



ANNUAL REPORT

2024



Director’s Note

Dear Friends and Partners,

I am pleased to share the Hirola Conservation Programme’s 2024 Annual Report. This year was challenging for me personally, as I faced a period of illness that limited my ability to be in the field. Despite this, our committed team ensured that essential work continued without interruption.

Together, we advanced habitat restoration, including modeling suitable native grasses for Hirola forage. We recorded 76 new Hirola calves and expanded our camera trap monitoring. Our rangers increased patrol coverage and training, strengthening anti-poaching efforts with Kenya Wildlife Service.

Beyond Hirola, we tracked Somali giraffe to reduce conflict and mapped suitable habitats for Grevy’s zebra to guide conservation planning. We also supported local communities through education visits, scholarships, and sustainable livelihood projects.

I am deeply grateful to our staff, partners, and the communities we serve for their support and resilience. Thank you for standing with us as we work to secure a future where wildlife and people thrive together.

With gratitude.



76

New Hirola Calves

2024 at a Glance

In 2024, the Hirola Conservation Programme achieved the following milestones:

Habitat Restoration	Nature-Based Livelihoods
<div>700+ha acres cleared</div> <div>250+ grass restoration engaged in reseeded 20ha</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">700+ ha invasive Prosopis cleared20 ha grass restoration plots250+ people engaged in reseeded, grazing plansModeled native grasses for Hirola forageHay distributed during drought</div>	<div>2,000 lime seedlings</div> <div>60 school visits 300+ households supported</div> <div>1,260 bags charcoal 2+76 associations members</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">2,000 lime seedlings to 60 farms2 kilns installed, 1,260 bags charcoal300+ households supported2 associations, 76 members5 trainings held</div>
Anti-Poaching and Protection	Species Conservation
<div>210 snares</div> <div>50,560 km covered (+41%) 28 poacher arrests</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">50,560 km of patrols (+41%)210 snares removed28 poacher arrestsImproved drone use, joint patrols</div>	<div>76 Hirola calves</div> <div>84 community surveys</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Hirola: 76 calves, expanded camera trapsGiraffe: GPS tracking, calf rescue, 6 desnaresGrevy’s Zebra: Habitat suitability modelingWild Dog: Movement monitoringCheetah: 84 community surveys</div>

Community Engagement:

1,500+ students

30+ school visits
6 scholarships awarded

- 30+ school visits, 1,500+ students
- 6 scholarships awarded
- Targeted conservation education

Science & Capacity Building

50+ camera traps

50km monitoring

- 50+ camera traps maintained
- 50 km roadkill monitoring introduced
- Joint trainings with KWS and scouts
- Built local data collection skills

Emergency Support

50,000 livestock vaccinated

50+ toolboxes

- Weekly water to 8 villages
- Maintained wildlife water points
- 50,000 livestock vaccinated
- 50+ giraffe toolboxes distributed
- Piloted giraffe feeding in drought

Outreach & Partnerships

150+ participants

6 media features
4 research partnerships

- Presented at ZACC and WCN Expo
- 4 new research partnerships
- 6 national media features
- Led World Wildlife Day (150+participants)
- Shared Prosopis control model

Research & Publications

9

Advanced 9 peer-reviewed papers on Hirola, Grevy's zebra, giraffes, forage modeling, conflict, and restoration

About Hirola Conservation Programme

The Hirola Conservation Programme (HCP) is an indigenous, non-profit organization based in Garissa, Kenya. Founded in 2014 by Dr. Abdullahi Ali, an indigenous Kenyan conservationist born and raised in Garissa County, HCP is dedicated to safeguarding the critically endangered Hirola antelope through collaborative, science-driven, and community-based conservation initiatives. HCP was established in direct response to the alarming decline of the Hirola, the world’s most endangered antelope species. Our mission is to halt and reverse this decline by combining rigorous scientific research, practical conservation management, and deep partnerships with local communities.

We recognize that effective conservation cannot happen in isolation. Our approach is rooted in the belief that protecting wildlife and sustaining local livelihoods go hand in hand. By working collaboratively with pastoral communities, government agencies, academic institutions, and international partners, we aim to create a lasting model for coexistence between people and wildlife.

While our primary focus is the Hirola antelope, our conservation efforts also benefit and actively monitor other threatened and iconic species in northern Kenya, including the Grevy’s zebra and the Somali giraffe. By addressing shared threats such as habitat loss, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict, our programmes strengthen the survival prospects of these important species and contribute to overall ecosystem health.

Our Vision:

To establish and sustain a conservation programme that makes lasting contributions to the survival of the Hirola antelope and improves the well-being of local communities across its geographic range.

Our Mission:

To protect and increase the numbers and distribution of the Hirola through participatory conservation, education, community engagement, and international collaboration. We recognize that effective conservation is a shared responsibility that depends on the commitment and partnership of multiple stakeholders.

Understanding Hirola antelope

The Hirola (*Beatragus hunteri*), locally known as Arawla, is one of the world's most endangered antelopes and is listed as Critically Endangered by the IUCN.

It is the only surviving member of its genus, making its conservation globally important.

Historically widespread along the Kenya–Somalia border, the Hirola now survives mainly in Garissa County, Kenya, with a small insurance population in Tsavo East National Park.

Fewer than 500 individuals remain in the wild, occupying less than 5% of their former range.

500
remain

Key Threats:



Habitat loss due to invasive tree drought and climate change impacts



Disease transmission encroachment from livestock



Predation and poaching pressure.



Habitat Needs:

Hirola depend on open grasslands with minimal tree cover. Invasive species have reduced these habitats, threatening their food sources and movement.



Why It Matters:

Protecting the Hirola also helps conserve critical grassland ecosystems that support local communities and other threatened species like the Somali giraffe and Grevy's zebra.

In 2024, the Hirola Conservation Programme achieved major milestones in restoring habitats, protecting wildlife, empowering communities, and building conservation capacity.

Our integrated approach linked landscape restoration, targeted species protection, emergency interventions, sustainable livelihoods, and robust partnerships to secure the future of Kenya's threatened wildlife.

Habitat Restoration

In 2024, we accelerated efforts to restore degraded rangelands by clearing invasive species and reseeded native grasses to support wildlife and livestock forage.

- 700 hectares cleared of *Prosopis juliflora*, restoring critical rangelands.
- 20 hectares of experimental plots established in the Bura–Arawale Conservation Area to test reseeded techniques, native grass mixes, and grazing exclusion strategies.
- Monitoring showed over 50% of reseeded operational plots reached target ground cover after the short rains, supporting sustainable grazing.
- Engaged over 250 community members, including pastoralists, women, and youth, in reseeded, clearing invasives, and rotational grazing planning.
- Integrated rotational grazing plans co developed with local pastoralists.
- Modeled suitable native grasses for Hirola forage restoration, informing locally adapted reseeded strategies.
- Strengthened partnerships with Kenya Wildlife Service, county departments, and local conservancies to align grassland restoration with wildlife corridor management and Hirola forage goals.
- Distributed hay to support wildlife, including Hirola, during drought emergencies.

Scientific & Cross-Cutting Conservation Impacts

To ensure data-driven conservation, we expanded research and monitoring across our landscape:

- Deployed and maintained over 50 camera traps for wildlife monitoring and anti- poaching detection.
- Introduced systematic roadkill monitoring protocols across 50 km of priority roads to assess infrastructure impacts on wildlife.
- Built partnerships with research institutions, Kenya Wildlife Service, and conservancies to strengthen data sharing and planning.
- Trained local teams in wildlife monitoring, camera trap use, GPS tracking, and data management to improve conservation capacity.

Species Conservation Highlights

Hirola Antelope

- Recorded 76 calves in Ishaqbini Sanctuary through systematic monitoring.
- Expanded and repositioned camera trap network to improve population estimates and movement data.
- Assessed fencing impacts on connectivity and movement corridors.
- Strengthened partnership with Colorado State University for long-term monitoring.
- Integrated local scouts to ensure robust, community-owned data collection.



Somali Giraffe

- Continued GPS collar tracking to monitor seasonal movements, reduce conflict, and plan landscape connectivity.
- Trained rangers in tracking, data interpretation, and coexistence measures.
- Conducted desnaring of 6 Somali giraffes in partnership with Kenya Wildlife Service veterinarians and rangers to reduce injuries and mortality.
- Piloted supplementary feeding in high-conflict zones during drought to reduce crop damage and support giraffe health.
- Responded to emergency calf rescue:
 1. Rescued a 2-week-old Somali giraffe calf near Arawale Conservancy.
 2. Provided 10 days of milk feeding and veterinary care before successful reintroduction to its herd.
 3. Demonstrated rapid response capacity and strong community collaboration.



Grevy's Zebra

- Advanced habitat suitability modelling using field surveys and environmental data.
- Identified priority conservation areas, potential range extensions, and management interventions.
- Informed regional land-use planning and community conservancy strategies to support Grevy's zebra conservation.
- Establishment of a protected area



African Wild Dog

- Participated in 2 regional movement and population monitoring initiatives.
- Collected data to reduce conflict risks and support coexistence planning.
- Engaged local communities in reporting sightings to improve early-warning systems.



Cheetah

- Conducted 84 community surveys on cheetah presence, conflict incidents, and wildlife trafficking.
- Designed targeted anti-trafficking education and awareness campaigns.
- Strengthened partnerships with local authorities to improve wildlife crime reporting and enforcement.



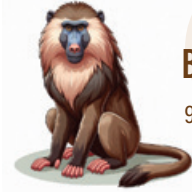












Emergency Interventions

Our emergency interventions in 2024 addressed urgent wildlife and community needs, reinforcing trust and collaboration.

- Conducted 50,560 km of anti-poaching patrols—a 41% increase over previous years.
- Removed 210 snares from critical habitats and enabled 28 poacher arrests through community intelligence.
- Piloted drone surveillance in high-risk zones to improve detection.
- Strengthened 6 joint patrols and training with Kenya Wildlife Service.
- Delivered weekly emergency water to 8 villages via 20000 litres of water bowsters (trucks), supporting both people and their livestock during severe drought.
- Maintained and improved water points for wildlife in priority conservation areas to reduce drought-related mortality.
- Vaccinated 50,000 sheep and goats (PPR, RVF, CCPP) to protect livestock health and reduce disease spillover risks to wildlife.
- Distributed over 50 Farmers–Giraffe Toolboxes (beehives, solar lights, scarecrows) to reduce crop-raiding and promote coexistence.
- Supported rapid response to wildlife emergencies, including giraffe calf rescue and more than 100 desnaring operations.



Mitigating the Impacts of El Niño on Wildlife and Local Communities in Garissa County, Kenya Successes 2024

 Baboons 9 Released	 Tortoise 6 Released to safer grounds	 Giraffe calf 1 giraffe calf transported to Garissa giraffe center for rehabilitation
 Cattle 3 cows released to safer grounds	 Camel 3 Camels released to safer grounds	 Goat 25 goats transported to safer grounds
 Livestock vaccination 30,000 livestock vaccinated across various villages	 Emergency water trucking 3,000,000 liters of water distributed among 25 most needy villages	 Supplemental Livestock feeds 5000 livestock were feed with hay grass, pellets and acacia pods
 Construction of Retaining walls We have constructed retaining walls made from soil-filled sacks for 30 farms	 Planting native Vegetation We planted 3,500 native vegetation including grass and shrubs	 Trees We planted 5000 acacia trees in 100 farms
 More than 40 Hirola conservation program staff and volunteers are saving animals in the wild.		

Community Engagement & Sustainable Livelihoods

We worked closely with local communities to develop nature-based enterprises, strengthen conservation education, and build capacity:

Education & Awareness

1,500+ students 30+ school visits
6 scholarships awarded

- Hosted 30+ school visits at the Hirola Wildlife Education Centre, engaging over 1,500 students.
- Delivered tailored conservation education on Hirola, Somali giraffe, and local ecosystems.
- Conducted guided nature walks to inspire future conservation champions.
- Partnered with schools and county education offices to strengthen conservation curricula and materials.

Supporting Students through Scholarships

6 scholarships & grants

- Awarded 6 scholarships and research grants:
 - 2 undergraduate scholarships in wildlife management/natural resources.
 - 2 diploma scholarships in community development and conservation.
 - 2 postgraduate research grants for master's-level studies on Hirola population dynamics and Somali giraffe conflict mitigation.
- Delivered mentorship to scholarship recipients to strengthen academic success and conservation skills.

Nature-Based Livelihood Support

1,260 bags 300 households benefit 80% carbonization efficiency

- Distributed 2,000 lime seedlings to 60 group farms, promoting giraffe-safe, high-value crops.
- Installed 2 modern kilns in Bura East and Ijara with over 80% carbonization efficiency.
- Produced 1,260 bags of sustainable charcoal, distributed to 14 markets, 3 schools, and 2 briquette production facilities.
- Over 300 households directly benefited, with many reporting up to 20% increase in monthly income.
- Established 2 Hirola Charcoal and Briquette Associations with 76 members (41 women, 21 youth, 14 elders).
- Conducted 5 training sessions on Prosopis harvesting, kiln operation, carbonization safety, and business skills.
- Linked habitat restoration to sustainable enterprise, demonstrating conservation's economic benefits.

Networking, Seminars & Strategic Partnerships

We strengthened partnerships, shared expertise, and promoted Hirola conservation on national and international stages:

- Participated in the 2024 Zoos and Aquariums Committing to Conservation (ZACC) Conference, sharing experiences with 300+ professionals.
- Presented at the 2024 Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) Expo, reaching 1,000+ donors and conservation partners.
- Formalized 4 new technical collaborations with academic and conservation institutions.
- Strengthened donor engagement supporting patrols, wildlife monitoring, and habitat restoration.
- Featured in 6 national media stories and regional stakeholder forums to promote northern Kenya's conservation priorities.

Collaborative Strategy Seminars

- Joined regional seminar on *Prosopis juliflora* management with 40+ stakeholders, including government, NGOs, and communities.
- Shared our approach turning invasive biomass into 200 bags/month of sustainable charcoal.
- Demonstrated modern kiln use tripling yield and reducing emissions.
- Promoted community buy-in and economic opportunities while tackling habitat threats.



World Wildlife Day Celebration

- Led 2024 World Wildlife Day at our Garissa camp with 150+ participants.
- Brought together Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, county government, conservancies, and local leaders.
- Promoted collaboration under the global theme “*Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation.*”
- Showcased GPS collars and 50+ camera traps as innovative tools.
- Engaged 60 local students in practical conservation demonstrations.
- Celebrated World Giraffe Day 21st June
- Celebrated World Hirola Day on 12th August
- Celebrated World Ranger Day on July 31st



150+ participants

50+ camera traps

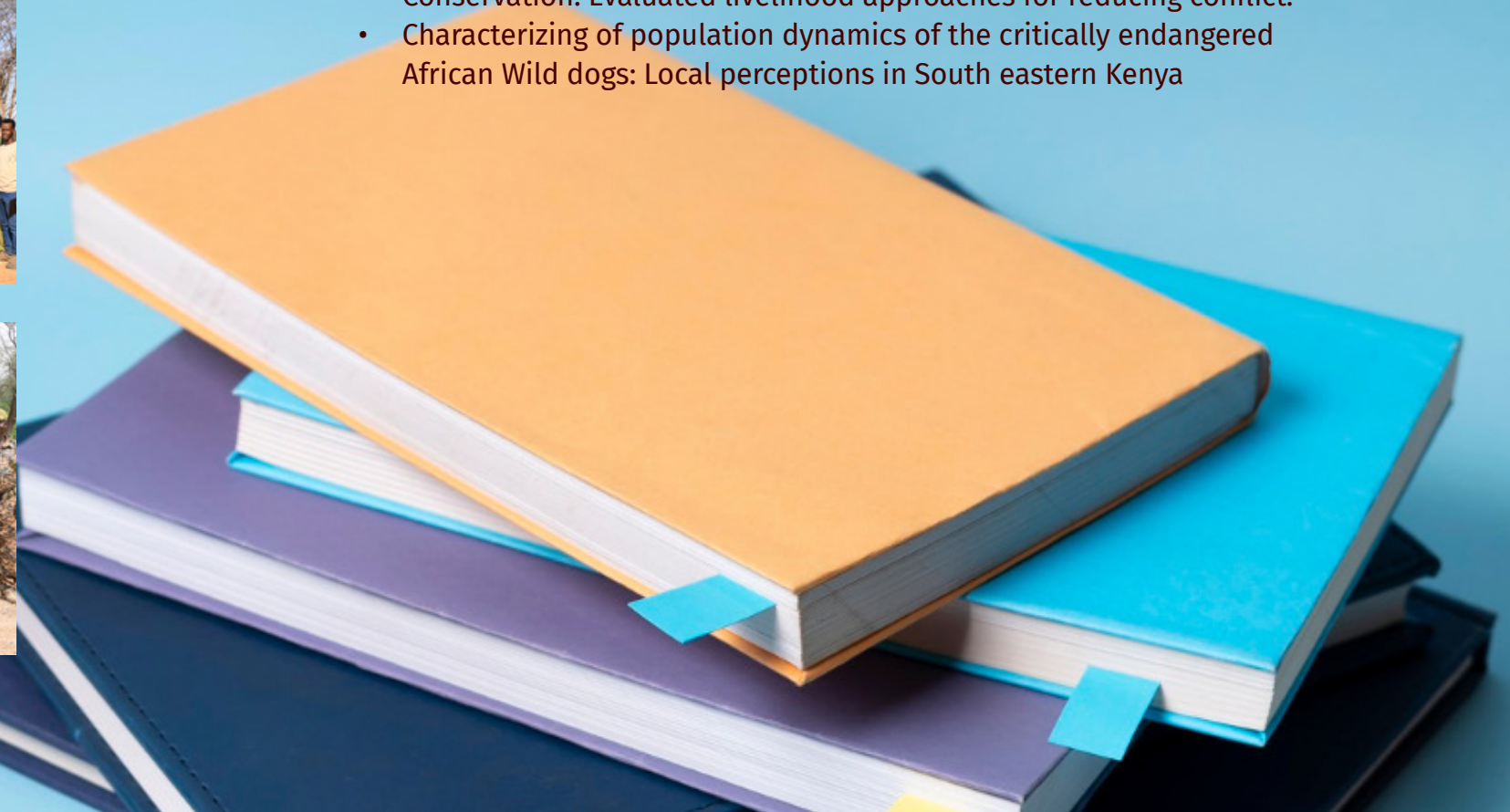
60+ local students



Manuscripts and Scientific Publications

We advanced work on 9 peer-reviewed manuscripts to share lessons from community-based conservation:

- Quantifying proactive and reactive anti-predator responses for enclosure-bred versus wild hirola: implications for reintroductions and population recovery
- Modelling the habitat of southernmost Grevy's Zebra population in eastern Kenya for conservation planning and recovery
- New Population and Range Extension for the Critically Globally Endangered Grevy's Zebra along the Kenya-Somalia Border
- Human disturbance, seasonality and tree cover drive hirola antelope calving site selection in eastern Kenya
- Drivers of hirola antelope diet selection in natural and managed habitat in Eastern Kenya
- Encroachment on Water Corridors Drives Farmers-Giraffe Conflicts: Analyzed land-use change and conflict hotspots.
- Human-Giraffe Coexistence: Socioeconomic Factors Influencing Conservation: Explored local drivers of coexistence.
- Community Nature-Based Enterprises as a Basis for Somali Giraffe Conservation: Evaluated livelihood approaches for reducing conflict.
- Characterizing of population dynamics of the critically endangered African Wild dogs: Local perceptions in South eastern Kenya





Thank You!

Your overwhelming support and generosity has enabled us to incredibly expand and strengthen our conservation efforts in 2023. We rely on this support to keep our operations running and to help us realize our vision of documenting the struggles of the world's most endangered antelope. We are humbled and very grateful to all the donors, individuals and institutions who support us.



Hirola Conservation Programme

www.hirolaconservation.org

hcp@hirolaconservation.org

P.O Box 1774-70100,

Nairobi, Kenya.