



ANNUAL REPORT

-2025



ABOUT HCP

HCP is an indigenous Non-profit organization based in Garissa, Kenya. The project is primarily dedicated to promoting the conservation of the Hirola antelope which is currently listed as critically endangered by the IUCN and was founded by Dr. Ali in 2014 who is an indigenous Kenyan conservationist born and raised in Garissa County.

Vision:

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

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.

About the Hirola

SPECIES DETAILS AND IUCN CONSERVATION STATUS

Common name: Hirola

Local name (Somali): Arawla

Scientific name: *Beatragus hunteri*

IUCN classification: Critically Endangered

Hirola Geographic Range: Eastern Kenya between Bura, Ijara and Galmagala locations in Garissa County, Kenya

Ex-situ population: There is also a small, translocated population in Tsavo East National Park which was translocated from Garissa as insurance for the in-situ population.

Population and Range

After undergoing a 90% population decline over the years, the hirola antelope was listed as critically endangered with only 500 individuals left in the wild. The current population has been restricted to an estimated 5% of its natural range along the Kenya-Somali border. The highest numbers are found in Ijara and Fafi in Garissa County, Kenya.

Major threats

The primary threat facing hirola is habitat degradation. The hirola antelope is a grassland dependent species preferring habitats with less than 30% tree cover. In the last three decades, hirola habitats saw 250% tree cover increase which translated to a 75% decline in grasslands, this shift posed a major threat to the remaining hirola population as it meant a lack of food and space.

Other threats include drought, disease, predation and poaching.

A smiling man with short dark hair, wearing a light green button-down shirt, stands in front of a blurred natural background of trees and foliage. The image is partially obscured by a dark grey rounded rectangle containing text.

Letter from Director

2025 was a year of resilience, growth, and meaningful conservation impact for the Hirola Conservation Programme. Working alongside local communities, conservancies, government agencies, and conservation partners, we strengthened efforts to protect the critically endangered hirola while advancing broader landscape conservation across North-Eastern Kenya. From expanding anti-poaching operations through the recruitment of new rangers to restoring degraded rangelands and responding to wildlife health emergencies, our work continued to demonstrate the importance of community-led conservation in safeguarding both wildlife and livelihoods.

This year also marked important progress in promoting coexistence between people and wildlife. Through the Somali Giraffe Project, we expanded giraffe monitoring through collaring operations across Garissa and Wajir Counties, while also implementing practical conflict mitigation initiatives along River Tana, including the distribution of lime seedlings, solar deterrent lamps, and other non-lethal deterrent methods. At the same time, our conservation education programs reached over 2,000 children, helping inspire a new generation of conservation champions and strengthening environmental awareness within our communities.

These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff, rangers, local communities, Kenya Wildlife Service, donors, and conservation partners who continue to stand with us in our mission. As we move forward, we remain committed to restoring ecosystems, strengthening scientific research, and building sustainable conservation solutions that secure a future for hirola, giraffes, and the people who share these landscapes.

2025 in Numbers

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION



29

GIRAFFES

29 giraffes collared to support spatial ecology and long-term monitoring

15

RANGERS

15 rangers recruited, trained, and deployed, enhancing anti-poaching coverage

8

SNARED

8 snared giraffes successfully rescued and treated in partnership with veterinary teams

100,000 liters of emergency water supplied to wildlife and livestock troughs

2,000

School children reached through conservation education programs

500

Local farmers engaged during world giraffe day celebrations

15

New community rangers recruited and trained

4

Quarterly farmer engagement workshops conducted

2,000

Lime seedlings distributed to farmers

200

Acacia trees planted in habitat restoration efforts during world giraffe day 30 rangers participated

15

Giraffe blood samples collected for disease surveillance operations

8

Snared Giraffes Rescued And Treated

2,000

Hectares of invasive species manually cleared

50

Sensor-activated solar lamps distributed to deter giraffe crop raids

20

Reticulated giraffes collared across garissa and wajir counties

2

Community-supported grazing management plans implemented

1,000

Lime seedlings distributed during World Giraffe Day

30

Scarecrows installed in high-conflict farms

30

Native grass islands established across fafi and ijara

1,000

Hectares reseeded with native grass species

20

Beehive fences established as natural giraffe deterrents

Conservation Impacts

A SNARE'S WAKE UP CALL: NEW GIRAFFE GUARDIANS UNVEILED

In 2025, under the banner we significantly strengthened our wildlife protection efforts through the recruitment and training of 15 new rangers. The expanded ranger unit enhanced our capacity to monitor and safeguard hirola, giraffes and other wildlife species.

Each ranger was equipped with new uniforms, while the unit received three GPS devices and binoculars to improve surveillance and patrol efficiency. The recruits completed intensive training in wildlife monitoring techniques, anti-poaching strategies, bush tracking, and coordinated patrol operations.

The new team was officially unveiled during a community gathering at Sankuri held in celebration of World Giraffe Day, facilitated by HCP.



INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATIONIST

In 2025, the Hirola Wildlife Conservation Centre remained at the forefront of conservation education in Garissa County, deepening school going children connection to our local wildlife species. Throughout



the year, we hosted 2,000 children from local schools through interactive, in-person learning sessions at the centre, where students observed giraffes in our camp while also learning about Hirola as well as other wildlife species via film and other educational materials.

These experiences are designed to spark lasting passion for conservation. We also conducted school visits to reach schools unable to travel, ensuring broader access to conservation education across the region. These engagements strengthened environmental awareness among youth and reinforced our commitment to nurturing the next generation of conservation leaders.



COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION IN ACTION AGAINST GIRAFFE SNARING

Throughout 2025, mitigating the severe threat of illegal bushmeat poaching required robust, continuous collaboration between HCP and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). Through this partnership, joint response teams successfully rescued and treated eight snared giraffes across our operational region.

These interventions took place across Bour Algy, Sankuri Conservancy, Raya, and Dadaab in Northern Garissa County. In these areas, our rangers actively monitored the landscape, spotting snared animals and rapidly raising the alarm.



This early detection enabled HCP to swiftly coordinate emergency responses with the KWS Meru Mobile Vet Unit. Together, the teams immobilized the affected giraffes, safely removed the snares, and administered comprehensive veterinary care to ensure their recovery.

Because these snares posed a persistent danger to endangered keystone species, HCP and KWS subsequently intensified joint snare-removal patrols and expanded community outreach initiatives to deter illegal poaching and encourage local reporting of injured wildlife.



ROADMAP TO DEVELOPING A FARMERS-GIRAFFE COEXISTENCE TOOLBOX

To advance the development of our Farmers-Giraffe Coexistence Toolbox, we intensified field trials and the implementation of safe, non-lethal deterrent methods on farms most vulnerable to crop raiding.

Throughout 2025, our team worked directly with farmers to deploy 50 sensor-activated solar lamps, 30 scarecrows, and 20 beehives as protective bee fences. Alongside traditionally crafted noise-generating tools to curb farm invasions.

To complement these physical deterrents



and build community capacity, we also conducted four quarterly farmers engagement workshops throughout the year to gather feedback and train participants on best practices. To rigorously evaluate the efficacy of each method, we systematically monitored incursion frequencies and deployed camera traps to study giraffe behavioural responses.



This combined approach of community education and data-driven field testing allowed us to actively refine these strategies, ensuring we provide farmers with the most effective tools for long-term coexistence.

Somali Giraffe Project (SGP)

HEALTH CRISIS IN THE HERD: INVESTIGATING GIRAFFE DEATHS IN NORTHERN GARISSA

In response to regular unexplained giraffe mortalities in our conservation area, HCP partnered with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to execute quarterly disease surveillance operations.



To determine the cause of death and evaluate broader population vulnerability, our joint teams conducted thorough post-mortem examinations on the deceased individuals, performed body condition scoring, and collected 15 blood samples from the surviving giraffe population.

This rapid response intervention is a core component of our One-Health program, recognizing the vital intersection of wildlife, livestock, and human health.

By actively investigating potential pathogens or environmental factors, and by collaborating directly with local pastoralists to monitor disease overlaps, HCP is establishing critical safeguards to mitigate future transmission risks and protect these vulnerable landscapes.

GIRAFFE COLLARING PROGRAMME SUMMARY (2025–2026)

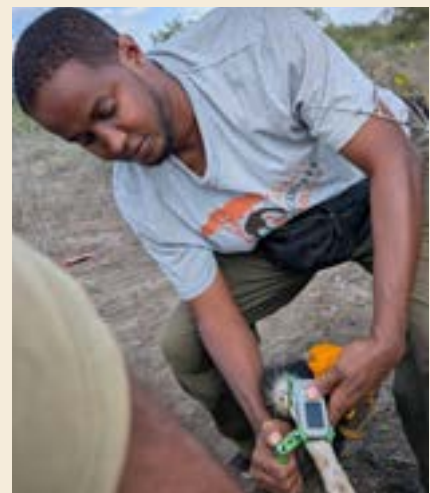
In 2025–2026, the Hirola Conservation Programme, through the Somali Giraffe Project and in collaboration with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and local community scouts, successfully implemented a targeted giraffe collaring initiative across Garissa and Wajir Counties.



Building on the 2023–2024 campaign, which collared 28 giraffes, this phase aimed to address critical spatial and ecological data gaps, particularly in underrepresented areas and along the River Tana where human–giraffe conflict is intensifying. A total of 20 reticulated giraffes (12 females, 8 males) were collared between October 2025 and January 2026 across key sites including Sankuri, Bula Gem, Modika, Habaswein, and Masalani.



Field operations were conducted under strict veterinary supervision, ensuring adherence to animal welfare protocols, with each collaring completed efficiently and safely within minutes. This effort significantly strengthens ongoing monitoring of giraffe movement patterns, habitat use, and landscape connectivity across North-Eastern Kenya. The data generated is critical for informing evidence-based interventions to mitigate human–wildlife conflict, particularly in agricultural expansion zones along river Tana.



LIME TREES FOR COEXISTENCE: SUPPORTING FARMERS AND PROTECTING GIRAFFES

In 2025, the Hirola Conservation Program (HCP), operating through the Somali Giraffe Project (SGP), achieved a major milestone in human-wildlife coexistence by distributing 2,000 free lime seedlings to local farmers and securing a guaranteed market with Nairobi-based companies for 12 tonnes of lime harvest.

This program was designed to mitigate the escalating conflict between farmers and giraffes along River Tana. Since giraffes frequently consumed and damaged traditional mango crops, we champion lime trees as a sustainable alternative. Limes are unpalatable to giraffes, providing farmers with a viable, non-invasive crop that safeguards their livelihoods without disrupting local wildlife.



By pairing extensive seedling distribution with reliable, profitable off-take agreements, HCP ensured long-term economic resilience for participating communities while protecting endangered giraffe populations.



HABITAT RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT

We successfully manually cleared hectares 2,000 of invasive tree species including *Acacia reficiens* and *Prosopis juliflora*. We reseeded 1,000 hectares of land with native grass species predominantly *Cenchrus ciliaris* and *Eragrostis superba*. These two grass species are not only easy to harvest (seeds) but are also highly adaptable to the hirola range and preferred by the hirola.



We have established 30 native grass islands across Fafi and Ijara areas. We establish two locally supported grazing plans for Bura East Community Conservancy in Fafi and Gababa Conservancy in Ijara.

The grazing plans aim to reduce the overgrazing and degradation of the hirola habitat by cattle, while also ensuring the livelihoods and well-being of the pastoralists. The grazing plan having approved and backed by elders from both conservancies has been implemented and monitored for six months and has shown positive results in terms of reducing the conflict and competition between cattle and hirola for pasture, as well as improving the condition and availability of pasture.

These habitat restoration and management activities helped improved the quality of the hirola habitat.



Hirola Crisis Fund

HCP STEPS-IN TO ADDRESS WATER CRISIS FOR WILDLIFE AND COMMUNITIES

In 2025 the October–November short rains were delayed and below average across our conservation area resulting in the drying up of dams and other critical water sources for both wildlife and local communities.

In response, HCP partnered with our local community conservancies including Ishaqbini Conservancy and Bura East Conservancy to implement an emergency water trucking intervention.



Through this collaborative effort, a total of 100,000 liters of water were supplied to replenish critical wildlife troughs, ensuring continued access to water for endangered species and community livestock while reducing pressure on remaining natural water points and minimizing potential human–wildlife conflict.

7.0 Capacity Building, Networking and recognition

HCP PARTICIPATES AT THE 2025 WCN FALL EXPO

We were thrilled to be part of the 2025 WCN Fall Expo that took place from 1 st to 8 th October.

We were honored to present our work at the expo and most importantly to be officially recognized as part of the WCN Partner Network. This milestone means the world to us as we unite with other passionate friends and partners in conservation to create a better future for wildlife and communities that host them.



HOW LOCAL LEADERSHIP IS REVIVING VANISHING SPECIES WITH DR. ABDULLAHI ALI

Our Director and Founder, Dr. Abdullahi Ali, was recently featured on the Forces of Nature, where he highlighted the urgent but often overlooked decline of giraffes and the critically endangered hirola—now fewer than 500 individuals remaining worldwide. In the episode, he shares his journey from a nomadic childhood to earning a Ph.D. in ecology, a path that led him to establish the Hirola Conservation Program and the Somali Giraffe Project.

He emphasized how community-led conservation—through habitat restoration, coexistence strategies such as promoting lime trees to reduce giraffe conflict, and revitalizing grasslands once maintained by elephants—demonstrates that when local knowledge and science work together, both people and wildlife can thrive.

Catch the **Episode:**

ANIMAL ACTION AWARDS BY IFAW: LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT WINNER: DR. ABDULLAHI ALI

Our Director and Founder, Dr. Abdullahi Ali, was honored for his groundbreaking efforts to save the critically endangered hirola antelope through the Hirola Conservation Program.

With fewer than 500 hirola remaining globally, his work—combining scientific research, habitat restoration, and strong community engagement—has significantly advanced the protection of this rare species.



This recognition highlights his leadership and reinforces the global importance of community-led conservation in securing the future of endangered wildlife.

Catch the full [story here](#):

2025 WORLD HIROLA DAY

In 2025, we continued to lead global recognition of World Hirola Day, which we established to be celebrated annually on 12th August. The date was intentionally selected to coincide with World Elephant Day, symbolically linking the ecological relationship between the two species, and to commemorate the 2012 translocation of hirola into a predator-proof sanctuary—a landmark moment in the species' conservation history. This year, we joined partners across Kenya and beyond to mark the day under the theme "Restoration to Enable a Future," emphasizing the critical role of ecosystem



restoration in securing the survival of one of the world’s most endangered antelopes. Celebrations held in Garissa County highlighted tangible progress, including native grassland restoration, the establishment of seed banks, and youth engagement initiatives. The 2025 commemoration strengthened awareness, partnerships, and momentum toward long-term recovery of the hirola.

HCP PARTICIPATES IN THE RETICULATED GIRAFFE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

Through the Somali Giraffe Project, we were honored to participate in the Reticulated Giraffe Management Committee workshop, hosted by the Kenya Wildlife Service in Nanyuki, Kenya.



The workshop brought together key giraffe conservation stakeholders from across the reticulated giraffe range in Kenya, with the goal of reviewing and updating the Reticulated Giraffe Conservation, Recovery, and Action Plan. We were proud to share our progress and contributions aligned with the current action plan, including a presentation on Phase One of our giraffe collaring exercise in North-Eastern Kenya, during which we successfully collared 29 giraffes.

In collaboration with fellow stakeholders, we also helped shape the updated Action Plan to ensure coordinated efforts across the landscape and strengthen our shared commitment to protecting the reticulated giraffe.

WORLD GIRAFFE DAY 2025

We celebrated World Giraffe Day on 21st June and held a giraffe art contest. We received 10 T-shirts, five of which were combined with 30 t-shirts from the Somali giraffe project and gifted to the winners of the giraffe art contest, held with 100 orphaned children from Young Muslim Primary School.

In addition to the contest, we connected with 500 local farmers, distributing 1,000 lime seedlings as part of our ongoing efforts to foster peaceful coexistence between communities and giraffes. We also planted 200 acacia trees within a key giraffe rangeland, working hand in hand with 30 dedicated rangers from the Sankuri Community Conservancy.



CAPACITY BUILDING: SNAKE AWARENESS AND HANDS-OFF HANDLING TRAINING

HCP was pleased to host a snake awareness and hands-off handling training for rangers from HCP-supported conservancies and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS).

The two-day workshop, led by expert instructors from Watamu Snake Farm, combined theoretical learning with practical skills development. On the first day, participants learned about common and dangerous snake species in Kenya, with a focus on those found in North-Eastern Kenya.



The second day featured hands-off snake handling training, where rangers practiced safely managing both venomous and non-venomous snakes using specialized tools like tongs and hooks. We extend our sincere gratitude to Watamu Snake Farm, Kenya Wildlife Service, and the community conservancies for their collaboration in making this training a success.

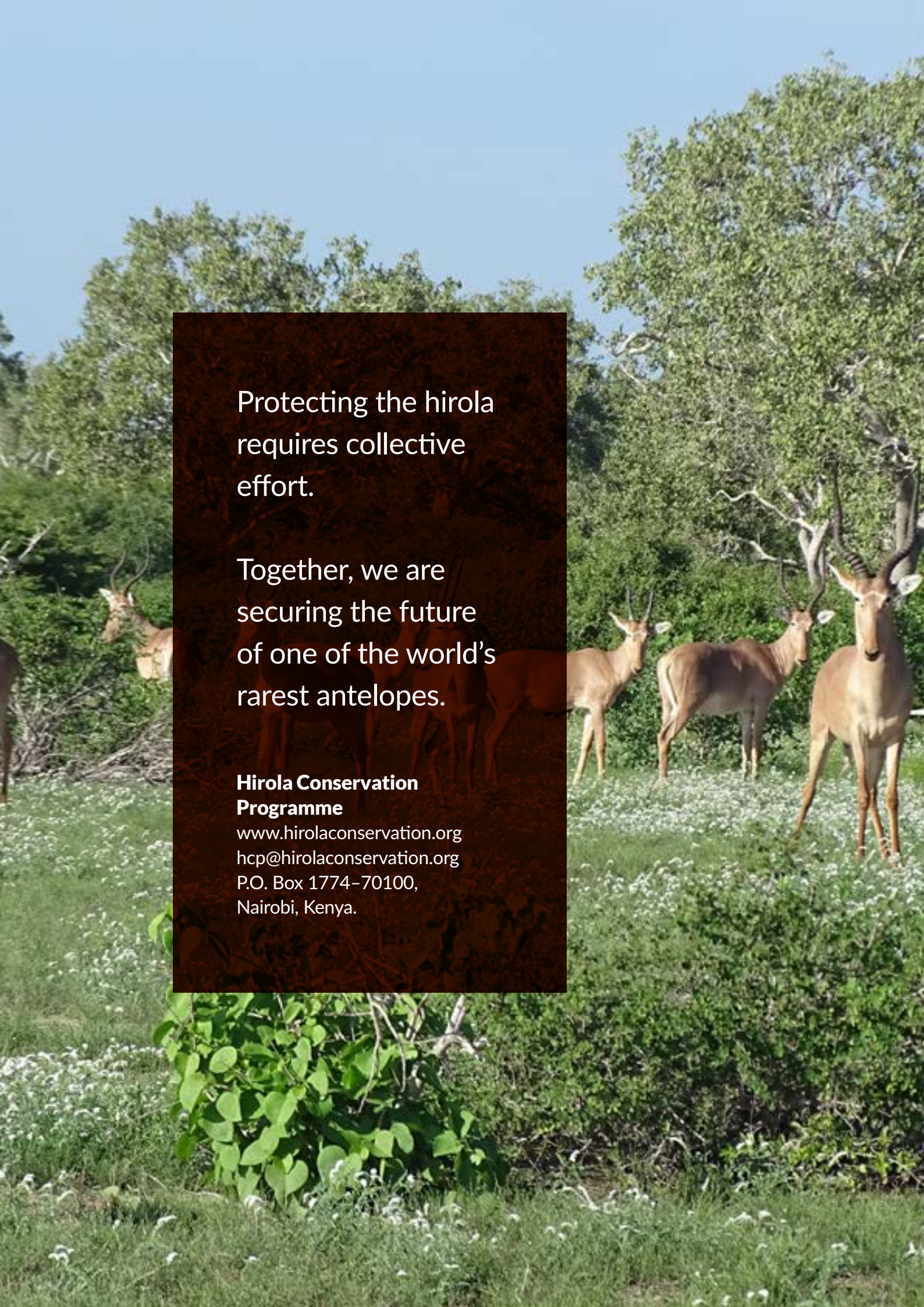
Solar Lamps for Giraffe Deterrence

In 2025, we distributed 30 solar-powered lamps to farms along the River Tana as a cost-effective tool to reduce giraffe incursions in high-conflict areas.

With agricultural expansion increasing pressure on shared landscapes, these lamps were installed around farm boundaries to deter giraffes from approaching at night, leveraging their natural caution toward unfamiliar or illuminated environments. This simple intervention helps protect crops while remaining practical and accessible for farmers.

This effort is part of our broader work to test and refine affordable coexistence strategies, alongside methods such as reflective deterrents and beehive fences. Insights from these interventions are contributing to the development of a Farmer-Giraffe Coexistence Toolkit, designed to provide scalable, community-driven solutions that reduce conflict while supporting livelihoods.





Protecting the hirola
requires collective
effort.

Together, we are
securing the future
of one of the world's
rarest antelopes.

**Hirola Conservation
Programme**

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