



WILDLIFE CONSERVANCIES

For The Greater Mara

END-OF-YEAR NEWSLETTER 2025





Reflecting on a Year of Resilience and Renewal

As we close the year 2025, the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA) takes this moment to reflect on a period marked by transformative progress, strategic visioning, and unwavering resilience. Despite the challenges experienced, particularly following the termination of USAID funding, our collective commitment to the conservation has remained strong.

We extend our deepest appreciation to all our donors, partners, member conservancies, community members, and friends who have walked this journey with us.

Below are some of the key highlights of our remarkable achievements during the year:

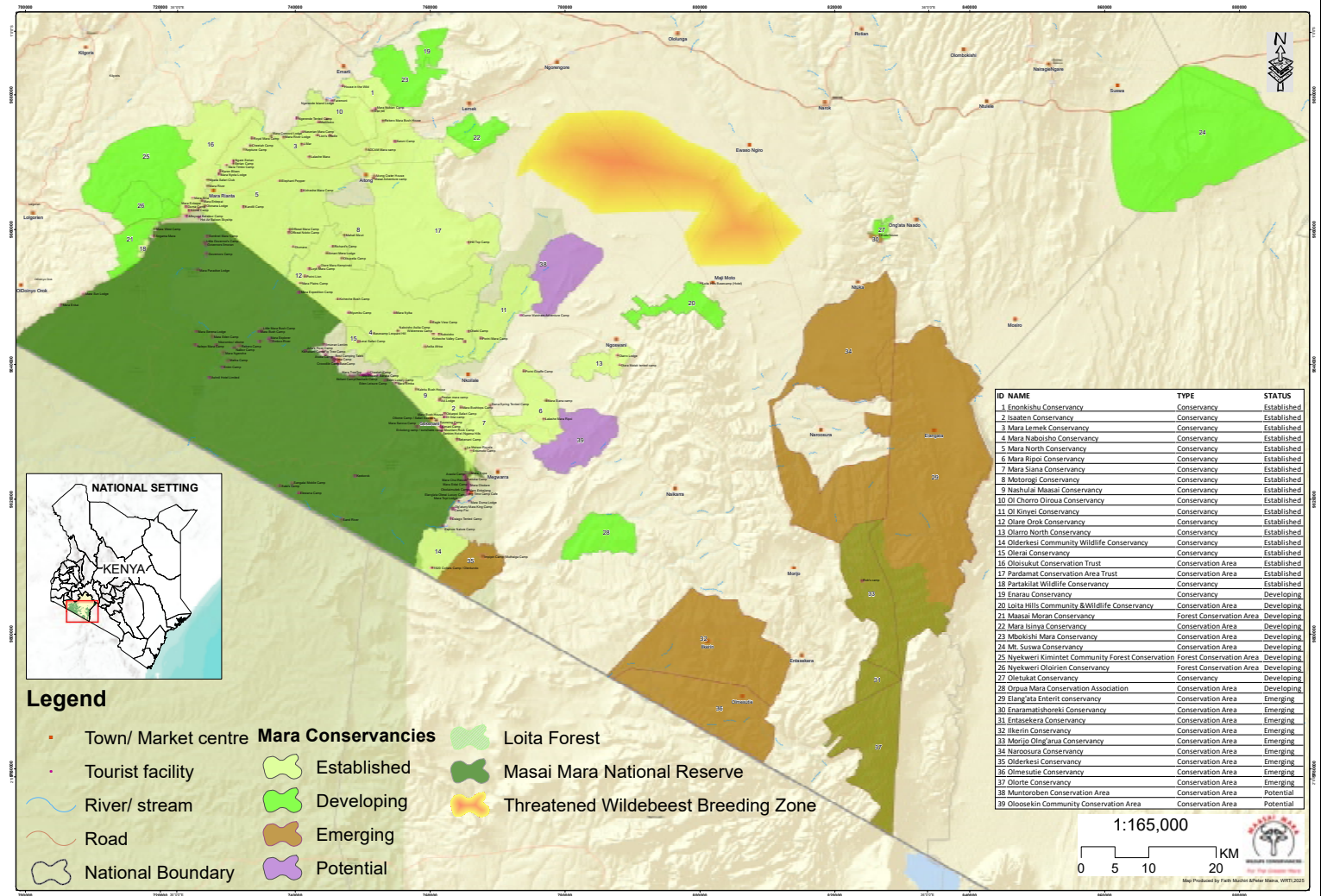
1. Updating the Maasai Mara Ecosystem Map

One of our major milestones this year was the successful update of the Maasai Mara Ecosystem Map.

The new map captures the current spatial layout and status of each conservancy, key ecological zones, and wildlife corridors. Importantly, conservancies are now categorised into four stages of development: established, developing, emerging, and potential, a major step forward in understanding each conservancy's unique strengths and needs.

This updated map enhances data accuracy, evidence-based decision-making, land-use and conservation planning, and coordination of communication across the Mara conservation landscape. It is a vital resource for partners, researchers, tourism operators, and conservation planners.

MASAI MARA ECOSYSTEM-2025





2. Finalisation of the MMWCA 10-Year Strategic Plan (2026–2036)

MMWCA made significant progress in developing and finalising the new 10-year Strategic Plan, which highlights our rich 12-year history and achievements.

The strategy focuses on five key goals:

1. Strengthened governance and resilience of Mara conservancies
2. Expanded and secured land for conservation
3. Conservancy revenue increased by diversifying income streams and growing sustainable tourism.
4. Community livelihoods improved with strategic partnerships and targeted support.
5. Mara conservancies are secured and strengthened by enabling policies.

The development process was highly consultative, bringing together staff, technical partners, board members, and other stakeholders. The strategy provides a renewed vision of resilience, sustainability, and community empowerment over the next decade.

3. Documenting a decade of Impact: The MMWCA Book

Another highlight of the year is the ongoing development of the MMWCA 10-Year Journey book, which captures our growth, achievements, and challenges alongside those of our member conservancies. The book documents:

1. Institutional evolution
2. Community-level conservation impacts
3. The progressive growth & strengthening of governance structures of all our member conservancies
4. Protection and expansion of land under conservation
5. Partnerships
6. Lessons learned in practice and policy

This publication will serve as both a historical record and a learning tool for partners in Kenya and beyond. It is currently in the final stages, with a scheduled release early next year.

4. Strengthening Governance

a

Conservancy Elections

MMWCA supported successful elections in Mara North, Lemek and Olare Motorogi conservancies. The success of these elections was a testament to our relentless efforts to strengthen the conservancies as viable investment entities. The successful elections also set the stage for smooth elections in the rest of the conservancies, such as Mara Ripoi, whose elections are scheduled for 2026. We also supported conflict-resolution processes in the Lemek Conservancy.



b

Addressing the Gender Gap and through Female Ranger Recruitment, the women

This year, we proudly supported the recruitment and graduation of 41 female rangers, as well as the construction and equipping of dedicated female ranger housing in the Mara Naboisho, Olderkesi, and Mara Ripoi Conservancies. This milestone represents a critical step toward empowering women in conservation and strengthening inclusive leadership within the Mara landscape. This step underscores our commitment to providing an enabling environment that allows female rangers to perform their duties effectively, with dignity and confidence. Additionally, we successfully held the annual Women's Forum, which brought together over 120 women leaders serving on various conservancy boards across the landscape. The gathering provided an important platform to reflect on progress, address emerging challenges, and strengthen coordination among women in conservation leadership. The participants also had the opportunity to learn more about the One Mara Carbon Project and engage in meaningful conversations on women's representation at all levels, from leadership to management.

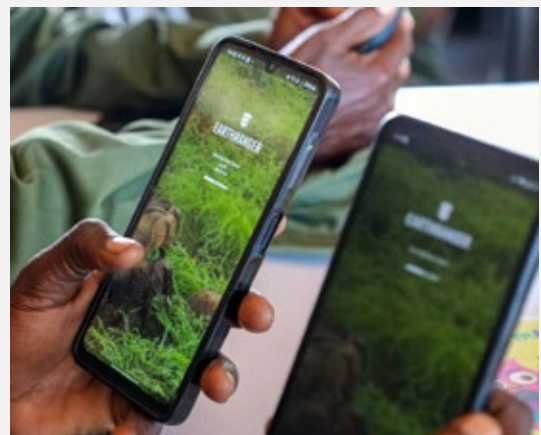


c**Youth engagement**

This year, we conducted a series of consultative meetings with the youth from across the Mara landscape to engage them on key thematic areas, including data and carbon Standards, the Mara conservancies model, and the development of a framework for effective youth engagement. In close collaboration with the youth, we co-created a guiding framework that will support Mara conservancies in sustainably engaging them in conservation activities. Our approach emphasises youth leadership, inclusivity, and practical actions that empower young people to actively participate in and shape the future of conservation within the Mara landscape. The Annual Mara Youth Conference held at Ilchorroi KAG in the Pardamat Conservation Area (PAC) brought together a significant number of youths and served as a powerful platform for learning, networking, and personal growth. Notably, the strong participation of young women underscored the growing and vital role of girls and young women in leadership and community transformation.

**d****Implementation of EarthRanger Application**

We successfully concluded the EarthRanger Training of Trainers (Tot's) for Wardens, Rangers, and Data Officers from the Mara conservancies, with all participants certified. The trained officers report improved skills, confidence, and ease of use of the platform. A follow-up data review in January 2026 will support the generation of the first harmonised report, strengthening monitoring and conservation outcomes across the Mara landscape.



5. Water Projects

a. Rehabilitation of Embarbal Water Project (Mosiro, Kajiado County)

The Embarbal Borehole is a critical lifeline for the Maasai community of Mosiro, serving domestic, livestock, and wildlife needs in this semi-arid region. Despite its importance, challenges such as vandalism, often by elephants, maintenance gaps, and resource limitations persist. We stepped into the gap and rehabilitated the project, restoring a **constant supply of the much-needed water for both community members and wildlife.**



b. Pump Testing at Lemisigiyo (Olderkesi Conservancy)

To ensure water sustainability, we conducted pump tests to establish the borehole's yield and long-term viability. This will inform the design and management of a reliable water supply system for the community.



6. Restoration of Degraded Sites in Mara Naboisho Conservancy

Working closely with the Mara Naboisho Conservancy, MMWCA mapped highly degraded areas to guide a large-scale land-restoration initiative. Key restoration activities included reinforcing existing wooden piles, hard-core filling of gullies & construction of erosion-control swirls. These interventions aim to reduce further degradation, stabilise soils, restore habitats, and enhance ecosystem resilience.



6. One Mara Carbon Project (OMCP)

a) Legal, Operations, and Governance Updates

A major milestone in 2025 was the formal registration of the One Mara Carbon Project (OMCP) in July as a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG), collectively owned by the participating conservancies. As a result, key legal instruments, including the Project Agreement, Members Agreement, and Conservancy Resolutions, were developed and strengthened through a series of legal and governance workshops involving project partners and conservancy leadership. These processes laid a strong foundation for the formal onboarding of conservancies, with Special General Meetings (SGMs) scheduled to commence in January 2026.

b) Leadership

A key milestone towards establishing OMCP's leadership was the appointment of Eric Reson as the Interim CEO in August, with the recruitment for a substantive Chief Executive Officer having been successfully concluded. Additionally, the recruitment of a Rangeland Manager was successfully completed to support conservancy staff in harmonising data-collection protocols and guiding rangeland restoration efforts across participating conservancies. In conclusion, a project bank account has been opened, and OMCP is recruiting an Administrator and a Finance Manager to strengthen daily operations, financial management, and logistical support.

b) Community Engagement and Safeguards

Community engagement remained a central pillar of OMCP throughout 2025 and was implemented in line with Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles and the approved Stakeholder Engagement Plan. To actualise this, we undertook engagement activities that included Maa-language radio outreach, public barazas, legal awareness workshops, and conservancy-level governance meetings, ensuring inclusive participation of elders, women, and youth representatives. Additionally, to strengthen transparency and accountability, a grievance and feedback receiving mechanism (GFM) was developed and initiated for phased rollout across the project landscape.

c) Technical and Carbon Updates

2025 marked the completion of the analysis of LDSF soil and ecological data collected in 2024. The exercise, conducted in collaboration with ICRAF, reflects a high scientific benchmark for grassland carbon projects in the region, integrating statistically robust field data with remote sensing and spatial modelling. In addition, conservancy managers were trained on all OMCP Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for data collection and management, which have now been fully adopted in day-to-day operations. The resulting findings informed both ex-post and ex-ante VCU estimates, increasing confidence in projected carbon outcomes and guiding the selection of conservancies for the first issuance. Further, a dedicated feedback session was held with conservancy managers to share results and discuss implications for grazing management and restoration planning. As a result, SOPs were finalised for biomass monitoring, livestock data collection, leakage monitoring, biodiversity monitoring, and data management, ensuring consistency across conservancies. The Data and project start-date attestation sheets were also shared with all conservancies to ensure consistency across participating sites. In conclusion, six conservancies, covering approximately 57,874 hectares, have been identified for the first issuance, with additional conservancies expected to join in subsequent issuances. In 2026, priority activities will include convening SGMs to formally onboard first-issuance conservancies, finalising and submitting the PDD to Verra, and preparing for validation and verification.

OMCP Pictorial Evidence



OMCP team participated in livestock count at Mara North introducing key SOPs on BCS, herd structure and counts.



Selected conservancy management and OMCP consultation meeting (Enonkishu conservancy)



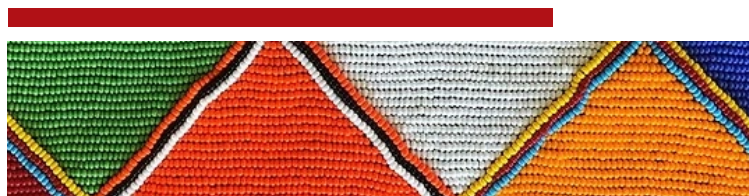
OMCP and Partners activity alignment meetings (Mara Base)



OMCP and Naboisho conservancy management planning restoration activities



OMCP Research assistants conducting grass biomass sampling across conservancies.



8. Challenges Following the Termination of USAID Funding

The unexpected termination of USAID funding, which has long been a foundational support for MMWCA and numerous conservancies, brought significant challenges, including:

1. Reduced operational budgets
2. Programme implementation delays
3. Strain on ranger support systems
4. Uncertainty around community benefit programmes, especially in Mara East

This period required restructuring, prioritisation, and renewed pursuit of alternative funding pathways. We remain deeply grateful to partners who stepped in with interim support.



**Looking
Ahead to**

2026

Despite the challenges, our determination remains unwavering.

MMWCA enters 2026 with:

1. Renewed optimism
2. Strengthened teamwork
3. A clear vision anchored in our new strategy and community-owned conservation

Our updated ecosystem map, new strategic plan, and upcoming book form a strong foundation for the next chapter of conservation leadership in the Mara landscape.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to all members, partners, staff, and friends for your steadfast support throughout the year.

Wishing you a peaceful festive season and a prosperous New Year.



For the Greater Mara

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