



**Born Free Foundation
Conservation Report
2022–2023**



Contents

FOREWORD	3
INTRODUCTION	4
OUR IMPACT	5
EAST AFRICA	7
LIONS	8
Pride of Meru – Tier 1	8
Pride of Amboseli – Tier 1	11
Northern Lions Project – Tier 2	14
AFRICAN SAVANNAH ELEPHANTS AND GIRAFFES	16
Saving Meru’s Giants – Tier 1	16
Amboseli Trust for Elephants - Tier 2.....	20
RHINOS	22
Kenya Wildlife Service Rhino Sanctuary – Tier 2	22
ETHIOPIAN WOLVES	24
Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme – Tier 2	24
CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA	26
GORILLAS AND CHIMPANZEES	27
Guardians of Dja – Tier 1	27
Bulindi Chimpanzee and Community Project – Tier 2	30
Gorilla Monitoring Project – Tier 2	33
AFRICAN FOREST ELEPHANTS	35
Elephant Research and Conservation – Tier 2	35
ENDANGERED AFRICAN SPECIES	37
Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement – Tier 2	37
Last Great Ape Organisation – Tier 2	39
SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA	41
TIGERS	42
Satpuda Landscape Tiger Partnership – Tier 1	42
Freeland Foundation – Tier 2	45
PANGOLINS	47
Wildlife Protection Society of India – Tier 2	47
ORANGUTANS	49
Orangutan Foundation – Tier 2	49
SOUTH AMERICA	51
JAGUARS	52
Jaguars in the Fringe – Tier 2	52
PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS	54

FOREWORD



Dr Nikki Tagg
Head of Conservation

2022-2023 was an exciting and ambitious year for Born Free, with the launch of a brand-new programme protecting chimpanzees and gorillas in the rainforests of Cameroon, Central Africa, and a big investment in Born Free's heartland, the Meru landscape, in Kenya, where we now have targeted activities to promote co-existence between people and lions, elephants and giraffes. Via this bold and strategic ambition, Born Free is maximising on its conservation impact.

This report is packed full of this impact, from community outreach through the international language of football, to large scale monitoring of threatened species in protected areas using high-tech remote-operated camera traps. From monitoring jaguars in the Yungas of Argentina, to saving Bengal tigers in the temperate forests of Central India, Born Free focuses on conserving iconic species and their habitats, enabling sustainable co-existence between humans and wildlife, and providing an environment in which wild animals can thrive.

It's always a team effort. From our colleagues working day-in-day-out on the ground, talking to the families impacted by conflict with wildlife and finding solutions, to our support teams who help us manage, fund and communicate our work, every individual involved in Born Free's Conservation work is critical to its success.

And above all, none of our work would be possible without you, the Born Free supporter, and your generous and wonderful support over the years.

I hope you enjoy this report, and I hope it inspires you to step up for nature.

"From the start, we've campaigned for a future where animals and people can co-exist and where threatened and endangered species are protected for generations to come."

INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the programmes and projects conducted and supported by Born Free to protect threatened species. It is compiled from staff and partner reports to inform the wider Born Free team, our collaborators, and associates, as well as the wider public about our investment and impacts in conservation.

The report details Born Free’s field conservation work from **April 2022** to **March 2023** and is divided into four sections according to our geographic scope: **East Africa, Central and West Africa, South and Southeast Asia** and **South America**. Within each section our work is presented by wild animal taxa (groups of species) or species of interest.

Our Tier 1 programmes are managed directly by Born Free, while Tier 2 projects are those supported financially and technically but managed by third-party partner organisations.



Reticulated Giraffe (Giraffa camelopardis reticulata) twins in 2022 – Born Free’s first record of twin giraffes in Meru National Park © Born Free

OUR IMPACT

4 landscapes directly protected by Born Free
and 12 partners supported



The Meru
Conservation Area



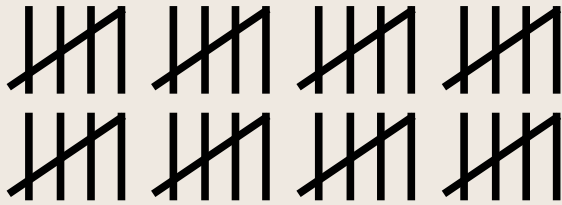
The Amboseli
Ecosystem



The Satpuda
Landscape



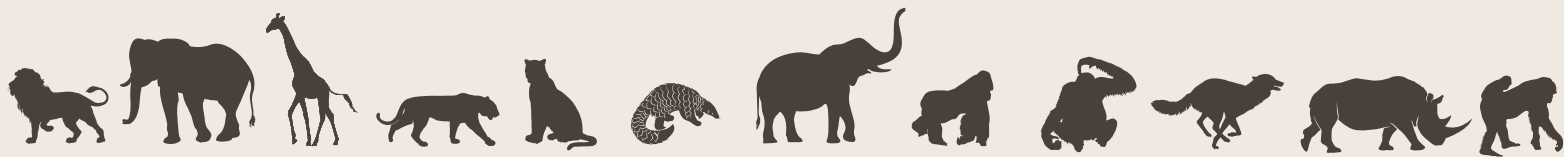
The Dja
Landscape



40 people directly employed in
Born Free conservation
programmes



8 of the greatest threats
to wildlife addressed

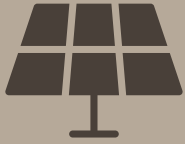


12 species and sub-species directly conserved





120 beehives installed



1,600 energy saving stoves, **70** solar light units and **23** water storage tanks distributed



192 predator deterrent lights installed



138 cattle painted with eye-cow

CONFLICT MITIGATION



23 predator proof bomas built



5 rangers deployed

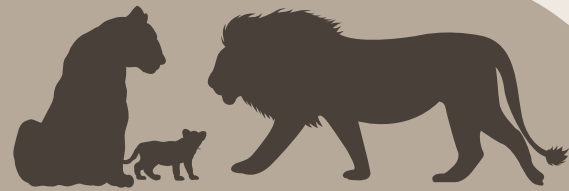


825 illegal activities recorded in Meru

ANTI-POACHING AND ILLEGAL ACTIVITY



667 snares removed

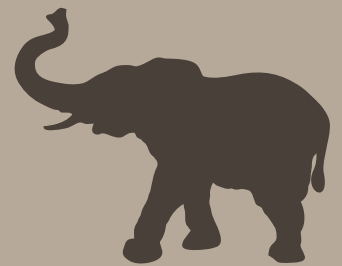


8 new lions identified and catalogued and **20** cubs born

SPECIES MONITORING



230 giraffes identified



250 elephants identified

15 football matches played under Kick to Conserve



832 people surveyed in Meru



184 medical camps organised across **51** villages

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



An estimated **38,683** people in India, **7,082** Meru, **370** in Amboseli and **2,646** in Dja reached



78 community ambassadors engaged

EAST AFRICA

Through 2022-2023, Born Free has run three flagship programmes in East Africa and supported four additional partners. We are investing in the long-term protection of highly threatened species including lions, elephants, giraffes, rhinos, Ethiopian wolves and many others, using a suite of practical, humane and effective conservation approaches.



Giraffes (Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata) in Meru © Born Free

LIONS

Pride of Meru – Tier 1 Meru Conservation Area, Kenya

The lions of Meru are at threat from ‘human-carnivore conflict’ – interactions between people and carnivores that result in negative outcomes for either or both parties. Lions and other carnivores, including leopards, cheetahs, jackals, hyenas and African wild dogs can attack and kill livestock kept by pastoralists in the Meru Conservation Area, and people may engage in retaliatory killings, particularly of lions. Lions are also highly threatened by habitat loss, as expansion for agriculture and settlements occurs at a rapid rate. It is therefore vital to introduce simple, effective and humane conservation solutions in collaboration with local communities and our long-term partners at the Kenya Wildlife Service.

Meru is Born Free’s heartland, where our charity’s inspiration Elsa the lioness returned to the wild, and now an area of major focus for our work. The Born Free-run initiative, Pride of Meru, monitors the lion population of Meru National Park and works with communities to nurture tolerance and introduce mitigation measures to reduce human-wildlife conflict. A reduction in predation by carnivores can increase tolerance and promote co-existence between people and Meru’s lion population.



Mururi Girl 2 and cubs, Meru © Born Free

2022-2023 Update

In 2022-2023, the team trialled several conflict mitigation strategies in the communities around Meru National Park. We trialled the ‘eye cow’ technique, first pioneered by Dr Neil Jordan and the Botswana Predator Conservation Trust, which involves painting eye spots on the rumps of cattle. Lions are ambush predators, and the eye spots trick the lions into thinking the cattle are facing them. Lions are subsequently reluctant to attack, so may reduce predation. During the trial period, 138 cows were painted with eye spots. The team also trialled the use of predator-deterrent lights, which are positioned around the perimeter of a livestock enclosure, known as a ‘boma’. The lights give the appearance there are people nearby, and may disrupt lions’ night vision, deterring them from attacking cattle overnight. During the trial period, 192 predator-deterrent lights were installed in 24 bomas. Initial results from people participating in both trials are promising. We will be conducting more extensive trials during 2023-2024 to determine the efficacy of both tools.

This work was complemented by conservation awareness initiatives, such as ‘Kick to Conserve’. As part of this initiative, our team has set-up the Meru National Park Football Club – dubbed the ‘Bush-Trackers FC’ – which comprises staff from Meru National Park, staff from Born Free and members of the local community. The team plays in football tournaments in communities around the protected area, where conservation messaging is delivered and environmental activities including rubbish clean-ups are conducted. Last year, 15 football matches were played with local community teams, drawing in large crowds to watch and hear more about our work.

In June, we employed a team of five Conservation Ambassadors, under Pride of Meru, from communities in wildlife conflict hotspot areas around Meru National Park. They act as the voice of the community, helping people report and resolve conflicts and implement conflict mitigation solutions and they are often first responders to conflict events. The team recorded 174 conflict reports over the year, providing vital information for our work going forward and also helping to diffuse tense and challenging situations, and facilitating those involved to seek compensation.

"Our Conservation Ambassadors act as the voice of the community, helping resolve conflicts and implement solutions."

To monitor lions in 2022-2023, there was an extensive effort, with the team covering 10,150 miles (16,335km) by vehicle searching for lions. As a result, the team recorded 349 predator sightings (201 direct and 148 indirect).

The population of Meru comprises four prides, Bisanadi, Elsa, Mulika and Virginia, along with several more loosely associated groups and male coalitions. Across the four prides, we recorded one death – the male Lolomarik1, who sadly died after getting caught in a snare. This was followed by the births of an incredible 20 cubs – eight in Elsa’s pride, six in the Bisanadi pride, five in Virginia’s pride and one in the Mulika pride – bringing the number of identified lions in Meru National Park to 93 lions.



How many lions?

- Scientific name: *Panthera leo*
- <20,000 globally according to the IUCN*
- IUCN status: **Vulnerable**
- Global population in **decline**
- Kenya population: **2,589**** lions
- Circa **93 adult lions** in Meru

*International Union for the Conservation of Nature

**National Wildlife Census Report 2021; a 25% increase since 2010, the year Born Free’s specific lion conservation work began in Kenya

Pride of Amboseli – Tier 1 Amboseli Ecosystem, Kenya

Pride of Amboseli seeks to develop simple, effective and humane solutions to address the issue of carnivore predation on livestock kept by the Maasai in the Amboseli Ecosystem, Kenya. Livestock are central to Maasai pastoralist livelihoods, and the economic, social and psychological impact of losing livestock to predation can be significant. Aggrieved pastoralists may engage in retaliatory killings, particularly of lions. Lions and other carnivores are also highly threatened by habitat loss, as expansion for agriculture and settlements occurs at a rapid rate, which has led to rapid population declines. Conservation efforts in the region have resulted in the population slowly recovering and retaliatory killings have been kept low. However, with an increasing population of both lions and people, this could – in the absence of conservation initiatives – lead to an increase in human-carnivore conflict once again, threatening both people and lions.



Predator-proof boma in Amboseli © Born Free

The Pride of Amboseli programme helps tackle conflict by constructing predator-proof bomas, known by the acronym 'PPBs'. PPBs comprise of strong metal posts (6ft [1.8m] from the ground), together with strong doors and rolls of chain-link fencing. PPBs are effective in preventing not only lions but also other predators such as hyenas and cheetahs from gaining access to livestock at night.

Since 2010, Born Free has helped local people construct hundreds of PPBs across several community-managed group ranches adjacent to Kenya's famous Amboseli National Park, as well in the West Kilimanjaro area across the border in Tanzania.

These bomas are also fitted out with 'smart' elements – water-storage units, solar lighting and energy saving stoves, called jikos. The solar lighting units reduce kerosene consumption and improve air quality inside homes. The smart elements also increase sustainability by reducing boma owners' reliance on natural resources – the jikos, for example, use less firewood, thus preserving trees and securing wildlife habitat. The water storage tanks are a lifeline in an arid and drought prone region.

2022-2023 Update

In 2022-2023, a further 23 PPBs were constructed, benefitting approximately 300 people, including 204 children. Ten of these PPBs were built in Tanzania, with the remaining 13 built in group ranches bordering the Amboseli National Park, seven in Olgulului-Olorashi, four in Mbirikani, one in Eselenkei, and one in Kuku/Rombo. This brings the total number of PPBs constructed since 2010 to 384. The average size of the PPB constructed was 210 m housing an average of 19 people (six adults and 13 children) and 231 domestic animals (96 cattle, 171 shoats, three donkeys and three dogs).

Our team distributed 1,600 energy saving stoves, 70 solar light units and 23 water storage tanks during 2022-2023. To date, Pride of Amboseli has distributed a total of 6,588 energy saving stoves, 399 solar units and 248 water storage tanks.

In 2022 and early 2023, the worst drought in 40 years fell upon the Horn of Africa. Amboseli was particularly hard hit – according to data from the Kenya Wildlife Service, between November 2022 and March 2023, 375 wild animals died as a result of the drought and an outbreak of the disease anthrax. Livestock was also affected by the drought, which has significant consequences on pastoralist livelihoods, who are often reliant on their livestock.

This had a significant impact on the pastoralist economy. Fortunately, the rains returned in the spring of 2023 and our team will monitor the recovery from this drought in Amboseli over the coming year.

In May 2022, Born Free published a research paper in the conservation journal *Oryx*. The study investigated the drivers of predator-proof boma disrepair, an important factor to ensure the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of our work. The team discovered there was more disrepair in bomas constructed with wooden posts. The Pride of Amboseli team began constructing the PPBs using posts made of more durable material, such as metal or recycled plastic instead of wood. Furthermore, the team discovered the extent of disrepair was greater in bomas located further away from a neighbouring predator-proof boma. This suggests there is a social element encouraging or enabling the maintenance of PPBs. This will inform the team in the future when deciding where to build PPBs.

'Since 2010, Born Free has helped local people construct hundreds of PPBs across several community-managed group ranches adjacent to Kenya's famous Amboseli National Park'



Northern Lions Project – Tier 2 Ethiopia, Sudan, Cameroon, Benin

Lions throughout Africa are threatened by a combination of habitat loss and land use change, depletion of prey populations, and retaliatory killings. Very little is known about the distribution of the lion subspecies known as the ‘northern lion’, which lives in fragmented and small populations in Asia, West, Central and North Africa, so we have little understanding of the threats they face, or how to conserve them. This subspecies has sharply declined over the last few decades. Robust surveying of the population distribution is important to inform effective conservation efforts.



Northern Lions (Panthera leo leo) in Cameroon © Northern Lions Project

In 2016, an expedition jointly organised by Born Free and the University of Oxford’s Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, also known as WildCRU, discovered a lion population in a huge area stretching either side of the border between Sudan and Ethiopia, called the Dinder-Alatash territory. Born Free provided funding to support the Northern Lions Project to survey the lion population of this area, which encompasses two national parks – Dinder on the Sudan side, and Alatash on the Ethiopian side. This area is inhabited by lions that have long been protected by authorities and local communities, but went unnoticed by the international community because the region is remote and infrequently visited.

The Northern Lions Project also surveys in other countries where populations of this rare lion subspecies are found, including Cameroon, Benin and Ethiopia. They implement a Lion Guards programme to build capacity of local people to conserve lions in their country. Cameroon is particularly important as it now holds the largest northern lion population, and therefore building the capacity of local people to conserve lions is vitally important.

2022-2023 Update

In 2022-2023, the project continued surveying Ethiopia's large carnivore populations, with a report due to be published later in 2023. Camera trap data across several of Ethiopia's reserves are being reviewed and will be incorporated into the national assessment of large carnivores.

In February 2023, the Northern Lions Project organised bush camps inside Ethiopia's parks for children from local schools. This was a fantastic opportunity for the children to learn about the surrounding ecosystems and to provide sensitisation on why lions need to be protected. This important work will help build the next generation of wildlife conservationists.



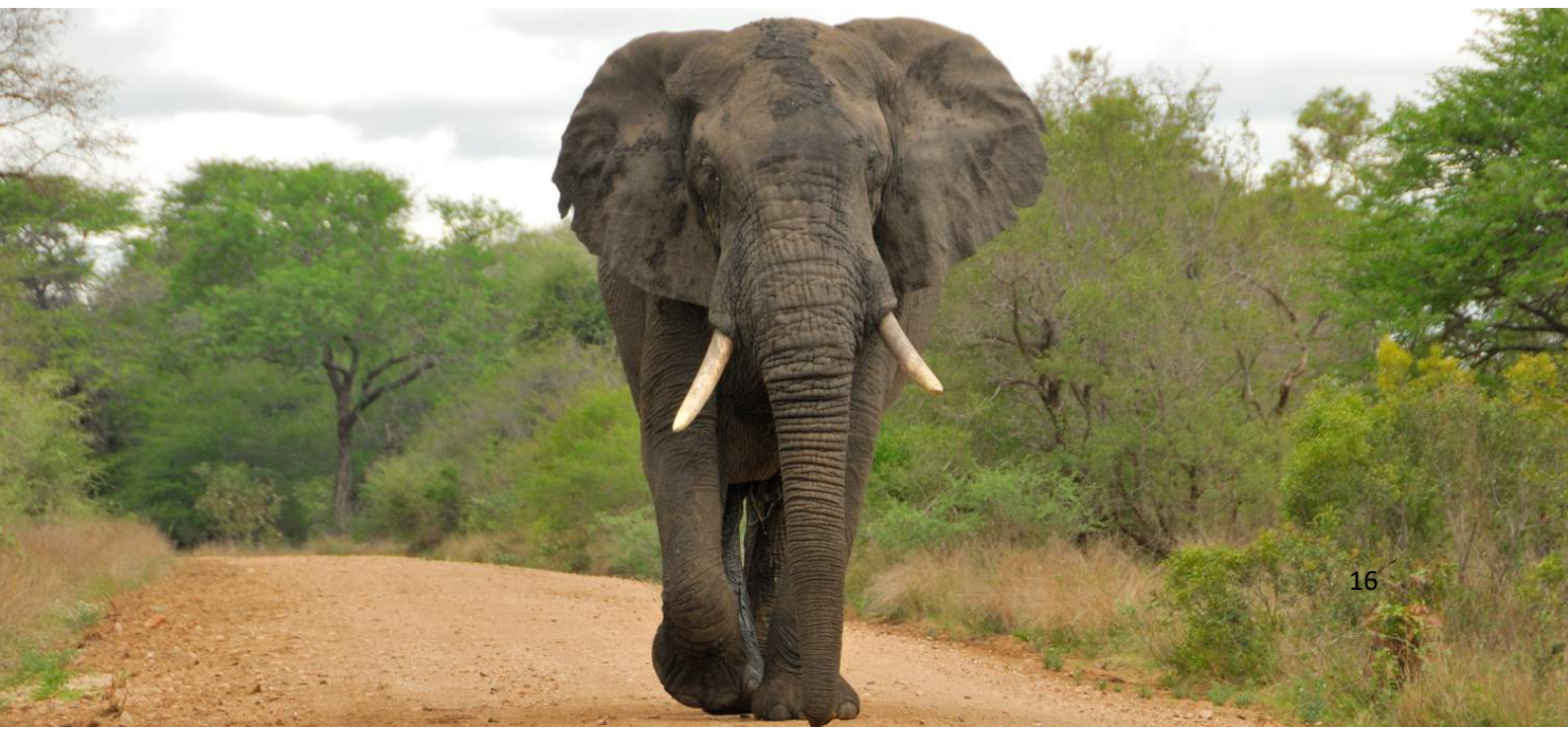
AFRICAN SAVANNAH ELEPHANTS AND GIRAFFES

Saving Meru's Giants – Tier 1 Meru Conservation Area, Kenya

The Meru Conservation Area, comprising the protected areas Meru National Park, Kora National Park, Mwingi Reserve and Bisanadi Reserve, is an important ecosystem for both elephants and giraffes.

Elephants

From a population of over 3,000 reduced to about 200 by poachers in the 1980s, savannah elephants in Meru Conservation Area now number an estimated 1,000. As their numbers increase and more habitat outside of protected areas is converted to agricultural and pastoral lands, conflict between humans and elephants has steadily increased and has become a significant issue for communities and elephants. Elephants can forage on crops, damaging the livelihoods of farmers. This can result in negative attitudes towards elephants, decreasing tolerance and reducing the ability of communities to co-exist with wildlife. Elephants can be persecuted, tormented, and sometimes killed, threatening the survival of the population. Furthermore, elephants can pose a threat to people, potentially leading to injuries and even deaths. Effective conservation solutions in collaboration with local communities are essential, not only to protect both elephants and people, but to achieve co-existence.



Giraffe

The Meru Conservation Area is an important stronghold for reticulated giraffes – a subspecies of giraffe who are listed as Endangered by the IUCN – and recent surveys estimate some 10% of the world’s population is found here. In the Meru Conservation Area, giraffes face habitat loss as land is converted for farming or settlements, and are illegally killed using firearms, snares and spears. The future of giraffes is precarious, and therefore necessitates effective conservation solutions in collaboration with local communities.

Saving Meru’s Giants

In 2021, Born Free launched a new conservation programme, Saving Meru’s Giants, to address the threats to both elephants and giraffes – in particular human-elephant conflict and loss of habitat integrity by illegal snaring – with the ultimate aim of creating an environment for co-existence between people and large herbivores.

To achieve this aim, Saving Meru’s Giants adopts a holistic programme of conservation strategies including implementing simple, low-cost conflict mitigation strategies, monitoring the elephant and giraffe populations of Meru, and carrying out de-snaring patrols via the deployment of the Twiga Team to protect herbivores from poachers and monitor instances of illegal activity within the park.



Bull African savannah elephant (Loxodonta africana) in Meru National Park © Born Free

2022-2023 Update

In 2022-2023, the team identified and catalogued 250 elephants in total across eight elephant families and groups of bulls. This represents 75% of the estimated 333 elephants found in Meru National Park (according to the Kenya Wildlife Service 2020 aerial survey), part of the wider population of the Meru Conservation Area which comprises approximately 1000 elephants. Our team has identified and catalogued 230 reticulated giraffes, representing 54% of the estimated 423 reticulated giraffes found in Meru National Park (Kenya Wildlife Service 2020 aerial survey), part of the wider population of the Meru Conservation Area which comprises approximately 1400 reticulated giraffes.

In June, we employed a team of five Conservation Ambassadors from communities in wildlife conflict hotspot areas around Meru National Park. As with the Pride of Meru programme, these five Conservation Ambassadors represent the community, giving them a much needed voice. During the last year, the Conservation Ambassadors reported 171 crop-raiding incidents in the community around Meru National Park.

The team initiated an innovative beehive fence project, a method pioneered by Dr Lucy King with Save the Elephants. In February, the team installed 120 beehives and 120 dummy hives along fences, protecting ten acres across ten farms (each farm received 12 beehives and 12 dummies). We will monitor these fences over the coming months to evaluate their effectiveness in mitigating human-elephant conflict and in providing an alternative source of income through honey production.

In addition to constructing beehive fences, the team has also developed a human-elephant conflict toolkit, which includes tried-and-tested and easy-to-implement strategies to prevent elephants from raiding crops, such as noise deterrents, unpalatable crops and light deterrents. The toolkit has been tailored to the needs of the communities living in the Meru Conservation Area.

"Effective conservation solutions in collaboration with local communities are essential, not only to protect both elephants and people, but to achieve co-existence."

The Twiga Team covered 321 miles (517km) during 121-foot patrols throughout the year. During their patrols the team removed an impressive 667 indiscriminate snares, 547 of which (82%) were active snares. This is approximately 1.3 snares removed for every mile patrolled (every 1.6 kilometre) the team covered.

Between July and September 2022, the Saving Meru's Giants team, in a joint effort with the Pride of Meru team, conducted a wide-scale social survey in the communities surrounding Meru National Park. The survey was conducted via our Conservation Ambassadors and surveyed 832 respondents across 37 sublocations throughout the ecosystem. The survey gathered detailed and nuanced information about economic status, livelihoods, and issues of human-wildlife conflict, as well as the attitudes, perceptions, knowledge, practices, and beliefs relating to elephants and large carnivores, specifically lions. The data are currently being analysed and the findings from the survey will be published over the coming year.

How many reticulated giraffes?

- Scientific name: *Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata*
- **11,048 mature individuals** according to IUCN* (<70,000 mature adults)
- IUCN* status: **Endangered**
- Global population in **decline**
- 56% population decline over the last 30 years**
- Circa **1,400 reticulated giraffes** in the Meru Conservation Area**

*International Union for the Conservation of Nature

**Aerial Survey of Mammals in Meru-Greater Kora Ecosystem, Kenya

Amboseli Trust for Elephants – Tier 2

Amboseli Ecosystem, Kenya

Throughout the continent, African savannah elephant populations have massively declined due to poaching for ivory, which peaked in the 1970s and 1980s. Today, poaching continues to remain a threat to elephants, as well as increasingly habitat loss and fragmentation resulting from land-use change by humans. As their habitat shrinks, conflict between elephants and people increases, presenting a barrier to their conservation and co-existence. The Amboseli elephant population has been able to live relatively undisturbed and has been steadily recovering since the late 1970s, their age structure and group composition not skewed by poaching. Understanding the complexity of ecology and social structures is vital for effective conservation. Therefore, the population is critical, not just for the conservation of Amboseli's elephants, but the conservation of elephants as a species.



Kita from the KB family, with her calf who survived the drought © Amboseli Trust for Elephants.

The Amboseli Trust for Elephants conducts the longest running study of wild African elephants anywhere in Africa. Amboseli National Park, located at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro, is home to some of the most well-known elephant families in the world. In September 2022, Amboseli Trust for Elephants celebrated its 50th anniversary and the project has been supported by Born Free since 1992.

With funding from Born Free, the research project seeks to monitor the social organisation and dynamics, behaviour, cognition, communication, genetics, and demography of savannah elephants, as well as human-elephant interactions. Field research and monitoring, spatial analysis, and mapping from the project have provided valuable insights into the behaviour and intelligence of African savannah elephants that have informed the conservation of this species.

2022-2023 Update

The Amboseli Trust for Elephants' long-term monitoring of Amboseli's elephant population continued in 2022-2023 with 139 days of monitoring in total, averaging 11 days every month. In total over the year, 768 elephant groups were encountered, with an average group size of 8.64. This group size is much smaller than is normal for elephants in Amboseli due to the harsh drought conditions East Africa experienced in 2022, the worst in 40 years. Sadly, the team recorded 210 deaths in the Amboseli population, were recorded during the year, many the direct result of the drought. The majority that succumbed to the drought were the old and the young. Whilst this is devastating, elephants show remarkable resilience. The elephants who survived the drought are usually of breeding age, and the team are hopeful that with the onset of the rains, there will be a baby boom in Amboseli, and the population will likely make a full recovery in the years to come.

How many African savannah elephants?

- Scientific name: *Loxodonta africana*
- Circa **415,000** according to IUCN*
- IUCN* status: savannah – **Endangered**; forest – **Critically Endangered**
- Global populations in **decline**
- **Kenya: >125% population increase** (16,000 1989; 36,280 2021**)
- Circa **1,000 elephants** in the Meru Conservation Area***

*International Union for the Conservation of Nature

** National Wildlife Census Report 2021

***Aerial Survey of Mammals in Meru-Greater Kora Ecosystem, Kenya

RHINOS

Kenya Wildlife Service Rhino Sanctuary – Tier 2 Meru Conservation Area, Kenya

Due to its biological diversity and cultural history, the Meru Conservation Area is a critical landscape in Kenya. However, poaching to supply the illegal trade in horns remains the main threat facing rhinos across Africa and in Meru today. Horns are used to produce ornaments, as well as being used in traditional Asian medicine.



Tana, a white rhinoceros (Ceratotherium simum), with a calf, Meru National Park © Born Free

In the 2000s, Kenya Wildlife Service created a Rhino Sanctuary in Meru National Park, which is a safe haven for black and white rhinos in this wild and diverse landscape. With funding and equipment from Born Free, Kenya Wildlife Service rangers carry out daily monitoring and patrols of the resident rhino population. Rangers patrol the Rhino Sanctuary daily, risking their lives to protect rhinos and other wildlife species from poachers. Due to their immense efforts, rhino poaching in the Meru National Park is virtually non-existent. Kenya now has the world's largest population of rhinos after Namibia and South Africa, with numbers continuing to increase, but they remain extremely vulnerable to poaching.

It is vital the rangers are supported in their daily activities to keep rhinos safe. Born Free provides financial support and equipment, such as solar panels and boots, to ensure the rangers can work in the most efficient way and effective way.

2022-2023 Update

With Born Free's support, Kenya Wildlife Service purchased a complete solar charging system for the Rhino Sanctuary security bases. This has had a positive impact for rhino conservation as the rhino rangers and watchers now have more time to patrol as well as timely communication within the Sanctuary, allowing for increased vigilance and greater protection for the rhinos against poaching.

We are thrilled that Kenya had a second successful year, in 2022, of achieving zero poaching incidents. We hope to see the same outcome for 2023.



How many rhinos?

- Scientific name: white rhino *Ceratotherium simum*; black rhino *Diceros bicornis*
- **583** eastern black rhinos, **10,080** adult white rhinos according to IUCN*
- IUCN* status: eastern black **Critically Endangered**, white **Near Threatened**
- Global population of eastern black rhinos **increasing**
- Global population of white rhino in **decline**

23

*International Union for the Conservation of Nature

ETHIOPIAN WOLVES

Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme – Tier 2 Bale Mountains, Ethiopia

Found only in a handful of scattered mountainous habitats in Ethiopia, the remaining global population of 500 adult Ethiopian wolves are at risk of extinction due to a range of reasons. Ethiopia has the fastest growing human population in Africa, which puts significant pressure on the natural environment. The highlands of Ethiopia, where the remaining wolves are found, have high rainfall and fertile soils, meaning people are attracted to the area to farm and habitat is lost to agriculture. Furthermore, Ethiopian wolves are susceptible to pathogens – such as rabies – transmitted from domestic dogs. Ethiopian wolves are also at risk from several other threats including retaliatory killings when the wolves predate livestock, road kills, as well as inbreeding and hybridisation with domestic dogs.



Ethiopian wolf cubs (Canis simensis) © Thierry Grobet Nyala Productions

The Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme carries out a variety of conservation activities aimed at protecting this threatened species, including population monitoring, disease control, community education, habitat protection, capacity building and research.

2022-2023 Update

One of the main aims of the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme is to protect Ethiopian wolves from lethal viruses transmitted from domestic dogs. Last year, in the Bale Mountains National Park, the team vaccinated 3,320 domestic dogs from 33 villages to prevent disease transmission to the wolves. During the vaccination campaign, domestic dogs in and around the park were visited and vaccinated against the rabies virus, with a vaccination coverage of 93%. No rabies cases on Ethiopian wolves were reported during last year, although there was one positive case in a domestic dog reported by the community. Their vaccination campaigns are accompanied by their education and outreach initiatives which reach out to school children and communities using educational leaflets and posters produced in local dialects, Amharic and Oromo.

To enhance the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme team's ability to accurately and efficiently diagnose disease and to control disease outbreaks, they provided practical post-mortem training to 17 government veterinarians working around wolf habitats in North Ethiopia and equipped them with post-mortem kits and rapid field diagnostic tools. The kits enable them to sample, rapidly test and dispatch samples to laboratories in Addis Ababa and the UK from any suspected rabies case. This is helping to facilitate the programme's disease controlling capacity in two protected areas in the northern highlands. Disease Alert Networks were established to provide rapid reporting of any suspected disease outbreaks, with tangible benefits to people, their livestock, and the wolves.

How many Ethiopian wolves?

- Scientific name: *Canis simensis*
- Population: Approximately **500** individuals remaining
- IUCN* status: **Endangered**
- Global population in **decline**

*International Union for the Conservation of Nature



CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA

Born Free protects chimpanzees, gorillas, forest elephants and many other endangered species within threatened tropical forest ecosystems of Central and West Africa, by investing in community engagement and habitat restoration, and reducing human pressure on forest ecosystems.



The Dja Forest, Cameroon © APGS

GORILLAS AND CHIMPANZEES

Guardians of Dja – Tier 1 Dja Biosphere Reserve, East Region, Cameroon

The Dja Biosphere Reserve is home to many rural communities who experience high levels of poverty, whose traditional livelihoods rely on unsustainable consumptive use of the forest including activities such as bushmeat hunting and shifting agricultural practices, also known as ‘slash-and-burn’. Unfortunately, these activities are extremely damaging to the forest ecosystem and to the survival of great apes. The Dja Biosphere Reserve is an important region for great apes and is home to an estimated population of 2,004 western lowland gorillas and 2,785 central chimpanzees. The region is also home to many other species, including an estimated population of 219 Critically Endangered forest elephants. It is imperative the threats facing this region are addressed and the habitat is secured to ensure the survival of threatened species.



Central chimpanzee (Pan troglodytes troglodytes) in Dja © MPI-EVA PanAf

Born Free launched a brand-new conservation programme in the Dja, called Guardians of Dja. The programme currently operates in six villages in the north-eastern periphery of the Dja Biosphere Reserve.

Born Free supports our local implementation partner, *Association pour la Protection de Grands Singes*, which means Association for the Protection of Great Apes in English, to deliver training in sustainable agroforestry practices at an Agroforestry Training Centre, where local students are empowered to develop a reliable and sustainable trade in cocoa and pepper.

The programme provides primary education via the local primary school, which has capacity for 100 pupils per year. Students at the school receive ten hours of conservation theory a week and the staff receive conservation training.

To address the issue of bushmeat hunting, the Guardians of Dja programme supports the 'Services of Conservation of the Dja Biosphere Reserve', the institution responsible for managing the Dja Faunal Reserve, to carry out at least two anti-poaching patrols each year across the landscape. To further assist in law enforcement and sensitisation of the communities to great ape conservation, the team recruited 12 'Great Ape Guardians', comprising five women and seven men from local communities, who patrol, gather information on bushmeat hunting, sensitise others, and act as a facilitator between the team and the communities.

The Guardians of Dja programme aims to protect and actively restore forest to benefit people, great apes, and other forest species. Farmers are encouraged to re-use previously farmed land, known as fallows, using composting to bring nutrients back to the soil. This reduces the pressures exerted on the environment via the traditional method of farming. Several nurseries have been set up to provide a mix of native trees and food crop trees to reforest these areas. This will improve habitat integrity and connectivity, and pro-actively respond to the challenges of climate change.



2022-2023 Update

During the 2022-2023 academic year, 39 pupils were registered at the Agroforestry Training Centre. Since the programme launched, three further pupils have already graduated from the training centre, with the tools and seeds needed to set up their own nursery, and they are currently applying the skills learnt.

By the end of March 2023, 81 primary school-age pupils were receiving ten hours of conservation lessons per week. Two pre-tests have been carried out to evaluate the pupils baseline understanding of conservation as a result of the education provided.

To encourage community interest in conservation and to build good relations with local communities, a one-week football and handball competition was held across several villages, and culminated in a single final event, where 400 young people participated whilst also learning about conservation. This was followed by an evening event, totalling an estimate of over 430 villagers including youths and adults from five neighbouring villages learning about conservation.

A total of 66 villagers have signed 'Reciprocal Environmental Agreements', committing themselves to conserve wildlife and forest and to sensitise others to do same. Over 50 people have expressed a willingness to engage in forest regeneration, each willing to create a hectare of agroforestry trees from fallow land. More than 4,320 agroforestry plants were transported to the programme's nursery, including pears, mangoes, mandarins, oranges, plums, and soursop. These trees will soon be planted in the fallows, as the villagers wait for the return of the rains.

How many western lowland gorillas?

- Scientific name: *Gorilla gorilla gorilla* (western lowland gorillas)
- Circa **316,000** western lowland gorillas IUCN*
- Global population in **decline**
- IUCN* status: **Critically Endangered**
- Circa **2,004** western lowland gorillas in the Dja Biosphere Reserve

*International Union for the Conservation of Nature

Bulindi Chimpanzee and Community Project – Tier 2 Hoima District, Uganda

In western Uganda's Hoima District, about 300 wild eastern chimpanzees survive in shrinking fragments of forest along rivers and swamps, owned by local households, and have no formal protection. However, the region is of high conservation value as it links two major chimpanzee populations in two large, protected areas – Budongo and Bugoma Forest Reserves, each home to more than 500 chimpanzees.



Juvenile eastern chimpanzees (Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii) feeding on sugarcane © Matthew McLennan, BCCP

The Hoima population comprises at least 10 resident chimpanzee communities, in an area of about 300 mi² (800km²). The chimpanzees are under immediate threat from habitat loss resulting from widespread logging as well as conversion to farmland. The chimpanzees are also threatened by a growing high-density human population, as well as infrastructural developments including an oil pipeline, road upgrades and urbanisation, pathogen exposure, and escalating human–chimpanzee conflict and negative human–chimpanzee interactions that can result in retaliatory killings and persecution of chimpanzees.

The Bulindi Chimpanzee and Community Project was established in 2014 with the immediate goal to preserve chimpanzee habitat in Bulindi by halting deforestation, and a broader goal of conserving chimpanzees throughout Hoima and facilitating long term human-wildlife co-existence in the region.

With support from Born Free, the project monitors the population of chimpanzees in the Hoima district and provides educational conservation lessons in schools. The team plants a mix of indigenous trees to help restore the forest habitat, and faster growing varieties to provide alternative wood and income sources for the community. The team implements a school sponsorship scheme – they provide funding to contribute to school fees, and in return the families agree to not cut down or degrade their privately owned forest areas.

2022-2023 Update

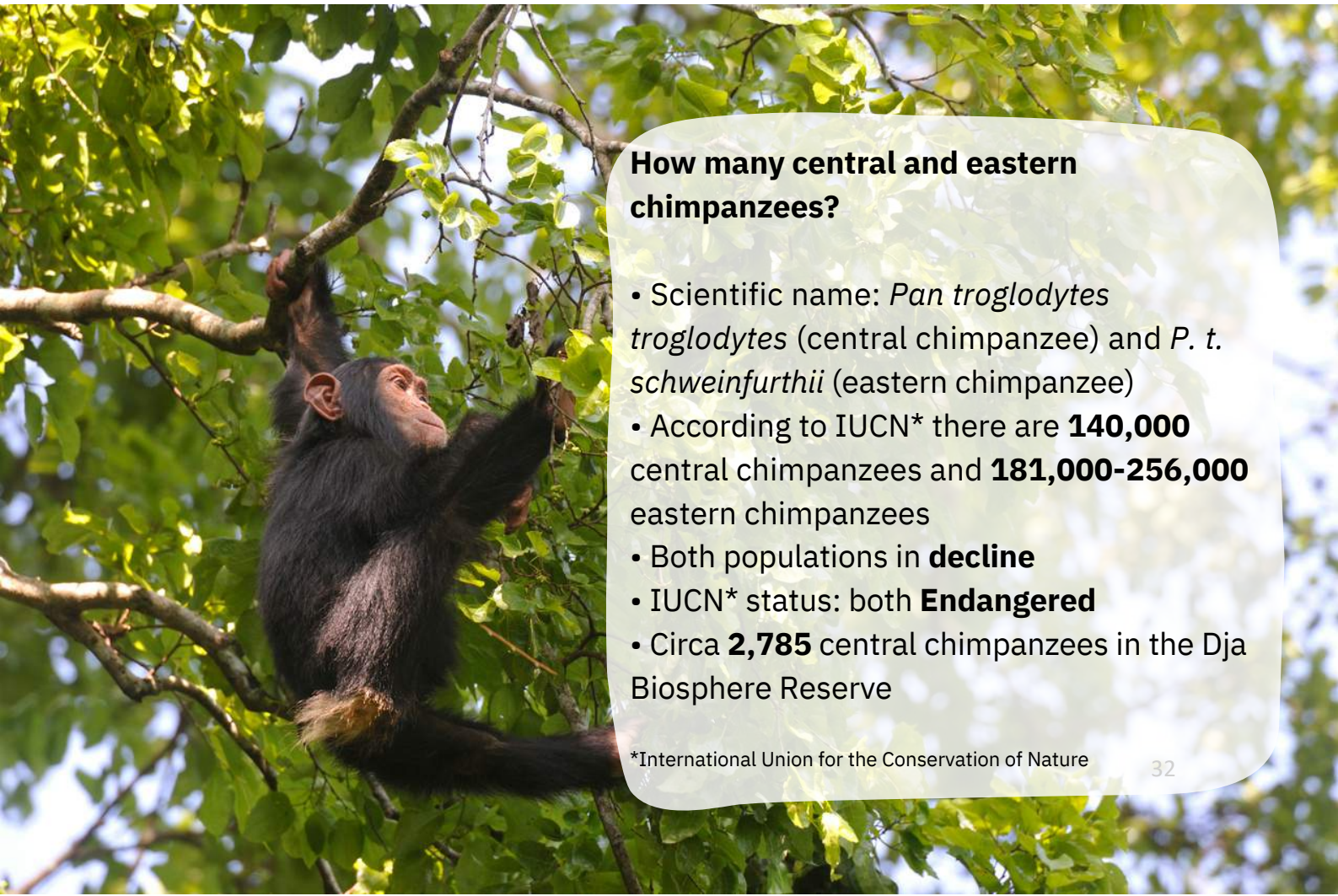
Five chimpanzee groups were monitored regularly, four to seven times a week, during 2022-2023. Throughout the year, the team recorded several births across the groups.

The team held 16 sensitization meetings and made 19 school outreach visits to ten different primary schools. Altogether approximately 1,000 children were reached by this school outreach programme during the year. During school visits, the education team explained about chimpanzee behaviour and environmental issues, and advised children about how to behave safely when they see chimpanzees- such as the 'do's and don't's. Following these school visits, a popular inter-school quiz competition was held between May and July 2022, involving pupils from eight primary school.

In 2022-2023, the Bulindi Chimpanzee and Community Project's school sponsorship programme was expanded to include a further 16 privately owned forests, bringing the total number of privately owned forests implicated by this scheme to 50. The area of privately owned natural forest being actively conserved increased from 133 to 212 acres. All private forests were in good condition at the start of the three school terms with no signs of tree cutting observed.

In early 2022, the team supplied 466,388 seedlings to 696 farmers; with a following 545,039 seedlings raised and supplied to 832 farmers between August and November 2022. This means that during the year over one million seedlings were raised and distributed. This results in the reforested areas providing an ecological benefit for chimpanzees, as well as benefitting the livelihoods of local villagers.

"300 wild eastern chimpanzees survive in shrinking fragments of forest along rivers and swamps, owned by local households, and have no formal protection"



How many central and eastern chimpanzees?

- Scientific name: *Pan troglodytes troglodytes* (central chimpanzee) and *P. t. schweinfurthii* (eastern chimpanzee)
- According to IUCN* there are **140,000** central chimpanzees and **181,000-256,000** eastern chimpanzees
- Both populations in **decline**
- IUCN* status: both **Endangered**
- Circa **2,785** central chimpanzees in the Dja Biosphere Reserve

*International Union for the Conservation of Nature

Gorilla Monitoring Project – Tier 2

Kahuzi-Biega National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo

The population of eastern lowland gorillas, also known as Grauer’s gorillas, has dramatically declined over the last few decades, and the species is now mostly confined to a few small regions in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, also known as the DRC. This makes them extremely vulnerable to extinction. This population decline can be attributed to illegal hunting for bushmeat as well as habitat loss due to expanding human settlements, agriculture and mining operations.



Juvenile eastern lowland gorilla (Gorilla beringei graueri) from the Bonane family © Wildlife Conservation Society

Kahuzi-Biega National Park was established more than 50 years ago to preserve this endemic species and protect one of the most biodiverse areas in the DRC. Last year, the Wildlife Conservation Society entered into a ‘Public Private Partnership’ agreement with the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation to assist in managing the park.

Born Free supports WCS to assist in the safeguarding and monitoring of 14 gorilla families in the Tshivanga Highlands sector of Kahuzi-Biega National Park. Each family group is monitored daily to account for every individual. Some of the family groups are not habituated to the trackers, so the members of each family are accounted for by counting the number of nests at each nest site in the morning. The trackers also collect photos of each individual. Gorillas can be identified from their nose prints and other distinctive marks, so the aim is to eventually build a family album for each gorilla family. Health monitoring of the gorillas is conducted under the supervision of two Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation vets. These vets remove snares when gorillas get trapped by poachers and treat individuals for other ailments such as flu.

2022-2023 Update

The Bonane family welcomed a new member this year with the birth of a new baby. Field teams first suspected the arrival of a new baby, and this was confirmed through regular monitoring of the group by staff. This is the second baby for mother Siri, who previously gave birth to Deschryver, who was named after the founder of the national park.

This is the second birth recorded this year amongst the park's monitored and habituated gorilla groups; the Mpungwe family welcomed a new baby at the beginning of 2022. A total of 173 gorillas (in eight groups) are now part of the regular monitoring programme.

How many eastern lowland gorillas?

- Scientific name: *Gorilla beringei graueri*
- - <4,000 in 2015 according to IUCN
- Endemic to the forests of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo
- IUCN* status: **Critically Endangered**
- Global population in **decline**

*International Union for the Conservation of Nature



AFRICAN FOREST ELEPHANTS

Elephant Research and Conservation – Tier 2 North-western Liberia

According to IUCN, more than 80% of African forest elephants have been lost in the last century, and the species has been classified as Critically Endangered. This decrease has been principally caused by poaching, which is still a significant and ongoing threat to this species. The ongoing conversion of their habitats, primarily to agricultural and other land uses, is another significant threat.



African Forest Elephant (Loxodonta cyclotis) © ELRECO

Liberia is home to two of the three remaining large blocks of the Upper Guinea Forest, it offers one of the best chances of survival for the forest elephant in West Africa. Currently, there are no reliable population estimates for Liberia. The main aim of Elephant Research and Conservation is to consolidate these urgently needed baseline data via a nationwide elephant status survey. The team also analyses the genetics of elephant populations, increases awareness of elephant conservation and building capacity to take action in local communities, reduces human-elephant conflict and promotes co-existence.

2022-2023 Update

In 2022-2023, Elephant Research and Conservation provided five training courses in human-elephant conflict mitigation strategies, reaching 130 farmers from 36 communities across seven conflict hotspots. This brings the total number of farmers trained since the training programme began in 2021 to 283 farmers from 46 communities across eight conflict hotspots. The farmers attending these training courses were issued with mitigation equipment including: 453 vuvuzelas (plastic horns) for noise deterrence; 623 whistles for noise deterrence; 176 solar-powered flashlights; 1,538 empty soft drink cans which when tied together create a noise deterrence; 1,340 white shirts to help create scarecrows; 334kg of dry chili pepper for fixing and burning chilli bricks, which elephants are known to dislike.

Elephant Research and Conservation tested Buzz Boxes™, developed by Wild Survivors and funded by Save the Elephants, that are triggered by motion and emit an electronically produced buzzing sound. Elephants are known to be deterred by the sound of buzzing as bees can inflict painful stings around the eyes and ears, and even around the trunk. Early evidence suggests these Buzz Boxes™ may be highly effective at mitigating crop raiding by elephants.

In early 2022, the Forest Development Authority and Elephant Research and Conservation rescued an orphaned four-month-old elephant calf, whom they named Noku, in Lowoma, Northwestern Liberia, whose mother likely had been killed by poachers. In 2022-2023, the team has supported the Forest Development Authority with Noku's care, with the aim to reintroduce the young elephant back to the wild.

How many African forest elephants?

- Scientific name: *Loxodonta cyclotis*
- Population unknown, but in **decline** and approximately **111,000** lost since 2006.
- IUCN* status: **Critically Endangered**

*International Union for the Conservation of Nature



ENDANGERED AFRICAN SPECIES

Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement – Tier 2 Cameroon, Gabon, Republic of Congo, Guinea, Togo, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Uganda and Burkina Faso

One of the most immediate and critical threats to many endangered African species including elephants, rhinos, primates, birds and pangolins is the illegal trade in wildlife, for meat, skins, bones and pets. Although national laws and international treaties protect these species throughout their range, there is a need to support local wildlife law enforcement to target and apprehend high-level criminals and criminal gangs, to combat the issue of illegal wildlife trade and protect wildlife species throughout Africa.



Elephant tusks seized in August 2022 © EAGLE

The 'EAGLE' (Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement) Network is a coalition of organisations in nine central and west African countries, committed to reducing illegal wildlife activity. EAGLE has developed a unique initiative, through collaboration with national governments and civil societies, to implement a programme of investigations, arrests, prosecutions and publicity in the network.

Supported by Born Free, EAGLE was initiated in Cameroon through the Last Great Ape Organisation project in 2002. Since then, this project has been replicated in eight other countries. To date, EAGLE has contributed to stopping hundreds of wildlife criminals and better protecting threatened species.

2022-2023 Update

Throughout 2022-2023, EAGLE ensured wildlife law was being enforced throughout the nine countries. Through EAGLE's operations, 130 major wildlife traffickers were arrested. Ivory trafficking was a serious issue, with 652kg including 115 tusks seized collectively across the EAGLE network. In one single event a group of traffickers was arrested with 100kg of ivory.

Pangolins also constituted a large proportion of seizures, with collectively over 800kg of pangolin scales seized.

Collectively across the nine countries, 2,070 media pieces were published across newspapers, television, radio and online, highlighting the work of the EAGLE network and acting as a strong deterrent against potential future crimes.



Last Great Ape Organisation – Tier 2 Cameroon

As part of the EAGLE Network, the Last Great Ape Organisation is a non-governmental organisation focusing on wildlife law enforcement in Cameroon. The team works with government authorities to capture and prosecute dealers in protected wildlife species, especially those trading in bushmeat and ivory.



African grey parrots (Psittacus erithacus) rescued from traffickers © LAGA

The Last Great Ape Organisation was the first initiative supporting wildlife law enforcement, which has since developed into the EAGLE Network. Through collaboration with national governments and civil societies, Last Great Ape Organisation implements a programme of investigations, arrests, prosecutions, and publicity about wildlife crime specifically in Cameroon.

"33 major traffickers – individuals with a large influence on the illegal trade of wildlife – were arrested, which has a significant impact on stopping criminal networks"

2022-2023 Update

During 2022-2023, Last Great Ape Organisation continued to ensure wildlife law was being enforced throughout the country. Through the team's operations, 33 major traffickers – individuals with a large influence on the illegal trade of wildlife – were arrested, which has a significant impact on stopping criminal networks and protecting many endangered species in Cameroon.

The largest proportion of trafficking cases in Cameroon investigated by the team were pangolin scales (46%), a sad indication of the critical situation that these threatened species are in. A further 15% of cases involved ivory trafficking, and 15% involved live primates.

Several Last Great Ape Organisation operations led to the seizure of a large volume of illegal wildlife products. During a single operation, 386kg of pangolin scales were seized. In September, 98kg of ivory was seized and in December, 28 African grey parrots were seized, leading to the dismantling of a parrot trafficking ring.

During the year, 330 media pieces were published across radio, television, newspapers, and online, to educate people across Cameroon on the illegality of wildlife trade and highlight the work the Last Great Ape Organisation has been doing to combat it.



SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Born Free has a varied impact in south-east Asia, promoting peaceful co-existence with Bengal and Indochinese tigers in India and Thailand, helping to curb the illegal trade in Indian pangolins, and rescuing and rehabilitating Bornean orangutans in Indonesia.



Timtom, the orphaned Bornean orangutan (Pongo pygmaeus), Lamandau Wildlife Reserve © Orangutan Foundation

TIGERS

Satpuda Landscape Tiger Partnership – Tier 1 Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, Central India

With fewer than 6,000 tigers left in the wild, the future for this species in its natural habitat is precarious. The distribution of tigers throughout India, Indochina, and southeast Asia has decreased significantly over the last 70 years, and the threats are mounting. Tigers require large contiguous forests with access to prey and water, and undisturbed core areas in which to breed, and are therefore particularly vulnerable to habitat loss and fragmentation. The Satpuda forests of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, constituting several tiger reserves connected by forest corridors, are the largest viable block of tiger habitat in India and offer perhaps the best hope for India's remaining wild tigers. Living in proximity, tigers can attack and kill livestock or pose a danger to people, which decreases tolerance and can lead to retaliatory killings of tigers and an unwillingness to engage in conservation activities, putting the future of the species at risk. Tigers are also poached for the illegal trade in high-value tiger products including skins, bones, and tiger meat, as are their prey.



Tiger (Panthera tigris) © Yashvardhan Dalmia

The Satpuda Landscape Tiger Partnership, also known as SLTP, developed by Born Free and the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit of the University of Oxford in 2004, brings together a network of Indian conservationists working in seven tiger reserves – Bori-Satpuda, Kanha, Melghat, Pench MP, Pench Maharashtra, Navegaon-Nagzira, Tadoba-Andhari – and the habitat corridors linking them.

With Born Free’s support, these dedicated non-governmental organisations carry out a diverse range of activities. These include running alternative livelihood and rural development initiatives – such as bio-gas stoves so people are less reliant on collecting firewood from the forest – as well as deploying a team of Tiger Ambassadors who are critical local agents of support for tiger conservation and points of contact for community members experiencing conflict. Born Free also supports an environmental education programme to teach children about wildlife and co-existence, and a Mobile Health Unit, which regularly visits rural villages so local people do not have to travel long distances to visit the hospital. Such activities provide essential services to people and encourage communities to support and participate in tiger conservation.

Another SLTP partner implements a stall-feeding project that supplies livestock owners with fast-growing, highly nutritious green fodder to feed their livestock. This means livestock do not need to be grazed in the forest, where they, and the people looking after them, are extremely vulnerable to attack from tigers. Reducing the need to graze livestock in the forest reduces conflict and increases tolerance for tigers, fostering an environment of co-existence between people and these iconic carnivores.



2022-2023 Update

In 2022-2023, 184 medical camps were organised across 51 villages in three tiger reserves, reaching 5,894 patients. Through these camps 3,380 villagers were made aware of the compensation package available for the injury or loss of livestock during a carnivore attack, and a monthly conservation action plan was shared with 4,380 patients.

During the year, 71 households were implicated in the stall-feeding project, benefitting 257 adult cattle and 55 calves. These households collectively received 35,000kg of green fodder for their cattle. Ten cattle sheds have also been installed to provide further protection to the cattle. A total of 56 new Tiger Ambassadors were selected and trained this year, from eight new villages, which is seven tiger ambassadors per village.

This brings the total number of Tiger Ambassadors trained over the last three years to 511. Across all the partners of SLTP, 300 school awareness programmes were conducted, reaching an estimated 10,244 students, teaching them about the importance of tigers and sensitising them to tiger conservation. Furthermore, across all the partners an estimated 38,612 community members were reached and provided with tiger conservation education and sensitisation via various community awareness programmes. This included 449 teachers, and 214 herders.

How many tigers?

- Scientific name: *Pantheris tigris*
- Estimated global population of between **2,608 and 3,905** mature individuals according to IUCN*
- IUCN* status: **Endangered**
- Global population in **decline**
- Circa **3,167** tigers are found in India**

*International Union for the Conservation of Nature

**2022 National Tiger Census



Freeland Foundation – Tier 2 Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex, Thailand

The future of the Indochinese sub-population is particularly precarious. Their only remaining strongholds are in Thailand and Myanmar and the subpopulation is considered by some scientists to be Critically Endangered. A small population of Indochinese tigers survives in eastern Thailand's forest complex and one of Southeast Asia's last contiguous tracts of forest. The main threats Indochinese tigers are facing include habitat loss, illegal rosewood logging, poaching, and overhunting of prey.



Camera trap image of a female tiger (Panthera tigris) with a cub © Freeland Foundation

The Freeland Foundation implements conservation initiatives to safeguard a population of Indochinese tigers found in eastern Thailand's Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex, one of only two viable populations of Indochinese tigers. These initiatives include supporting anti-poaching unit operations, providing on-job-training for rangers in data collection and survey techniques to improve understanding of tigers and prey distribution, supporting teacher-led educational outreach to schools near tiger reserves, and improving surveying and patrolling coverage in key forest complexes.

2022-2023 Update

Thanks to these measures, in the last few years tigers have been documented to be breeding in Thailand again. The tigers are also now dispersing eastwards to areas where they were previously extirpated.

Although the population of this forest complex is only small, there are promising signs that the population is doing well, with three incidents of tiger breeding recorded in 2022-2023. Furthermore, no cases of tiger poaching within the complex were recorded during the last year, suggesting the population may have increased since the last large-scale survey, which was over four years ago. This is promising, considering the importance of this population for the survival of this isolated subspecies.

During the last year, Freeland Foundation continued to implement an outreach programme for schools around the forest complex to sensitise people to tigers and tiger conservation. In total, 18 schools were visited, and 1,317 students reached during 2022-2023. A further two schools in neighbouring Cambodia were also reached. The outreach programme is also aimed at the wider community, with ten villages and more than 100 people engaged during the year.

Freeland provide training to rangers on patrolling techniques, data collection and law enforcement. A total of 40 rangers were provided with on-the-job training during the first quarter of 2023 alone, which will greatly increase the capacity of the team to patrol the forest complex and monitor illegal activity in the site.



PANGOLINS

Wildlife Protection Society of India – Tier 2 Ganjam, Nayagarh, Boudh, and Mayurbhanj in Odisha, eastern India

In India, populations of the Indian pangolin are being targeted for the illegal trade in live pangolins and their body parts – mainly scales, meat, and skin. Odisha is believed to be one of the last strongholds of the Indian pangolin. It has also been identified as potentially the location where poachers are capturing pangolins and transporting them for the illegal trade in live pangolins and their body scales.



A live Indian pangolin (Manis crassicaudata) rescued by the Forest Department found at a construction site © WPSI

Since 1994, the Wildlife Protection Society of India has pioneered investigations into poaching and trade in endangered species and has assisted enforcement authorities in apprehending numerous wildlife criminals across India. The Wildlife Protection Society of India has built a dedicated informer network to gather local intelligence on pangolin trade, and investigates the little-known involvement of nomadic poaching tribes in Odisha. The team sensitises local communities living in remote parts of the region, particularly where the threat of illegal pangolin poaching and trade is most prevalent.

2022-2023 Update

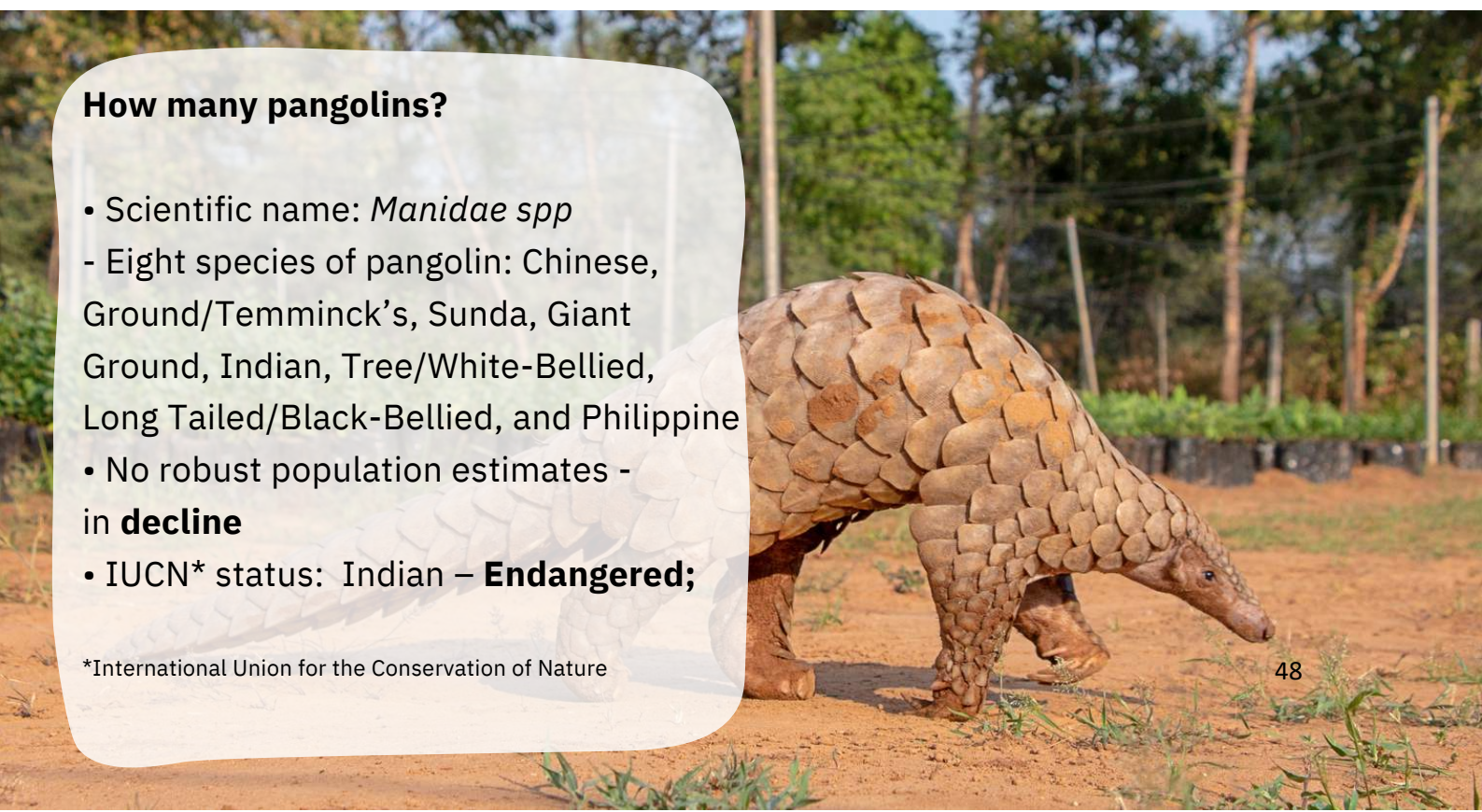
During 2022-2023, the team carried out field investigations covering a vast area, while gathering new and relevant information on possible hotspots for pangolin poaching. This included seven new locations of nomadic and traditional camps known to target smaller mammals and wildlife species for local trade, the identification of ten vulnerable villages where pangolin poaching and trade is prevalent, and 110 locations identified as having either pangolins present or suitable habitat. This data was used to update a pangolin 'threat zone' map, showing the location where both pangolins are present and poaching is highly likely, and model pangolin habitat suitability. This data will be critical to inform conservation efforts.

To ensure active community participation in pangolin protection in their project areas, the Wildlife Protection Society of India put up over 500 billboards in identified and targeted village locations. Through this medium, the team displayed information on their reward scheme in return for information concerning the illegal trade in pangolins in Odia, the local language, and gave the free-to-call contact number of the Wildlife Crime Cell for people to report incidents of wildlife crime, in particular concerning pangolins. They have had a large volume of anecdotal evidence from local people that these billboards act as a ready reference to report crimes against pangolins and thus deter potential crime.

How many pangolins?

- Scientific name: *Manidae spp*
- Eight species of pangolin: Chinese, Ground/Temminck's, Sunda, Giant Ground, Indian, Tree/White-Bellied, Long Tailed/Black-Bellied, and Philippine
- No robust population estimates - in **decline**
- IUCN* status: Indian – **Endangered**;

*International Union for the Conservation of Nature



ORANGUTANS

Orangutan Foundation – Tier 2 Central Kalimantan, Borneo, Indonesia

Orangutans were once widespread across southeast Asia, but today are found on only two islands: Borneo and Sumatra. There are three species of orangutan: two in Sumatra, and one in Borneo. They are increasingly under threat from habitat loss, due to mining, logging, and palm oil development and it is estimated by the Orangutan Foundation that 80% of their forest habitat has been lost in the past three decades. Illegal hunting is another significant threat: many orangutans are shot and killed, and their orphaned infants may become illegal pets.



Tmtom, the orphaned Bornean orangutan (Pongo pygmaeus), Lamandau Wildlife Reserve © Orangutan Foundation

The Orangutan Foundation has been working for over two decades to protect orangutan populations and their habitat in Central Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo. Supported by Born Free, the Orangutan Foundation's works to preserve protected areas, create new conservation areas, conduct daily foot patrols, prevent deforestation and illegal activity in the forests, and engage with local communities.

The Orangutan Foundation provides continued support and care for Timtom, a young female orangutan who was rescued as an illegal pet aged nine months in 2016. The Orangutan Foundation's soft-release programme cares for young, orphaned orangutans as they learn vital skills and prepare themselves for a future in the wild.

2022-2023 Update

As a result of the Orangutan Foundation's habitat restoration work, in 2022-2023 there was no significant change in the area of forest cover within Lamandau forest reserve, indicating virtually no illegal deforestation was occurring. Indeed, throughout the year there were no cases of illegal logging, encroachment, or forest fires on the eastern side of the reserve as a direct result of patrolling efforts.

To date, 23 orphaned orangutans have graduated from the Orangutan Foundation's soft-release programme, with another six currently in the process, including Timtom. This year, Timtom took a significant step towards adulthood by spending a night alone in the forest. Timtom has so far been reluctant to attempt nest-building. The team caring for her are slowly encouraging her to spend more nights alone in the forest and up in the trees, in the hope that she will develop her nest-building skills.

How many orangutans?

- Scientific name: *Pongo spp*
- Three species of orangutan: Bornean, Sumatran and Tapanuli
- Population Estimates: Bornean – circa **57,000***; Sumatran – circa **13,000***; Tapanuli – circa **800****
- IUCN* status: all three species are **Critically Endangered**

*Orangutan Foundation

**International Union for the Conservation of Nature

SOUTH AMERICA

Born Free helps protect jaguars in the Argentinian highlands of the Yungas via landscape surveying, reducing habitat degradation and fragmentation and working with local farmers to address human-carnivore conflict.



Camera trap image of a female jaguar (Panthera onca) in the Yungas region, Argentina © Jaguars in the Fringe

JAGUARS

Jaguars in the Fringe – Tier 2 Yungas Forest, Argentina

Jaguars in the region face numerous threats including deforestation, poaching, creation and maintenance of lineal infrastructure – mostly roads and irrigation channels – cattle raising, selective logging, and wildfires. Historically, habitat loss resulting from deforestation was the most significant threat to jaguars in the region. However, more recently deforestation has reduced, meaning illegal killing is now the most significant threat facing jaguars, especially retaliatory killing when jaguars attack cattle.



Camera trap image of a young male jaguar (Panthera onca) named Dozer in Calilegua National Park, Argentina © Jaguars in the Fringe

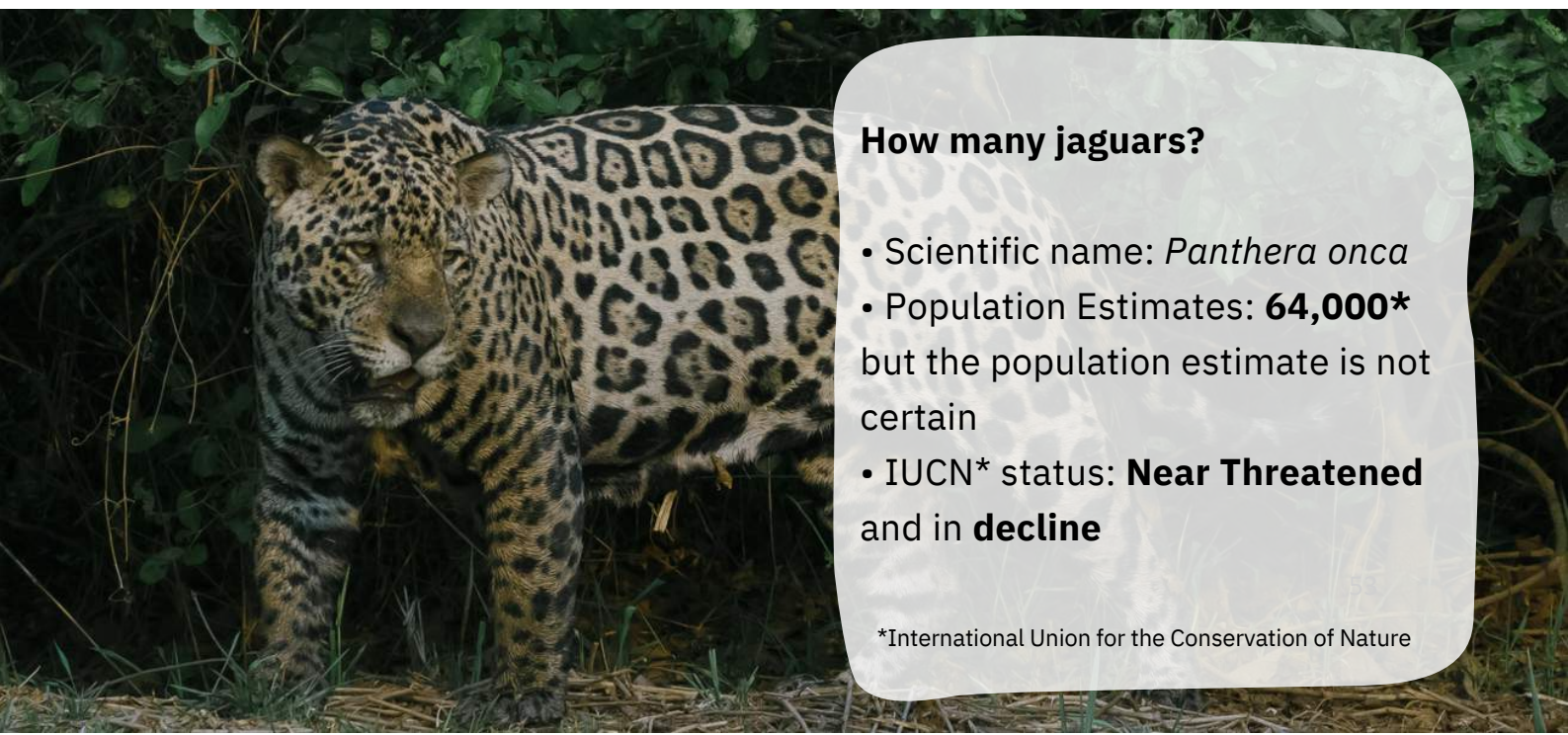
Since 2011, Jaguars in the Fringe has been working to secure the survival of jaguars in the threatened Yungas and change negative attitudes among the local community towards these large carnivores.

The project carries out region-wide camera trap surveys which contribute to more reliable estimates of jaguar and prey populations, the identification of key areas for conservation, and provide a better understanding of the ranchers' attitudes toward jaguars. Additionally, the project works to support local governments to protect the Yungas and its wildlife, through the implementation of the Jaguar Strategic Conservation Plan. By working with diverse landowners – including state-owned, plantations, large cattle ranches, and farms – Jaguars in the Fringe promotes the recovery of wild prey populations, benefitting the survival of the remaining jaguars.

2022-2023 Update

Supported by Born Free, Jaguars in the Fringe has been evaluating the effects of wildfires on jaguars and other mammals in the Yungas. Between November and December 2022, another fire spread across 215,831ha. The team will be monitoring the effects of this fire and will publish the findings later this year. However, as a result of monitoring the effects of wildfires, the Jaguars in the Fringe team obtained the first records of large herds of the endangered, white-lipped peccary.

During the year, the team continued with visiting local farmers to help resolve and mitigate conflicts with jaguars, which can prey on livestock. Over the year, the team built ten livestock enclosures that have protected 637 cows, as well as distributing light collars and bells to 75 cows and odour colours to 255 cows. As a result of these efforts, predation events remained low, despite jaguar presence records remaining constant. This is a good indication that co-existence between jaguars and people is occurring in the Yungas Forest.



How many jaguars?

- Scientific name: *Panthera onca*
- Population Estimates: **64,000*** but the population estimate is not certain
- IUCN* status: **Near Threatened** and in **decline**

*International Union for the Conservation of Nature

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS





**THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR
SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS,
WITHOUT WHOM THIS WORK
WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE!**

