



BIG LIFE FOUNDATION

QUARTERLY REPORT (JULY-SEPT 2014)
KENYA OPERATIONS

MISSION STATEMENT

“Recognising that lasting conservation can only be achieved through a collaborative community-based approach, Big Life uses innovative conservation strategies to address the greatest threats: wildlife poaching, human-wildlife conflict, and habitat destruction.

Big Life’s vision is to take the successful holistic conservation model used in the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem and replicate it across Africa.”

Director’s Note

As always, the last three months have been non-stop action. We have once again experienced the annual upswing in bushmeat poaching as the dry season bites and people are forced to look for alternative means of income. The rangers have done a great job of combating this, often spending long nights on the chase.

Our exciting new rapid response mobile unit has also been achieving success. This unit is constantly on the move, accessing areas outside the coverage of our permanent bases. Their movements are unpredictable by design, and in many cases they have caught poachers unawares. This must surely be one of our most effective poaching deterrents.

There were a large number of elephant deaths this quarter, but most of them were natural causes. There was only one poaching attempt, but an extremely well coordinated response by our rangers, and those of Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust, meant that the poachers did not get away with the tusks, and two weeks later two of them were arrested. In fact, in all nine elephant deaths the tusks were retrieved and kept out of the supply chain.

Human-elephant conflict remains a big problem, with two people killed by elephants over this quarter, as well as large amounts of crop damage. The damage reported in this document is only the tip of the iceberg, as much goes unrecorded. Our ranger teams have been able to largely contain elephant poaching in the ecosystem, and mitigating the conflict between humans and elephants remains our next big challenge.

A huge and continued thanks, as always, to our kind donors who make our work possible.

Richard Bonham

Wildlife Security

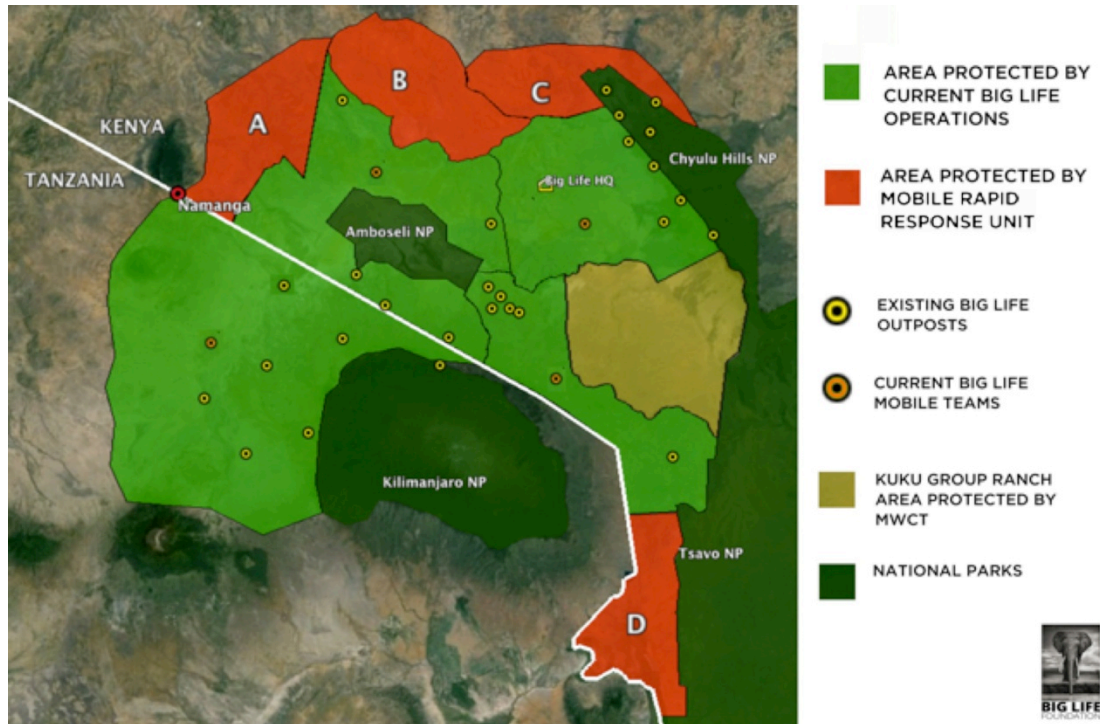
The reporting period has been a difficult but relatively successful one for BLF's Game scout program. Increasingly dry conditions have led to escalating HWC and increased threat of poaching. The sheer number of arrested suspects over the reporting period is an indication of the challenges facing the ecosystem and the importance of the wildlife security program. In a total of 71 incidents BLF rangers arrested 174 people and participated in an operation that concluded with the death of three poachers.

Crime	# Incidents				# Suspects			
	July	Aug.	Sept.	Total	July	Aug.	Sept.	Total
Trophy Poaching	2	0	1	3	3	0	2	5
Trophy possession	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
Game meat poaching	5	3	9	17	13	5	17	35
Charcoal	6	5	8	19	13	12	19	44
Logging	3	1	10	14	7	1	18	26
Firewood	3	1	2	6	20	1	10	31
Community crimes	2	2	0	4	10	8	0	18
Poaching intention	1	1	2	4	2	2	2	6
Wood carvings	0	2	0	2	0	4	0	4
Possession of wildlife products	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2
Total	24	15	32	71	71	33	68	174

BIG LIFE GAME SCOUTS

Big Life's Game scout program continues to grow, a total of 33 (6 in Tanzania) units now make up the 260-man ranger network managed and/or funded by Big Life, with plans to expand further in the next 2-3 quarters.

On the Kenyan side these units are made up of 22 permanent ranger outposts, 4 mobile units, a Rapid Response Unit and 2 permanent observation posts (OP's) covering a total of 1,688,000 acres (680,000 hectares).



Map showing the Big Life areas of operation in both Kenya and Tanzania, coloured lime green. Yellow dots show location of Big Life ranger bases.

ELEPHANT

Summary

During the reporting period, a total of nine elephants died due to various causes. Of the nine, four were males, three were females and two were of an unknown sex (unidentifiable due to decay). Five died due to natural causes, three due to HWC and one mortality was the result of a poaching attempt. In the HWC cases, one died en route to Tsavo NP while being translocated, while two were shot by KWS after a series of incidents that (in both cases) led to the death of a person. Out of the nine deaths, four happened within the BLF area of operation (AOO), four mortalities occurred with Amboseli NP (ANP) and the single poaching attempt occurred on Kuku Group Ranch (MWCT AOO). In all 9 cases both tusks were recovered.

Incidents

On the 22nd of July an elephant carcass was discovered within ANP, both tusks had been taken following a natural death. BLF rangers from Oscar 1, 2 and 5 units responded and successfully apprehended the suspects in possession of the tusks.



Tusks removed from elephant carcass following natural death

On August the 25th, Mobile 1 Unit picked up tracks of 4 people following an elephant. While the unit was tracking the suspects, BLF HQ received a call from an informer reporting that the 4 people with spears were stalking an elephant nearby in



Kuku Group Ranch. A second call followed soon thereafter and the informer reported that he had just witnessed the 4 spear the elephant and leave (presumably to fetch tools to remove the tusks). BLF and Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust (MWCT) rangers arrived at the scene within 15 minutes and commenced pursuit procedures. A David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (DSWT) airplane responded and provided air support throughout the afternoon. BLF's Canine Unit also responded. On two occasions the suspects were sighted and pursued, on both occasions they were able to escape. A further attempt was made during the night by a team of both MWCT and BLF rangers and one suspect was successfully apprehended. However, the suspect unfortunately escaped early the next morning due to the negligence of the rangers involved.

Elephant speared to death on Kuku group ranch (August 25th)

Investigations were launched and on the 18th September BLF arrested one of the suspects. MWCT succeeded in arresting another suspect shortly thereafter, on 21st September. The Investigation is on-going, with information indicating that both remaining suspects have left the immediate area.

On 27th July at Kiatine (Beyond Chyulu National Park, Ukambani) two suspects involved in the elephant-poaching incident that occurred on the 1st March 2014 were arrested following an extended investigation.

Kerumpoti Leyian was arrested last year following a poaching incident in Kimana area. In June he skipped bail and a warrant for his arrest was issued. On the 26th of July he was arrested by a combined Kimana team of BLF and Kenya Wildlife Service rangers. The outcome of his case was far from certain following numerous delays and the loss of his file, but during the writing of this report he has been sentenced to 7 years in prison, a tremendous success.

BUSH MEAT

Bushmeat poaching has been exceptionally high throughout the ecosystem over the three-month reporting period. The rate of incidents has increased as the conditions have become dryer and a total of 40 bush meat poachers have been arrested over the three months. Eland and small antelope appear to be the most targeted species and Kimana, Rombo and Ukambani area's the most affected.



HABITAT DESTRUCTION

BLF rangers responded to 50 incidents of habitat destruction over the reporting period, and a total of 101 people were arrested as a result. The areas most affected are Kimana, Rombo and Ukambani.



Tree chopped down for wood

The most significant incident occurred on Mbirikani group ranch when a lorry carrying charcoal from a number of areas was impounded and a total of 248 bags of charcoal confiscated. A total of over 400 bags of charcoal have been confiscated over the reporting period.



Lorry caught with charcoal on Mbirikani group ranch

MBIRIKANI GROUP RANCH (MGR)/CHYULU HILLS NATIONAL PARK (CHNP)

The Mbirikani Section of BLF's wildlife security has had a successful three months considering the level of threat. The single significant incident of elephant poaching was concluded relatively successfully with the assistance of the Rapid Response Unit. Bushmeat poaching, habitat destruction (in the form of fires, logging, charcoal, wood carving and sand collection) has escalated compared to previous quarters. Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) has been exceptionally high as the dry season continued with an average of 2 incidents per day on MGR alone. Due to this exceptionally high rate of HWC, MGR scouts followed a rotational policy to ensure that anti-poaching operations were not compromised.



Bravo Mike 5 camp received a donation of 4 Swazi raincoats. Living on top of the Chyulu Hills, the rangers are very grateful for the warmth these coats will provide.

OLGULULUI GROUP RANCH (OGR)

OGR has had a relatively quiet quarter in terms of direct threats, with little poaching and/or habitat destruction taking place. Credit must go to the teams for their efficient coverage of the area and to the Group Ranch leaders for their strong stance when it comes to wildlife related issues. However, OGR has also experienced a large amount of HWC, in this case involving elephants raiding food stores, killing livestock and damaging boreholes.

One elephant was killed on OGR during the reporting period, a young male that died due to spear wounds suffered during a crop raid on the lower slopes of Kilimanjaro.

KIMANA GROUP RANCH (KGR)

We have a number of camps in this area, funded largely by African Wildlife Foundation (AWF). Kimana group ranch is heavily populated and the high arrest rate this quarter has reflected this. Despite the success of the rangers catching many of the perpetrators, the on-going upward trend in bush meat poaching and charcoal burning is a concern. A large percentage of habitat-destruction related arrests were formerly dealt with by the offices of the local Chief rather than the courts. However, the consistent rearrests of suspects for the same or similar crimes is a concern and has led to BLF being increasingly less flexible in post arrest processes.

The KGR section has been reorganised to consist of two platoons operating independently due to the difference in threats in their respective areas. So far this compartmentalisation has led to an increase in arrest rate and decrease in reoccurring incidents, however it remains to be fully evaluated.

ROMBO GROUP RANCH (RGR)

Rombo remains a crucial area for all species and a buffer zone between heavily populated areas to the South and the vital Amboseli-Tsavo corridor. The Rombo Unit has continued to perform exceptionally well, and it is entirely due to them that so far no elephant have been poached on the group ranch, which traditionally experienced the highest rate of elephant poaching when compared to other BLF AOO's. KWS Tsavo West units must also receive a fair share of those plaudits.

Bushmeat poaching and charcoal burning remain a significant threat in Rombo and the areas to the south of the ranch. On three occasions this quarter the Rombo unit has combined with the Rapid Response Unit and achieved an arrest rate of three suspects per operation.

CROSS BORDER OPERATIONS

Two Cross-border Operations have been completed this quarter, the second of which concluded in the arrest of two suspects in possession of 12 ostrich eggs. Both cross border operations spent a significant amount of time in Human Wildlife Conflict mitigation and resolution.

The primary aim of each Cross-border Operation is to increase ranger presence and coverage in areas that historically received little attention.

Poaching and habitat-destruction tools recovered by Big Life rangers over the three-month reporting period.

Item	July	August	September	Total
Firearms	0	2	0	2
Snares	2	16	18	36
Jembe	6	5	1	12
Axe	5	4	6	15
Hand saw	0	2	1	3
Machete	11	9	26	46
Adze	0	3	0	3
Knife	0	0	9	9
Car over 5t	7	1	1	9
Car below 5t	0	0	1	1
Motor bikes	9	2	2	13
Bicycle	2	3	1	6
Poisoned arrows	8	0	0	8
Bows	3	0	0	3
Quiver	1	0	0	1
Kadoo light	1	0	0	1
Rake	1	1	0	2
Spade	6	3	0	9
Chain saw	1	0	2	3
Water pump	1	1	0	2
Total	64	52	68	184

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The Rapid Response Unit (RRU) has been operational for three months and has participated in two significant incidents (both involving trophy poachers) and several less significant incidents of bushmeat poaching and habitat destruction. As important as the arrests has been the increase in knowledge on outlying and adjacent areas surrounding the core BLF AOO. This will hopefully lead to the successful implementation of permanent security camps in these areas.

The construction of a cement factory in Northwest Mbirikani has led to the rapid increase in population in the area, a fact that is sure to affect the local wildlife. The specific area forms part of the northern corridor joining Amboseli and Chyulu NP's. Thus construction of a new outpost in the area is underway with thanks to Simba Cement Ltd. for the building materials and costs.

BLF has recently been granted an organisational firearms permit and been donated ten new shotguns and two pistols. This development will significantly increase BLF's operational capabilities in all areas, particularly where we are protecting species with high risk of contact with armed poachers, such as rhino.

RHINO PROGRAM

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) has added to the strength of the Mukururo Unit, bringing it to a total of 25 people. The lack of armed personnel was one of the biggest weaknesses of the rhino program in the past, and this increase in rangers, together with the recently acquired BLF weapons, means that the Chyulu hills rhino population will be receiving a much-intensified level of protection.

RHINO IDENTIFICATION AND MONITORING PROGRAM

The RIMP continues to perform with the limited resources available. Following the death of Nasha, the monitoring scouts of BLF have kept a close eye on her son (Chester) who received a bullet wound in his neck. He continues to do well and appears to be completely healthy and growing as expected.

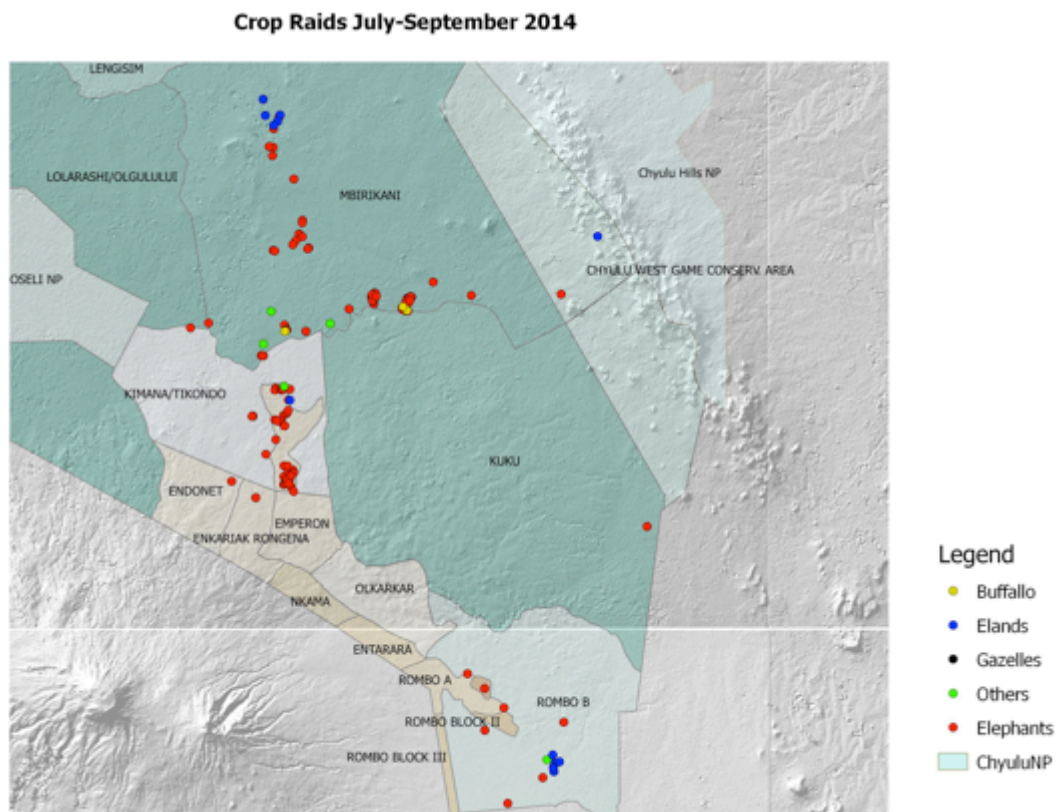
HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) takes two primary forms across the Big Life area of operation. One type of HWC is raiding of crops by wildlife, largely elephants. Another form of HWC occurs when predators kill local pastoralists' livestock. Both these

forms of HWC can (and do) incite deadly retaliatory attacks by the affected community.

CROP-RAIDING and HUMAN ELEPHANT CONFLICT

Crop raiding by all species, but particularly elephant, has been consistently high over the reporting period. Areas most affected by crop raiding were the Kimana area and Swamp, Ilchalai area, and the farms off the pipeline that runs through MGR.



Species responsible for crop-raiding over the reporting period

Species	Number of incidents	Area damaged (acres)
Elephant	161	86 ¹ / ₇
Buffalo	3	5/8
Eland	13	7 ¹ / ₄
Gazelle	1	1
Zebra	1	¹ / ₄
Others	9	2 ³ / ₄
Total	190	98

Crops damaged in crop-raiding incidents by all species over the reporting period

Crop	Number of incidents	Area damaged (acres)
Maize	81	47 2/7
Water melons	3	2 3/4
Beans	31	15 7/8
Bananas	2	1 1/4
Cabbage	5	1 3/4
Green grams	3	3/4
Kales	1	1/4
Onions	6	2 1/2
Potatoes	2	1
Sugar cane	1	1/2
Tomatoes	50	22 1/9

Over the three months several cases were reported where elephants killed domestic animals, a total 7 head of livestock were killed by elephants (5 shoats and 2 cows). Besides killing livestock, dozens of incidents of property damage of water holes, tanks and harvest-storage facilities by elephants were reported each month.

Two people were killed by elephants in different cases at different locations. One woman was trampled on 18th Sept at Ilmarba and a man was killed on 2nd Nov at Ilchalai. In both of these incidents, the elephants responsible were subsequently put down by KWS to assure the community of their safety.

Beside the deaths, two people were injured by wild animals during the reporting period. A man was injured by a buffalo on 30th July and a woman sustained minor head injuries on 28th Sept when an elephant demolished the roof of the manyatta she was sleeping in. Our rangers facilitated transport of the two injured persons to the hospital and visited them frequently to monitor their progress.

Two other human-wildlife conflict incidents were reported. In one of them, 28 starling birds were poisoned in a single farm following crop damage. The other incident involved the poisoning of 1 eland in Rombo following repeated crop raids.

PREDATOR PROTECTION PROGRAM

Big Life protects all the major predators of the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem through an innovative program comprised of two main elements. The first is a form of compensation scheme, aimed at reducing the motivation for retaliatory killing of predators following livestock depredation. The scheme pays people a portion of the value of their livestock lost to predators, on condition that no predators are killed in retaliation. BL staff verifies all depredations, and penalties apply for poor husbandry. The community provides 30% of the total compensation amount, and there are severe fines if any predators are killed on the areas covered by the scheme.

The second part of our strategy is focused on the young warriors (morans) of the Maasai community, and is known as the Menye Layiok program. In Maasai culture, lion killing has traditionally been an important part of becoming a man. Through the creation of the Maasai Olympics, a culturally relevant sporting event for warriors across the ecosystem, we intend to give young men an alternative avenue through which to demonstrate physical prowess. The lead-up to the event is combined with a targeted education program aimed at changing attitudes and behaviour to wildlife and conservation.

PREDATOR COMPENSATION FUND

Predation of livestock is traditionally high in the dry season but skewed towards hyena and jackal. A significant percentage of all claims made were for “Lost” livestock (close to 80%). Additionally, jackal incidents increased enormously as young livestock roams further from habitation to graze when left at home through the day.

Depredation statistics for reporting period, for MGR and OGR (total of 720,000 acres)

MONTH	LIVESTOCK SPECIES	KILL PER WILDLIFE SPECIES					
		Lion	Leopard	Hyena	Jackal	Cheetah	Total
JULY	Cattle	4	0	14	0	3	21
	Shoats	4	8	103	43	37	195
	Donkeys	0	0	4	0	0	1
	Sub total	8	8	121	43	40	220
AUGUST	Cattle	8	0	22	0	3	33
	Shoats	8	0	163	88	47	306
	Donkeys	0	0	3	0	0	3
	Sub total	16	0	188	88	50	342

SEPTEMBER	Cattle	5	0	24	0	0	29
	Shoats	1	3	135	159	57	355
	Donkeys	2	0	10	0	0	12
	Sub total	8	3	169	159	57	396
	Grand total	32	11	478	290	147	958

MENYE-LAYIOK AND MAASAI OLYMPICS

The Maasai Olympics events officially got underway this quarter, with three regional events held. A total of six regional events take place in the lead up to the final on the December 13th, with each team places each other once. These lead-up events are a chance for event practice, and importantly for constant interaction and conservation education of the young men taking part.

A number of initial meetings were held between warrior leaders, government chiefs, and representatives from BLF and MWCT. The purpose of these was to confirm the strategy for regional events and approve the timetable for the same.

The first regional competition (Rombo manyatta vs Kuku manyatta) was held on 23/8/2014 at Rombo, followed by competitions between Mbirikani and Olgulului, and Rombo vs Olgulului. The events have been reasonably well attended, with a total of 76 men having come to the events, 224 women, and 644 warriors.



A warrior lines up to participate in the spear (javelin) throw

EDUCATION

On Wednesday, the 3rd of September, Samar Ntalamia (programs manager at BLF) did a video skype interview for ABC Good Morning America producers and Seein Lepayon; a class seven pupil at Enkijape Primary School. This “good-news” story on the BLF wildlife scholarship program was aired for six minutes by ABC Good Morning America on Friday the 26th September (<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/video/teen-14-makes-difference-half-world-25776262>).

This was thanks to the Highland School group who visited to Enkijape School in June-2014, led by Alice Laimbeer. One of the students in the group was moved by the story of Seein Lepayon, who is in grade seven and was rescued from a proposed forced marriage. Lily Daniels, who was in the Highland School group, heard about Seein’s predicament and decided to help Seein, agreeing to sponsor her school costs.

In addition, Highland school sponsors the salaries of three teachers at Enkijape, and through Alice Laimbeer agreed to continue sponsorship of two of their sponsored students all the way from secondary school to university; covering their tuition and accommodation costs. A very big thank-you to our Highland School friends.



Lily Daniels, Seein Lepayon and her grandmother at Enkijape School.

Despite this, the Wildlife Scholarship program continues to face challenges of matching sponsors to the ever-increasing number of applicants; very bright students, from resource challenged family backgrounds, who have no means of paying for their education

On Friday, 25th of July Big Life presented Lemasusu School with a full set of school uniforms, including shoes and socks for all the 136 students, as well as books and stationery, all valued at Kshs. 830,000 (US\$10,000). Orbili School also benefited from storybooks, and other stationery valued at Kshs.30, 000 (US\$361).

One education committee meeting was held in the period. This meeting discussed the importance of strengthening engagement with the sponsored schools by starting/activating environmental and drama clubs. These will act as wildlife conservation education platforms in the community.

The quarterly Wildlife Scholarship Program Students day was held on Friday the 22nd August. 29 students attended and recited poems on wildlife conservation, as well as doing role-plays on themes of wildlife conservation.

In terms of expanding the initiative, roll out of the wildlife scholarship program on OGR is in limbo as of now, as BLF waits to finalise plans with Amboseli Serena lodge and other tour operators on OGR. Plans are also afoot to start the wildlife scholarship program on Kimana group ranch, working with the group ranch committee and the tourist operators on Kimana Group Ranch. We are hoping that in future all of these plans become a reality, for the benefit of children and wildlife on the ranches around Amboseli National Park.

SUPPORTER AND PARTNERS

All the work detailed above is only possible thanks to Big Life's very kind donors and partner organisations, listed below. We are continually grateful.

