



FROM THE FIELD

LATEST IMPACT UPDATES FROM OUR GREAT PLAINS INITIATIVES

2026 Q1 IMPACT REPORT | JANUARY – MARCH



Hello everyone,

As I consider highlights each month, reading reports of our impact of the Great Plains Foundation is right up there for me. In this first quarter's report (assembled by Georgie), it shows involvement in rhino moves, progress on the painted dogs and very gratifying returns on our investment in female rangers across Botswana and Zimbabwe. But it includes our often-overlooked efforts in our Big Cats Initiative that we continue to run beyond its origins with National Geographic. Each is a success, and it just goes to show that, just like climbing Kilimanjaro, small, steady steps can make a huge difference that, when you pause to catch your breath, as these reports allow us to do, you realise just how much we have achieved with your incredible support of the Great Plains Foundation.

We are increasing our scope, increasing the landscape we work in, and steadily making a difference each day. Successes like these give me confidence that we are making the right strategic choices for maximum effect, and with more support, we will be even more effective.

Kind regards

Dereck and Beverly

Dereck & Beverly Joubert
Founders, Great Plains Foundation

CONSERVATION

Biodiversity • Healthy Ecosystems • Endangered Species



UGANDA RHINO RELOCATION

Supporting conservation rewilding of critical species

UGANDA

Great Plains Foundation are proud to have been a contributor to the ground-breaking conservation success in March, which saw the return of rhinos into Kidepo Valley National Park in Uganda, after more than 40 years of absence. The project aims to rebuild a self-sustaining wild population of rhino after poaching, conflict and failing protection wiped out the Park's rhino population in the 1980s.

The initiative ambitiously translocated rhinos on a 12-hour journey from Ziwa Rhino and Wildlife Ranch to Kidepo Valley National Park. The rhinos were sedated, loaded into the transport crates before embarking on their journey to Kidepo where they were released into their new home. Within hours they were already grazing and exploring their new surroundings. The rhinos are now under tight security, using a park-wide real-time reliable monitoring system in place.

The project was successfully led by a partnership of Uganda Wildlife Authority, Uganda Conservation Foundation and WildLandscapes East Africa.

**WATCH THE UGANDA CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION VIDEO**



4

Rhinos reintroduced to Kidepo, Uganda so far

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PROJECT REWILD

Translocations of wildlife and post-translocation monitoring

ZIMBABWE

Since the translocation of 101 elephants in 2022, routine research and monitoring efforts have been ongoing to track their movements. So far, the team has recorded 6 calves, indicating that the elephants have successfully adapted to their new habitat. Overall, all 13 groups currently being monitored, including 8 resident and 5 translocated herds, appear healthy, with collars functioning properly. In response to growing cross-boundary movements, a new collaboration was successfully established between the Akashinga Female Ranger project and the Nyamakate Village communities this quarter. This collaboration has strengthened information sharing, improved early warning systems, and enhanced community involvement in wildlife monitoring and conservation efforts. In the next quarter, efforts will focus on recruiting additional rangers to improve ground coverage and enable simultaneous monitoring of multiple elephant herds.

The translocated painted dog pack, released into the Sapi Reserve in 2025, is doing well and remains healthy. We hope this pack will breed this season to promote genetic mixing.



Monitoring of



1 Translocated painted dog pack and



13 Elephant herds

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ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION

Monitoring biodiversity and mitigating illegal activity

BOTSWANA

Ongoing ecosystem monitoring activities were conducted across the concessions, focusing on biodiversity, habitat condition, and environmental changes. Monitoring key indicator species provides insight into the health and integrity of the ecosystem. The presence of wattled cranes and southern ground hornbills serve as strong indicators of a healthy ecosystem, while stable populations of large carnivores confirm a functioning food chain and overall ecosystem balance.

Illegal fishing remains a challenge in the wetland system. This quarter the team detected illegal camps and confiscated large quantities of fishing nets and equipment.

Conservation efforts have also focused on consistent patrol coverage of the rhino population. The team continued monitoring with ongoing in-field training of rangers using EarthRanger, a digital monitoring and data management platform improving real-time tracking, reporting and coordinating of patrols.



334 Hours on patrol

FEMALE RANGERS

Training and hiring Female Wildlife Rangers from local communities

BOTSWANA & ZIMBABWE

BOTSWANA

A number of activities were undertaken to support the development, empowerment, and operational integration of Female Rangers, contributing to their multi-faceted skillsets, confidence and operational capabilities. A rotation through the office saw the ladies take part in administrative and procurement activities, and all 17 ladies participating in a strategy workshop to support leadership growth. Last but not least, one of the Female Rangers crossed the finish line of the 21km Kazungula Half Marathon!

“Completing the run proved that we are stronger than we thought, and any doubt about our abilities was replaced with confidence.”

– Shathani, Female Ranger



ZIMBABWE

The Female Rangers' demonstrated strong enthusiasm, professionalism, and impact during the first months of 2026. Rachel began her attachment in her BSc in Wildlife, Ecology and Conservation, Kristie having completed her BSc has progressed to an MBA in Strategic Management, and Olivia and Rubidzai are in the final stages of their master's degrees in Sustainable Technologies and Livelihoods. These developments reflect a deliberate investment in building technical expertise and leadership capacity within the team.

In addition to studies, the ladies have been monitoring the ecosystem on daily patrols, with a focus on supporting the ongoing research in the area on elephants and painted dogs.



21 in the Female Rangers programme

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APPLIED CONSERVATION RESEARCH

Dedicated scientific research on critical species

ZIMBABWE

THOMAS PHD ON PAINTED DOGS

Registered with Chinhoyi University of Technology, Thomas' PhD is being conducted in collaboration with Painted Dog Conservation and WildCRU, to evaluate translocation outcomes including habitat use and pack stability. Despite challenging terrain from the rainy season, the Nyuanetsi Pack was monitored weekly, and we look forward to next quarter, which aligns with the denning season. We hope the translocated pack will be able to breed this season to promote genetic diversity.

PATMORE PHD ON AFRICAN SAVANNA ELEPHANTS

Patmore Ngorima, a Principal Ecologist with Zimparks, is undertaking a PhD study on African savanna elephants in the Sapi Safari Area in collaboration with University of Washington-Seattle. This quarter use of Earth Ranger and Africa Wildlife Tracking has advanced the research considerably, bringing real-time monitoring abilities that contribute to spatial distribution mapping.



2 research studies underway



CONSERVANCY SUPPORT

Ranger support to partner conservancies

KENYA

SERA CONSERVANCY SUPPORT

Sera Conservancy, in the Samburu-Laikipia landscape in Kenya, is home to a critical, community-managed population of black and white rhino. Great Plains Foundation has been supporting the operations of the Ranger teams responsible for protecting them. The conservancy was proud to have recorded zero poaching incidents and improved monitoring efforts.



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CONSERVATION TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Building capacity and upskilling Wildlife Rangers

ZIMBABWE & BOTSWANA

BOTSWANA

During Q1, several key activities were undertaken to support the development, wellbeing, and capacity building of the conservation team. In addition to two new vehicles now in the field, two new male rangers were recruited and integrated into the team. The Ranger Fitness Programme has been progressing with the Rangers competing in two local marathons, improving their fitness, endurance and a culture of discipline and commitment.

“Thank you to Great Plains for organising and supporting the Kazungula Marathon experience. It was a fantastic opportunity to balance our professional responsibilities with fitness and team building. Our team continues to grow stronger and more cohesive through these shared experiences, and the support we receive makes a meaningful difference in our performance and morale. Thank you for believing in us.”

- Batshabelakae, Great Plains Ranger

ZIMBABWE

The conservation team participated in a conference hosted by African Wild Dog United, bringing together a range of presentations on ecology, monitoring and conservation strategies. This enhanced the team's skills in data interpretation, analysis and application of research in the field. In addition to the conference, the team underwent comprehensive First Aid training and Thomas, the Sapi Ecologist, enrolled in an 8-week R programming course. R is a powerful programming language used for processing large datasets, mapping geographic distributions, and modelling population dynamics. For conservationists, it can turn raw field data into actionable strategies for protecting wildlife and habitats.



36

Rangers upskilled

2

Marathons completed by Rangers

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CONSERVATION ROOTS

Planting indigenous trees for ecosystem restoration and carbon sequestration

KENYA

The Great Plains tree planting project, Conservation Roots, which has planted 60,817 trees in total, expanded into the Shompole ecosystem in southern Kenya. This area is a critical corridor from the Maasai Mara to the Amboseli ecosystem. 420 seedlings were planted in schools within Shompole to support the schools and engage of young people in environmental protection. 200 additional trees were donated to community centres. This area has been degraded and bare ground coverage has replaced trees over the years. The trees aim to restore soil structure, shade, and offer protection against strong winds.

“Thank you Great Plains for this support and we will be looking forward to work together to make our environment a better place to live”

- Senet Ikokia, Oloika Dispensary.



620 new trees
planted

60,817 planted in
total



COMMUNITY

Education • Empowerment • Welfare



CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Educating and inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders

ZIMBABWE

The ongoing partnership between Great Plains Foundation and Wildlife Conservation Action hosted another 'Guardians of the Wild Schools Environmental Education Initiative' in the Mbire District of Zimbabwe. The inspiring camp aimed to strengthen conservation awareness in schools, foster a positive attitude toward wildlife, and encourage participation in tackling conservation challenges. Activities included the planting of 70 trees to help promote restoration while providing nutritious food sources.



 **84** Students hosted for conservation education

TERTIARY SCHOLARSHIPS

Sponsoring students in 2-year Conservation Leadership diplomas

KENYA

We are pleased to share that three of our tertiary education scholarship students, Simon, Sarah and Backson, have graduated from the Conservation Leadership Program at Wildlife Research and Training Institute. As part of our commitment to fostering talent within our partner landscapes, two of the students (Sarah and Backson) are from the Amboseli region. Their studies in wildlife conservation and community development ensure they are equipped with the skillsets to lead future conservation efforts within their own communities.



3 students graduated so far

9 scholarships awarded since 2023

COMMUNITY

Education • Empowerment • Welfare



SCHOOL SUPPORT

Improving the quality of education in rural areas

KENYA & ZIMBABWE

ZIMBABWE

Great Plains Foundation continued to support the renovation of Mushoshoma Primary School, replacing windows, renovating classrooms with new desks and chairs, installing a borehole, donating beds and laptops for teachers and restoring ablution blocks.

KENYA

The Great Plains Sponsored Teachers programme model continues to demonstrate its success. The teachers hired under Great Plains' framework support local schools and reduce student teacher ratios in classrooms while also gaining experience preparing them to be hired by Kenya's Ministry of Education. This quarter, six of the Great Plains teachers were onboarded by the Government system, allowing the hiring of six new teachers into the Great Plains programme.

SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMME

Distributing nutritious meals to rural schools in Kenya to boost education

KENYA

Kicking off the first term of school, the School Food Programme distributed 930,280 daily meals to 14,512 students. The programme improves nutrition and health for young learners in school. It also increases attendance, which subsequently increases government support to the school. School meals also enable parents to channel their finances into economic activities to grow regional wealth.

“A lot of appreciation of Great Plains for the food distribution which has really impacted our school in terms of increase in enrolment, improved performance of learners and improvement in the health of learners due to the nutritional value of the food distributed” - Esther Sankori, Headteacher, Namunyak Pre-school.



6

New teachers sponsored

51

in total



14,512

school pupils with a daily nourishing school meal

9 million

meals donated in total



BUILDING BRIDGES

Connecting communities with essential services and schools

KENYA

Footbridges in the Maasai Mara region of Kenya are vital infrastructure projects that provide safe passage over dangerous rivers and terrain, crucial for connecting isolated communities, especially during the rainy season, with schools, clinics and markets. This quarter saw the opening of the 7th GPF bridge, built and funded in partnership with Bridging the Gap Africa. The Iturisho bridge supports over 700 young learners to reach school throughout the year, and a wider 2,000 in the community.



NABOISHO WOMENS GROUP

Sponsoring a women-led business in the Maasai Mara to support education and healthcare

KENYA

The Naboisho Women's Group is empowering women to foster economic resilience in the Maasai Mara by being part of a business that sells honey, beadwork, and sustainable soap-making. Funds generated from the business support school fees, uniforms, healthcare, food and other essential items.

This quarter also saw renovations to the office and the shop, installation of shelves in the soap making centre, and dividing the leather workshop into two rooms to allow for improved honey displays.

"I'm happy to be among my friends, working in this centre. It has been almost five years, and I have seen a big improvement in my family as a result of the income I get from the centre after my work. I pay for my five kids school fees, buy food and buy clothes. We are happy as women." - Kisinyinye enole sasi, Naboisho Women's Group member.



\$11,566

in income generated

185

Women in the group



1

New bridge built

700

Pupils helped

7

Bridges built
in total

BIG CATS INITIATIVE

Grant funding to NGOs worldwide to projects with a focus in big cat conservation

NIKOLO-KOBA NATIONAL PARK, SENEGAL

Big Cats Initiative Grantee

The Niokolo-Koba National Park, in the Southeast of Senegal, is one of three major large carnivore strongholds in West Africa, providing habitat for large carnivores including lion, leopard, spotted hyena and African wild dog. In February, funds from Big Cats Initiative supported the training of 12 rangers in large carnivore survey methods. The workshop covered monitoring, camera traps, online software and analysis methods.



EWASO LIONS, KENYA

Big Cats Initiative Grantee

Ewaso Lions is dedicated to conserving lions and other large carnivores by promoting coexistence between people and wildlife in northern Kenya. Engaging closely with communities is a priority, with a total of 18 meetings of 459 participants over the last six months. These efforts are strengthening community capacity, encouraging continued local ownership of conservation initiatives, and creating conditions where lions and people can thrive.

COMMUNITIES LIVING AMONG WILDLIFE

SUSTAINABLY (CLAWS), BOTSWANA

Big Cats Initiative Grantee

CLAWS is a long-term programme, established to promote coexistence between farmers and lions along the northern Okavango, Botswana. The project has a two-prong approach of technology and traditional practices. Using satellite tracking collars on lions gives real-time warnings direct to communities and building lion-proof enclosures and kraals at night to protect herds of cattle. Farmers in the herding programme have experienced limited losses of cattle to predators (only five cases since 2023). With this support, CLAWS has bolstered their Lion Response Teams and disseminated 11,132 lion alerts.



BIG CATS INITIATIVE

Grant funding to NGOs worldwide to projects with a focus in big cat conservation



AFRICAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION FUND (AWCF), ZIMBABWE

Big Cats Initiative Grantee

AWCF work to protect big cats in the south-east lowveld of Zimbabwe. BCI funding supports effective monitoring of lions and mitigating human-wildlife conflict. Monitoring consists of annual spoor surveys and data captured from citizen science and conservancy members. Human-wildlife coexistence methods include 'kraals', which are protected livestock enclosures used at night. This quarter 88 were reinforced and 51 new kraals were constructed.

MARA PREDATOR CONSERVATION PROGRAMME (MPCP), KENYA

Big Cats Initiative Grantee

The Kenya Wildlife Trust's MPCP strengthens community-based conservation and reduces human-predator conflict across the Greater Mara ecosystem. Big Cats Initiative funding is targeted specifically at MPCP's cheetah conservation programming including capacity building for four new recruits, field equipment for 24 rangers, and advanced monitoring tools such as EarthRanger to scale operations. The expansion of the Predator Ambassador Program strengthens community-led conservation across the Greater Mara by targeting high-conflict corridors where cheetahs are most at risk.

WASIMA, TANZANIA

Big Cats Initiative Grantee

WASIMA focus on human-lion coexistence in Western Tanzania. Funding from Big Cats Initiative included the construction of five lion-proof bomas, protecting 53 households and 165 livestock valued at \$13,131. This resulted in zero losses for communities. 30,328 trees were planted across schools and farmer groups, strengthening habitat restoration, and community outreach continues to be a focus. WASIMA's awareness efforts range from radio stations, school and university talks, career shows and more. And their 'alternative livelihoods programme' saw 237 cookstoves constructed, reducing firewood use and supporting conservation.



GRANT PROJECTS

Big Cats Initiative • Project Ranger

PROJECT RANGER

Granting funds to anti-poaching units across Africa

CONSERVATION LOWER ZAMBEZI, ZAMBIA

Project Ranger Grantee

CLZ protects the ecosystems of the Lower Zambezi National Park and surrounding Game Management Areas in Zambia. Funding from Project Ranger continues to support operational costs for CLZ, including salaries, fuel, rations, equipment and medical supplies. The Rufunsa patrol teams put in 375 person-days of patrol, covering 1,033km of distance. These efforts have deterred poachers and ultimately contributed to protecting endangered species such as elephants, lions, leopards, wild dog and their prey species.



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