Development Program, USAID is reducing maritime trafficking of wildlife by supporting the development of new tools such as the 'Risk Profiler'. This tool quickly profiles thousands of containers at the Mombasa Port and detects suspicious cargo that is likely to contain wildlife and other contraband. A remote air sampling technology to detect target odor from containers using scent detection rats is also being piloted in Tanzania. Further, in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange database is being rolled out in East Africa to enhance opportunities for information sharing on wildlife crime among law enforcement officers in the region. In addition, an innovative wildlife data application — called "WILD" — that allows government agencies and community rangers to collect, analyze and share real-time data on human-wildlife conflict and poaching, has been rolled out in 15 community conservancies around the Maasai Mara reserve, making protection efforts more effective.

DEMAND REDUCTION

East Africa recognizes a large demand for commercial bushmeat for both meat and medicine. Under the IUCN-CONNECT project, The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network is conducting research in Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya, in collaboration with national wildlife authorities, to understand the extent of bushmeat consumption and developing behavior change communication strategies to help reduce the demand for target species.

Budget: USD $30 million

Key Government Partners:
Ministries of Tourism and Wildlife, Ministries of Environment and Forestry, Wildlife Authorities, and the East African Community

Key Implementing Partners:
USAID Uganda and Tanzania
U.S. Department of the Interior
United Nations Development Program
International Union for Conservation of Nature/World Wildlife Fund/TRAFFIC
The Nature Conservancy
Northern Rangelands Trust
Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association
Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association

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POLICY REFORM TO ENABLE CONSERVATION

In 2019, USAID launched a new regional program with the East African Community, together with IUCN, World Wildlife Fund, and TRAFFIC, to support conservation and management of East Africa's natural resources. The program focuses on supporting the coordination and implementation of the EAC Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products. USAID supported the development of the National Wildlife Strategy 2030, which acts as a roadmap for long-term engagement for wildlife conservation in Kenya. USAID also partners with the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association to support national-level policy analysis to strengthen the legislative framework for community conservation in Kenya.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS

USAID has partnered with the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) on a nine-year project that utilizes DOI's expertise in law enforcement, investigation, and prosecution to create a network of regional actors to combat wildlife trafficking throughout East Africa. USAID is also working in partnership with KWS to scale up counter wildlife trafficking efforts in Kenya that align with Kenya's national priorities and USAID's new Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2020-2025. In the East Africa region, USAID is supporting a global GEF-financed, World Bank-led Global Wildlife Program which brings together a wide range of partners, including the governments of 32 participating countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, GEF agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, the private sector, and civil society.