



**BIG LIFE**  
FOUNDATION

## QUARTERLY REPORT

OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER

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Photo: Jeremy Goss

It will take time to fully process our data from the last year, but looking at the numbers from the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter in context of all that came before, I'm proud of our team and what we accomplished.

Last year, our rangers were involved in confiscating more than 1,000 kgs of ivory and more than 2,000 kgs of sandalwood. They helped rescue dozens of animals and arrest more than 150 suspects engaged in illegal wildlife crimes. These are just a few of our impressive numbers, and we look forward to sharing more of our 2023 impact soon.

In the meantime, one number that stands out from December is something I don't recall ever recording before: zero crop raids by elephants. We can attribute this to an abundance of natural food sources following the good rains, but also the cumulative efforts of our rangers and our crop-protection fencing really paying off.

In our work to protect habitat, we've signed conservation leases with thousands of Maasai landowners to help protect critical natural areas. Thanks to our supporters, we're moving forward on our partnership with the local community to protect the Nairrabala corridor on Olgulului. We're signing leases, hiring rangers, and planning for the future of this 37,000-acre connection between Amboseli National Park and the conservancies to the north.

Sadly, we closed out the year on a somber note, having lost two of our star employees unexpectedly: Agnes Sopilal, our first female ranger, and Joan Seleyian, who was inspirational in her work to bring critical health services to remote parts of our area of operation. Their loss was felt deeply.

I continue to be amazed and grateful for our supporters around the world, for always stepping up to help us address the challenges we're facing in Amboseli, and for recognizing that what's happening here has significance for the world, regardless of whether you ever get to visit this incredible place. That said, we hope you do! You won't be disappointed.

Thank you for everything,

Richard Bonham  
*Executive Chairman & Founder –  
Big Life Foundation Kenya*

## WHERE WE WORK

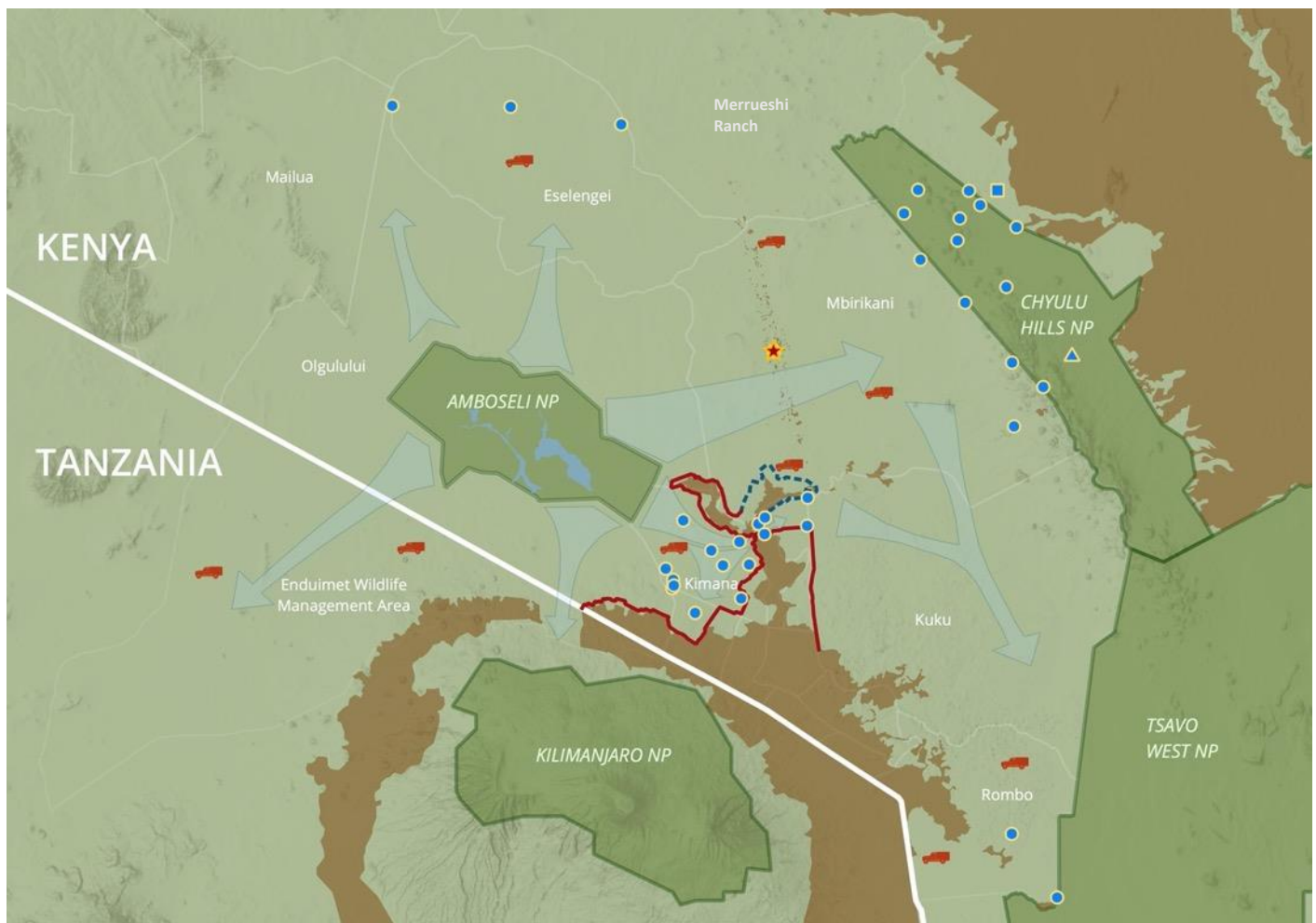
**Big Life Foundation's (Big Life) Area of Operation (AOO)** covers approximately 1.6 million acres across the Amboseli-Tsavo-Kilimanjaro (Greater Amboseli) ecosystem in East Africa. Our team of 500+ helps to protect and secure wildlife and critical habitat stretching from the rangelands north of Amboseli to the Chyulu Hills and Tsavo West National Parks in the east, and south to Kilimanjaro National Park. The area is a central connection point for migrating wildlife and contains some of the most important habitat left in Africa. Big Life was the first organization in the region to conduct collaborative cross-border patrols between Kenya and Tanzania.

Our AOO is divided into a core area with a permanent ranger presence and regularly patrolled by mobile units, a non-core area where mobile units respond based on need and are actively covered by our intelligence network, and adjacent areas where we provide support as needed. The level of Big Life support provided varies between outposts.

**Core AOO:** Eselengei, Kimana, Mbirikani, Rombo, Chyulu Hills National Park, and Enduimet Wildlife Management Area (Tanzania)

**Non-Core AOO:** Merrueshi Ranch, Taveta Area

**Adjacent\*:** Amboseli National Park, Kuku, Mailua Ranch, Olgulului, Tsavo West National Park



\* Except for intel-related arrests, incidents that occurred in adjacent areas are not reflected in this report.

## WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Big Life strives to prevent the poaching of all wildlife within our area of operation. We track and apprehend poachers and collaborate with local prosecutors to ensure that they are punished to the fullest extent of the law. One of the largest employers of local Maasai in the ecosystem, Big Life's community rangers are expertly trained and well-equipped to tackle a variety of wildlife crimes.

Since our inception, poaching of all animals has dramatically declined in our area of operation.

Our **2023 Q4** ranger activity in Kenya and Tanzania<sup>i</sup> is summarized below:

### OVERVIEW

Big Life employs Maasai rangers from local communities who work collaboratively with a vast informer network and a number of tools to undertake a variety of activities including anti-poaching and trafficking, conflict mitigation, community support and much more.

Total Staff: <b>572</b>	Rangers: <b>380</b>
Ranger Units: <b>45</b>	Tracker Dogs: <b>2</b>
Mobile Ranger Units: <b>11</b>	Permanent Outposts: <b>32</b>
Aerial Surveillance Hours: <b>43.3</b>	Rangers Trained: <b>76</b>
Total Suspects Arrested: <b>109</b> YTD Total: <b>321</b>	Total Arrest Incidents: <b>54</b> YTD Total: <b>167</b>
Kilometers Patrolled This Quarter: On foot: <b>46,107</b> By vehicle: <b>148,052</b> <b>Q4 TOTAL: 194,159</b> <b>YTD TOTAL: 830,218</b>	Total Kilometers Patrolled Since Inception (2011): On foot: <b>1,387,728</b> By vehicle: <b>4,376,283</b> <b>TOTAL: 5,764,011</b>

### WILDLIFE CRIME & ANTI-TRAFFICKING

Following the arrest of suspects by Big Life rangers, our Prosecution Officer monitors court cases to ensure that maximum penalties are pursued. Meanwhile, Big Life's intelligence team remains actively involved in investigating wildlife trafficking, both in the immediate ecosystem and beyond.

<b>SUSPECTS ARRESTED</b> Poaching - Bushmeat: <b>12</b> Poaching Intention: <b>0</b> Trophy Possession: <b>36</b>	<b>RECOVERED ITEMS</b> Ivory: <b>382.6 kg</b> Snares: <b>14</b> Other: animal skins ( <b>3</b> ), bushmeat ( <b>261 kg</b> ), pangolin scales ( <b>3 kg</b> ), sandalwood ( <b>1,103 kg</b> ), tools/weapons ( <b>57</b> )
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<b>INCIDENTS</b> Bushmeat Poaching: <b>8</b> Poaching Intention: <b>0</b> Trophy Possession: <b>16</b>	<b>PROSECUTIONS</b> Cases - Concluded: <b>1</b> Cases - Ongoing: <b>1,071</b> suspects
<b>MORTALITIES - ELEPHANT</b> Human-Elephant Conflict: <b>3</b> Poaching: <b>0</b> Natural Causes: <b>0</b> Unknown: <b>2</b>	<b>MORTALITIES – OTHER</b> ( <i>excluding large predators</i> ) Buffalo ( <b>2</b> ), Bushbuck ( <b>4</b> ), Dik-dik ( <b>9</b> ), Duiker ( <b>6</b> ), Eland ( <b>1</b> ), Gazelle ( <b>5</b> ), Giraffe ( <b>2</b> ), Impala ( <b>1</b> ), Stork ( <b>1</b> ), Warthog ( <b>1</b> ), Wildebeest ( <b>1</b> ), Zebra ( <b>4</b> )
<b>INJURIES - ELEPHANT</b> Elephants Injured: <b>1</b> Elephants Treated: <b>1</b>	<b>RESCUES/TREATMENTS - OTHER ANIMALS</b> Lion ( <b>2</b> ), Ostrich ( <b>2</b> )

## RHINO INTENSIVE PROTECTION ZONE

There are **eight** known Eastern black rhinos in Big Life’s area of operation. They spend most of their time in the densely-forested Chyulu Hills National Park, protected by dedicated Big Life rangers and the Kenya Wildlife Service. In addition to monitoring and protecting the resident rhinos, Big Life has been working to improve and maintain infrastructure in the rhino area, the goal of which is to maintain Intensive Protection Zone (IPZ) status, which will allow for the future inbound translocation of rhinos from other territories.

Rhino Mortalities: <b>0</b> Rhino Births: <b>1</b>	Rhino Snares Found: <b>0</b>
Rhino Protection Rangers: <b>52</b>	Dedicated Rhino Outposts: <b>9</b> Dedicated Rhino Units: <b>9</b>
<b>RHINO MONITORING</b> Direct Sightings: <b>0</b> Indirect Sightings ( <i>via camera trap</i> ): <b>22</b> Spoor Sightings: <b>16</b>	<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b> Fencing: <b>70+ km</b> constructed by SWT to date Water Points: <b>3</b> Camera traps: <b>45</b>

### NOTABLE UPDATES (click to read):

- [Baby rhino calf is born](#) and caught on camera
- [Agnes Sopilal](#), Big Life’s first female ranger, passed away unexpectedly
- [Theodora](#), the Queen of Amboseli, dies of natural causes at 57
- Read [our statement](#) following the news of two tuskers trophy hunted in Tanzania



**HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT MITIGATION**

Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) takes three primary forms across Big Life’s area of operation: crops raided by wildlife, particularly elephants; livestock killed by predators, such as lions; and humans injured or killed due to living in close proximity with wildlife.

Our **2023 Q4** activity is summarized below:

**HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT MITIGATION**

Poaching continues to pose a significant threat, but many elephants face an even bigger challenge: conflict with humans. As the human population increases, so do competing land uses, such as farming and cattle grazing. As humans compete for limited resources like water, land, and grass for livestock, we further encroach onto what were once wild lands. With less space to share, people and animals now come into direct contact at an alarming rate and often with deadly results.

Crop-Raiding Incidents: <b>40</b> Crop-Raiding Incidents Involving Elephants: <b>40</b>	Acres Damaged: <b>18.25</b> Acres Damaged by Elephants: <b>18.25</b>
Crop Raids Prevented by Big Life: <b>12</b>	Elephant Retaliatory Hunts Attempted: <b>0</b> Retaliatory Hunts Stopped: <b>NA</b>
Crop-Protection Fence Constructed to Date: <b>100 km</b> Crop-Protection Fence Maintenance Workers: <b>32</b>	Non-crop-raiding, elephant-related incidents*: <b>14</b> <i>*including water tanks/pipes damaged by elephants, boma destruction, etc.</i> Livestock Killed by Elephants: <b>1</b>

**PREDATOR PROTECTION**

Big Life protects vulnerable predators in the ecosystem in collaboration with partners and local communities. The core component of Big Life’s predator protection program in Kenya is livestock compensation, which reduces the motivation for retaliatory killing in response to livestock depredation.

The Predator Compensation Fund (PCF) pays Maasai livestock owners a portion of the value of their livestock lost to predators, on the condition that no predators are killed in retaliation. Big Life manages the PCF on Mbirikani, Eselengei, and the Kimana Conservancy. Given the success of this program, the goal is to continue expanding the PCF across the entire ecosystem.

The second part of Big Life’s predator protection program in Kenya is the Maasai Olympics, which was established in 2012 as an alternative for the traditional killing of lions. At the Maasai Olympics, young warriors can compete for recognition, prove bravery, and attract girlfriends through a sports competition based on traditional warrior skills. The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the games will happen in December 2024.

Lion Mortalities: <b>2</b> ( <i>spear</i> ) Violations of PCF: <b>1</b> Lion Retaliatory Hunts: <b>5</b> Retaliatory Hunts Stopped: <b>3</b>	Additional Predator Mortalities ( <i>human-related or unknown</i> ): Jackal: <b>1</b> Hyena: <b>10</b> Leopard: <b>2</b>
Compensation Issued for: <b>61</b> Cows: \$12,195 <b>496</b> Sheep/Goats: \$18,169 <b>6</b> Donkeys: \$218 <hr/> <b>Q4 TOTAL: \$30,582</b> <b>YTD TOTAL: \$129,037</b>	Livestock Killed by Predators: Caracal: <b>4</b> Cheetah: <b>33</b> Hyena: <b>373</b> Jackal: <b>57</b> Leopard: <b>3</b> Lion: <b>89</b> Wild Dog: <b>1</b>

## ADDITIONAL WILDLIFE CONFLICT

Humans Injured: <b>1</b>	Wildlife Responsible for Injuries: snake (1)
Humans Killed: <b>0</b>	Wildlife Responsible for Deaths: NA



## SECURING WILDLIFE HABITAT

The Amboseli ecosystem is one of our planet's surviving natural treasures. It is also home to almost 200,000 people. Big Life and our partners have taken on some of the most complex conservation challenges and been successful. But the demands of an increasing human population, and unplanned development, have already blocked some key wildlife corridors and habitats. If this continues, space will run out, decimating Amboseli's wildlife populations and depriving human communities of the natural resources that they rely on.

Big Life is working with local communities to protect land that is strategically important either as wildlife movement corridors or dispersal areas but is also valuable to the local livestock economy as a grazing resource. This protection can be achieved through land-use planning and the establishment of conservancies, including the legal and management systems necessary for their effective functioning, and assisting to develop income-generating opportunities such as tourism.

Our **2023 Q4** activity is summarized below:

### LAND-USE PLANNING & SUBDIVISION

This work has recently accelerated as a process called 'land subdivision' is sweeping Amboseli, fragmenting large tracts of community-owned land into thousands of small, privately-owned parcels. Resultant land sales, land-use conversion, and fencing have the potential to destroy this irreplaceable ecosystem. Big Life is supporting our partner communities by investing in proper land-use plans, using spatial planning to create area designations for all land-use types (e.g. settlement, agriculture, rangeland, and conservancy/wildlife corridors). The outcomes are extremely positive, communities are reserving large areas for wildlife conservation and livestock grazing, and a series of corridors will connect these habitats across the ecosystem.

### CONSERVANCY DEVELOPMENT & LAND LEASES

Big Life believes that land belongs best in the hands of its traditional owners, but widespread land sales as a result of subdivision have the potential to destroy large areas of natural habitat, and result in landless communities. Our involvement in the land subdivision processes has ensured that important wildlife habitats are protected, but things don't stop there. The next critical step is to develop revenue streams from these areas or risk their eventual conversion to other land-uses.

Conservation land lease agreements are a way of ensuring continued local ownership AND generating the financial returns that those landowners need. These lease agreements are willingly entered into by both parties, the terms of which restrict land conversion and fencing in exchange for annual lease payments.

**Kimana Conservancies (ALOCA):** The Kimana Ranch subdivided two decades ago, and while some landowners sold their parcels, the majority came together to form six 'Kimana Conservancies', which border Amboseli NP and protect the first section of the Kimana Wildlife Corridor.



With support from Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, Big Life has lease agreements with hundreds of landowners in the conservancies, protecting thousands of acres of critical wildlife habitat. These lease payments are intended to limit destructive development of the land, other than that which is compatible with conservation and pastoralism and made possible thanks to the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust.

**Kimana Sanctuary**, at the easternmost part of the Kimana Corridor, was one of the first community-owned and run wildlife conservancies in East Africa. After years of mismanagement, at the request of the community, Big Life took over management in 2017. With support from the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and D.N. Batten Foundation, Big Life set about getting the Sanctuary back on its feet. It now acts as an important dispersal area for wildlife moving to and from Amboseli National Park. A [partnership](#) with Angama will increase the tourism revenue, allowing the Sanctuary to become self-sufficient, simultaneously covering the costs of its protection and increasing income to its landowners.

<p><b>ALOCA:</b>          Landowners benefitting from lease fees: <b>337</b>          Number of acres protected: <b>20,220</b>          Tourism road network: <b>51.3 km</b> built to date;  <b>11.5 km</b> rehabilitated          Other: Environmental Assessment underway</p>	<p><b>Kimana Sanctuary:</b>          Landowners benefitting from lease fees: <b>844</b>          Number of acres protected: <b>5,700</b>          Paying visitor days: <b>572</b>          Other: Angama Amboseli opened its doors to tourist</p>
<p><b>Eselengei:</b>          Landowners signed lease agreement: <b>683</b>          Number of acres under lease: <b>32,101</b>          Other: 2<sup>nd</sup> annual lease payment made to landowners; Eselenkei Conservancies Land Owners Association (ECLOA) AGM held</p>	<p><b>Olgulului:</b>          Landowners signed lease agreement: <b>1,426</b>          Number of acres under lease: <b>29,946</b></p>
<p><b>Mbirikani:</b>          Other: Area meetings regarding the formation of Mbirikani Group Ranch Cooperative Society (MGRCS) continued; 2,200 title deeds processed for rangeland parcels</p>	<p><b>Rombo:</b>          Other: Strategic Environmental Assessment underway</p>

**NOTABLE UPDATES (click to read):**

- AN (ELEPHANT) HIGHWAY CALLED NAIRRABALA [needs your help](#) to stay that way
- A REASON FOR A [PARTY](#): Official Opening of Angama Amboseli
- NEW VIDEO – [Preventing A Shattered Landscape](#)

## RANGELANDS MANAGEMENT

Amboseli’s arid rangelands are hurting. High stocking rates of livestock animals, and the breakdown of traditional rotational grazing practices, has resulted in unsustainable pressure on the savannah grasses, and over-harvesting of natural resources in all forms has degraded habitats. Big Life is working to combat these threats to the ecosystem.

Our **2023 Q4** activity is summarized below:

### LAND

Rangers actively protect the land by fighting against illegal habitat destruction activities such as logging or charcoal production, sand and water extraction, and combatting bushfires. Rangers also enforce protected area rules in conservancies and national parks, where encroachment activities like trespassing, settlement, and grazing are illegal and harmful to critical ecosystem habitats.

Lastly, since 2017, we’ve partnered with local communities, partner NGOs, and local government to implement a [carbon credit program](#) in the Chyulu Hills to protect it from deforestation and overgrazing. The program generates significant income for the management of the Chyulu Hills National Park and creates benefits for surrounding communities.

Suspects Arrested* for Habitat Destruction: <b>33</b> Habitat Destruction Arrest Incidents: <b>15</b> <i>*Sometimes released depending on severity of crime</i>	Non-Arrest Habitat Destruction Incidents: <b>55</b>
	Incidents of Community Grazing, Conservancy, and Subdivision Land Use Rules Enforcement: <b>10</b>

### RESTORATION

Overgrazing in an arid environment has resulted in large areas without a protective covering; soils are eroding, and gullies scar the landscape. The little rain that does fall runs straight off the hard surfaces, depriving the land of moisture and resulting in a downward spiral. Large areas have been rendered unproductive, with negative impacts for both wildlife and people.

Thanks to support from Conservation International and Apple Inc., Big Life is working with the Mbirikani community to restore 10,000 acres of rangeland back to health.

Rangeland Restoration Area: <b>9,460</b> acres Active restoration: <b>1,960</b> acres Natural regeneration: <b>7,500</b> acres	Bunds installed Q4: <b>22,561</b> <b>YTD: 83,787</b> <b>Total: 161,685</b>
Total acres reseeded: <b>337</b> to date	Number of people employed: <b>193</b>

## COMMUNITY

Winning the hearts and minds of the community and providing a mutual benefit through conservation is the only way to protect wildlife and wild lands far into the future. To that end, Big Life provides a number of services in support of the community generally, including education, healthcare and income-generating initiatives, and also lesser-known activities, such as growing food for local students through a sustainable farming project, using ranger vehicles as ambulances, arresting criminals for community crimes (e.g., theft), conducting human and/or livestock search and rescue operations, and more.

Community Crime Incidents: <b>8</b>	Suspects Arrested: <b>14</b>
Human Search and Rescue Incidents: <b>5</b>	Livestock Search Incidents: <b>3</b>
Other Community Support Incidents: <b>6</b> - <i>crime response (3), emergency transport (3)</i>	
Beehives: <b>65</b> in 6 apiaries	Sustainable Farms: <b>1</b>

## EDUCATION

Big Life invests in the future of participating communities by funding teachers' salaries, providing scholarship funds for local students, and implementing conservation-specific curriculum in classrooms and communities. Additionally, Big Life is continuing to provide school lunches to hungry children in the wake of last year's drought.

Our **2023 Q4** activity is summarized below:

Long-Term Student Scholarships Awarded: <b>460</b> Boys: <b>178</b> Girls: <b>282</b>	Students Reached by Conservation Lessons: <b>1,731</b>
One-Time Student Scholarships Awarded: <b>203</b>	School Visits: <b>24</b>
Amount paid in Scholarships: <b>\$21,978</b>	National Park Trips: <b>1</b>
Tertiary-Level Graduates: <b>4</b>	Teachers' Salaries Paid: <b>7</b>



## HEALTHCARE

Healthcare is a key part of Big Life’s community support program and by working in close coordination with the Kajiado South Department of Health, Big Life facilitates outreaches that provide primary healthcare, family planning services, immunizations, and antenatal check-ups across the Greater Amboseli ecosystem.

Big Life is also working to improve sexual and reproductive health and rights education for both the wider community and for the youth and adolescents in local schools. This approach not only improves individual health outcomes, but also helps to build more resilient and empowered communities.

Our **2023 Q4** activity is summarized below:

Back-Pack Medical Outreaches: <b>89</b>	CHV Household Visits: <b>12,027</b>
Family Planning Dialogue Days: <b>100</b>	People De-wormed: <b>2,782</b>
Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights school talks: <b>55</b>	Immunizations Administered: <b>4,595</b>
Child Rights Club Meetings: <b>110</b>	Family Planning Services Provided: <b>2,437</b>
	People Reached with Family Planning Information: <b>41,624</b>
	People receiving primary healthcare: <b>2,891</b>

### NOTABLE UPDATES (click to read):

- [Joan Seleyian](#), an essential part of Big Life’s Health Department, passed away



**Thank you to our wonderful partners and supporters for helping make our work possible. Together we can save wildlife and wild lands - now and for future generations. Please consider making a lifesaving [donation](#) to support the critical programs mentioned in this report.**

<sup>i</sup> Livestock losses and crop-raiding incidents from Enduimet Wildlife Management Area (Tanzania) have been excluded from this report as they aren’t part of the PCF program nor have comparable crop-raiding mitigation measures.