



FROM THE FIELD

LATEST IMPACT UPDATES FROM OUR GREAT PLAINS INITIATIVES

2025 Q1 IMPACT REPORT | JANUARY - MARCH

Hello everyone,

There is a momentum with the Great Plains Foundation and it is apparent when you look at the stats and trends in this well laid out report. The number of hours spent patrolling, the increased ranger force, the recollaring of elephants and of course the meals issued to children in Kenya, now over 6 million since we started the program just a few years ago. Each of these programs conforms to our very clear strategy of protecting and enhancing threatened species and working with local communities in partnerships around wildlife. It's a simple strategy, protect for today, enhance for tomorrow. We invest equally in people and in wildlife, but we don't give handouts, we create partnerships.

I hope you enjoy reading about our progress and see the impact of your donations, friendships and support within these pages.

Kind regards,

Dereck & Beverly Joubert
Founders, Great Plains Foundation

CONSERVATION

Biodiversity • Healthy Ecosystems • Endangered Species



BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION

Monitoring and conserving biodiversity, including critical species

Over the last couple of months, our patrols have been specifically focussed on maintaining the integrity of the areas we operate in, as the wet season significantly affects our wildlife and habitat monitoring. Heavy rains create challenging conditions, such as flooded roads, tall grass, and dense vegetation, which make it difficult to track animal movements, detect signs of illegal activity, or assess ecosystem health with accuracy. The teams have instead focussed their attention on maintaining a consistent presence to deter potential threats

In Botswana, patrols have been coordinated to target ongoing illegal fishing operations in the Linyanti Swamp system. Kilometers of nets have been removed from the area, boats confiscated, and arrests made, reflecting the importance of these joint patrols in this strategic and ecological sensitive region.



The conservation teams also responded to the discovery of a poached giraffe carcass that tragically led to the poisoning of 34 raptors, most of them vultures. The poisoning appeared to be deliberate, likely intended to silence the natural alert system that vultures provide by circling over carcasses. The incident triggered a targeted search for additional poisoned vultures, highlighting the critical need for rapid intervention and broader surveillance to mitigate the devastating ripple effects of wildlife crime.

6,010 HOURS SPENT ON PATROL

PROJECT REWILD

Translocations of wildlife and post-translocation monitoring

Our close monitoring of both the translocated and resident collared elephant herds in the Sapi Reserve remains on-going with a significant recollaring effort taking place in March.



Under the guidance of African Wildlife Conservation Management the operation focussed on replacing the satellite tracking units on the matriarchs and fitting a collar to another dominant female in each group. By incorporating this dual-collaring method, we are building a more resilient monitoring framework that strengthens the integrity of our research. The work ties directly into the Great Plains-funded PhD research led by Partmore Ngorima and involves strong collaboration with Zim Parks. These collaring efforts are critical for understanding herd movement and integration into the landscape, as well as safeguarding any risk of human-wildlife conflict going forward.

**5 ELEPHANTS
COLLARED**

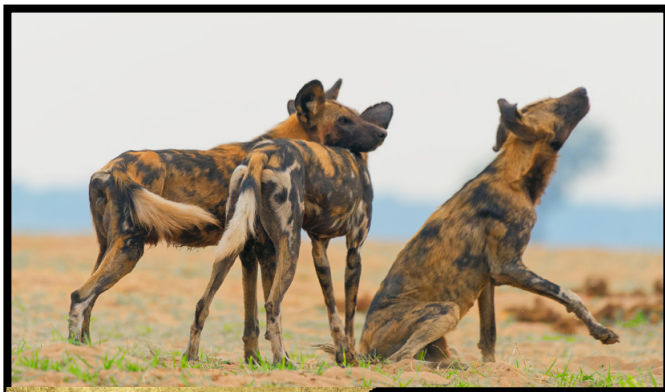
APPLIED CONSERVATION RESEARCH

Dedicated research to inform conservation decisions

ZIMBABWE

Great Plains Foundation is funding the PhD of ZimParks Principal Ecologist for the Mid-Zambezi Valley Mr. Patmore Ngorima, to study elephants in the region. The research has a specific focus on understanding how the translocated elephants are adapting to their new environment by examining their physical condition, behavioural shifts, and ecological health. These herds are currently being closely monitored through Satellite VHF tracking and advanced real-time platforms like Earth Ranger and AWT, providing valuable insights into their movement and adaptation process. Collaborations on this project include Zim Parks, Chinhoyi University, Washington University, Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust and Angela Brennan from Save the Elephants.

Predator monitoring across the Sapi Reserve continues to play a key role in informing day-to-day conservation efforts and the broader landscape strategy for the Mid-Zambezi Valley. Great Plains' ecologist Thomas Mutonhori has begun his PhD research on the spatial ecology of carnivores in the region, which has strong backing from partners like Oxford WildCRU, Painted Dog Conservation, and Chinhoyi University of Technology. Thomas and the team have been regularly monitoring the Ilala Pack of African wild dogs, over the past three months, and who appear to have taken up residence in Sapi Reserve. Camera traps help in identifying individuals and understanding predator densities.



BOTSWANA

We also welcomed Tshephang Keemekae to the Botswana team this quarter, a PhD candidate with Okavango Research Institute. This study looks at how different types of grazing animals on Duba Island in the Okavango Delta coexist alongside each other competing for nutrients and space. It focuses on how their body size, teeth, and digestive systems affect what they eat and how they use the space during different seasons, comparing the dry and rainy periods. By understanding which areas are most important for survival and reproduction, the research will help conservationists protect these animals and manage the landscape in a way that supports them for the long term.

3 NEW PHD
RESEARCHERS

FEMALE RANGERS

Training and hiring Female Wildlife Rangers from local communities



Our female rangers continue to thrive in the field, fully engaged in all activities, including extended patrols, overnight monitoring, and supporting security-oriented missions. Their dedication and enthusiasm are evident as they grow from strength to strength, embracing new challenges with determination. Their progress not only enhances our operations but also underscores the vital role women play in advancing conservation efforts. We are pleased to share that the three new female rangers who joined the program last quarter have completed their probational period and have started their formal training. So far, they have taken part in computer courses and First Aid training.

Our female rangers have continued to make us extremely proud by actively engaging on all patrols not only focussed on monitoring but also facilitating security activities. We often receive feedback from government entities commending the female ranger program and particularly the rangers themselves, their abilities, their bravery and dedication to their responsibilities.



WILDLIFE RANGER DEVELOPMENT

Building capacity and upskilling wildlife rangers

In February, some of our rangers attended the Okavango Delta Conservation Science Symposium in Maun, hosted by Nkashi. Themes revolved around Human Wildlife Coexistence, Natural Resource Use, Mammal Ecology and more. The rangers were exposed to a range of presenters from well seasoned scientists all the way through to students providing feedback on undergraduate and post graduate studies.

“The Okavango Delta is under threat, and science can help us protect it. When we understand what’s changing, we can make better decisions about land, water, wildlife, and how people live and work here.”

The Honourable Minister of Environment and Tourism, Wynter Mmolotsi.



The Great Plains Wildlife Ranger Fitness Program has reached new heights this quarter. When talking about the fitness program, one ranger put it, “We sweat here to be stronger out there.” Eight of our Great Plains Rangers ran the Kazungula Bridge Half Marathon in Kasane. It wasn’t just a test of physical endurance but a lesson in mental grit. Every ranger (Boipelo, Bontle, Molaodi, Kelebemang, Olebeng, Keoagile, Pihelo, Shaka) who ran faced, and conquered, that inner voice urging them to slow down, walk, or quit.



Three of the rangers continue to learn and develop under our Leadership Development Program, a three-month development plan where each ranger works closely with mentors to enhance their skills in monitoring focal species, managing teams, overseeing camp operations, and adhering to safety and financial protocols. Key activities include coaching, demonstrating skills, monitoring performance, and identifying training needs.

ZIMBABWE

Team Leader Rachel Sibanda successfully completed her first year of studies toward a BSc in Wildlife, Ecology and Conservation at Chinhoyi University. Female rangers Rumbidzai and Olivia have completed their first semester of a master's degree in Sustainable Development, also at Chinhoyi.

The wildlife rangers participated in an intensive one-week training program in GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and remote sensing at Chinhoyi University of Technology. This specialized training aimed to enhance their technical skills in spatial data analysis, mapping, and remote sensing technologies, which are essential for effective data-driven conservation. The course provided hands-on experience in using satellite data to monitor changes in ecosystems, track wildlife movements, detect areas of deforestation, and assess the impact of climate change on wildlife habitats.



“Our commitment to team development is reflected in the strides our rangers have made this quarter. Together, these initiatives empower our rangers to become more skilled, knowledgeable, and resilient in their vital roles.”

Gordon Duncan – Sapi Monitoring and Research Manager, Zimbabwe

SPECIES-SPECIFIC CONSERVATION

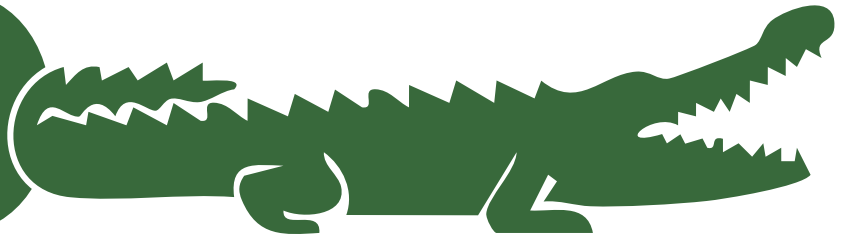
Monitoring and conserving biodiversity, including critical species

Our contribution to the Mabula Ground Hornbill Project in both Botswana and Zimbabwe has grown this quarter, with our data and documentation now feeding into the IUCN Zimbabwe Action Plan and National Monitoring Program. Our teams together with other entities across northern Botswana are supporting with opportunistic sightings of hornbills to build on the national database, focus efforts and identify areas of need.

We have also been monitoring crocodile nesting on the Duba channel for the past few years. Surveys are carried out by boat and on foot, between September and January, during the routine patrols. The 2024/2025 season delivered three nest sites which were located ideally for ongoing monitoring. All three nests hatched successfully, and hatchlings were found. There were more than 160 hatchlings counted and hopefully this will result in some breeding crocodiles in the future.

Crocodiles are a keystone species in the Okavango Delta ecosystem. Ensuring healthy populations of crocodiles is critical because they perform a number of vital function sin the ecosystem. Acting as apex predators and as the water-based ‘clean-up crew’, they ensure healthy functioning water ways.



160 
SUCCESSFUL CROCODILE HATCHINGS

CONSERVATION ROOTS

Planting indigenous trees for ecosystem restoration and carbon sequestration

Tree planting is only beneficial to ecosystems if there is guarantee that the tree can grow to its potential and add value. This process can take many years and therefore relies on the community to support its growth and survival. To boost education on the value of trees and how to look after them, the team visit schools regularly. This quarter the team visited six primary schools in the Maasai Mara landscape donating 1,421 trees to schools and community members, giving lessons on tree planting and conservation. This is enabling the restoration of areas where trees have been cut down around communities. The team also planted 3,107 indigenous trees in the ecosystem for canopy restoration and riverbank strengthening. We are excited to pass 50,000 planted next quarter.



“We are really grateful for your kind support in tree seedling donation to our school. This will improve the look of our school compound and as well teaching the young learners and the community as well on the importance of environment conservation”.

Mr. Ole kasoe, chairman of Oloolchura primary school

The team also took advantage of the season and have been working hard in our central tree nursery in the Maasai Mara where the team collect seeds from around the area and start the propagation stages.

In Zimbabwe, Great Plains has been sponsoring the planting of 10,000 indigenous trees with MyTreesTrust over the two rainy seasons of 2023 and 2024. The focus of the planting was to restore the tree cover of the Zambezi Valley, which had faced large-scale deforestation around communities. This quarter saw the completion of planting the 10,000 trees.



COMMUNITY

Education • Empowerment • Welfare



CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Educating and inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders

Many communities near wildlife areas depend on conservation for their livelihoods, making it essential to teach children about sustainable coexistence with wildlife. By providing resources and opportunities for young learners, we can inspire a new generation of conservationists committed to protecting endangered species, combating habitat destruction, and promoting harmony between people and nature.

The Great Plains team in the Sapi Reserve played an active role in World Wildlife Day commemorations for primary schools students in Mbire District. In a collaboration with Wildlife Conservation Action (WCA), an exciting and education event was held at Mazambara Primary School and connected the key themes of education, conservation and sustainable development. Topics included human-wildlife coexistence, fire prevention, tree importance and reforestation, career guidance in conservation and student-led conservation storytelling performances.



“Engaging with the young minds of Mbire District during World Wildlife Day reminded us that the future of biodiversity lies in education and collaboration. By catching them young and sharing knowledge about conservation and coexistence, we empower the next generation to protect our natural heritage and foster harmony between humans and wildlife.”

Rachel Sibanda, Team Leader – Sapi Wildlife Ranger


50 CHILDREN & 23 TEACHERS
HOSTED FROM 
10 SCHOOLS 

SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM

Distributing nutritious meals to rural schools in Kenya to boost education



Great Plains partners with 54 schools in rural communities in the Maasai Mara, Shompole community and Amboseli region of Kenya to improve the quality of education for the next generation. With the provision of nutritious meals, the attendance of school has improved drastically, as well as the attention and progress of the individuals. This quarter the Great Plains School Food Program added another 160 school kids to receive a daily nutritious meal. The first term of the year kicked off with 14,162 young minds receiving nutritious food at school.

6.2 MILLION  
TOTAL MEALS DONATED  
FEEDING 14,162 STUDENTS  
DAILY   

SPONSORED STUDENTS

Sponsoring the fees of Kenyan students in Conservation Diplomas

Great Plains continues to support six students on Kenya Wildlife Trust's (KWT) Conservation Leadership Program. This quarter the students took part in industrial attachments and exam results from 2024. The industrial attachments prove an essential component of higher education providing the opportunity to gain practical experience in their field of study. The students spent time in Amboseli National Park, Eselenkei Conservancy and Samburu National Park, all critical ecosystems in Kenya. The Green Project continues, with the students establishing tree nurseries, transplanting trees and ongoing sustainability and maintenance of the trees.



6 STUDENTS SPONSORED
     

NABOISHO WOMENS GROUP

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

The Naboisho Women's Group consists of 105 Maasai women coming together to build a business of selling beaded items, honey and soap. Income raised supports the ladies in their families school fees, healthcare and basic home needs. Each mother has between 4-10 kids in their families, who are benefitting directly from the project. This quarter the group hired an accountant to assist in sales accounting, office admin works and filing. The ladies are improving in their planning with materials, now managing to fulfil orders from safari companies on time and effectively, boosting their reputation as a business.



"Beading work and sales has really improved our lives as local Maa women, we are very grateful to the Great Plains Foundation for all the support to us, especially the provision of raw materials and staff salaries"

Noonkokwa, Naboisho Womens Group member

135 WOMEN 
SUPPORTED
\$2,325 GENERATED 
IN SALES 

SCHOOL SUPPORT

Supporting schools with sponsored teachers and educational supplies

This quarter the team in Kenya were busy with over 50 schools in partnership with Great Plains. With a mission to reduce barriers to education, Great Plains has started a partnership with Uhurupads, donating 100 reusable sanitary pads for young girls in the Maasai Mara. The pads, which also come with soap and underwear, aim to empower them with confidence and courage to continue well in their studies. From the positive response the schools have shared, we hope to expand this initiative across all the schools we partner with to support young girls in education across Kenya.



This quarter also saw the donation of 400 knitted bears by Mother Bear. The bears are welcomed as soft toys, but also as an educational tool to support the learning about body parts in the new Kenyan curriculum education system.

At the end of 2024 a community reached out to Great Plains with an urgent challenge in one school, where strong winds had destroyed two of their classrooms and their administration block, leaving 82 students and 5 teachers were exposed to rain and heavy winds. Great Plains began work to restore these structures and ensure safe education continued. The work also included an employment angle with the hiring of 13 people from the local community to repair the structures.

“We thank Great Plain Foundation for their big support. We stand with you as Leinkati community. Our children are back to their class as normal. God bless you”.

Headteacher, Leinkati Primary School.

100 REUSABLE SANITARY PADS

400 KNITTED BEARS DONATED
 **2 CLASSROOMS REPAIRED**

COMMUNITY FARMING

Sponsoring farms to improve food security and enterprise in rural areas

During a recent engagement with the Okavango Community Trust community in Botswana, the needs for enhanced farming equipment was raised as a way to improve yields. Great Plains donated a walk-behind tractor, plough, harrow and a planter to each of the five Okavango Community Trust villages, to benefit as many people as possible during the planting season from January to March.

The donation of the farming equipment was followed by a training session on how the items work and how to ensure they are maintained properly. As part of the collaborative effort, the tractors are managed by the Kgosi of each village as a community resource and, the department of crops production will conduct additional trainings with the farmers.

“The tractors came at the right time when the country is on a food security drive where most farmers are encouraged to produce food to help the nation,”

Said by the District



5 TRACTORS AND FARMING EQUIPMENT DONATED

GRANT PROJECTS

Big Cats Initiative • Project Ranger



BIG CATS INITIATIVE

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

TSAVO CHEETAH PROJECT, KENYA

Big Cats Initiative Grantee

In the first quarter of 2024 Tsavo Cheetah Project received a grant to investigate anthropogenic and ecological factors impacting cheetah density, occupancy and survival between Tsavo East National Park and Tsavo West National Park in southeastern Kenya, one of the last remaining strongholds for the species in Kenya. The project will use 140 camera traps in the area to allow assessment of the conservation status of cheetahs, other carnivores, including leopards, as well as cheetah's potential prey species. The data will be used to develop landscape connectivity model for cheetahs and inform conservation decisions in the region.



INSTITUTO HOMEM PANTANEIRO (IHP), PANTANAL, BRAZIL

Big Cats Initiative Grantee



This quarter IHP have been busy with various camera trap projects across the Pantanal, with locations ranging from Natural Reserves to farms, to optimize image capture and data gathering. The traps remain in the field for 60 days and assist in understanding what species are present in the area, and how they use the environment. IHP also hosted an environmental education activity, hosting 79 children, and focussing on footprints of felines in the Pantanal. The lessons addressed the importance of monitoring and conserving fauna, and preserving local biodiversity.

WILD-TECH, MAASAI MARA, KENYA

Big Cats Initiative Grantee

WILD-TECH uses digital tools for sustainable wildlife and livestock management including camera traps to monitor landscapes in the Maasai Mara. This quarter they set up a grid of 84 camera traps, in line with Biome Health Project protocols, in Olare-Motorogi Conservancy and Naboisho Conservancy. The camera trap images are then downloaded and processed through the Artificial Intelligence system for identification, considerably reducing time spent by the team manually analysing them. The aim is to use the images to conduct ecological analyses of the areas to understand how wildlife species are distributed across the landscape, and how they might be affected by human infrastructure and grazing pressure throughout the conservancies. The data will also be used to further refine user friendly software that rangers and conservancy managers can use on an on-going basis to inform conservancy management.



WASIMA, TANZANIA

Big Cats Initiative Grantee

WASIMA continue with their four major programs of human-lion coexistence, habitat conservation, environmental education and outreach, and alternative livelihoods. WASIMA have built carnivore-proof bomas benefitting seven households securing a total of \$61,162 value. As part of the mission to strengthen community-led conservation WASIMA also invest in communicating biodiversity conservation over local radio stations. Their partnerships with schools continues with a hosted conservation education camp this quarter and the launch of the new Wildlife Clubs in Mpimbwe District reaching 630 pupils.



PROJECT RANGER

Granting funds to NGOs across Africa specialising in anti-poaching



ANTI-POACHING TRACKING SPECIALISTS (ATS), ZIMBABWE

Project Ranger Grantee

ATS who have been specialising in the protection of black rhino in Zimbabwe. ATS's main focus has been organised crime and armed poaching. However their efforts have expanded to include the bushmeat poaching, due to recent increased activity. Despite the ongoing efforts of the anti-poaching unit in apprehending suspected poachers, a persistent challenge remains the lack of consistent and stringent prosecution within the courts. This deficiency undermines the field work, as captured individuals may receive lenient sentences or have cases dismissed, therefore failing to act as a sufficient deterrent for future poachers. With the funding from Project Ranger, ATS has been able to hire a dedicated individual whose main responsibility is to improve the follow through of poaching cases. He is the court monitor for the North of the SVC who was hired to boost conviction rates, and has been pivotal in processing the arrests.



CONSERVATION LOWER ZAMBEZI (CLZ), ZAMBIA

Project Ranger Grantee

CLZ work to protect wildlife and sustainable use of natural resources in the Lower Zambezi in Zambia. They focus on three key areas of wildlife protection, environmental education and community empowerment. The Project Ranger grant supporting the operational support of salaries, equipment, fuel, rations and medical supplies for the rangers on the ground. CLZ have been collaborating with Great Plains with in-field tracking of the collared translocated elephants of Project Rewild, ensuring eyes are on the herds when they have moved freely across into Zambia.



ENARAU CONSERVANCY, MAASAI MARA, KENYA

Project Ranger Grantee

Enarau Conservancy was established in 2022 and covers 1,271 hectares of the Maasai Mara ecosystem. Enarau is dedicated to biodiversity conservation and habitat restoration of the area, with eleven rangers in the cohort safeguarding the conservancy's rich biodiversity by combatting illegal activities. Through vigilant patrols conducted around the clock, both day and night, they have covered a distance of 1,620 kilometres this quarter. Project Ranger has sponsored an intensive 5-week ranger training for the rangers and also the full build of a new ranger accommodation to ensure the rangers have a comfortable living condition, both activities are underway through the first and second quarters of 2025.



BUMI HILLS ANTIPOACHING UNIT, LAKE KARIBA, ZIMBABWE

Project Ranger Grantee

The Bumi Hills Anti-Poaching Unit is at the frontline of protecting Zimbabwe's threatened wildlife, on the shores of Lake Kariba and Bumi Hills where the illegal bush meat and ivory trades are rife. Project Ranger continues to support the Bumi Hills Antipoaching Unit rangers, with operational support covering rangers salaries, food rations, vehicle fuel, equipment and more. This quarter the rangers covered 6,067kms of patrol both on foot and by boat, reaching remote areas. The work of the rangers recovered 49 snares, 29 fishing nets, and an arrest. This work is invaluable to the region to ensure illegal activities are reduced and a long-term future is guaranteed.



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