



# FROM THE FIELD

LATEST IMPACT UPDATES FROM OUR GREAT PLAINS INITIATIVES

## 2025 Q3 IMPACT REPORT | JULY - SEPTEMBER



When I cast around each quarter to understand what stands out and defines us, I test each of these projects we have and you will read about, from Female Rangers' work, tree planting, school children feeding schemes, and each is important, so it's hard to select one to highlight here. For me, though, in this unique combination of looking to the immediate and also to the future to do what we can to breathe harmony into our lives, the immediate is often about rescuing and doing something right now.

This quarter, it was all about moving the rare painted dogs from a part of Zimbabwe where they were in a closed system and in conflict with communities, to the Great Plains-managed Sapi Reserve. You will read about this, but it was so successful that we have now been asked to do more and increase this ReWilding program to include other species. We basically take on families of wildlife that would otherwise not survive and give them a second chance. As such, our expectation of success is already higher because even one survivor is a win. In this case, all adults survived, and puppies born added to an unprecedented introduction of a pack of 17 into the ecosystem. Almost immediately, more dogs started coming into the area to meet the newcomers, and the whole ecosystem appears to have been jolted alive again. What a joy and delight to be involved in a project of hope as opposed to the often desperate, bad news in conservation today.

*Dereck and Beverly*

Dereck & Beverly Joubert  
Founders, Great Plains Foundation

# CONSERVATION

Biodiversity • Healthy Ecosystems • Endangered Species



## PROJECT REWILD

Translocations of wildlife and post-translocation monitoring

### ZIMBABWE

A major milestone for wildlife conservation during this reporting period was the successful release of 17 painted dogs, which included 8 adults and 9 pups, into the Sapi Reserve. This achievement marks an important step in rebuilding predator diversity and stabilising painted dog populations in the region.

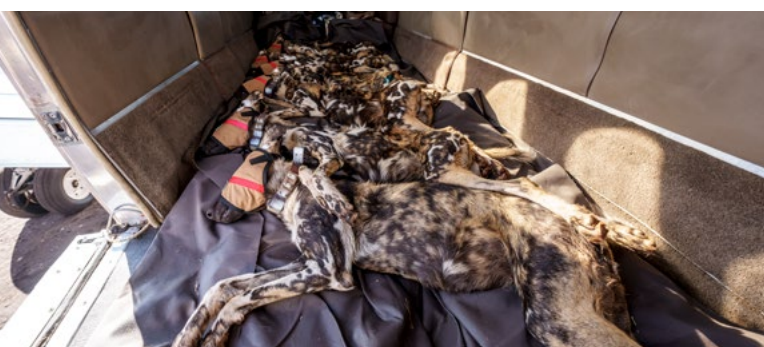
In the ongoing challenge of protecting endangered species, every success story counts. This one belongs to African wild dogs, also known as painted dogs. A specific population of painted dogs in the Southern part of Zimbabwe was hunting both inside and outside livestock areas, causing some damage. Earlier this month, this pack of endangered canines was successfully relocated into the Sapi Reserve, managed by Great Plains, as part of Project Rewild. Project Rewild focuses on restoring ecological balance and biodiversity through wildlife translocations.

**“This wasn’t a simple relocation. It was a mission filled with unexpected turns, including the birth of puppies mid-operation, and countless moments of determination and care from a dedicated team of conservationists. Today, these dogs are running free in a protected area, learning to hunt in a new landscape, strengthening their fragile bloodlines, and carving out a hopeful future.” - Dereck Joubert**

We are deeply grateful to our partners and support teams: Zimparks, Great Plains Conservation, African Wildlife Management & Conservation (AWMC), Dr. Jacqueline and Josh Mostert, NJ LaGrange, Grand Air Charters, and our Great Plains family, whose expertise and passion made this possible.

Additionally, the project has strengthened the prey base for large carnivores by successfully translocating an additional 479 impalas into the Sapi Reserve and surrounding regions. The painted dog pack is showing promising signs of stability, with seven adults and nine pups, and a good movement pattern exploring the area from Sapi Reserve to Chewore North along the Zambezi River. The team is continuing to monitor the pack and collect samples for hormone and DNA analysis while minimising disturbance to the dogs.

**DISCOVER THE STORY BEHIND THE PAINTED DOG TRANSLOCATION, BY DERECK JOUBERT**



**17** Painted dogs successfully relocated

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## ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION

Monitoring biodiversity and mitigating illegal activity

### ZIMBABWE & BOTSWANA

The Great Plains Wildlife Rangers continue their daily patrols of the critical ecosystems under their protection in Botswana and Zimbabwe (694,471 acres). The rangers collect data on specific species, vegetation, flood water levels and more on a daily basis, to further understand the landscape and advise conservation decisions on. The rangers' role also includes patrolling for illegal activity and poaching risks.

The Great Plains Rangers in Zimbabwe had a busy quarter, from ongoing elephant monitoring, to welcoming the painted dogs to a bird survey to bolster understanding of the avian diversity of the Sapi Reserve. By collecting and recording bird sightings in the BirdLasser app, detailed maps can be created, that reveal species distributions, habitat preferences, and seasonal movement patterns.

In addition to ecosystem monitoring Great Plains Wildlife Rangers are on the lookout for illegal activity and potential threats. Patrols mitigating illegal activity are a collaborative effort across organisations and government departments. In Botswana, patrols using a combination of helicopter, vehicle, and boat patrols are proving highly effective at detecting illegal fishing activities and poaching incidents. This quarter, this collaboration led to the arrest of an individual and the recovery of substantial quantities of illegal fishing equipment, including 14 fishing lines. Rapid coordination between aerial and ground assets ensured timely interception and intelligence sharing. Arrests, net destruction, and confiscations show tangible conservation impact.

The Rangers in Botswana also discovered an elephant and lion mortality and are investigating the potential causes of these. Understanding the causes of any mortalities discovered is an important part of wildlife ranger work, which is focused on analysing threats to the ecosystem and responding to them.



**7,313**  
Kms patrolled

**4,375**  
Hours on patrol

**14**  
Fishing nets confiscated

**1**  
Arrest

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## WILDLIFE RANGER SUPPORT

Supporting existing conservancy ranger units

### KENYA

In the Maasai Mara in Kenya, the Great Plains Foundation have been supporting ranger efforts in conservancies bordering the national park. The Olare Motorogi Conservancy (35,000 acres) and the Enarau Conservancy (3,140 acres) are essential corridors for wildlife of the Maasai Mara ecosystem, including the annual wildebeest migration. Support includes rangers' salaries, training courses, and upgrading of ranger facilities, with the completion of 16 houses, a kitchen and dining hall, a water harvesting system, and washrooms.

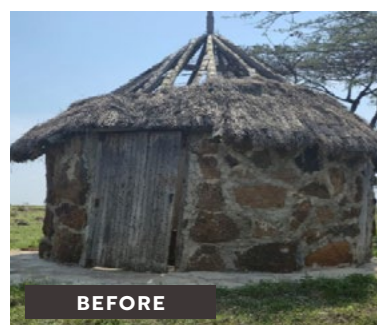
Great Plains Foundation has also been supporting the conservation of Sera Conservancy (840,000 acres) in northern Kenya, home to a critical population of black rhino. The support has covered rangers' salaries, rations, vehicle maintenance, and fuel, all of which are foundational to the conservancy's daily functioning and security operations. Sera rangers are deployed daily to conduct anti-poaching patrols and ecosystem conservation.

**“The generous support from the Great Plains Foundation has enabled Sera Conservancy to maintain essential critical operations in the protection of black rhinos and other wildlife species, and the well-being of the rangers.”**- Sera Conservancy.



# 878,140

Acres of wilderness protected by supported rangers



## FEMALE RANGERS

Training and hiring Female Wildlife Rangers from local communities

### BOTSWANA & ZIMBABWE

The Great Plains Female Rangers initiative covers both technical upskilling and personal development of women from local communities. There are 19 women currently in the programme, who are challenging stereotypes about women in conservation and excelling in all areas.



#### BOTSWANA

This past quarter, the Botswana Female Ranger team attended an intensive training in a 4x4 driving course, adding to their fieldwork capabilities in the challenging conditions of sand and floodplains of the Okavango Delta, and driving principles to reduce vehicle damage.

The ability to reach remote areas on patrol is essential for year-round data collection and ecosystem monitoring. The ladies' commitment to learning and applying these skills reflects their dedication not only to take care of equipment, but also to safeguarding the ecosystems they work so hard to conserve.



#### ZIMBABWE

The Great Plains Female Rangers in Zimbabwe have been at the forefront of tracking and monitoring the recently introduced painted dogs, as well as the continuous daily monitoring of the elephants translocated into the Sapi Reserve in 2022. Community outreach continued this quarter with the Female Rangers hosting meaningful conservation discussions in primary schools neighbouring wildlife areas for World Rhino Day, in partnership with Wildlife Conservation Action. This quarter, all four Female Rangers in Zimbabwe continued to advance their tertiary education. Rachel and Kristie continue their BSc in Wildlife and Conservation, and Olivia and Rumbidzai are nearing completion of their Master's degrees.



19

Women currently in the programme



23

Total women trained

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## APPLIED CONSERVATION RESEARCH

Dedicated scientific research on critical species

### ZIMBABWE & BOTSWANA

#### AFRICAN WILD DOGS

Mid-Zambezi, Zimbabwe

Thomas Mutonhori is pursuing a PhD study on large carnivores, in partnership with Painted Dog Conservation and WildCRU from Oxford University, focusing on assessing the painted dogs translocated into the Sapi Reserve. The research includes measuring pack stability, assessing the genetic diversity of the population in the region and investigating competition between African wild dogs, lions and spotted hyenas. This quarter, Thomas has been following the pack, collecting critical samples for DNA and hormone analysis.

**“It’s a privilege to dedicate my research to the conservation of the endangered African wild dog. Through this study, I hope to inspire future generations and contribute to the development of evidence-based management actions that will secure the long-term future of this iconic species.”**

- Thomas Mutonhori, Ecologist and Researcher



#### AFRICAN SAVANNAH ELEPHANTS

Mid-Zambezi, Zimbabwe

Research in the Sapi Reserve continues, assessing the ranging behaviour and impact of translocation on the health and reproductive status of elephants. The data collection is going well and includes collecting dung samples from the elephants to analyse hormones and other factors.



#### LARGE HERBIVORE GRAZING BEHAVIOUR

Okavango Delta, Botswana

A two-year study is in progress, working to establish the ecological carrying capacity of the Duba Concession in the heart of the Okavango Delta. Understanding the feeding behaviours of large herbivores in a landscape that is constantly changing due to seasonal rains and floods, is essential for ensuring the long-term health of this dynamic ecosystem. The study is using a range of modern tools, including remote sensing, GPS mapping of vegetation, and camera traps across the different seasons. This quarter focused on laying the groundwork for research through site visits to meet the field team, understand the ecosystem, review ranger monitoring efforts, and plan field logistics.



**3** Critical species under research

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## CONSERVATION TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Building capacity and upskilling Wildlife Rangers

### ZIMBABWE & BOTSWANA

This quarter saw significant progress in Wildlife Ranger development, including trainings, promotions, and fitness challenges. The rangers took part in a 4x4 defensive driving training to continually improve patrols over the challenging Okavango delta terrain. Five wildlife rangers were promoted to Team Leaders (including two Female Rangers), elevating them to leadership roles, strengthening our field teams. These promotions mark an important milestone, not only for the individuals but also for the entire ranger unit, as they continue to inspire their colleagues and set the standard for professionalism and dedication in the protection of wildlife and our natural heritage.

#### WILDLIFE RANGER CHALLENGE

This quarter also saw the Great Plains Wildlife Rangers take part in the Wildlife Ranger Challenge, an African-wide initiative that unites ranger teams to test their physical endurance, mental resilience, and teamwork, spreading global awareness of the day-to-day of wildlife rangers on the front line of conservation. Sixteen of our rangers (eight women and eight men) took part in the 21km run Wildlife Ranger Challenge, with 10kg (women) and 22kg (men) weighted packs, competing to the very end with heart and dedication.



This annual challenge not only raises awareness of the critical role rangers play but also strengthens the skills they rely on daily in the field: discipline, strength, focus, and unity. This year was the first year Great Plains had our rangers chosen as funding-match partners and listed among 104 units. Fitness and health are an essential part of their work patrolling wilderness, to build endurance and prepare them for the tough conditions they may face during patrols and in the bush. As rangers, it is essential to maintain a high level of physical fitness to ensure their safety and effectiveness in carrying out their duties.

**“Participating in the Wildlife Ranger Challenge showed me that I’m stronger than I ever thought. It was a tough challenge, but absolutely worth it. It not only tests physical and mental endurance but also inspires growth, teamwork, and a stronger sense of determination.”**

Rachel Sibanda, Biodiversity Ranger



4

Courses trained

16

Rangers (including 8 women) competed in the Wildlife Ranger Challenge.

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## CONSERVATION ROOTS

Planting indigenous trees for ecosystem restoration and carbon sequestration

### KENYA

This quarter, the team were busy planting 5,199 indigenous trees in the Maasai Mara landscape, restoring the ecosystem and strengthening river banks. The variety of tree species planted came from the Great Plains central tree nursery in the Maasai Mara, where the team collect seeds within the landscape and propagates them in the nursery. Species included acacias, crotons, figs and the endangered Warburgia Ugandensis (Greenheart Tree). In addition to planting trees for ecosystem benefits, 401 trees were also donated to local community groups, including a self-help group, to support community areas with shade, soil stability and natural resources, whilst strengthening connections with our nature and our environment.

**“Tree planting from Great Plains Foundation has brought our community together. It is not just about trees, it’s about building greener, healthier and more connected communities”**

Simon Kerore, community association leader.

**“Great Plains Foundation has given us a sense of purpose and responsibility. We now take pride in maintaining the trees and educating others about their importance.”**

Mr Kasaine, Community group leader



**5,600**

Trees planted this quarter



**60,165**

Trees planted in total

## CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Educating and inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders

### BOTSWANA, ZIMBABWE & KENYA

#### ZIMBABWE KIDS CAMP

Conservation education initiatives aim to promote environmental awareness in primary schools in communities living adjacent to wildlife, with the aim of inspiring and nurturing the next generation of conservation leaders.

In Zimbabwe, our partnership with Wildlife Conservation Action continued, with a celebration of World Rhino Day on 22nd September across five primary schools hosting 50 school children in total. The inspiring event covered subjects such as the importance of endangered species, plastic pollution, fire management, and general ecosystem health and local livelihoods. The session also offered insights into careers in conservation. The involvement of teachers, parents, and regional institutions reinforced the message that conservation is a collective responsibility.

**“This programme has opened my eyes to the importance of protecting our environment and has inspired me to take action in my community. It’s empowering to see young people coming together to learn and make a difference. I feel hopeful for the future, knowing that we are building a generation that cares deeply about conservation and sustainability.”** - Musembwa Rumbidzai, Great Plains Female Ranger.

#### BOTSWANA KIDS CAMP REFRESHER

In Botswana, the annual Kids Camp Refresher was held in August, hosting 140 school pupils from communities in the eastern panhandle of the Okavango Delta, to discuss environmental stewardship and conservation. The educational sessions covered topics from pollution, littering, sustainability and wildlife conservation. The refresher is a follow up to the Conservation Education Kids Camp held in December, to keep environmental stewardship at the front of mind, and to encourage kids to join the Environmental Clubs in schools.



180

School children participated

# COMMUNITY

Education • Empowerment • Welfare



## CONSERVATION GOALS

Engaging youth in conservation through sport

### BOTSWANA

The annual Conservation Goals tournament in Botswana was held in August, to spread awareness on wildlife conservation with the communities living alongside wildlife areas in the Okavango Delta. This year the tournament welcomed 200 participants, across five Netball and five Football teams, who took part in training sessions in the lead-up to the tournament, and battled for the trophy. The sessions leading up to the tournament included life skills, conservation and sports coaching. Partners in the region, such as CLAWs and Ecoexist, shared conservation messages on human-wildlife coexistence with lions and elephants, respectively.

The tournament attracts large crowds, and it was reported that in addition to the youth who participated, many small businesses, such as local food vendors, saw great economic benefits from the event.



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**200**  
Youth participated


## SCHOOL SUPPORT

Reducing barriers to progress in school

### KENYA

This quarter, 200 new school children were included in the School Food Programme in Kenya, now reaching 14,362 pupils with a nutritious daily meal. The project is proving beneficial for increasing school enrolment and attendance by alleviating child hunger, improving student concentration and academic performance, and reducing malnutrition through consistent, nutritious meals. For the community, the school meals provide a safety net, reducing the financial burden on families, enhancing food security, and supporting community stability during climate crises like drought.

This quarter Great Plains Foundation have been able to add 8 new teachers to our Sponsored Teachers initiative, including two special needs teachers. Sponsoring teachers improves the teacher-to student-ratio in classrooms, improving the attention to each student and progress in grades.



**14,362**  
Students with daily nutritious meal.

**8.1 million**  
Meals donated in total

**8** New teachers    **45** Sponsored teachers total

# COMMUNITY

Education • Empowerment • Welfare



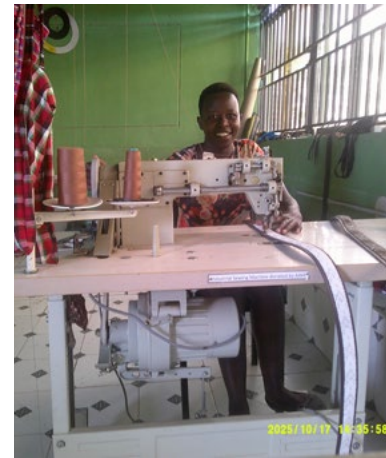
## BUILDING BRIDGES

Connecting communities with essential services and schools

### KENYA

During the rainy season, flooding, strong currents, and crocodiles make the Mara region's rivers dangerous to cross on foot. Building footbridges for local communities ensures safety, economic empowerment and access including schools, clinics and markets. The Enoosoito Bridge, built in partnership with Bridging the Gap Africa and completed this quarter now provides safe passage for 2,150 students across four schools and supports community trade and cultural activities.

**"We're left with no words to say about this amazing work Great Plains Foundation is doing to my community. We have lost lives in the past rainy seasons at this stream due to floods and after the completion of this bridge, we will be moving safely to our local markets, hospitals and kids to school even when the stream is flooded. Thank you"**  
- Rev Nangiyioo, community representative.



## NABOISHO WOMENS GROUP

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

### KENYA

The economic benefits of this women-led enterprise in the Maasai Mara continue to impress! The ladies, who specialise in beadwork, soap-making, and honey production, are creating an income, preserving cultural heritage, promoting self-reliance, and fostering collective strength for women in the pastoralist community. This quarter, the ladies have enhanced their guest experience, welcoming tourists to join their beading sessions. They have been trained in leatherwork to expand products, and earned over \$10,000 collectively to support their families and children's school fees. By entering the male-dominated field of beekeeping, the women are challenging stereotypes and demonstrating women's capacity for business and leadership while promoting environmental sustainability and community well-being.



**1** Bridge built benefiting

**2,150** pupils across

**4** schools **5** bridges built in total



**155** Women supported

**\$11,621** generated in sales

# GRANT PROJECTS

Big Cats Initiative • Project Ranger



## BIG CATS INITIATIVE

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

### FUNDACIÓN PROYECTO PRIMATES, COLOMBIA Big Cats Initiative Grantee

Fundacion Proyecto Primates (FPP) are monitoring jaguars in the Barbacoas region of the Middle Magdalena in Colombia. The work aims to understand the spatial distribution of jaguars, the effects of landscape transformation and prey availability, and to understand people's perceptions and expectations of sharing territories with jaguars. Funding supported the purchase of 26 camera traps and field expenses such as transportation, food and accommodation for local field assistants.



### TSAVO CHEETAH PROJECT, KENYA Big Cats Initiative Grantee

The Tsavo Cheetah Project works to protect the cheetah population of the Tsavo ecosystem. This quarter, funding supported the team's camera trap operation, recording 14 individual cheetahs, eight adult males and six adult females. The team were particularly excited that two of the females have cubs below the age of six months.



### WASIMA, TANZANIA Big Cats Initiative Grantee

WASIMA are working with local communities in western Tanzania for support lion-human coexistence. Communities in this region are predominantly pastoral, raising livestock. During this quarter, WASIMA built 15 lion-proof bomas for the community, securing 682 livestock across 200 community members. WASIMA hosted workshops reaching 5,290 people to improve knowledge, practices and attitudes towards lions and conservation.



# GRANT PROJECTS

Big Cats Initiative • Project Ranger

## PROJECT RANGER

Granting funds to anti-poaching units across Africa

### ANTI-POACHING TRACKING SPECIALISTS, ATS Project Ranger Grantee

ATS have maintained consistent anti-poaching, surveillance and security operations across the Savé Valley Conservancy in Zimbabwe, which harbours 25% of the country's black rhino population; along with specially protected white rhino, elephant, pangolin, painted dog, cheetah, lion, sable, python, ground hornbills, lappet-facet vultures, and more. This time of year is particularly challenging with dry season awaiting the rains, lack of water leads to poaching and wildlife concentrated around waterholes. This quarter the rangers have been busy removing snares, arresting poachers and mitigating poaching.



### CONSERVATION LOWER ZAMBEZI, ZAMBIA Project Ranger Grantee

CLZ rangers work to protect the wildlife and ecosystem of the Lower Zambezi National Park and surrounding Game Management Areas. Funding has supported the operations for community scout patrols in more remote areas, arial surveillance of the region, and a VHF communications system to improve landscape-level conservation.



### BUMI HILLS ANTI-POACHING UNIT, LAKE KARIBA, ZIMBABWE Project Ranger Grantee

The Bumi Hills rangers in Zimbabwe work tirelessly to secure the area from illegal activity and poaching, and give the wildlife a chance. The team made two arrests, removed 684 snares, and confiscated 40 fishing nets amounting to 12,400m long. Every snare and fishing line confiscated is an avoided death and gives the wildlife an opportunity to thrive.



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