



Maasai Mara

Protecting unique habitats

ENARAU CONSERVANCY ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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Supported by Wild Philanthropy



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1.0 Background

Mokona Nabaala had a dream of restoring his land in this area for many years. He spoke to Dickson Kaelo (Kenya Wildlife Conservancy Association– CEO) about being a part of Mbokishi Conservation Area, but they never had a plan of extending all the way to Nabaala’s land. Nabaala visited MMWCA offices in his effort to form a conservancy, but he was only one landowner and although the intention was promising, MMWCA was concentrating on other up and coming conservancies which were already connected to the Greater Mara Ecosystem. At this point, cultivation was ongoing on 336 acres of Enarau. The remaining 1804 acre parcel was unfarmed and destructive activities such as overgrazing, chopping trees, and bushmeat hunting were rampant.

In early 2021, Harrison Nabaala, son of Mokona, met Neil Anthony. They teamed up to actualize Neil’s long-time vision of restoring the Mara Landscape. Harrison began working for Neil, running the restoration program under the Maa Trust. Later, they formed a new organization called the Centre for Ecosystem Restoration Kenya, where Harrison currently serves as the Savanna Hub manager. Neil and Harrison saw the initiation of a conservancy as an opportunity to expand and test the restoration techniques and monitoring protocols that they are piloting at their monitoring plots in the Maa Trust’s Headquarters on a larger scale. The conservancy’s inspirational story and success would attract surrounding landowners to join and the conservancy would grow to become a part of the Greater Mara Ecosystem.

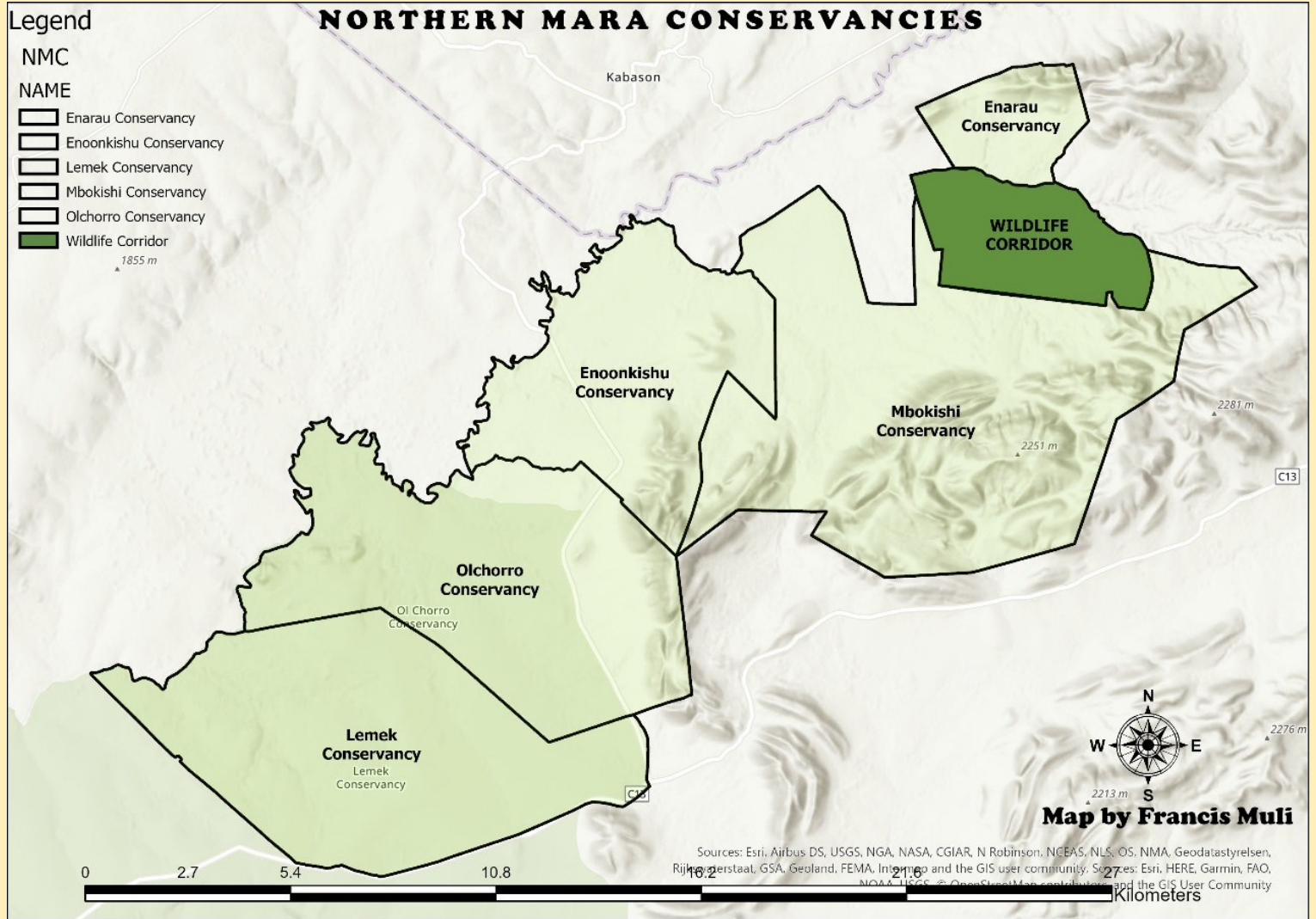
In September 2022, Francis Muli joined as the conservancy manager with the goal of instituting technology to monitor ranger movements, wildlife numbers, and improvements within the conservancy from its initiation.



Mokona Nabaala and Neil Anthony, founding members

Neil Anthony, Harrison Nabaala and Francis Muli (Left) and Enarau’s manager, Francis Muli (Right)





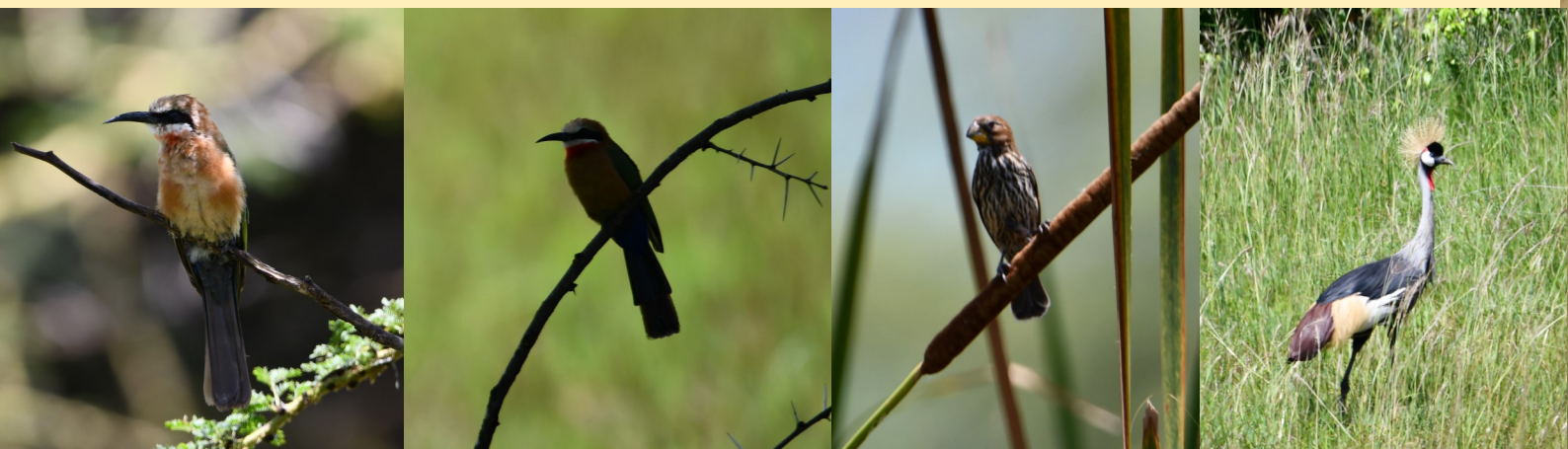
2.0 Introduction

Enarau Conservancy is the northernmost conservancy in the Maasai Mara Ecosystem, adjacent to Mbokishi Mara Conservation Area. Its main aim is to create more space for wildlife conservation, restore degraded farmland, protect unique threatened habitats and protect existing vegetation. The methods from which these goals are accomplished are through research, restoration and conservation, technology, and community wellbeing.

Enarau Conservancy consists of 21 acres of wetland where *Typha* (cattail) plants grow, providing habitat and a food source for birds and other wildlife species. The wetland serves as a catchment for several streams, providing a permanent water source for wildlife. Currently, the conservancy has secured 2140 acres of land with the potential to secure 6000 additional acres including a critical wildlife corridor connecting it with Mbokishi.

Throughout 2023, Enarau has been a fully functional conservancy with 10 employees including a manager, community liaison officer, nursery attendant, six rangers, and a cook as well as two interns. The conservancy continues to build valuable partnerships and recently secured funding to lease land from the community to connect Enarau to Mbokishi Conservation Area.

Birdlife of Enarau from the conservancy's wetland



3.0 2023 Impact



1150
Livelihoods
supported

- 10 employees supporting 50 dependents
- 1000+ community members receiving benefit from conservation
- 1 landowner with 19 beneficiary households (100) receiving leases



4534
km
patrols

- Rangers tracked 4534 km of patrols in 2023.
- Within the conservancy, patrols are on foot
- Community assistance outside the conservancy utilized motorbikes.



2
motorbikes
acquired

- 1 motorbike donated by Neil Anthony in February 2023.
- 1 motorbike donated by IMARA (The Integrated Management of Natural Resources for Resilience in the ASALs) in April 2023.



4669
Seedlings
germinated

- 30 trees planted in degraded areas within Enarau
- 50 trees donated to Laila Primary School
- 34 indigenous species grown in tree nursery
- 4669 seedlings germinated in the tree nursery



5
Partnerships
built

- Key partnerships built after visitors came to Enarau and were impressed with conservation actions.
- Partnerships will enable Enarau to accomplish goals efficiently with support from organizations that specialize in their fields.



2
Solar power
systems in-
stalled

- Solar Power system for office acquired from IMARA funding.
- Solar power system, wi-fi, weather station installed at ranger station through Give Power and One Mara Carbon Project



660
Livestock
supported per
month

- Average number of cows supported by Enarau Conservancy each month
- Herd is used to enrich ecosystem rather than degrading it.



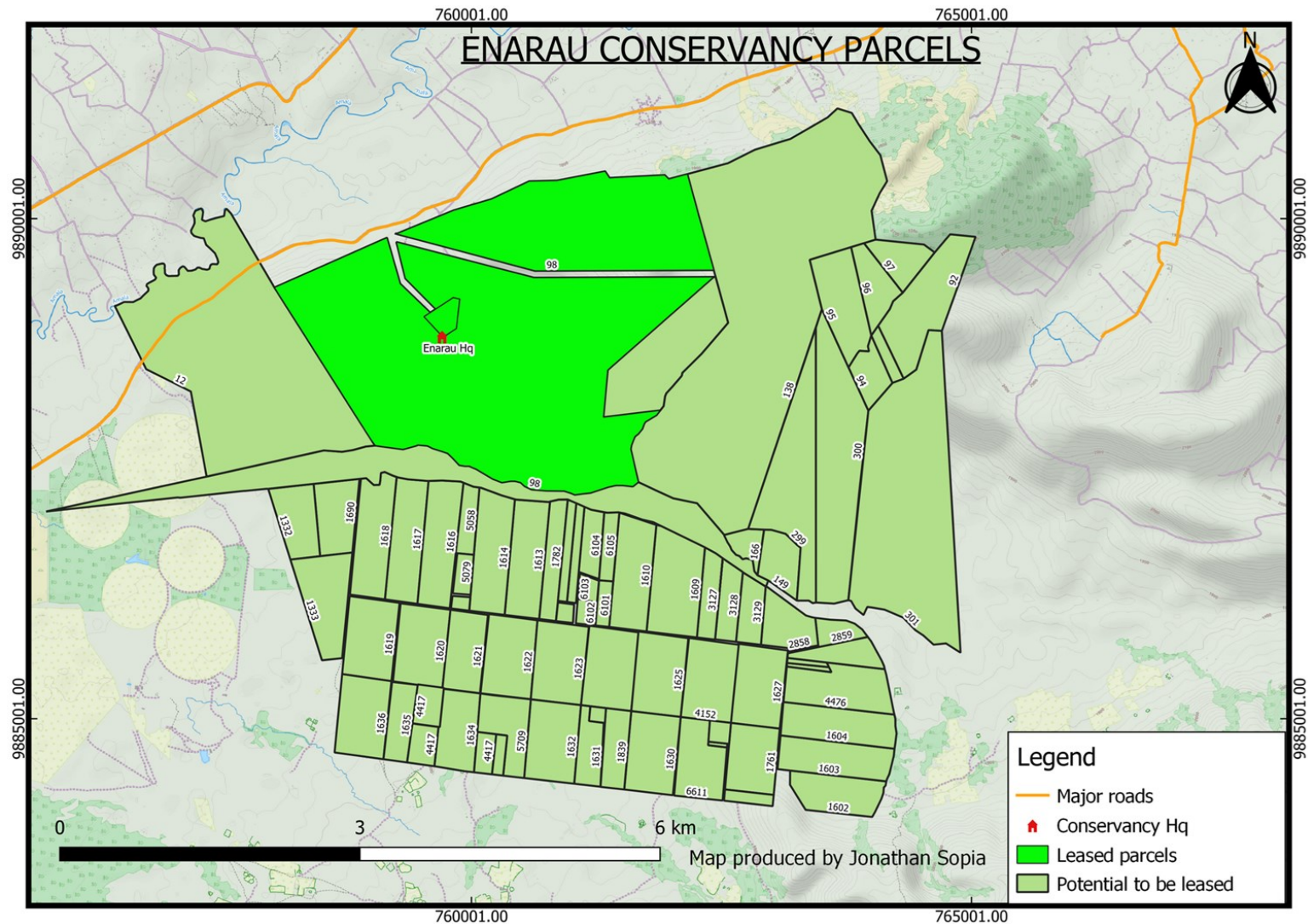
10
Trainings
attended

- Valuable governance trainings focused on wildlife policies, accounting, HR, sustainable rangeland management strengthened the capacity of Enarau employees
- Conservancy members visited northern Kenya on an exposure visit
- Ranger refresher course enabled rangers to hone their skills.



1.5
Acres secured
at conservancy
HQ

- Fence around conservancy HQ supported by IMARA project
- Mitigate temptation from community and secure conservancy assets



4.0 Conservation

4.1 Expanding boundaries

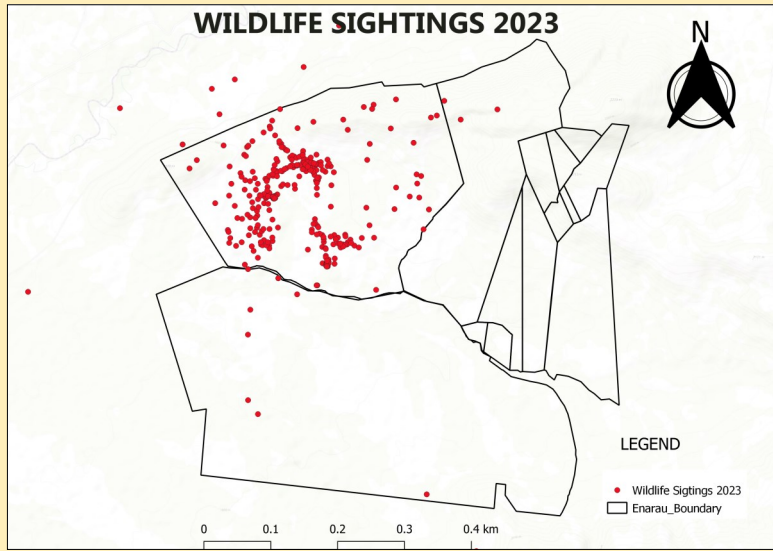
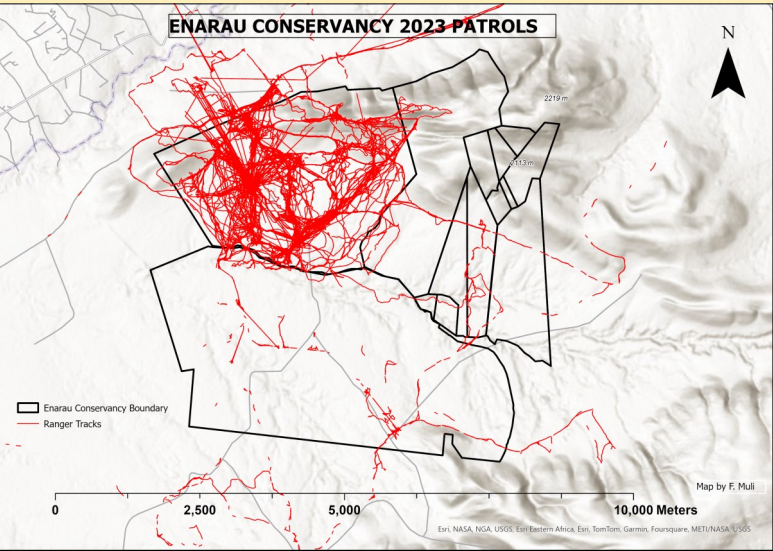
Because of Enarau’s location as the northernmost conservancy in the Mara ecosystem, it has the unique opportunity and the responsibility to expand, benefiting additional landowners and expanding wildlife habitat within the Greater Mara ecosystem. Kenyan conservancies, particularly in the Mara, are developed by paying landowners a lease for the land to limit development, overgrazing, and illegal activities, thereby conserving the land for wildlife habitat. In 2023, Enarau supported 2140 acres belonging to one landowner with 19 beneficiaries who have approximately five dependents each.

The immediate goal of the conservancy is to expand its boundaries to secure a corridor between Enarau and Mbokishi Conservation Area, its immediate neighbor to the south. This corridor would allow wildlife to travel freely from the southern boundary of Kenya without being impeded by fences and conflict within communities.

In October 2023, Enarau welcomed Wild Philanthropy and a potential donor looking for an exciting project that would have a significant impact on the Mara ecosystem. After a very thorough presentation of what was needed for Enarau to succeed, the donor had committed to financing the corridor for five years of lease payments. This is a significant move for Enarau, fulfilling a major objective of connectivity to the rest of the Greater Mara ecosystem.

Wild Philanthropy visitors with manager, Francis Muli





4.2 Protection of wildlife habitat

Throughout 2023, Enarau’s ranger team patrolled 4534 km within and in the surrounding communities of the conservancy. While on patrol, rangers record all observations of wildlife species including mainly zebra, impala, wildebeest, giraffe, and elephant.

The purpose of highly trained rangers within a conservancy is to make their presence known with boots on the ground. In the beginning of 2023, rangers had significant conflict with the surrounding community as they tried to control unauthorized grazing, illegal charcoal production, harvesting of natural resources, and bushmeat hunting. The surrounding community had grown accustomed to using the land for their own personal gain, but as the rangers made their presence known, the community grew to respect the fact that the land was being conserved and restored for wildlife. The hope is that as Enarau succeeds, the surrounding community will want to get involved by including their own land in conservation objectives.

Wildlife commonly seen in Enarau: Common impala, Kirk’s dik-dik, Common zebra, and Maasai giraffe





4.3 Security of wildlife and people

Enarau Conservancy is in a unique position among the Mara Conservancies because of its location at the border between Maasai and Kalenjin tribes. The Kalenjin culture is cultivation, which does not meld with conservation efforts. Conversely, Maasai are culturally connected to livestock husbandry and have coexisted with wildlife for centuries in the Mara. Therefore, the conservancy is more vulnerable to bushmeat hunting and charcoal production because these acts are conducive to cultivation for the neighboring Kalenjin community. Moreover, in the decades before Enarau was formed, the land was not being guarded and therefore was a “free-for-all” for activities of surrounding communities.

There have been challenges with the development of a conservancy in this location because of this cultural context. In October, the tension rose to the point of an altercation at the conservancy headquarters. The conservancy then had to ramp up security and built a fence for its headquarters. In addition, Enarau houses two armed police officers who are based at the headquarters offering additional protection.

4.4 Ranger activities

Human-wildlife conflict response is an important aspect of the conservancy rangers’ responsibilities. Most commonly, the conflict that occurs is depredation of livestock by predators. There were six sheep killed by a leopard, a young cow killed by hyenas, a goat was killed by a leopard while grazing, and a calf killed by a hyena. The rangers’ response is to visit the owners of the lost livestock to discuss mitigation measures and the importance of growing wildlife populations because of the conservancy’s implementation.

Within the surrounding community, a hippo was killed by farmers who were protecting their crops from wildlife. Kenya Wildlife Service responded along with Enarau rangers. A suspect was arrested and taken to KWS headquarters in Ewaso Nyiro.

In addition, rangers were able to seize 104 bags of charcoal that were being transported through Enarau in three separate stakeouts. In 2023, most of the charcoal was only being transported through the conservancy and was taken from land that is not within any of the Mara conservancies. While Enarau has effectively stopped the charcoal production within its boundaries, according to the law of Kenya, this activity is illegal even on private land, as it is having irreversible environmental impacts.

In August 2023, a young pupil walking to school in the corridor between Enarau and Mbokishi was killed by an elephant. Enarau rangers responded along with Kenya Wildlife Service, Mara Elephant Project and rangers from other conservancies. As decided by KWS, the elephant was later culled to avoid further conflict incidents.

Incidents reported in 2023: young cow killed by hyena, hippo killed in community, donkeys carrying charcoal and elephant culled because of death of young student (top to bottom)





5.0 Restoration and Research

5.1 Regenerative grazing

Enarau Conservancy aims to utilize the cultural importance of cattle grazing to restore degraded land within its boundaries. Currently, the conservancy has four grazing zones and a core area that is reserved for wildlife only. The herd of 600 cattle are grazed in these zones rotationally to ensure recovery time for the grass. In 2023, it was a struggle to get the community to comply with not grazing on land that does not belong to them, but as the end of 2023 approached and grass became plentiful with the rains, issues of illegal grazing became less prevalent.

In the first quarter of 2023, the community tried to burn the wetland within Enarau to provide fresh foliage for livestock, but rangers were able to extinguish the fire and had meetings with the community to ensure this cultural practice would no longer take place on land that did not belong to them personally.



5.2 Tree nursery

The tree nursery at Enarau has been very productive with thirty-four species currently growing. Seeds from native species are collected from the forest within Enarau and germinated in seedbeds that accommodate particular substrate requirements. Once the seedlings reach a certain milestone in establishment, they are transferred to bags where the nursery attendant ensures they receive adequate water until they are ready to be transferred into the ground. Thirty trees were planted in degraded areas of Enarau in 2023, with nearly 5000 seedlings in progress.

In early 2023, it became clear that the water source for the tree nursery was alkaline and the seedlings were suffering. However, a donation from IMARA project and MMWCA provided a water tank to collect from a spring which had a huge positive impact on the productivity of the nursery. The tree nursery attendant looks forward to the coming years when Enarau and all its neighboring land will be fully restored to its original state.



5.3 Utilizing seedballs for restoring abandoned charcoal kiln sites

Seedballs Kenya contributed 100 kg of seedballs which are indigeneous seeds embedded in a ball of charcoal which protects the seed from degradation prior to rainfall. Rainfall initiates germination which is supported by the nutrients within the charcoal casing. Rangers focused seedball distribution around abandoned charcoal kilns which are surrounded by stumps of large trees that had been destroyed for charcoal production.



5.4 Baseline biodiversity data: vegetation, soil composition and invertebrates

One of the most important pillars of Enarau's development will be to collect data throughout the restoration of its rehabilitated farmland. In 2023, the conservancy began multiple research activities producing data which will be used in the years to come as baseline data. No other conservancy in the Maasai Mara has a complete record of environmental improvements resulting from the establishment of a conservancy.

In April 2023, the first vegetation survey was conducted within the restored farmland. Eleven grass species and 43 herbaceous species were identified, 47% of which were non-native. As similar data is collected in the coming years, we would expect the proportion of non-native species to reduce while the biodiversity of grass species increases.

Soil samples were collected as well in order to track improvements of the soil composition after the establishment of the conservancy and the implementation of regenerative grazing and other restoration techniques.

Toward the end of the year, the first invertebrate biodiversity survey was conducted by creating pitfall traps strategically throughout the restored farmland. Pitfall traps are small holes with cups of water and soap that will capture insects crawling along the ground. Invertebrate species were collected to be quantified in the lab.

5.5 Accommodation for visiting researchers

In order to develop Enarau, the landowner opted for the construction of accommodation in lieu of a large portion of the lease payment in 2023. Having accommodation for students and visiting institutions will enable Enarau to attract long term research students who will contribute to collecting evidence on best practices to restore degraded land and manage the rangelands to benefit both the local community as well as the wildlife habitat in the area.



6.0 Conservation Technology

Enarau prides itself on being an information led conservancy. Several tools are used to inform management decisions and every day duties of the rangers include logging all their patrols into Earth Ranger, creating reports of patrol data with Ecoscope and GIS software, utilizing drones for remote patrols, and deploying camera traps to inventory species within the conservancy.

6.1 Earth Ranger and supporting software

All Enarau rangers have received training on Earth Ranger so that all information from each daily patrol is properly logged and consistently collected. Enarau is the first Mara Conservancy to engage with the Earth Ranger platform directly independent of supporting organization such as Mara Elephant Project (MEP).

6.2 ESRI Conservation Grant

In 2023, Enarau was able to attain five GIS licenses through the ESRI Conservation Grant. The capabilities of GIS will enable the conservancy to present data in a way that conservancy and community members, as well as stakeholders will easily understand.

6.3 Drone patrols

The conservancy has an advantage in that the manager, Francis Muli, is a licensed drone pilot. The Centre for Ecosystem Restoration– Kenya has kindly lent a drone to the conservancy for remote patrolling. There have been instances of the drone capturing illegal grazers on its camera which were later arrested by the drone operator.

6.4 Camera traps

A student from Nottingham-Trent University is supporting 20 camera traps to be deployed in the conservancy. The camera trap study will enable Enarau to inventory species that are not commonly seen on patrols. Four camera traps have been set up to capture images for a pilot study.



Images captured with a drone: Common impala (left) and cattle grazing illegally (right)

Wildlife captured on pilot camera traps: African civet (top), Grey crowned crane (middle left), Grey heron (middle right), common zebra (bottom)



7.0 Community Wellbeing

7.1 Football for Conservation

In June 2023, Enarau partnered with Water 4 Wildlife to kick off the Football for Conservation program at Laila Primary School. Pupils were able to participate in a football tournament while spending time with Enarau rangers who taught them about the importance of conservation and being stewards of the environment. Often, rangers are viewed with trepidation because of their involvement during conflict incidents, but this event gave the children an opportunity to see the perspective of the rangers. Educating the children is educating their parents as well because they often share what they learn with the rest of their families.



Ranger with pupils from Laila Primary School

7.2 Community Awareness meetings

One of the goals of Enarau is to educate the surrounding community on conservation and the benefits it can bring in order to uplift livelihoods and support the growth of the Greater Mara Ecosystem. In 2023, a first of many community awareness meeting was held to discuss the long term effects of restoring wildlife habitat and actions to be taken to mitigate increasing conflict due to the successful conservation practices. In the coming years, Enarau aims to continue these meetings and campaign for conservation so that the conservancy can grow.

Other team building and community strengthening activities included an exposure visit to northern Kenya where the team learned about the development of more established conservancies. Enarau also hosted students from the Wildlife Tourism College to learn about research and rangeland restoration. Building community capacity for conservation and holistic management not only supports wildlife, but if done properly will enable the community to benefit from their land for years to come.

Various meetings with conservancy and community members, the board of directors, and students from the Wildlife Tourism College.



8.0 Finances

Enarau Conservancy fully relies on donor funding for its development at this stage. The conservancy members have the ambition that Enarau will be a research destination which will generate revenue to support its operations in the future. With further restoration, Enarau will provide habitat to all the species that are abundant in the other Mara conservancies, which will then attract a tourism partner. Until then, the budget remains thin and efficient, seeking to make a large impact with any generous donations that come into the conservancy. In 2023, Enarau Conservancy spent a total of \$ on operations, staff, and leases to conservancy members.

2023 Annual Expenses	KES	USD
<u>Operations</u>		
Personnel- (Manager, rangers, tree nursery attendant, planters)	3,835,508	28,485
Administration and logistics	1,468,000	10,902
Capital expenditure (initial research unit)	4,526,000	33,613
<u>Leases</u>		
2023 Conservancy member leases (2140 acres)	3,834,960	28,480
TOTAL	13,664,468	101,480

In 2024, the conservancy has the opportunity to expand by 6000 acres, thereby establishing connectivity with Mbokishi Conservation Area. In addition, further capital expenditure is necessary to provide improved accommodation for staff and visiting researchers as well as securing a more viable space for the office.

2024 Budget	KES	USD
<u>Operations</u>		
Personnel- (Manager, rangers, tree nursery attendant, planters)	3,835,508	28,485
Administration and logistics	2,188,000	16,250
Capital expenditure (office & staff quarters upgrade, 2 unit research building)	16,500,000	122,222
<u>Leases</u>		
2024 Conservancy member leases (8140 acres)	20,350,000	150,740
TOTAL	42,873,508	317,697



9.0 Future directions

As one of the youngest conservancies in the Maasai Mara, Enarau was established with the ambition of being a leader in research-based conservation and land rehabilitation practices. 2023 has been very productive in achieving that goal. However, we have identified specific goals to focus on in the coming year:

1. Establish a management plan to implement registration with KWS and gazette Enarau Conservancy as a protected wildlife area.
2. Develop and implement a five-year strategic plan and utilize it to improve governance.
3. Establish an advisory board separate to the conservancy member board to direct research objectives, restoration activities, and fundraising.
4. Work with supporting partners to implement more community welfare projects to demonstrate the benefit of conservation as a preferred land use.
5. Build capacity within the community to mitigate conflict with wildlife by enforcing bomas, and magnifying traditional knowledge in regards to coexisting with wildlife.
6. Improve roads, signage and airstrip within the conservancy.
7. Attract and negotiate an agreement with WE Education for Children Limited to welcome visitors into the conservancy and generate revenue.
8. Upgrade staff housing, office, and accommodation for visiting researchers.
9. Continue ongoing ranger training and provide tools to enable their responsibilities.
10. Establish a scientifically robust method of restoring degraded land.



10.0 Supporting partners

The successes of Enarau Conservancy in 2023 were supported by:

MMWCA in collaboration with its partners supported several community meetings, the restoration of a spring for fresh water for the tree nursery, water tanks, 20 kg of indigenous seeds for the tree nursery, solar power, wi-fi, a motorbike, and security fence at the conservancy headquarters.

Water4Wildlife Maasai Mara established a water pan within Enarau and supported the Football4Conservation outreach event at Laila Primary School.

Earth Ranger, Ecoscope, and ESRI supported the technology used to put Enarau on the map, utilizing technology to advance conservation.

Mara Elephant Project and Kenya Wildlife Service ranger teams assisted with conflict response.

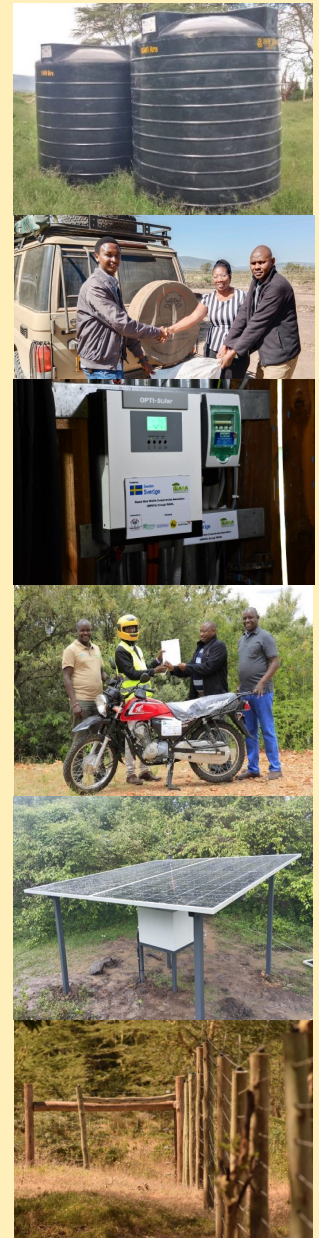
Mara Predator Conservation Programme, Maa Trust, GIZ, and Nature Kenya facilitated trainings and workshops to educate the rangers and management on responding to current challenges.

Centre for Ecosystem Restoration– Kenya, Smithsonian Institute, Jomo Kenyatta University, Mount Kenya University, Nottingham Trent University (UK), and Bologna University (Italy), have established themselves as research partners in the restoration project at the conservancy conducting baseline biodiversity data collection in 2023.

Wild Philanthropy has assisted with website development and fundraising.

If you would like to support Enarau Conservancy, please visit

[Enarau Conservancy - Wild Philanthropy](#)



For the Greater Mara



CENTRE FOR ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION - KENYA





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Cover art: Enarau Conservancy wetland