

ARKive

Rare bongo free at last

Mountain antelopes back
in the wild after 20 years

Priceless treasures of Kakamega forest

Unique gems of Kenya's
last remaining rainforest

Fence project gets public's nod

Rhino Ark and community
united in conservation



HUMANS IN HARMONY WITH HABITAT & WILDLIFE



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S VIEW

CHRISTIAN LAMBRECHTS

To achieve our conservation objectives, Rhino Ark follows four complementary approaches: (i) effective public-private partnerships; (ii) active participation of all stakeholders, in particular communities; (iii) ecosystem integrity achieved through an integrated conservation portfolio that includes but goes well beyond fencing; and (iv) sustainability through long-term arrangements.

At the core of all our work are the forest-adjacent communities. We devote much of our time to ensure that these communities are actively involved in each of our programmes. This is essential to: (i) ensure that our interventions respond as far as practicable to their needs, as they are often key beneficiaries; (ii) secure ownership of our programmes by them; (iii) ensure that our activities benefit from their local knowledge and expertise; and (iv) provide long-term sustainability in our programmes. In the case of fencing, for example, forest-adjacent communities are fully involved in the various stages, from fence alignment and design, to construction, maintenance and gate management.

Community members also benefit from our interventions in terms of jobs. Every four kilometres of fence built comes with the creation of a new position of fence attendant that will be offered to a member of the adjacent community. To date, more than 180 community members have been hired as fence attendants. In Rhino Ark's tree nurseries, we have one or more community members working as nursery attendants. The same applies to our forest rehabilitation sites where, on average, for every 10 hectares of forest replanted one community member gets a job as a tree attendant. Communities also benefit significantly from our sustainable livelihood initiatives, deriving skills, exposure and direct income earning opportunities.

Increasingly, adjacent communities are also involved in forest protection. In 2010, Rhino Ark established its first community patrol team in the Aberdares, known as the Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit. Today, we have four community patrol teams covering four different ecosystems. The latest of them was established in the South Western Mau Forest Reserve in November 2023. Some members of our JSU teams are reformed poachers, with an unparalleled knowledge of the forests, and can conduct week-long patrols in the most remote parts of our forests. They are seen as a key asset by our government partners, Kenya Wildlife Service and Kenya Forest Service.

Over our past 35 years, we have invested continuously in our forest-adjacent communities. Today, our successes in conservation and community well-being are the dividends on those investments.

MISSION, VISION AND KEY PRIORITY AREAS



Rhino Ark is a charitable trust established in Kenya in 1988 with the vision to restore and maintain harmony between humans, habitats and wildlife in Kenya.

To this end, Rhino Ark aims to be a trusted partner in advocating, developing and implementing high-impact forest, water catchments and endangered wildlife conservation initiatives that tangibly support adjacent local communities.



Rhino Ark's conservation programme is developed around six priority thematic areas:

1. Trusted Partner

Rhino Ark is the partner of choice in the long-term conservation of forests and their wildlife in Kenya.

2. Advocacy

Rhino Ark is a thought leader and senior advisor on forest and wildlife conservation in Kenya.



3. Innovation

Rhino Ark is a leader in the development and implementation of high-impact dynamic conservation solutions.

4. Forest and water catchment conservation

Rhino Ark develops and implements long-term management tools that protect and restore forest ecosystems and their water catchment values.

5. Endangered wildlife conservation

Rhino Ark develops and implements conservation interventions that protect and recover endangered forest species, including black rhino, mountain bongo and forest elephant.

6. Tangible community support

Rhino Ark develops and implements long-term solutions to human-wildlife conflicts, spearheads conservation education and champions conservation-based livelihoods within forest-adjacent communities.

FOREST ECOSYSTEMS

MAU EBURU

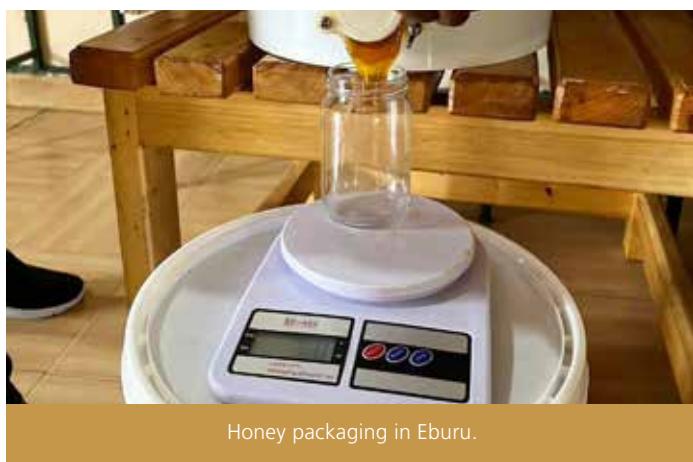
Sweet returns as farmers embrace beekeeping

The Rhino Ark / Wilder Institute Calgary Zoo (WICZ) joint venture is thriving, with the team now equipped with special shoes, branded lab coats, and hair nets to meet the requirements of the Health and Safety Certificate and Business Licence.

Beekeeping is not just about honey; it is about nurturing ecosystems and empowering communities. Here is why supporting beekeeping in our forest edges matters:

- Conservation: Beehives encourage forest preservation by providing a sustainable income that reduces the need for deforestation.
- Biodiversity: Bees are essential pollinators, ensuring the growth of diverse plant species, which benefits both flora and fauna.
- Economic empowerment: Beekeeping creates jobs and income opportunities for forest-edge communities, fostering sustainable livelihoods.
- Health and nutrition: Forest honey is not only delicious but also packed with nutrients, contributing to local diets and well-being.

Supporting beekeeping means supporting the environment and the people who depend on it.



Honey packaging in Eburu.



Maseto Kursen, an Eburu bee farmer and indigenous Ogiek member, processes honey.



Anne-Marie Pista (centre) and Llewellyn Hainey visit Eburu Honey Co-operative.

Conservation champions trained

The Rhino Ark Community Conservation Champions completed a week-long training at Elsamere, Lake Naivasha, marking a significant milestone in their journey towards environmental stewardship.

The group, consisting of 30 trainees from two critical regions, Mau Eburu and South Western Mau, demonstrated unwavering dedication throughout the intensive programme.

With 15 members representing each area, the diversity and collective commitment were evident, setting a strong foundation for collaborative conservation efforts.

The comprehensive training sessions delved into various facets of conservation, equipping participants with invaluable knowledge and skills. From biodiversity preservation to sustainable practices, each session was meticulously crafted to empower these champions to effect positive change within their communities.

Equipped with newfound expertise and a shared vision, the Rhino Ark Community Conservation Champions are poised to lead by example, safeguarding the natural heritage of their respective regions with passion and determination.



Conservation Champions and Rhino Ark staff take a group photo during a training in Naivasha.

SOUTH WESTERN MAU



Aberdares Joint Surveillance Unit scouts and Kenya Forest Service rangers after a joint patrol in the South Western Mau forest.



The joint patrol team sets up tents in their camp in the forest.



The joint surveillance flight team members.

Surveillance flight reveals reduced illegal activities

A surveillance flight over the South Western Mau on April 4, 2024, noted minimal illegal activities, marking a significant improvement from previous years.

Rhino Ark and Kenya Forest Service (KFS) organised the flight to detect illegal activities such as logging, charcoal burning, farming, encroachment, and cattle grazing.

The objective of the flight, part of an ongoing effort supported by Browns Plantations, Rhino Ark, and the Netherlands-based IDH, was to gather GPS data to aid ground operations against illegal activities.

The improvement was attributed to the efforts of KFS's Imarisha Misitu initiative, along with continued support from private sector partners through aerial surveillance and ground operations facilitation.

At a post-flight debriefing in Kericho, project partners and law enforcement agencies were introduced to Rhino Ark's newly established eight-person South Western Mau Joint Surveillance Unit (JSU).

Since November 2023, this elite team has been conducting extended patrols deep into the forest to identify and disrupt illegal activities. Working closely with KFS and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), the JSU will play a vital role in swiftly addressing illegal activities identified during surveillance flights.

In another development, the Aberdares Joint Surveillance Unit and South Western Mau Joint Surveillance Unit conducted a joint forest operation in the southern and northern regions of South Western Mau forest.

The detection of illegal activities within the forest and the requirement to bolster the protection team served as the impetus for the operation. The Kenya Forest Service was involved in the operation as well.

The two-week programme began on February 15 and ended on February 29, 2024. These procedures will provide forest security and curb illegal activities such as logging and bush meat hunting.

Success at Sophia rehabilitation site

The Rhino Ark team at the Indigenous Tree Planting Initiative site at Sophia in the Aberdares conducted an annual seedling survival count and seasonal maintenance to reduce competition for space and nutrients among seedlings.

The team has successfully rehabilitated the 30-ha site and is diligently engaged in daily monitoring and maintenance as part of the programme supported by The Darwin Initiative.

30 Ha
effectively
rehabilitated

Our dedicated field team at the
Sophia Tree Rehabilitation Site
conducts daily monitoring and
maintenance.



A section of the 30 hectares of rehabilitated site at Sophia, Aberdares.



New Forest mulcher delivered to Rhino Ark.

New mulcher for the Aberdare National Park

A new forest mulcher machine procured for the Aberdare National Park will be instrumental in its conservation.

The machine, which will be used in the management of weeds and bushes, was acquired by Rhino Ark with support from the Horne Family Foundation. It will be instrumental in;

- (i) Enhancing patrol access to bolster security for the remaining Black rhino population in the Eastern Salient;
- (ii) Preserving secondary roads within the park; and
- (iii) Establishing and sustaining firebreaks in the central and northern moorlands.

The mulcher is affixed to a Kenya Wildlife Service tractor, refurbished through funding from Rhino Ark.

10-km fence construction in Aberdares begins

The 10-km Wanjohi-Shamata conservation fence has had new beacons installed and properly aligned to enhance its efficacy in demarcating the protected area.

Rhino Ark, in collaboration with the local administration and members of the Geta Community Forest Association, convened at the fence for the work.

This task required careful planning and coordination among the participants to ensure that the fence was properly positioned to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts and safeguard the biodiversity within the forest.

Additionally, as part of their community engagement efforts, the team conducted interviews with local residents to gather insights and perspectives on conservation efforts.

Unskilled labour from the community was also enlisted to contribute to the fence installation process, fostering a sense of ownership and involvement among community members in the conservation initiatives.

Overall, the collaborative efforts undertaken by the local administration and the Geta Community Forest Association exemplify a proactive approach towards sustainable forest management and community-driven conservation efforts. The project is supported by The Darwin Initiative.



Surveyors install beacons ahead of construction of the 10-km electric fence.



Members of forest adjacent communities in the Aberdares attend a consultative meeting about the fence.

Bamboo plays crucial role in restoring biodiversity

The Rhino Ark team at the Geta Forest Station is currently propagating bamboo seedlings within a greenhouse.

Bamboo plays a pivotal role in supporting the ecosystem, providing habitat, and contributing to soil conservation. By nurturing bamboo seedlings, we actively participate in the restoration of the Aberdares' unique biodiversity.

The team is making significant strides in the conservation and restoration of indigenous flora. The following are the other activities the team is engaged in.

Pricking and Weeding: The team recently completed pricking and weeding, ensuring the optimal growth of indigenous tree seedlings. These efforts are crucial for creating a nurturing environment, and

we extend our appreciation to the team for their dedication to this meticulous task.

Upcoming Activities: Looking ahead, we have planned activities such as soil enrichment, greenhouse monitoring, and community outreach programmes. These initiatives aim to create a more sustainable and interconnected ecosystem within the Aberdares.

Community Involvement: Our project thrives on collaboration with the local community. We encourage everyone to actively engage, share knowledge, and inspire a sense of responsibility towards environmental conservation. Together, we can create a positive ripple effect that extends far beyond our immediate efforts.

This project is proudly supported by The Darwin Initiative.

Mount Kenya forest is 1,350 trees richer

A total of 1,350 trees were planted in the Ontulili Forest section to further the restoration of this vital part of Mt. Kenya. Reforestation helps halt soil erosion, and ensure that our forests can filter and supply the water that we all depend on.

Rhino Ark, in collaboration with the Mount Kenya Conservation Forum, Kenya Forest Service and local communities, organised the tree planting event.

This initiative was timed to coincide with the current rains and in response to President William Ruto's call to plant trees to mitigate the effects of climate change.



Local residents participate in tree planting in Mt. Kenya forest.



Members of the Rhino Ark Wildlife Nature Conservation Clubs help to clean up a forest.

Cleaning the wild

Rhino Ark Wildlife Nature Conservation Clubs engaged in rubbish collection activities and learned about the importance of the 3Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Together, we are making a positive impact on our environment and safeguarding wildlife habitats. Stay tuned for more updates on our conservation efforts.

Nanyuki tree nursery

Preserving our forests is crucial for the health of our natural ecosystems and the well-being of future generations. By establishing indigenous tree nurseries, we are:

- Preserving Biodiversity: Indigenous trees are vital for maintaining biodiversity in our forests, providing habitats for wildlife and supporting local ecosystems.
- Combating Climate Change: Indigenous trees play a key role in carbon sequestration, helping to mitigate the effects of climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- Protecting Watersheds: Trees help to regulate water flow, reduce soil erosion, and maintain the health of our watersheds, ensuring a sustainable supply of clean water for communities.
- Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods: Tree nurseries create opportunities for local communities to engage in sustainable livelihoods through the cultivation and sale of indigenous tree seedlings.



Rhino Ark tree nurseries create jobs for local communities through the cultivation and sale of tree seedlings.

Rangers step up patrols in Ragati and Chehe

Rangers from the Rhino Ark / Wilder Institute Calgary Zoo (WICZ) Mountain Forest Conservation Partnership spent a total of 92 days in Ragati and 84 days in Chehe on forest-monitoring foot patrols, in 2023.

These efforts, in collaboration with Ragati & Chehe Forest stakeholders, have been crucial for wildlife conservation and forest protection.

Our partnership with Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Local Administration, Ragati & Chehe Community Forest Associations, Bongo Surveillance Project (BSP), Mt. Kenya Trust (MKT), and Ragati River Management (RRM) made all these achievements possible.



The rangers from Rhino Ark, Wilder Institute Calgary Zoo and Kenya Forest Service involved in foot patrols in Ragati and Chehe forests.



British High Commissioner Neil Wigan (second right), Rhino Ark Executive Director Christian Lambrechts and a KWS official in Mt. Kenya.



British High Commissioner signs the visitor's book on his visit to Mt. Kenya National Park.

British High Commissioner visits Mt. Kenya, Aberdares

The British High Commissioner to Kenya, Mr. Neil Wigan, visited Mt. Kenya and the Aberdares to assess the progress of Rhino Ark conservation programmes.

During his visit, Mr Wigan engaged closely with Rhino Ark initiatives, underscoring the commitment to wildlife preservation and environmental sustainability.

The objective of the high-profile inspection was to gain insights into the strides made in safeguarding these critical ecosystems.

The High Commissioner emphasized the importance of international collaboration in tackling environmental challenges and expressed the UK's continued commitment to partnering with Kenya in conservation endeavors.

This visit not only signifies the strategic cooperation between the UK and Kenya but also underscores the global significance of preserving the unique ecosystems found in Mt. Kenya and the Aberdares.

Mr. Wigan's firsthand assessment reaffirms the importance of collective action in the pursuit of a sustainable and biodiverse future.



Mr. Neil Wigan, the British High Commissioner, KWS officials, scouts and local community members pose for a picture at a commissioning site of a conservation project.

KAKAMEGA FOREST

Conserving Kakamega forest's rich biodiversity

The Kakamega forest is a critical bastion for primate conservation, serving as a refuge for numerous species that are integral to the delicate balance of the ecosystem.

As Kenya's last remaining indigenous forest from the greater Congo Forest, Kakamega holds a unique assemblage of primate species, including the endangered De Brazza's monkey, blue monkey and black-and-white colobus monkey.

These primates not only contribute to the biodiversity of the forest but also play essential roles in seed dispersal, maintaining forest structure, and supporting the overall health of the ecosystem.

Efforts to conserve primates in the Kakamega Forest are multifaceted, involving a

combination of habitat protection, community engagement, law enforcement, and education initiatives.

Collaborative projects between government agencies, non-governmental organisations, local communities, and international partners aim to mitigate threats to primate populations by establishing protected areas, implementing sustainable land-use practices, and raising awareness about the importance of conservation.

In safeguarding primate species in the Kakamega Forest, we not only preserve biodiversity but also protect vital ecosystem services that benefit both wildlife and humans.

By recognising the interconnectedness of all life forms within the forest ecosystem, and taking

concerted action to conserve its inhabitants, we can ensure the long-term survival of primates and safeguard the ecological integrity of this invaluable natural treasure.



Black-and-white colobus monkey in Kakamega forest.

Investment opportunities in renewable energy

The inaugural Kakamega International Investment Conference (KAIICO 2024), was held in March with the aim of accelerating economic growth through sustainable investments.

The County Government of Kakamega, in collaboration with the Kakamega County Investment and Development Agency (KCIDA), organised the conference that took place between March 19 and 22. Rhino Ark Kenya was invited to attend the conference as a partner in the fencing and preservation of Kakamega forest. It was represented by the Executive Director, Mr. Christian Lambrechts, who spoke on the Kakamega Conservation Fence Project and the need to protect the forest's biodiversity.

The theme of his presentation was "Natural Resources, Environment, & Climate Change" which addressed critical environmental issues.

In addition, it sought investors in sustainable projects in areas of water management, environmental conservation and projects that harness renewable energy and promote climate resilience.

The convention was attended by some of Rhino Ark's key partners in Kakamega including Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, NETFund, local and international investors.

Fungi are critical to stability of nature

Fungi play a critical role in nature, particularly in mountain forest ecosystems. They are integral to the functioning and stability of ecosystems like the Kakamega forest, highlighting the importance of conserving and understanding these often overlooked organisms.

Here are some key highlights of their importance:

- **Decomposition and nutrient cycling:** Fungi break down organic matter, including dead plants and animals, returning essential nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus to the soil. This process is crucial for maintaining soil fertility and supporting plant growth.
- **Symbiotic relationships:** Many fungi form symbiotic relationships with plants, such as mycorrhizal associations. In these partnerships,

fungi help plants absorb water and nutrients from the soil, while the plants provide sugars produced through photosynthesis. This mutualistic interaction enhances plant growth and health.

- **Food web dynamics:** Fungi serve as a vital link in the forest food web. They provide food and habitat for various organisms, including insects, small mammals, and birds. The presence of fungi influences the abundance and diversity of other species within the ecosystem.
- **Medicinal and Therapeutic Potential:** Certain fungi species found in the Kakamega Forest have medicinal properties and are used in traditional medicine. Research into their pharmacological properties holds promise for the development of new medical treatments.
- **Conservation and Management:** Understanding the role of fungi is essential for effective conservation and management of forest ecosystems. Protecting fungal habitats ensures the long-term health and resilience of these ecosystems, benefiting both wildlife and human communities.

RHINO ARK

NEWS

New Board members join Rhino Ark

We are thrilled to extend our warmest welcome to Lucy Chodota and Nick Wachira, our newest members of the Rhino Ark Charitable Trust Board of Directors.

Their wealth of experience, diverse backgrounds, and unwavering dedication to their respective fields will undoubtedly enrich our organisation and drive us toward even greater heights of success in our mission to conserve Kenya's invaluable natural heritage.

Lucy Chodota brings with her more than two decades of profound expertise in the entertainment industry, particularly in the realms of film, television, and documentary production.

Her passion for storytelling and her commitment to delivering captivating narratives align seamlessly with our own dedication to raising awareness about conservation issues.

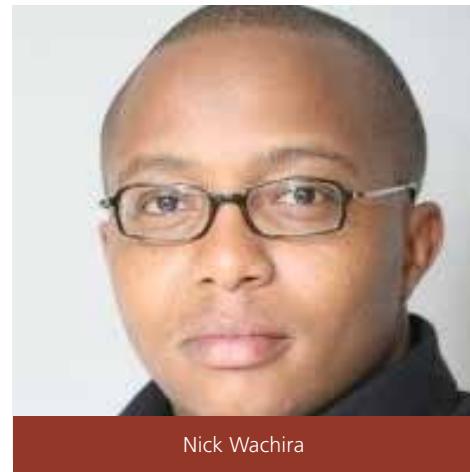
With Lucy's creative vision and unparalleled ability to engage diverse

audiences, we are confident that our conservation efforts will resonate more powerfully than ever before.

Nick Wachira, a dynamic figure in the communications and journalism sphere, joins us with a remarkable track record of leadership and innovation.

Through his leadership at Oxygène Marketing Communications, he has demonstrated an unparalleled capacity to build and nurture successful enterprises, fostering relationships with prominent figures across the continent. Nick's extensive network and strategic insights will be invaluable as we navigate the complex landscape of conservation advocacy and stakeholder engagement.

Together, Lucy and Nick bring a potent blend of creativity, strategic acumen, and a deep-rooted passion for positive change. Their collective expertise will undoubtedly catalyze innovation within our organisation, driving forward our shared vision of a sustainable future for Kenya's natural treasures.



Nick Wachira



Lucy Chodota



George Griffin

Final bow for George Griffin, Rhino advocate

It is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of George Griffin, a former Trustee in the Board of Rhino Ark USA.

George was a senior diplomat in the US Foreign Service. Over a 40-year period, he served in 15 posts, including Nairobi where he was introduced to Rhino Ark. As a trustee of Rhino Ark USA, he was a strong advocate for wildlife, in particular the preservation of the Black rhino.

We present our sincere condolences to his wife Christina and his family.

UK trustee visits Bongo site

Mr. Ian Purcell, a dedicated trustee of Rhino Ark UK, recently visited the Rhino Ark Bongo Security Site situated at Mt. Kenya.

During his visit, Mr. Purcell had the opportunity to explore and appreciate all the special sustainability features integrated into our conservation efforts.

Our talented community team showcased their expertise by demonstrating camera

trapping techniques, offering Mr. Purcell valuable insights into our wildlife monitoring initiatives and the crucial role they play in our conservation endeavours.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Mr. Purcell for taking the time to visit the Rhino Ark Bongo Security Site and for his unwavering support of our mission to protect and preserve Kenya's natural heritage.



Mr. Ian Purcell, Rhino Ark UK Trustee.



Rhino Ark US Trustee Mark Somen and Adam Mwangi, the fence and community manager, plant a ceremonial tree with pupils of Bondeni Primary.

USA trustee tours Aberdare projects

Mr. Mark Somen, a Board member of Rhino Ark USA, recently visited the Aberdare Ecosystem to gain insight into Rhino Ark's projects in the area. During the visit, he met with Mr. Daniel Kosgey, Assistant Director of Aberdare National Park from the Kenya Wildlife Service, who provided an overview of the collaboration between Rhino Ark and KWS, highlighting the positive impacts of the projects.

Mr. Somen also visited Bondeni Primary School,

where he engaged with students through speeches, entertainment, and participated in tree planting activities, making it an enjoyable and educational experience for everyone involved.

The visit concluded with further tree planting at the Fence Commissioning Arboretum in Aberdare, contributing to the ongoing conservation efforts in the region.

New inspiration for next generation of climate stewards

Rhino Ark is thrilled to introduce Lucy Shepherd as the newest addition to the Rhino Ark Charitable Trust family, serving as our inaugural global ambassador.

Lucy embodies the spirit of adventure and environmental stewardship like no other, dedicating her life to exploring the uncharted corners of our planet while advocating for its protection.

As a Professional Explorer, Lucy's mission extends far beyond mere exploration. She ventures into untouched landscapes, documenting their wonders and advocating for their preservation. Her work amplifies the voices of climate advocates, highlighting the delicate beauty and fragility of our Earth.

With a portfolio spanning more than 20 expeditions across diverse

terrains, from mountain ranges to tropical rainforests and Arctic tundra, Lucy brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to our cause. She leads by example, championing sustainable enterprise and inspiring the next generation of climate stewards and adventurers.

Lucy's accolades speak volumes about her dedication to exploration and conservation. As a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the youngest council member ever elected to the Scientific Exploration Society, she embodies excellence in her field.

We are honoured to have Lucy Shepherd join us in our mission to protect Africa's vital ecosystems and the magnificent flora and fauna they shelter. Together, with her passion and expertise, we will continue our efforts to safeguard these precious habitats for generations to come. Join us in welcoming Lucy to the Rhino Ark family.

Rhino Ark scoops top digital award in conservation

Rhino Ark achieved recognition at the 2023 Digitally Fit Awards, a prominent digital marketing and technology event celebrating success in the online business landscape. The awards honour companies, brands, businesses, and individuals making a positive impact in the digital space.

The gala dinner took place at the Safari Park Hotel on November 24, 2023. We extend our gratitude to our dedicated followers for nominating and voting for us, leading to our Gold Award for Best NGO in Wildlife and Water Tower Conservation.

ENDANGERED WILDLIFE



Bongo release big step in saving threatened species

Twenty-four Mountain bongos have been released into the wild in a move that signals significant progress in efforts to save the critically endangered species. It is the first time after a 20-year campaign that the rare antelope which is endemic to Kenya is being released from captivity.

The Mountain bongo has faced steep population declines due to hunting, poaching, habitat loss, and disease, with fewer than 100 left in the wild. But now, thanks to efforts like the Mawingu Mountain Bongo Sanctuary, established by Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy, we are seeing real change.

The breeding and rewilding programme started in 2004, bringing bongos from the United States to join the existing captive herd. Now, they are being released into the wild to acclimatise and thrive in their natural habitat in the Mt Kenya forest reserve. At the same time, a Mountain bongo release security site has been launched in Ragati and Chehe forests by the Mountain Bongo Joint Site Committee.

The event was graced by Dr. Clement Lanthier, President and Chief Executive Officer, Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo and Mr. Christian Lambrechts, Executive Director, Rhino Ark Charitable Trust.

The security site is an important milestone representing the culmination of more than two years of work. Forest security is a serious gap in the

long-term survival of the Mountain bongo, the critically endangered flagship species of mountain forests of Kenya.

A joint security unit comprised of Kenya Forestry Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, and community scouts will patrol the forest from the site to ensure that it is safe and secure for the current bongo population and for any re-introduced bongo in future. This joint security force can go deep into the forest by using this security post as a base. The camera trap team will also operate from the site.

Rhino Ark / Wilder Institute Calgary Zoo and Mount Kenya Trust will facilitate the camp. Facilities at the security site include solar lighting and heating, provision for water storage, furnished uni-huts, an ablution block, and a viewing platform structure.

The Joint Site Committee is made up of:

- Non-governmental organisations: Rhino Ark Kenya Charitable Trust, Wilder Institute Calgary Zoo, Bongo Surveillance Project, Mt. Kenya Trust, and the Ragati River Management.
- Government: Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, Wildlife Research and Training Institute.
- Community: Ragati and Chehe Community Forest Associations.

Underpass to safeguard wildlife in Imenti

An elephant underpass will be constructed under the Nanyuki-Meru highway in a move to reduce incidents of human-wildlife conflict.

The project will be funded by the Elephant Cooperation and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

A large number of elephants move from Mt. Kenya to Imenti Forest and return every year. In their journey, elephants have to cross the Nanyuki-Meru highway leading to collision between vehicles and elephants. This is a key challenge in terms of road safety, road kills, as well as human-wildlife conflict.

As part of the process to obtain the authorisation from the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) to build the underpass, Rhino Ark is financing an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment study, led by a KWS EIA Lead Expert.

A stakeholder workshop was held in Meru on December 7, 2023 as part of the study.

The workshop was attended by a wide range of stakeholders including KeNHA, KWS, KFS, Water Resources Authority, NEMA, Wildlife Research and Training Institute, Rhino Ark, Community Forest Association, Matatu Welfare Association and political leaders.

All the stakeholders at the workshop strongly supported the proposed underpass.



Participants at a meeting to discuss the proposed Imenti wildlife underpass.



Southern White Rhino.

Return of endangered Southern White Rhino

At the brink of extinction in the late 19th century, Southern White Rhinos have returned through intensive conservation efforts.

They are the second largest land mammal after the elephant, with males weighing around 2,300 to 3,600 kilograms (5,000 to 8,000 pounds) and females weighing slightly less.

Camera traps key in conservation strategies

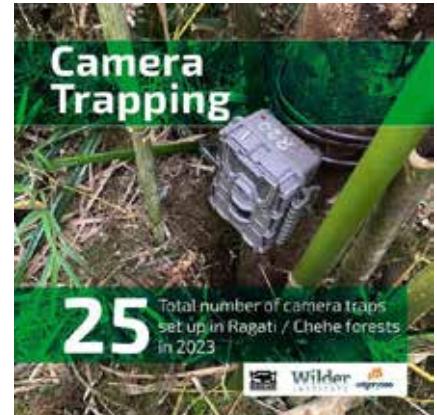
The Rhino Ark / Wilder Institute Calgary Zoo Mountain Forest Conservation Partnership successfully installed 25 camera traps in the Ragati / Chehe Forest in 2023.

These camera traps are strategically placed to monitor and document wildlife activity within the forest ecosystem.

The camera traps will aid in monitoring the diverse range of wildlife species, including the critically endangered Mountain Bongo,

inhabiting the Ragati / Chehe Forest. This data will contribute to our understanding of species distribution, behaviour, and population dynamics.

The information gathered from the camera traps will support conservation efforts aimed at protecting and preserving the biodiversity of the Ragati / Chehe Forest. By identifying key habitats and wildlife corridors, we can develop targeted conservation strategies.



COMMUNITY LIVELIHOODS

MAU EBURU

Eburu honey marks first anniversary

Bee keepers in Eburu forest produced 1,170 kilogrammes of honey in their first year of operation.

Working under the Rhino Ark-supported Eburu Forest Honey Cooperative, the beekeepers' produce was worth KES581,775 (\$4,200).

The cooperative started buying and processing honey in April 2023 and the end of March 2024 marked its first year.

With 27 highly engaged members and an additional 20 enthusiastic hopefuls, the group has much to anticipate as it embarks on the second year of its journey.



Conservation education review workshop

Rhino Ark, along with partners, held a workshop to evaluate the conservation education curricula for schools.

The session centered on the principle of continuous improvement and its key participants included the Ministry of Education, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, teachers, and community conservation champions.

The workshop's aim was to assess how Rhino Ark's conservation education programme, which is marking its 10th year, aligns with the national Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) education system.

In addition, it was to ensure the programme effectively imparts practical knowledge on nature conservation to primary and secondary pupils within the Eburu forest ecosystem.

The workshop, the second in a two-part series, follows the initial session held in Naivasha previously.

Opened by Kuresoi Sub-County Director of Education, Mrs. Donnate Otieno, the workshop emphasized the importance of monitoring progress indicators in cultivating a conservation culture.

The goal is to ensure that the conservation education programme significantly contributes to this cultural progress. Addressing challenges faced by implementing schools is also a key focus, especially in adapting to evolving needs.

Rhino Ark's conservation education programme remains dedicated to enlightening, engaging, and empowering the youth to live in harmony with the environment.

SOUTH WESTERN MAU



New outpost in Tiritiya completed.



A Kenya Forest Service official inspects one of the unihuts at the Tiritiya outpost.

New outposts will be game-changers

Two new outposts at Tiritiya and Monges are under construction in the Mau, marking a significant stride towards conservation and improved infrastructure in the expansive forest. Tiritiya outpost, in the South Western Mau Forest, is set to act as a basecamp that will improve the way rangers and scouts operate.

Construction of the Monges outpost in the heart of Itare forest is near completion. With easier access to key affected areas, the dedicated forest guardians will be empowered to assess and address challenges more efficiently.

The completion of the outposts also signifies a positive step towards solving the longstanding issue of inadequate housing for the dedicated personnel of the Kenya Forest Service. The improved facilities are a testament to Rhino Ark's commitment to both the preservation of the environment and the well-being of those tirelessly working towards this noble cause.

The strategic placement of these outposts is set to revolutionise the way rangers operate.



Public endorses proposed 10-km Malewa River fence

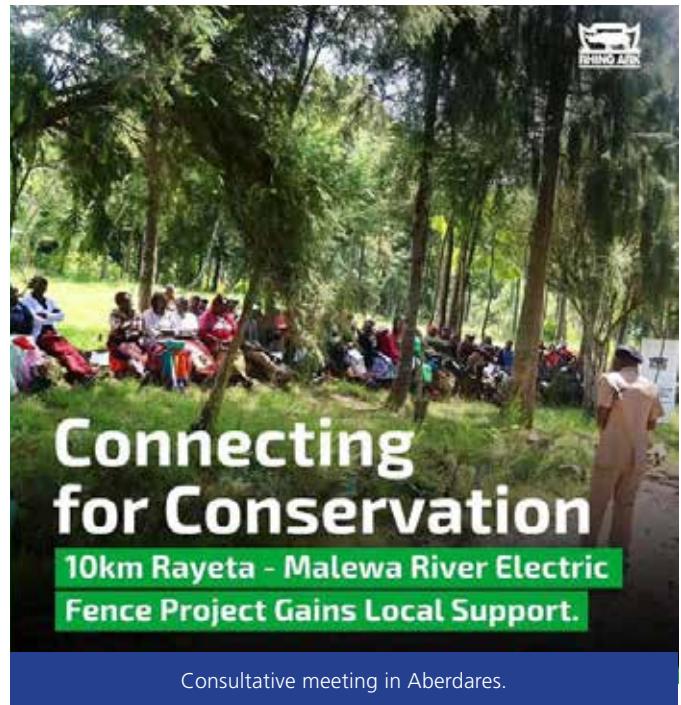
Rhino Ark recently organised three community sensitisation meetings regarding the proposed 10-km electric fence along Rayeta to Malewa River.

These sessions included a comprehensive Environmental Social Impact Assessment conducted by an expert from the Kenya Wildlife Service.

During the meetings, the local community positively received the project, deeming it a noble idea. They highlighted the anticipated reduction in human-wildlife conflicts and the safeguarding of water resources as significant advantages.

The community's endorsement underscores the importance of the electric fence initiative in promoting harmonious co-existence between wildlife and the local population.

This collaborative effort between Rhino Ark and the community reflects a shared commitment to environmental conservation and sustainable resource management.



Surveillance scouts trained on ecosystem protection



Joint Surveillance Units scouts who were trained in various aspects of protecting biodiversity.

Twenty-five members of Joint Surveillance Units scouts were trained in various aspects of protecting biodiversity. The participants came from the Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit, South Western Mau Joint Surveillance Unit, Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, and Rhino Ark. The focus areas included Wanjerere, Katare, and Kimakia forests.

The training provided a comprehensive orientation on standard operating procedures within protected areas. The goal is to protect these ecosystems from illegal activities, promoting environmental conservation and safeguarding the rich biodiversity.

Other key elements of the training included:

- Desnaring: Rigorous efforts were dedicated to desnaring operations to protect wildlife from harmful snares.
- Anti-Logging Activities: Participants engaged in activities aimed at combating illegal logging and preserving the integrity of the forests.
- Anti-Poaching: Training emphasised effective strategies to counter poaching and safeguard the biodiversity within the protected areas.
- Detection of Charcoal Burners: Special attention was given to identifying and addressing the presence of charcoal burners, a significant threat to the ecosystems.
- Illegal Firewood Collections: Participants were trained to monitor and prevent unauthorised firewood collections, ensuring sustainable forest use.
- Use of GPS for Navigation: The team was equipped with navigation skills using GPS technology to enhance precision during operations.

The trainees are now well-prepared to execute operations effectively and uphold the sanctity of these vital ecosystems.



14 more nature clubs set up in forest-edge schools

Nature Conservation Clubs focusing on conservation education and action have been established in 14 primary schools near the Ragati and Chehe forests of Mt. Kenya. The clubs are a collaboration of Rhino Ark / Wilder Institute Calgary Zoo (RAWICZ) Mountain Forest Conservation Partnership and the forest-edge schools.

Key activities of the collaboration include launching clubs, providing informational sessions, and focusing on mountain forest conservation. The programme will soon be expanded to eight secondary schools, incorporating hands-on activities, and implementing special projects.

Ragati CFA annual meeting a success

The Ragati Community Forest Association has held a successful annual general meeting and launched its office with the support of Rhino Ark/ Wilder Institute Calgary Zoo. Community Forest Associations (CFAs) play a pivotal role in conservation by bridging local communities and environmental protection. They empower communities to become custodians of their surrounding forests, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Through sustainable resource management and community-led initiatives, CFAs contribute to biodiversity preservation, mitigate deforestation, and enhance ecosystem resilience. Beyond environmental benefits, CFAs also foster social and economic development, creating a harmonious balance between human needs and ecological well-being.



Ragati CFA office.



Ragati Community Forest Association members at their annual general meeting.



Mr. Solomon Mwangi of Rhino Ark at the Ragati CFA annual general meeting.

TESTIMONIALS



"Since the majority of the conservation education curricula goals were accomplished by some of the discussions on the necessary partnerships, the workshop has been successful. Understanding the successes, difficulties, and future directions has also been aided by the workshop. Several members who had forgotten about conservation have also been awakened."

Josephine Chorono Ngeno
Technical Implementation committee



"The Kenya Wildlife Service is appreciative of Rhino Ark conservation education curricula. This commendable endeavour will preserve our ecosystems and add to the bulk of trees in our surroundings and forests. Rhino Ark is effectively engaging schools. Education on environmental conservation will play a major role in protecting our ecosystem for future generations."

Tabitha Kariuki
Kenya Wildlife Service



"The Rhino Ark conservation education curricula review workshop went well. All through the session, participants were engaged. The Rhino Ark officials were well informed on the many talks that took place throughout the workshop. Kuresoi North and South teachers pledged to actively partner with Rhino Ark and pave the road for better learning environments in their classrooms."

Justus Ruttoh
Quality Assurance and standard department
Ministry of Education



"Participating stakeholders and environmentalists were all welcomed to this very participatory discussion to review the Rhino Ark curricula. To discuss progress, such sessions should be scheduled twice a year or every three months. The unreached schools along the cut line should be included in the programme."

Paul Okuro
Forester Ndoinet
Kenya Forest Service

Sights to behold: Butterflies in our ecosystems





ABOUT THE RHINO CHARGE

The Rhino Charge is an annual off-road 4x4 competition held in Kenya in which entrants are required to visit 13 points (guard posts) scattered over approximately 100 km² of rough terrain within a 10 hour period. Entrants are supplied with a 1:50,000 scale map of the venue, co-ordinates of the 13 guard posts and their start position the night before the event. Each competitor must plot the guard posts on the map and decide his/her route. The winner is the competitor who visits the most guard posts in the shortest distance (GPS measured).

The event is organised in order to raise funds to support the activities of the Rhino Ark Kenya Charitable Trust, an NGO which works towards a noble cause: the conservation and protection of Kenya's mountain range ecosystems, the so-called "Water Towers".

How Can You Support the Rhino Charge

ATTEND AS A SPECTATOR

Attending the Charge as a Spectator is an amazing way that you can support the event and be part of all the action!

SPONSOR A CAR OR THE RHINO CHARGE EVENT

The Rhino Charge offers some fantastic branding and PR opportunities and is a unique way to support Rhino Ark's conservation efforts.

HELP OUT AT THE EVENT

If you are interested in volunteering at the Charge please get in touch with us on info@rhinocharge.or.ke

ENTER A TEAM OR JOIN AN EXISTING TEAM

Spaces are limited and competition is fierce but once a Charger, always a Charger! If you are interested in getting involved please contact us on info@rhinocharge.or.ke

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

For lots of news and information about the Rhino Charge follow us:

- ⌚ @Rhino.Charge
- ⌚ @Rhino_Charge
- ⌚ @RhinoChargeKenya
- ⌚ @Rhino.Charge
- ⌚ @rhinocharge4x4

www.rhinocharge.co.ke

HOW TO SPONSOR A TEAM

MPESA

MPESA payments must be done in the following way:

- Lipa na M-PESA
- Pay Bill
- Enter business no. 855995
- Account No. (Car no. being sponsored e.g.CAR01)
- Enter amount

BANK TRANSFER

If you wish to make a donation by direct transfer to Rhino Ark's bank account, kindly contact us on:

Email: info@rhinoark.or.ke,
Please include the relevant car number you are making payment for in the description for the transfer.

CHEQUE

Please ensure that all Cheques are made out to:

RHINO ARK KENYA CHARITABLE TRUST

When delivering a Cheque to Rhino Ark please ensure that the relevant car number is clearly stated on the envelope.

ONLINE GIVING

Many of the teams have set themselves up with online giving pages please go to our website to see the teams' details.

2024 RHINO CHARGE ENTRANTS



TOP 10 RHINO CHARGE FUNDRAISERS



Over 180 million shillings
Peter Kinyua/John Macharia
(2000-2023) Car 23



Over 179 million shillings
McKittrick/Ray/Jessop/Bovard/Knight/Smith
(1989-2023) Car 5



Over 163 million shillings
Adil Khawaja's AK44 Team
(2005-2023) Car 44



Over 89 million Kenya Shillings
Stanley Kinyanjui's Magnate Chargers Team
(2007-2023) Car 62



Over 77 million shillings
Mark Tilbury's Hog Charge Team
(1999-2023) Car 35



Over 53 million shillings
Tim Carstens' Aussie Rules Team
(2013-2023) Car 63



Over 50 million shillings
The Avery's Bundufundis Team
(1996-2023) Car 38



Over 40 million shillings
Eddy Verbeek's Rhino Charge Car No 1
(2000-2023) Car 1



Over 39 million shillings
Mike & Sarah Higgins
(1990-2008) Car 22



Over 38 million shillings
Mark Glen Team 48
(2005-2023) Car 48

THANK YOU!

- **ChallengeAid** - Support to the Schools of Hope (Aberdares)
- **KWS** - Rhino Ark Offices
- **DH-ISLA & Finlays** - Support to the surveillance flights (South Western Mau)
- **Wilder Institute / Calgary Zoo** - Support to forest conservation / community livelihoods in Eburu Forest
- **Wilder Institute / Calgary Zoo** - Support to forest conservation / community livelihoods / bongo recovery in Ragati Forest, Mt.Kenya
- **Rare Species Conservatory Foundation** - Support to the conservation of the mountain bongo
- **Elephant Cooperation** - Construction of one wildlife underpass in Imenti Forest
- **Wildlife Conservation Society** - Construction of one wildlife underpass in Imenti Forest
- **Eburru Rafiki** - Support towards community work at Eburu Forest
- **AutoXpress** - Provision of tyres for all Rhino Ark vehicles
- **MPESA Foundation** - Support for the maintenance of Eburu Electric Fence
- **MPESA Foundation** - Support for the construction of the Kakamega Electric Fence
- **Platinum Credit & Platcorp Foundation** - support towards reforestation in South Western Mau
- **Upper Tana Natural Resources Management Project (IFAD-GoK)** - support towards the fencing of Mt. Kenya
- **BIOPAMA** - support towards the maintenance of the Aberdare fence
- **Darwin Initiative** - support towards the conservation of the Aberdare and South Western Mau
- **Kenya Pipeline Company** - support towards the fencing of Mt. Kenya
- **UNDP/Government of Japan** - support towards the fencing of Kakamega Forest
- **Horne Family Foundation** - support towards the conservation of the black rhino

Our Contacts

Rhino Ark Kenya Charitable Trust

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P.O. Box 181 Uhuru Gardens, 00517 Nairobi, Kenya
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Email: info@rhinoark.or.ke
Website: www.rhinoark.org/www.rhinocharge.co.ke

Rhino Ark (UK) Charity No. 1047083

Acorn Wood, Swan Lane,
Edenbridge, Kent TN8 6AH
Tel: +44 (780) 224 5865
Email: kit@rhinoark.org
Website: www.rhinoark.org
Website Donations: justgiving.com/charity/rhinoark

Rhino Ark (US)

A registered US Charity with IRC 501 (c) 3 Status
Ms. Sheena Bliss
P.O. Box 46250 Madison, WI 53744-6250
Tel: +1 608-576-0571, Fax: +1 608 4425 264
Email: sheenab230@gmail.com
Website: www.wildlifedefenseusa.org

Website Donations:

[Firstgiving.com/Rhino Ark Kenya Charitable Trust Inc.](http://Firstgiving.com/Rhino%20Ark%20Kenya%20Charitable%20Trust%20Inc)
Banking Details: US Bank, Gamon Place, Madison WI 53719

Please make cheques payable to:

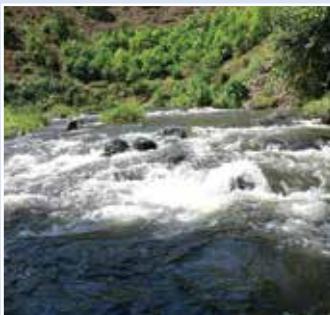
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Email: info@rhinoark.or.ke
websites: www.rhinoark.org/www.rhinocharge.co.ke

Order your copy of:

- Environmental, social and economic assessment of the fencing of the Aberdare Conservation Area. Available for KES 3,000 only.
- Rhino Ark Profile.
- 2023 Spirit of the Charge film in DVD. Available at KES 1,000 only.
- Rhino Charge 2024 calendar. Available at KES 1,100 only.
- Mau Eburu Guidebook. Available at KES 1,500 only.



HELP TO SAVE OUR MOUNTAIN FORESTS AND THEIR ENDANGERED WILDLIFE



WHY IT MATTERS

The Aberdares, Mt. Kenya and the Mau mountain forests are key 'water towers' of Kenya. They are the sources of major rivers that provide much-needed water to the city of Nairobi, which is the main contributor to the country's GDP. These rivers support the livelihoods of millions of households in rural areas and are the lifeline of key conservation and tourism areas downstream. Together these three mountain ecosystems provide yearly ecological services to Kenya worth KES 412 billion (US\$ 4.12 billion).

These important forests include World Heritage Sites, Important Bird Areas and National Parks. The critically endangered Black rhino and Mountain bongo antelope, the African elephant and the vulnerable leopard are among the iconic wildlife species that inhabit them.

Forest-adjacent communities are critical to the conservation of these forests; they are their front-line guardians who are the most directly dependent on the forests and also the most impacted by human-wildlife conflict.



WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- KES 1.6 BILLION (US\$ 16 MILLION) invested in conservation
- 710 KILOMETRES of electric fences built and maintained to date
- 172 FENCE ATTENDANTS maintaining Rhino Ark electric fences full time
- 21 VEHICLES supporting Rhino Ark conservation work
- 85,000 HOUSEHOLDS protected from human-wildlife conflicts
- 178 SCHOOLS providing conservation education
- 570,000 HECTARES of protected areas and water catchments better conserved
- 15 THREATENED SPECIES (mammals and birds) better protected
- 6 FOREST REHABILITATION projects on going
- 2 CORRIDORS for wildlife established

DONATE!

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We always welcome your kind donations to support our work. Your important contributions help us achieve the following:

1. Fencing programme

Our comprehensive game-proof electrified fences help secure prime indigenous forests and resolve human-wildlife conflict, keeping forest-adjacent communities engaged in conservation. One kilometre of electrified fence costs KES 2.5 million (US\$ 25,000). Once built, fences must be maintained continuously and we deploy 174 fence attendants maintaining our fences on a daily basis, supported by eight 4×4 vehicles. Fence maintenance costs KES 80,000 (US\$ 800) per kilometre per year.

2. Endangered species and forest conservation

Support our community-based patrol programme:

The Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit (AJSU) is an elite, seven-man team of community scouts that patrols the Aberdare ecosystem. AJSU targets illegal activities such as logging, charcoal kilns, snaring and wildlife trapping. The team also monitors wildlife abundance and distribution, gathers intelligence information, and participates in forest fire fighting. KES 73,500 (US\$ 735) can cover a two-week field mission.

In Eburu, a five-man Foot Patrol Team responds to local intelligence reports to carry out highly-skilled operations to catch would-be wildlife or forestry criminals. Their main targets are wildlife snares, illegal logging and charcoal kilns. KES 24,000 (US\$ 240) can cover a two-day field operation.

Support forest rehabilitation:

Large areas of prime mountain forest habitats degraded by illegal human activities and forest fires, need to be rehabilitated. Donate to help restore our mountain forests. KES 100 (US\$ 1) will enable planting and caring for a tree seedling.

3. Community conservation and livelihoods

Our community programmes are geared towards reducing forest-adjacent communities' reliance on forest resources, improving their livelihoods, and raising their environmental awareness. These interventions result in their engagement in forest conservation, adoption of on-farm best practices and improvement of incomes.

HOW TO DONATE

1. Mobile Money
Mpesa Paybill No.: 855995
Account No.: Your name
2. Bank Transfer
Kindly contact us on:
Email: info@rhinoark.or.ke, to obtain the bank accounts
3. Cheques
Please ensure that all Cheques are
made out to: RHINO ARK KENYA CHARITABLE TRUST
4. Paypal
Visit our website donations page:
<https://rhinoark.org/donate/>

