

# ANIMAL WELFARE

## MAGAZINE

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### FINDINGS BY LUSH PRIZE:

*New Study Examines Animal Research and Testing Across Africa*

### AQUATIC ANIMAL WELFARE:

*Enhancing Kenya's Aquaculture Sector for Sustainable Growth*

### ANIMAL WELFARE CHAMPION:

*How a Protector Delivered Animal Welfare to Africa*

### GUARDIANS OF WETLANDS:

*Ramsar's Role in Conservation*

### FEATHERS AND FLOODPLAINS:

*Saving Africa's Wetland Birds*

### EXPERT PERSPECTIVES ON AU POLICY:

*Addressing the Kampala Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Declaration*



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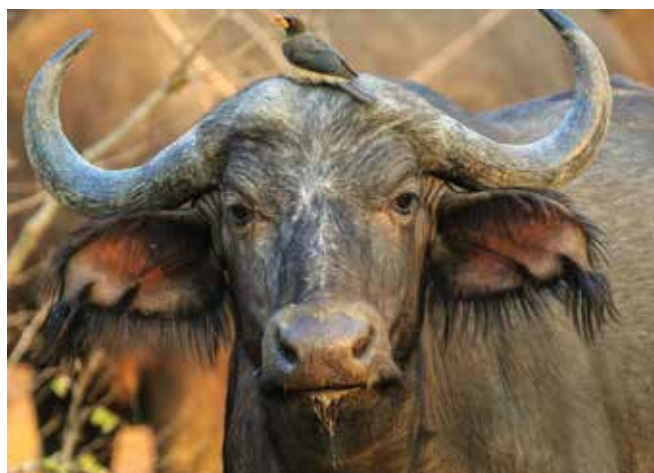


### Objectives of ANAW Network Partners Program

1. Promote animal welfare awareness in society through knowledge, skills and attitude change.
2. Nurture ambassadors with the aim of working towards having a continent where people show compassion, protection, and care for all animals.
3. Foster beneficial public participation in animal welfare programs, activities and events across the continent.
4. Pursue a common agenda that will nurture a culture of advocating for good animal welfare practices.
5. Promote and coordinate information sharing on animal welfare among the partners.

### Benefits to ANAW Network Partners

1. Access to a platform to voice common animal welfare and conservation interests.
2. Opportunities to participate in animal welfare and conservation activities/campaigns such as anti-rabies, anti-poaching, desnaring and animal rescues.
3. Opportunities to participate in animal welfare and conservation workshops, webinars as well as the annual international Africa Animal Welfare Conferences <https://www.aawconference.org/>
4. Opportunities to participate in experiential learning trips and excursions.
5. Access to a platform of sharing information, networking, and collaborations.
6. Opportunity to participate in meetings organized by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
7. Publicity on ANAW's Website and social media pages, where agreed on.
8. Where appropriate, certificates and/or plaques may be issued.



Partnership Category (Tick)

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As a partner, you will work with other partners across the continent to become animal welfare ambassadors and animal welfare champions in advocating for the welfare of animals in your countries, organizations, institutions and/or other spheres of influence. You will also initiate, coordinate and collaborate with other partners in planning and implementing animal welfare field activities in their countries, organizations and/ or other spheres of influence.

# READ OUR OTHER ISSUES OF THE MAGAZINE!!



"Explore the pages of our past issues and delve into a world of captivating narratives, impactful initiatives, and heartwarming encounters with wildlife. Each issue is a testament to our commitment to animal welfare and conservation, offering valuable insights, expert perspectives, and inspiring stories that resonate with readers of all ages.

Happy Reading!"



READ AT [WWW.ANAW.ORG](http://WWW.ANAW.ORG)

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### **Aquatic Animal Welfare:**

### **Enhancing Kenya's Aquaculture Sector for Sustainable Growth**

The article gives insights to the aquaculture in Kenya and presents a range of opportunities and challenges in the sector. The author posits that it is key to prioritise the welfare of aquatic animals to ensure sustainable and ethical practices. He cites exploratory work conducted by Ethical Seafood Research (ESR) which sheds light on the state of aquatic animal welfare in Kenya. ESR emphasizes that the challenges need to be addressed through innovative solutions and collaborative efforts among stakeholders.



### **New Study Examines Animal Research and Testing Across Africa**

The authors present findings in a new report that is the first of its kind on the 'state of play' on animal research and alternatives to animal use across Africa by Lush Prize, a well renowned global prize fund that supports scientists and campaigners working to end animal use in research, testing and education. The article cites examples of past and current initiatives on animals used in scientific research and education including the growing awareness and use of non-animal methods, such as in-silico (computer-based) and in-vitro methods. Read on to learn more about the report.

### **Guardians of Wetlands: Ramsar's Role in Environmental Conservation**

The informative article presents an introduction of the intergovernmental treaty, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The author orients readers on the contracting parties, Ramsar sites managed by the treaty, the main commitments, the Standing Committee and the importance of the treaty. The author also brings to focus other international reports on wetlands conservation such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative, The Global Wetland Outlook among other reports.



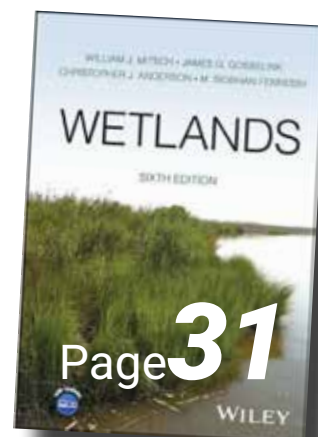
### **Feathers and Floodplains: Saving Africa's Wetland Birds**

This delightful piece launches you into the magical intriguing world of wetlands and their fascinating creatures. In the article, we learn more about wetlands and animals, particularly birds, living in the habitat such as the African Jacana, the Malachite Kingfisher, the Grey Crowned Crane and the Lesser Flamingo. The author highlights the major wetlands across Africa and discusses the major threats to the habitat. The article urges and advises readers how they can take action to protect wetland ecosystems.



## Pages of Preservation: Inspiring Reads that Champion Wetland Conservation

Book enthusiasts and conservationists are acquainted with fascinating books that focus on global wetland ecosystems, diverse species and their conservation status. Take a glance at a typical wetland ecosystem in the book, *Wetland*, visit rivers and the important role they have played in human civilization, travel through the Gulf Coast and survey the damage done, encounter the Everglades in Southern Florida, and learn about community efforts to save land and nature preserves on Lake Michigan. The favourite is *Saving Arcadia* which expounds on how far determined townspeople went to save beloved land and endangered species from the grip of a powerful corporation.



## Expert Perspectives That Address the Missing Focus on Animal Welfare in The Kampala CAADP Declaration

The article is a brilliant critique of the most recent development in regional policy in Africa. The interview takes us through Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and gives an in-depth review of the The Kampala CAADP Declaration. We get a chance to explore it and read on views such as prioritizing animal welfare in the implementation of the recommendations, fostering partnerships with civil society organizations, and taking practical measures to integrate animal welfare as some pointers in ensuring a sustainable agrifood systems transformation. Read on to learn more.

### Of Paws and Feet: Harmony Between People and Animals in Africa's Wetlands

The author cleverly refers to wetlands in Africa as a place of magical interplay of feathers, fur, and feet where people and animals co-exist in delicate harmony. The article traverses deep into the conservation of wetlands in Africa, which include swamps, deltas, mangroves, and floodplains. We travel to The Nile Delta, The Zambezi, Okavango Delta, Lake Victoria, Lake Chad, Lake Tanganyika Basin, Gazi Bay, Nabajjuzi wetland among other ecosystems.



### Bridging the Gap: African and Western Perspectives on Animal Welfare - A Realistic Approach

This article braves the topic on the less ventured comparison of Western and African perspectives on animal welfare. The author brings to focus the Industrial Age, and the urban disconnect in the Global North and deliberates on Africa's relationship with animals being culturally embedded. It cites that animal welfare is deeply practical as animals are integral to livelihoods, providing food, labour, and other essential resources. The author proposes that the African perspective of animal welfare is grounded in the balance between animal wellbeing and human benefit. Read on to engage with this fascinating piece.

## Local, Regional and International News

This section highlights articles that cover activities, programs and initiatives that take place across the world. The Animal Welfare Magazine brings to fore local, regional and global news pieces that demonstrate the status and progress of the field in different parts of the world.

## THE EDITORIAL PAGE

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### COVER PHOTO

A female mallard takes a swim.

### DISCLAIMER

Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) but of individual writers. ANAW does not endorse or guarantee products and services advertised in the Magazine.

Have you felt the need to talk about the important work people are doing in protecting animals? The Africa Network for Animal Welfare provides writers and photographers an opportunity to have their articles, opinions, interviews, profiles and photographs featured in each bi-annual magazine of Animal Welfare. Sharing your work on Animal Welfare will go a long way in enlightening others on the importance of protecting, caring and advocating for animals. If you are interested, you can send your stories and photographs to: [communications@anaw.org](mailto:communications@anaw.org).



## Editorial Note

**S**torm clouds, heavy rain, torrents and currents haunt those living in urban and peri-urban areas in African cities as we know that at any second, riverbanks will break, bridges will overflow, and floods will reign supreme on the streets. Lack of proper drainage, poor planning, and yes, infringing on wetland areas has held us up at levels not seen before. Water-borne diseases, harmful toxicity from substances and contaminated water affect people and animals as a result of the rampant floods. Unfortunately, many people's and animal lives are lost, residential houses submerged, and vehicles stuck and carried away.



One way to control floods is to protect wetlands in the continent such as Okavango Delta, East Africa's Mangrove Ecosystems, The Niger River Inner Delta, and Lake Tanganyika Basin. These are a few ecosystems among wetlands in Africa which constitute about 131 million hectares with a majority of inland wetlands being 81% and coastal wetlands being 19%. Wetlands control floods by absorbing and slowly releasing water which regulates the volume and the speed of run-off. They act as a barrier to protect surges caused by storms. Wetlands sustain community livelihoods and provide a habitat for wildlife, fish and bird species and different micro-organisms.

It is important to note that animals are crucial to wetlands because they are able to remove pollutants through absorption and bioaccumulation, improve plant and microbial growth and aid as indicators in the monitoring of wetland welfare. The Resolution 5/1 passed at the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA) on March 2, 2022, acknowledges that animal welfare can contribute to addressing environmental challenges, promoting the One Health approach and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. As we explore the interlink between animal welfare, wetland conservation and sustainable development in this issue, we brave the shallow and deep waters of swamps, marshes, rivers and lakes that make up the continent's wetland ecosystems. We recognize and review the One Health Approach, by examining the harmony between people and animals in Africa's wetlands.

In an article by Ethical Seafood Research (ESR), we learn about sustainable interventions such as the organization's exploratory work on aquatic animal welfare in Kenya. The piece acquaints readers to projects that enhance the country's aquaculture sector for sustainable growth. The baseline farmer survey being carried out has found that Kenya's aquaculture sector faces various challenges which the article takes us through. As you flip the pages, readers encounter some of Africa's wetland birds and get to understand how they can be protected and saved from extinction. We visit wetlands as a haven for birds especially during breeding and migration. The magazine also encourages readers to learn more about the lives of human beings and wildlife in the wetlands by reading exciting books in the Pages of Preservation section and to watch different films as suggested in our enthralling Wetland Wonders on Screen section.

In this issue, we also find out about recent developments in the animal welfare field as we review impactful highlights on a study that examines animal research and testing in the continent. Readers also get an opportunity to learn about the missing focus on animal welfare in The Kampala CAADP Declaration which was recently adopted during the Extraordinary African Union Summit in January 2025. They also get a chance to read an often unapproached opinion on the differing African and Western perspectives on animal welfare.

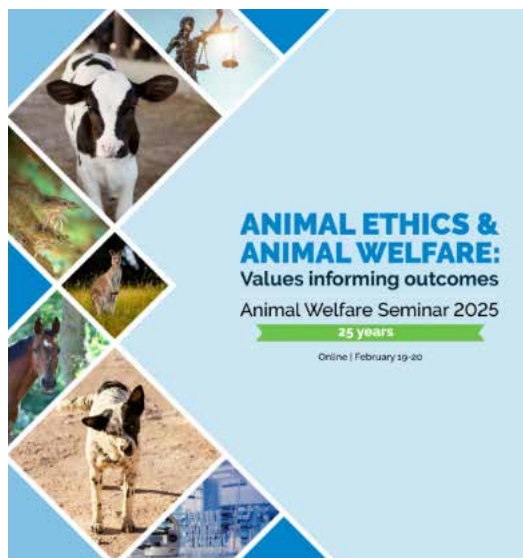
Grab a cup of coffee, take a seat in the coziest chair and read this thought-provoking issue of the Animal Welfare Magazine. The Animal Welfare Magazine team would love to hear from you. Please write to us and share your thoughts on what you find interesting, points of agreement, disagreement or just what your favorite part is.

We wish you all the best in your reading!

*Catherine Chumo*



# Animal Welfare and Conservation Events



## RSPCA Animal Welfare Seminar 2025

**Date:** February 19 and 20, 2025

**Venue:** Online

**T**he 2025 Seminar will be held online on the afternoons of Wednesday 19 and Thursday 20 February 2025 (AEDT) and is titled 'Animal ethics and animal welfare – values informing outcomes.'

All of our interactions with animals are informed by personal and societal values and ethics, yet we may not often stop to think about how these values have real impacts on animals and the way that animal welfare issues are discussed. In addition, animal ethics is inextricably linked to animal welfare science, but this is often not acknowledged or recognized, especially by proponents of science who insist that science is completely

objective. The 2025 Seminar will explore the links between ethics, animal welfare, and animal welfare science, with discussions about ethical concepts, how our ethical values affect animals in different settings, the relationship between ethics and legislation, and how we can use ethics to improve animal welfare. A recording of the presentations will be available on the website after the Seminar.



## Animal Care Expo 2025

**Date:** April 15 – 18, 2025

**Venue:** Caesar's Forum, Las Vegas, Nevada, U.S.A.

**T**he Humane Society of the United States/Humane Society International's Animal Care Expo combines a world-class educational and networking conference with a full-scale international trade show on all things related to dog and cat care and population management. The goal of this annual event is to help people working in the fields of animal sheltering, care, control, and rescue do the best and most effective jobs possible. This four-day event offers specialized workshops in areas such as management, field services, shelter operations and community outreach.

Since 1999, animal advocates from across the globe have come together to participate in Animal Care Expo. There are a number of sessions which cater to the specific needs of participants working outside the United States. The next Animal Care Expo will be held April 15 – 18, 2025 in Las Vegas, Nevada, U.S.A.

## Humane Canada's Summit for Animals



**April 27-29, 2025 - Montréal, Quebec**

**T**he conference will enable delegates to discover innovative strategies and practical solutions to enhance the well-being of animals in your community and beyond. The conference will feature diverse speakers, including experts in advocacy, community outreach, animal care, farmed and wild animals, shelter medicine, fundraising, marketing and more. They will share valuable insights and best practices that you can implement in your daily work and organization.

You will experience the Discovery Hub, where you can explore a dynamic exhibit floor featuring cutting-edge products, technology and services, make connections and enjoy delicious food. This area brings together exhibitors and top-tier partners, all seamlessly connected within the conference venue. At the Discovery Hub, you will also find our Hot Topics area, where you can gather in small groups to discuss current topics and pressing issues in animal welfare. Delegates will have an opportunity to take part in activities including hubs such as Happy Walrus Recharge Room and the Yappy Hour.



## UFAW International Animal Welfare Conference 2025

**Date: 24-26 June 2025**

**Venue: Online**

**U**niversities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) is committed to improving animal welfare through a scientific understanding of animals' needs and how these can be met. In line with this, we are pleased to announce our international conference, to be held online on 24 - 26 June 2025.

This event will feature a diverse range of presentations, including talks and posters, covering all areas of animal welfare science. By hosting the conference online, we aim to facilitate global engagement and participation while reducing environmental impact\*.

This event will be of interest to the growing international community concerned with animal welfare and – as well as animal welfare researchers – to those working in biomedical research, food animal production, slaughter, companion animal rehabilitation, the care of captive wild animals, and policy makers.



## 40th Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH) Conference 2025

**Date:** May 8-9, 2025

**Venue:** Telford International Centre

As the UK's largest animal welfare conference, the ADCH Conference gathers around 550 delegates from the UK, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands, and Isle of Man. It's an essential meeting place for professionals across the sector to share knowledge, insights, and best practices in animal care, welfare, and centre management. Recognizing the importance of building connections, we've ensured plenty of opportunities for networking throughout the event, allowing delegates to engage with peers, share experiences, and foster collaborations.

Every year, the conference attracts an exceptional mix of trade and industry experts, including insurers, pet food manufacturers, microchip providers, nutritionists, contractors, and other key specialists. This year's conference holds special significance as we celebrate ADCH's 40th anniversary, making it an unforgettable event that you won't want to miss!

## Animal & Vegan Advocacy Summit



**Date:** July 17-20, 2025

**Venue:** Emara Ole-Sereni Hotel  
Nairobi, Kenya

This Summit is the first ever AVA Summit Africa 2025, a landmark event bringing together advocates, leaders, and changemakers from across Africa and the world. This four-day conference will focus on advancing animal advocacy on the continent, addressing unique regional challenges, and fostering systemic change for animals. The conference will have inspiring keynote speakers and expert panel discussions, interactive workshops and skill-building sessions, networking opportunities with professionals and advocates and collaborative spaces for additional meetings and retreats.



## Asia for Animals (AfA) Conference Taipei 2025

**Date:** August 25 - 29 2025

**Venue:** Taipei, Taiwan

**Rethinking Approaches for Animal Protection**

Asia for Animals Conference is proud to be the leading animal protection conference in Asia since 2001. The 2025 theme, Reflection and Breaking Boundaries will focus on learning from past mistakes and refining future strategies to bring about positive change. The Conference aims to facilitate discussions through the sharing of initiatives, case-studies, campaigns, research projects and partnerships, particularly on methods to engage with different stakeholders, industry and governments. The highly anticipated 14th Biennial AfA Conference will be held in the vibrant city of Taipei, Taiwan with AfA Coalition co-hosts EAST (Environment & Animal Society of Taiwan), Taiwan SPCA, and Taiwan Human-Animals Studies Institute.

## 2nd World Congress on Animal Science & Veterinary Medicine



**Date: November 3-4, 2025**

**Venue: Bangkok, Thailand**

**A**nimal Science and Veterinary Medicine 2025 is a global platform to discuss and learn about Veterinary Medicine and Research, Animal Reproduction and Genetics, Animal Nutrition and Feeding, Animal Parasitology, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Science, Aquatic Animal Health, Veterinary Forensics, Poultry Science, Livestock Production and Management, Recent Advances in Farm Animal Feeding, Animal Welfare and Animal-Human Relationships and many more.

Themed Emerging Trends in Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science for Future Resilience, Animal Science conference brings together individuals who have an interest in different fields of Animal Science and Veterinary Medicine. It is a forum to explore issues of mutual concern as well as exchange knowledge, share evidence and ideas, and generate solutions.

## IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025



**Date: October 09 – 15, 2025**

**Venue: Abu Dhabi, UAE**

**J**oin global leaders, experts, and advocates at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025 to shape the future of conservation and sustainable development. Held once every four years, the Congress will take place in Abu Dhabi, UAE in 2025. The global gathering will include:

**The Forum:** A dynamic hub of public debate, workshops, and dialogues exploring innovative solutions to conservation and sustainability challenges.

**The Members' Assembly:** IUCN's highest decision-making body, where governments and NGOs jointly shape the direction of global conservation efforts. **The Exhibition:** An engaging space where members, partners, businesses, and academia showcase their research, innovations, and conservation projects to participants and the public.



# Aquatic Animal Welfare: Enhancing Kenya's Aquaculture Sector for Sustainable Growth

By Wasseem Emam and Dr Mwenda Mbaka



*Aquaculture in Kenya is on the rise, presenting a range of opportunities and challenges. As the industry expands, it is imperative to prioritise the welfare of aquatic animals to ensure sustainable and ethical practices throughout the sector.*

Ongoing exploratory work conducted by Ethical Seafood Research (ESR) has shed light on the state of aquatic animal welfare in Kenya, highlighting areas of concern and the urgent need for improvement. The baseline farmer survey being carried out has found that Kenya's aquaculture sector faces various challenges, including water stress, access to quality fish feeds, market inefficiencies, predation, and post-harvest losses. Access to high quality formulated feed in particular seems to be a pressing challenge. In many areas, the farmers are not able to afford the high prices of feed

coming from the limited number of feed mills currently in operation. Fortunately, in response to this challenge, companies like Tunga Nutrition (owned by Skretting) are scaling up their production in order to make it accessible and affordable to even the smallest scale farmers.

In Nyeri County, we learnt about the challenges of water stress which have meant that farmers are exchanging pond water even less frequently than they might normally do. This has led to high mortality rates amongst the stocked fish. One temporary solution we have proposed is the use of mechanical



*Aquatic animal welfare encompasses various factors, including housing conditions, handling practices, and access to proper nutrition. Neglecting these aspects can lead to animal suffering, compromise the health of aquatic ecosystems, and undermine the long-term viability of aquaculture operations.*



or biological filtration if the farmers have access to it, or ideally the use of water-based probiotics or biofloc technology. Challenges such as these need to be addressed through innovative solutions and collaborative efforts among stakeholders which is exactly the approach ESR is taking.

By understanding the exact challenges that farmers face in their everyday work, we are developing tailored training programmes to strengthen farmer knowledge around the best management practices they can adopt. Additionally, through research, we have been able to identify the most pressing issues animals face so we can develop suitable interventions.

Aquatic animal welfare encompasses various factors, including housing conditions, handling practices, and access to proper nutrition. Neglecting these aspects can lead to animal suffering, compromise the health of aquatic ecosystems, and undermine the long-term viability of aquaculture operations.

To address these challenges, Kenya must strengthen regulations and enforcement mechanisms related to aquatic animal welfare. This involves implementing humane treatment standards across the aquaculture value chain, from breeding and rearing to transportation and processing.

The State of Aquaculture in Kenya 2021 Report underscores the importance of incorporating ethical principles into aquaculture practices to promote animal welfare and environmental sustainability. By adopting a holistic approach that values both

animal welfare and industry growth, Kenya can enhance its reputation as a responsible steward of its aquatic resources while ensuring the well-being of its aquatic animals.

Kenya's aquaculture sector holds significant promise for economic development and environmental conservation efforts. While it has great potential to play a significant role in meeting the country's food security needs, it is essential to address welfare issues to maintain the integrity and sustainability of the industry. Additionally, with its abundant water bodies and favorable climatic conditions, Kenya has the potential to leverage aquaculture for biodiversity conservation, livelihood enhancement, and wetland preservation.

Wetlands, which are vital ecosystems, are currently facing threats from agricultural expansion and urban development. Aquaculture presents a viable solution, offering an alternative to wild fish capture and providing livelihoods that incentivize wetland conservation. Responsible aquaculture practices can help alleviate pressure on wetlands while promoting biodiversity and community well-being.

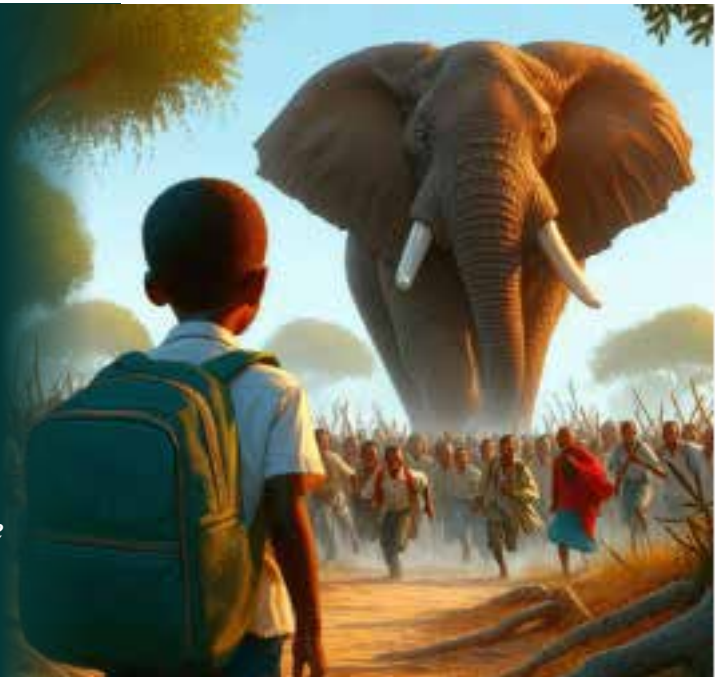
Unlocking Kenya's aquaculture potential requires a comprehensive approach that prioritises sustainable practices, ethical standards, and environmental conservation. Embracing these principles, can enable Kenya to achieve a balance between economic growth and environmental stewardship, ensuring a prosperous future for its aquaculture sector and the well-being of its aquatic animals.



# How A Bold Determined Protector Delivered Animal Welfare to The Continent

**Josphat Ngunyo's Journey in Protecting Africa's Animals through Animal Welfare**

*The boy stood frozen, the school bag weighing heavy on his back, and staring, as the massive beast suddenly turned to face the crowd of people that were chasing him. The African Savannah elephant, genus *Loxodonta* - also known as the largest living land mammal on earth - shook its massive head from side to side and began charging. Josphat instantly forgot that he was going home from school from his class seven lessons at a nearby primary school. A few minutes before, as he followed the people at a distance, he had witnessed a crowd of people chasing two huge elephants back into Tsavo East National Park. The elephants were driven back. Right up until one of them had had enough.*



In no time, everybody scampered and took off at a rapid speed. Josphat was lucky because he was at the very back of the crowd. It was that day that he realized that nobody was ever ready to lose their life before their time. He realized that people were winners as long as the elephant was facing ahead and kept going. But when the mammal turned abruptly, they truly knew

who was in charge. It was only by the skin of their nose that they escaped death. Fortunately, no one was harmed. This incident was the first time Josphat Ngunyo came very close to an elephant.

Decades later, this young boy grew up to become a bold leader who made a great impact on his community and animal life alike. He set out on a mission to protect, care for and advocate for animals across the continent through the advent of animal welfare in Africa. This crucial mission culminated in the establishment of the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW). The organization carried out hands on projects, education and awareness activities, community mobilization, international policy engagement, law advocacy and other campaigns under the pillars of animal care,

capacity building, education and awareness, and human-animal co-existence.

Much like the mighty elephant, Josphat Ngunyo, commonly known to many as Jos, became an iconic leader in animal welfare and wildlife conservation in Africa. On November 1, 2024, Josphat announced that he was stepping down from his position as Executive Director after 18 years of steering the Africa Network for Animal Welfare [ANAW] ship, to embark on other pursuits. Seeing the baton passed has been his desire for some time now.

Jagi Gakunju, Chair of the Board of Riverine Nature Trust, a key partner to ANAW, also conveyed his congratulations on his remarkable and outstanding achievement. "... I would like to congratulate Jos for steering ANAW to becoming a landmark





*Josphat was born among the Waatha community, The Elephant People, bordering the government protected Tsavo East and Tsavo West ecosystems of Kenya. His mother belonged to the Waatha community, an indigenous marginalized Cushitic community that has lived off the land for generations in Kwale, Kilifi and Tana River. The Waatha are also found in the rich biodiversity forested hills of Kilibasi and in various coastal forests including the Arabuko Sokoke. Their former lifestyle as hunters and gatherers is no longer sustainable today and the area they once lived in and lived off was taken from them to create the current Tsavo East National Park. Josphat grew up understanding the values of the community and their way of living.*

organisation in advocating for animal welfare in Africa, an area of focus that did not exist before ANAW was conceived almost 19 years ago.” He mentioned.

Jagi was confident that his skills and experience would be of great benefit as he scaled new heights. “Knowing Jos the way I do, stepping from his present role is only a change of role but his heart remains in animal welfare sphere.”

Dr Bojia Duguma, a highly skilled veterinarian who was the Country Manager of The Donkey Sanctuary in Ethiopia spoke highly of the outstanding leader. “I am a witness to Jos’ tremendous achievements as a strategic leader advocating for animal welfare across Africa and beyond and establishing networks with governments, civil society organizations, the Africa Union-InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the international community [working with them] to speak to each other [about animal welfare]” Dr Bojia stated.

He first encountered the plight of wildlife affected by the bush meat trade when he found a baby dik dik caught in a snare. He stopped and removed the snare that caught the animal and set it free. He mentions that the baby dik dik hopped off but stopped and looked back in silent gratitude to her rescuer. Staring into its eyes, he vowed

to protect animals henceforth. When he met Rosalie Osborn, his resolve was strengthened as he began building a career as she guided him and prepared him unknowingly for a brilliant future in animal welfare. She adopted him and helped fund his education and mentored him through his career.

Josphat is known to have given back to his community and has also made an impact on communities across the continent as well. Today, being marginalized by the government, the Waatha community is currently characterized by youth unemployment, low literacy and poverty. Josphat was recently able to make an impact with the community by establishing an education project, the Africa Conservation Education Fund (ACEF). He found it integral to make a difference to the community

Dr Jean Claude Masengesho, a well-known leader in Rwanda’s veterinary field, echoed this in his sentiments. “Congratulations to Mr Josphat and we greatly appreciate his leadership and effort in promoting Animal Welfare across Africa. Mr Josphat has contributed a lot to some of us in building our animal welfare career, mentorship and his support! I really wish him all the best in his future endeavors!”



Josphat Ngonyo speaks at the ANAW Strategic Plan (2021 to 2025) at Michuki Gardens, Nairobi





While at the helm of ANAW as Founder and Executive Director, the organization grew in giant strides from an office in of only three employees to 28 staff, volunteers and interns currently. Steering the organization since April 3, 2006, he led his team with remarkable dedication, compassion, and impact and saw the achievement of key milestones in 18 productive years. Today, the organization stands as an international organization, accredited to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) as a Major Group and Stakeholder, and to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as an advisor with special consultative status.

His strategic vision and dedication have fostered a network spanning 34 nations in Africa. Josphat's impact extends far beyond organizational achievements. He has been instrumental

in pioneering hands-on experiential exchanges with students and practitioners from around the world, and engagement in policy, practice, and educational initiatives that have shaped the landscape of animal welfare and environmental conservation in Africa.

His efforts in initiating the Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC), co-hosted with UNEP and the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), and this regional Animal Welfare Magazine have provided a platform for collaboration and innovation in addressing critical animal welfare, wildlife and environmental conservation, and sustainable development issues facing the continent of Africa.

"The Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) has been the only functional common

platform for AU-IBAR in promoting animal welfare across Africa. He [Josphat] has been a visionary leader who has achieved several milestones [including AAWC] that will leave a legacy in the partnering institutions and colleagues. Thank you for your enormous contributions to the development of animal welfare in Africa; just as it was a chapter in your life, it will continue to be a chapter in animal welfare throughout Africa." Dr Bojia stated.

Moreover, Josphat's leadership has catalyzed concrete actions in combating wildlife and environmental crimes in Kenya through initiatives like the National Judicial Dialogues, that engages 16 law enforcement agencies in Kenya in the fight for justice and conservation. Josphat's commitment to excellence has not gone unnoticed. His two appointments by the Government of Kenya to the





Josphat Ngonyo with fellow CEOs of FourPAWS, ANAW Staff and interns at Kifaru House in Karen, Nairobi  
Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) and  
Deutscher Tierschutzbund Organizations

National Steering Committees, and one other as honorary warden, reflect his expertise and influence in shaping animal welfare and wildlife conservation policies and legislation.

Among many other achievements, perhaps Josphat's greatest legacy lies in his advocacy for the involvement of civil society organizations, to work with governments across the globe in driving meaningful change, at the intersection of animal welfare, environmental protection, and sustainable development. His unwavering dedication to this cause resonated globally, culminating in the realization of the Animal Welfare, Environment, and Sustainable Development Nexus Resolution at the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).

These are a few among many mentionable actions of impact that have been initiated and taken place under Josphat's watch. We bid farewell to a visionary leader at the helm of ANAW, who has transformed the landscape of animal welfare, wildlife, and environmental conservation in Africa and beyond. His prowess has seen him challenge and work with governments, national and international institutions and his dedication to champion and build a movement in acquainting the United Nations with animal welfare is an inspiration to Africa and individuals globally now and in future.

The ANAW Board of Directors has appointed Josiah Ojwang', Director of Programs to Act as Executive Director, until a substantive Executive Director is recruited.



*Among many other achievements, perhaps Josphat's greatest legacy lies in his advocacy for the involvement of civil society organizations, to work with governments across the globe in driving meaningful change, at the intersection of animal welfare, environmental protection, and sustainable development.*

*We wish Josphat God's blessings and a long successful sustainable future for ANAW.*



# New Study Examines Animal Research and Testing Across Africa

by Craig Redmond and Rebecca Ram - Lush Prize



*An unknown number of animals are used in scientific research and education across Africa; no country on the continent has implemented legislation specifically relating to animal use in research or banned animal testing for specific uses (e.g. cosmetics); and few animal protection organisations include the topic of animal research in their work.*

*These are some of the findings in a new report by Lush Prize, a global prize fund that supports scientists and campaigners working to end animal use in research, testing and education.*

**T**he aim of the study was to assess the level of animal use across the 54 independent states in Africa and the types of experiments conducted, to see what initiatives exist to use non-animal methods instead, and if there are any educational, public awareness or legislative campaigns to end animal use in research. To our knowledge, this report is the first of its kind on the 'state of play' on animal research and alternatives to animal use across Africa. As a wide-ranging look at many issues, it is intended as an initial scoping review to provide a basis for potential further work.

Despite a significant level of animal use across the continent there appears to be growing awareness and use of non-animal methods, such as in-silico (computer-based) and in-vitro methods. However, as observed in other areas of the world, these are often used as preliminary or complementary methods to

animal studies, rather than to fully replace them.

## Animal Welfare Organisations

Our review found that many animal welfare organisations have a well-established programme for educational outreach, with the public, schools and universities (particularly veterinary students), which could provide opportunities for outreach on animal research replacement. As universities appear to be major users of animals across Africa, and a great deal of research relates to animal farming (e.g. veterinary skills training; disease research; research to increase productivity), this appears to be a good basis for education and outreach programmes.

Our study includes examples of past and current initiatives on this issue. The work of the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) is particularly

*"Students have been very happy and said they never thought of a good and simple learning method like this where they can work without fear of killing an animal for the purpose of learning. The tutors have been wishing to see if this can be part of the curriculum as it becomes easier to teach."*



highlighted. ANAW remains the only Africa-based winner of a Lush Prize (winning the Training Prize in 2014), and of course the annual Africa Animal Welfare Conference (AAWC) often has discussions on animal research, with the potential for future events to focus more on replacing animal use (rather than just on welfare improvements). At the 8th ANAW conference in 2024, veterinary campaigners noted the need for change.

We were also pleased to include in our findings the work of the Tanzania Animal Welfare Society (TAWESO), which has a formal arrangement with colleges, and students are trained with replacements to animal use in research. Computer software has been used to replace the use of dogs, cows and frogs, especially in physiology and anatomy. These are the species most commonly used in these fields.

TAWESO reported a good response: "Students have been very happy and said they never thought of a good and simple learning method like this where they can work without fear of killing an animal for the purpose of learning. The tutors have been wishing to see if this can be part of the curriculum as it becomes easier to teach."

For this work, TAWESO was shortlisted for the 2024 Lush Prize Training Award and their comment echoes that of the

winner of that category, the School of Veterinary Science at Massey University in Aotearoa / New Zealand, who developed models and resources to teach surgical skills to hundreds of students that replace the use of 150 sheep every year who were killed for the purpose. The university reported the positive impact of replacement on staff and student morale in using replacements to save animals.

We are sure that similar initiatives are taking place elsewhere in Africa and would love to hear about them. We have been informed of projects in Ghana and Zimbabwe but so far have no further details.

## Alternatives to Animal Research

We also reviewed published scientific papers for each country in Africa which either reported animal research or used specific alternatives. Not surprisingly, there were higher numbers of results with regard to both animal research and alternatives in Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt and South Africa, reflecting greater numbers of academic establishments and general scientific infrastructure, also reflective of the larger nations of Africa.

In addition to high animal use in veterinary research and training, another common area of animal research relates to plant extract

testing (e.g. vanilla, ginseng, countless essential oils) for medicinal use, despite many having been used by people for a long time in traditional medicine or as herbal remedies.

## Legislation

Assessing legislation on animal protection for each country, we discovered that only eight of the 54 countries (Algeria, Kenya, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia) have general animal welfare legislation which also applies to animals used in research. However, there are reported problems with oversight and enforcement in at least six of those countries. In four cases where legislation is due to be updated or improved, this has not yet happened.

Working on legislative campaigns to ban animal use in research, testing and education, to support non-animal methods, and for greater transparency could provide opportunities for many worthwhile projects for animal welfare lawyers, students and policymakers across Africa..

The lack of data on how many animals are used and what they are used for is a serious problem. Without official statistics a true picture of the level of animal research in individual countries is not available, and we must assume significant numbers of animals are routinely used to an estimate of several million, even if this may be relatively 'low' when compared to countries with

high rates of scientific research in academia and commercial laboratories. This is certainly not unique to Africa: of the world's top ten largest users of animals in research, six do not produce accurate statistics.

Although some examples of numbers of animals used are included in our study, most of these are not recent. The only reliable estimate we have seen is for South Africa, thought to use the largest number of animals on the continent, with estimates of around 130,000 per year. It should be noted that this is an estimate of live animal use only. Many more unknown numbers of animals may be killed and used for their parts. Again this is not unique to Africa and remains unknown in many countries worldwide.

## The Way Forward

While it's important to be aware of the current situation, it's also important to discuss how to achieve an end to animal use in research, testing and education.

Most countries in Africa already have animal protection organisations and, as already mentioned, some already have well-established educational outreach programmes. Organisations like InterNICHE

(the International Network for Humane Education) has supported researchers in several African countries for many years and also presents at the AAWCs, and their work is particularly relevant to replacing harmful animal use in veterinary training.

As we have seen, some research using non-animal methods is already taking place in several countries and this demonstrates the great potential for further training, outreach and education. Our findings that a significant level of non-animal methods are conducted before or alongside animal studies show that such methods need to be developed and promoted to increase replacement of animal research. As noted earlier, this is not unique to Africa. Nevertheless there is much scope to improve awareness of non-animal methods and allow the African research community to invest in and use modern science.

Much has been made of how Africa can, and is, developing in a way that 'leapfrogs' some of the older, more damaging, technologies used in the West. This includes the use of decentralised renewable energy generation systems instead of giant fossil-fuelled power plants, and the use of cellphones and mobile payment systems rather

than landlines and banking networks. At the 2024 ANAW Conference, discussion included that Africa must continue to resist such damaging technologies of industrialisation seen elsewhere in the world, in order to enhance human, animal and environmental wellbeing.

We now know how poor animal-based models are for studying and regulating human health. Given our observations of the use of animals in laboratories across much of Africa, this sector too looks ripe for another case of 'leapfrogging'. By focusing on the new molecular and digital technologies of the future, African economies could move much faster towards better science and avoid the 'old ways' seen in continents where animal research is entrenched, not necessarily for scientific reasons but convention and convenience. The ANAW conference also noted that only 35 nations of Africa recognise animals as sentient beings and that this must change via continued drivers in policy and legislation.

At the start of our report we quote from Dipo Faloyin's recent book *Africa is Not a Country*. We are conscious, as Faloyin writes, that this is "a continent of fifty-four countries, more than two



**"a continent of fifty-four countries, more than two thousand languages, and 1.4 billion people. A region that is treated and spoken of as if it were a single country, devoid of nuance and cursed to be forever plagued by deprivation."**

thousand languages, and 1.4 billion people. A region that is treated and spoken of as if it were a single country, devoid of nuance and cursed to be forever plagued by deprivation.” We have set out as much as possible to research each country individually, while still cautiously applying some discussions to the continent as a whole.

We have also quoted several researchers recognising the importance of “honouring the sovereignty of African nations”, allowing each to “evolve its own standards based on its individual priorities” and “engage with ethical issues in research that are locally relevant”. Others have recommended “linking animal welfare with other imminent social issues such as climate change, public health, employment, and food security” and that such initiatives could benefit governments through budget-saving and improved human health and disease control. This may be an area most relevant to supporting the replacement of animals in research, testing, education and training.

Differences across nations also require tailor-made plans for supporting phase-out of animal use and phase-in of non-animal approaches. Access to various types of methods can be combined to replace the use of animals; for example, taking into account costs, languages and access to (reliable) internet.

In 2014, ANAW won the Lush Prize for Training and used the funds to hold a two-day workshop on ‘Alternatives to the Use of Animals in Research, Education and Testing’, at Egerton University, Kenya. We believe that the ‘actions and way forward’ based on this workshop provide a suitable model for other organisations, institutions and governments to support the replacement of animals. We list these in our report and congratulate ANAW for remaining a key influence on animal welfare across the continent over the last decade.

There are certainly many challenges to changing the landscape in each country and across a huge and varied continent, but there are also many opportunities.

Our report was initially designed to help the Lush Prize Team assess why we receive so few nominations from African countries and to identify and support any organisations or individuals that could be potential prize recipients. Given the large number of countries on the continent and the difficulties in obtaining information, this report is not designed to be exhaustive but to provide a preliminary overview and we envisage it as being a basis on which other interested organisations or individuals can conduct further research into specific topics or countries

While we are unable to fund projects unless they are a prize winner, we hope that this study provides a useful basis for discussion and further research. We are very interested in hearing from anyone with information on animal use, and alternatives in research, testing and education in Africa as we hope to update the report in the future with new examples.

Our fully-referenced report, The use of animals and alternative approaches in research, testing and education in Africa, is available at <https://bit.ly/lush-prize-report>. We welcome comments and feedback and can be reached at [contact@lushprize.org](mailto:contact@lushprize.org)

**Craig Redmond and Rebecca Ram are part of the team co-ordinating the Lush Prize, a global prize fund supporting the complete replacement of animal use in research and testing. Craig has a background as a researcher and campaigner with animal protection NGOs, while Rebecca is an independent scientific consultant on the need for science to transition away from animal use.**



# Guardians of Wetlands: Ramsar's Role in Environmental Conservation

By Sharon Wawira



*Often referred to as the 'kidneys of the world', wetlands play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. Their role in conserving biodiversity includes providing critical habitat for wildlife, regulating water cycles, and supporting the livelihoods of millions globally. They also play a role in climate change by acting as carbon sinks, meaning they store carbon dioxide, helping to regulate global temperatures. Central to global efforts in safeguarding these critical areas is the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an intergovernmental treaty that has profoundly shaped wetland conservation discourse and inspired pivotal global agreements and reports.*



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS  
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES  
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES  
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

**T**he Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty adopted on 2 February 1971 that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

Its original emphasis was on the conservation of wetlands as habitat for waterbirds. Over the years, however, it has broadened its scope to cover all areas of the conservation of wetlands as vital ecosystem for biodiversity.

As of today, the treaty has 172 contracting parties (member states) with Kenya being a member since 1990. The Parties designate special wetland areas known "Ramsar sites" managed by the treaty. The treaty includes four main commitments that the Contracting Parties agree to before joining: one is to designate a suitable wetland area within its territory (Ramsar site), two is to promote the 'wise use' of

wetlands areas in their territory by including its conservation in national policies, three is to establish nature reserves for research, management and training and four is to ensure international cooperation especially on shared wetlands and areas.

The Convention operates through a Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP), which meets triennially to set policy, review progress and receive national reports from the contracting partners, a Standing Committee that oversees implementation, and a Secretariat. It collaborates with five International Organization

Partners, including BirdLife International, The International Water Management Institute (IWMI), and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) International for technical and financial support. Ramsar's principles and strategies, including its flagship Ramsar List, are integral to global efforts to safeguard wetlands amid evolving environmental challenges.

With over 40 years of international wetland conservation work and ratified by 160 countries, it has come to offer a significant contribution to environmental diplomacy paving the way for other treaties, global agreements, initiatives and reports.

The Ramsar Convention's capacity to shape global agreements and generate impactful reports underscores its enduring relevance to the continued existential threats that wetlands face. It serves as a clarion call, emphasizing that wetland preservation is not merely an environmental imperative but a cornerstone of sustainable development and global ecological resilience. Achieving its goals demands collective action and innovative solutions, where individuals, governments and communities unite to safeguard these ecosystems. By fostering collaboration and harnessing creative approaches, the Convention paves the way for a future where wetlands thrive, biodiversity flourishes, and humanity reaps the ecological and economic benefits of these irreplaceable landscapes.

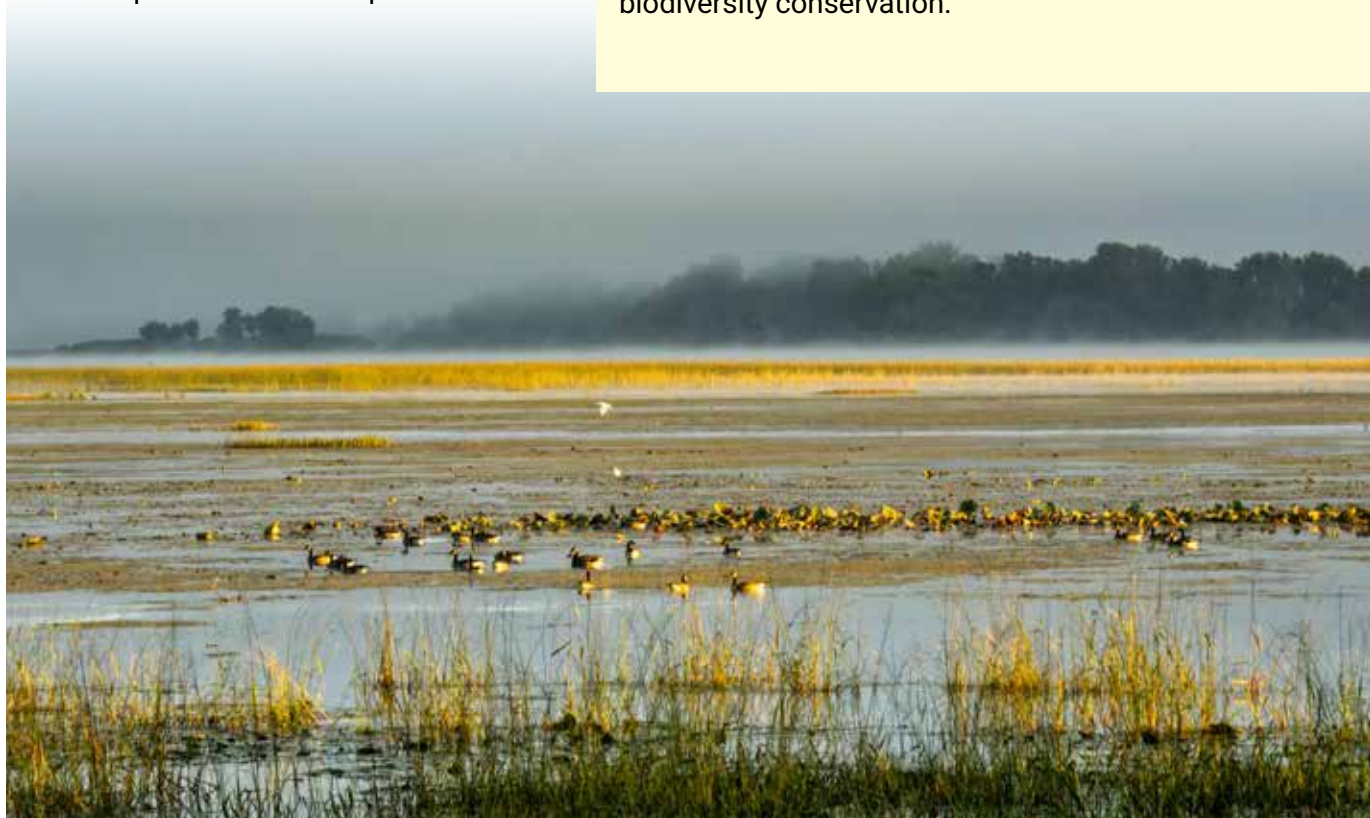
**Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** incorporates wetland conservation into its broader framework. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework aligns with Ramsar's principles by emphasizing the restoration of degraded ecosystems and the protection of freshwater systems.

**The Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative** brings together 27 Mediterranean and peri-Mediterranean countries that are Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in its mission to ensure and support the effective conservation of the functions and values of Mediterranean wetlands and the sustainable use of their resources and services.

**The Convention on Migratory Species** focuses on conserving migratory species that depend on wetland habitats, protecting transboundary wetlands essential for birds, fish, and mammals thus enhancing international cooperation for shared wetland ecosystems. Developed under this framework is the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds.

**The Global Wetland Outlook** is published by the Ramsar Secretariat and offers a comprehensive assessment of the status and trends of global wetlands. It underscores the challenges and opportunities in wetland conservation, serving as an indispensable reference for policymakers and conservation practitioners.

**With an MoU with the World Heritage Convention** which leverages the benefit of cooperation and coordination of efforts between their secretariats recognizing the unique niche these conventions occupy in the global efforts at biodiversity conservation.



A Great Egret with long legs and a long neck stands in a wetland. Its reflection is clearly visible in the calm water in the foreground. The background shows more wetland vegetation and a clear blue sky.

## Feathers and Floodplains: Saving Africa's Wetland Birds


**By Heather Theuri**

*Picture this: vast, shimmering wetlands bursting with life—home to birds that dance on lily pads, paint the skies pink, and bring nature's melody to life. Now imagine this magical world under threat. Heartbreaking, isn't it? But fear not! Together, we can save these vital ecosystems and their avian residents. Let's explore the enchanting world of wetlands and their feathery inhabitants, shall we?*

Image by Josep Monter Martinez from Pixabay

## What Are Wetlands? (Spoiler: They're Awesome!)

*Wetlands are nature's middle ground—neither fully dry land nor underwater. These ecosystems, which can be seasonal or permanent, brim with life. Marshes, swamps, and bogs are the big three types of wetlands, each supporting unique flora and fauna. Did you know wetlands store twice as much carbon as rainforests? That makes them MVPs in the fight against climate change. They're also critical habitats for countless birds, especially during breeding and migration seasons. In short, wetlands are like five-star resorts for birds. Fancy, huh?*

A Great Egret stands in a wetland, its reflection visible in the water. The background shows more wetland vegetation and a clear blue sky.

# Meet some Birds of the Wetlands

## The African Jacana

**M**meet the “lily trotter,” a wading bird with an uncanny ability to walk on water—or at least it looks that way! With their long, slender toes, jacanas gracefully stride across lily pads and floating vegetation in shallow, freshwater wetlands. Found in warm regions across Africa, they rely on wetlands for food, water, and shelter. These wetlands aren't just homes; they're nurseries where jacanas raise their chicks.



Image by Leon Basson from Pixabay

## Malachite Kingfisher

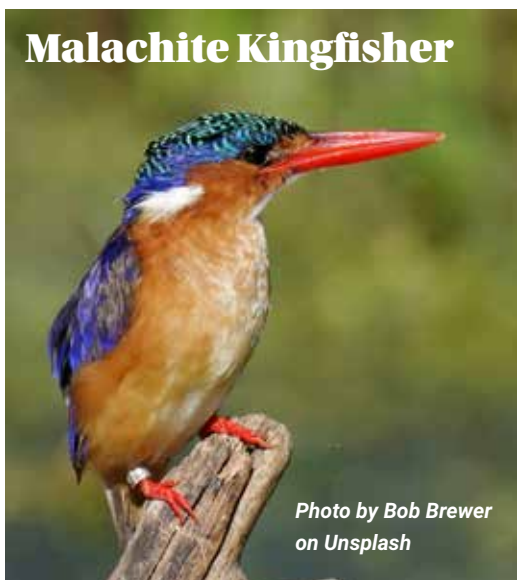


Photo by Bob Brewer on Unsplash

**T**his tiny dynamo is as dazzling as its name suggests. With its vivid colors and sharp fishing skills, the malachite kingfisher is a master hunter in wetland environments. It inhabits a range of wetland habitats, including swamps, marshes, and estuaries, across sub-Saharan Africa. Watching one dive for fish is like witnessing a ballet in nature.



Photo by David Clode on Unsplash

## Grey Crowned Crane

**E**legant and iconic, the grey crowned crane is Uganda's national bird and a wetland superstar. It thrives in wetlands mixed with open grasslands, like floodplains, marshes, and savannahs. At night, these cranes roost in tall trees, but during the day, they're all about their wetland habitats. Unfortunately, this endangered beauty faces threats from habitat loss and illegal capture for display in captivity, often by wealthy families or hotels.



## Lesser Flamingo

**S**mallest but mightiest, the lesser flamingo is the most populous of its kind, with an estimated two million individuals gracing Africa's wetlands. Despite their numbers, they face real threats, from pollution to habitat loss. These vibrant birds owe their iconic pink plumage to their diet of blue-green algae and benthic diatoms, extracted from alkaline lakes and salt pans. Their resilience in such harsh conditions is a testament to the incredible adaptability of wetland life.



Image by from Pixabay

## Africa's Wetland Wonders

**A**frica boasts some of the world's most stunning wetlands, including the Okavango Delta in Botswana, the Niger Delta in Nigeria, and the Sudd in South Sudan. These ecosystems not only support incredible birdlife but also provide essential resources for millions of people.

## Why Wetlands Are Under Threat

Wetlands are ecological powerhouses, but they're also some of the world's most endangered ecosystems. Here's what's putting them at risk:

- 1. Pollution:** Industrial waste, untreated sewage, and invasive species like water hyacinth choke wetlands and harm native wildlife.
- 2. Climate Change:** Shifting weather patterns disrupt rainfall and temperature, affecting the delicate balance of wetland ecosystems.
- 3. Urban Development:** Wetlands are being drained and paved over to make way for cities, leading to habitat destruction on a massive scale.

**A Hopeful Future:** How Wetlands Are Being Conserved Despite the challenges, there's hope on the horizon. Conservation efforts are underway across Africa, including:

**Legal Protections:** Countries are designating wetlands as protected areas to safeguard biodiversity.

**Community Engagement:** Local communities are learning about wetland importance through education programs and are actively participating in restoration projects.

**Sustainable Practices:** From eco-friendly farming to integrating wetlands into urban planning, people are finding ways to coexist with nature.

**Restoration Projects:** Efforts like rewilding and the reintroduction of native species are breathing new life into degraded wetlands.

### Be a Wetland Hero!

*Protecting wetlands means protecting birds, biodiversity, and even ourselves. Next time you see a jacana tiptoeing across lily pads or a flamingo showing off its pink feathers, remember how special these places are—and how much they need us. Let's work together to ensure wetlands remain magical havens for generations to come.*

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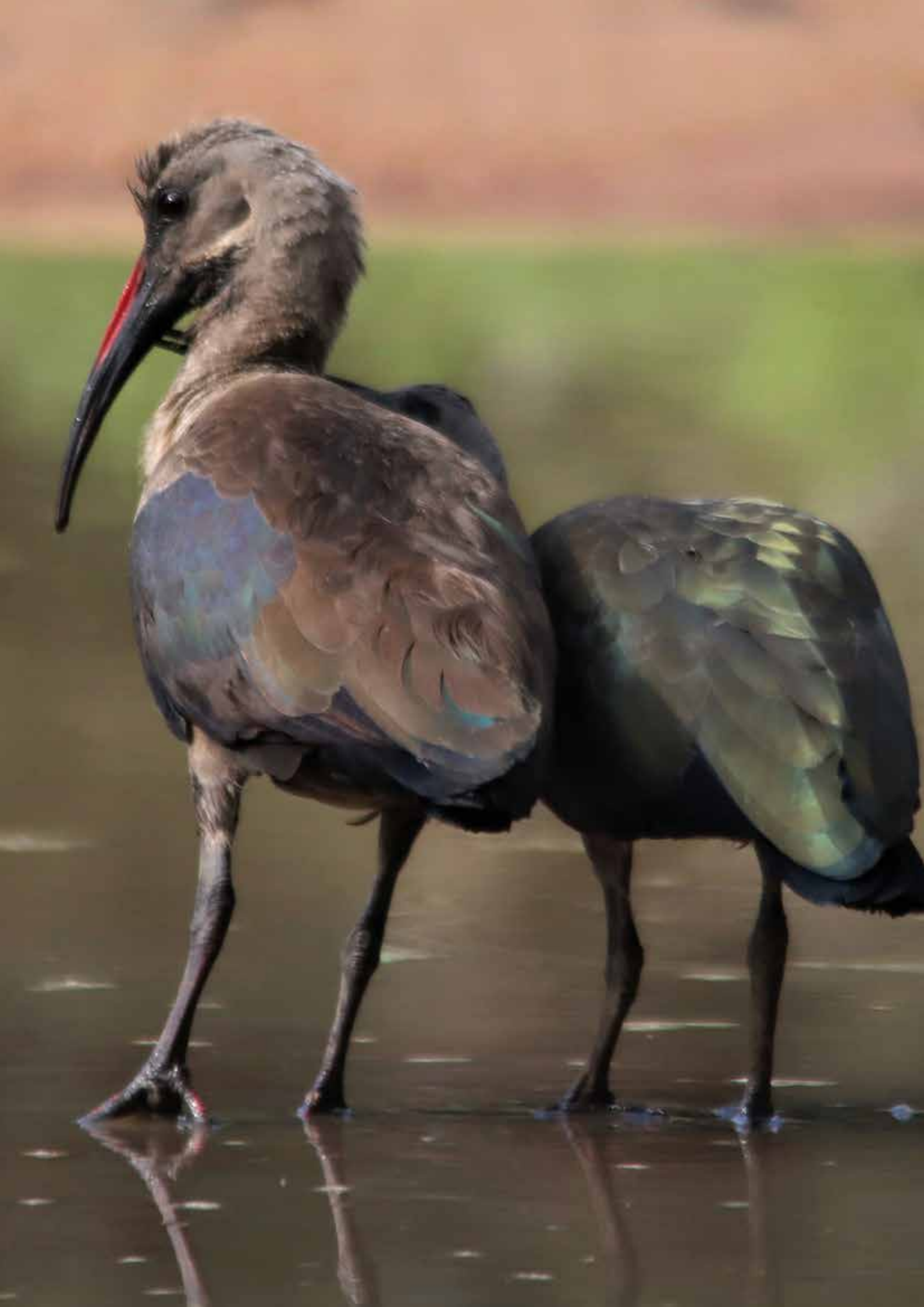
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## Pages of Preservation:

# Inspiring Reads That Champion Wetland Conservation

By Sharon Wawira

## Wetlands

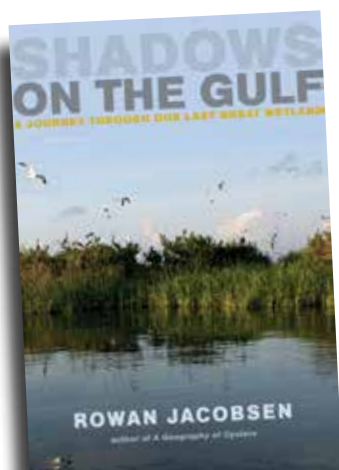
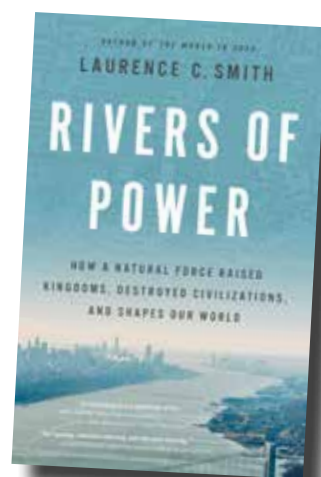
**W**etlands provides a thorough and comprehensive foundational text on wetland ecology, management, and restoration. Wetlands rank among the most productive but also the most vulnerable ecosystems. It covers some topics such as providing a detailed discussion of the role of wetlands in improving water quality, protection from storm damage, and other ecosystem services, the latest approaches and examples of wetland creation and restoration and thorough discussion of the impacts of climate change on wetlands, and how to mitigate them.



## RIVERS OF POWER:

How a Natural Force Raised Kingdoms, Destroyed Civilizations, and Shapes Our World

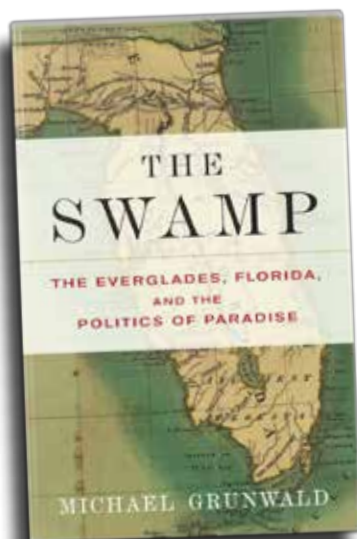
**R**ivers of Power by Laurence C. Smith explores the timeless yet vastly underappreciated relationship between rivers and civilization as we know it. Rivers are of course important in many practical ways but the full breadth of their influence on the way we live is less obvious. Rivers define and transcend international borders, forcing cooperation between nations. Huge volumes of river water are used to produce energy, raw commodities, and food. Wars, politics, and demography are transformed by their devastating floods. The territorial claims of nations, their cultural and economic ties to each other, and the migrations and histories of their peoples trace back to rivers, river valleys, and the topographic divides they carve upon the world. And as climate change, technology, and cities transform our relationship with nature, new opportunities are arising to protect the waters that sustain us.



## Shadows on the Gulf:

A Journey through Our Last Great Wetland

**S**urveying the Gulf Coast by sailboat, skiff, car, and kayak, Jacobsen journeys from the bayous of Terrebonne Parish, where he goes on oil patrol with a Native American man whose tribe is being displaced as their island disintegrates; to the last shucking house in New Orleans's French Quarter, whose oyster supply has vanished; to the pristine barrier islands of Mississippi, where a Kafkaesque cleanup effort is underway. He discovers a little-appreciated ecological wonder of breathtaking natural beauty and rich culture struggling to hold on to the things that have always sustained it. Shadows on the Gulf details the catastrophe creeping across the region and reveals why the damage to the Gulf will affect us all. Not only are the Gulf's wetlands the best oyster reefs and fish nurseries in the world, they also provide critical habitat to most of America's migratory songbirds and waterfowl. If the Gulf is allowed to fail, the effects will ripple across America. And fail it will, unless BP's blunder can somehow galvanize a national effort to save it.



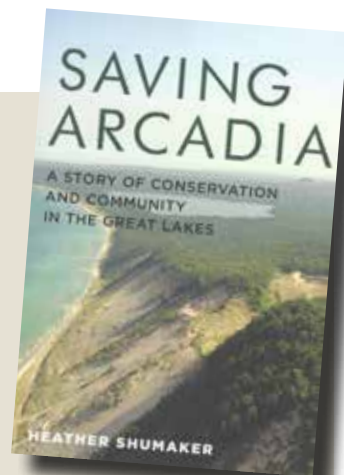
## THE SWAMP: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise

**T**he Swamp is the stunning story of the destruction and possible resurrection of the Everglades, the saga of man's abuse of nature in southern Florida and his unprecedented efforts to make amends. Michael Grunwald takes readers on a riveting journey from the Ice Ages to the present, illuminating the natural, social and political history of one of America's most beguiling but least understood patches of land.

The Everglades was America's last frontier, a wild country long after the West was won. Grunwald chronicles how a series of visionaries tried to drain and "reclaim" it, and how Mother Nature refused to bend to their will; in the most harrowing tale, a 1928 hurricane drowned 2,500 people in the Everglades. But the Army Corps of Engineers finally tamed the beast with levees and canals, converting half the Everglades into sprawling suburbs and sugar plantations. And though the southern Everglades was preserved as a national park, it soon deteriorated into an ecological mess. The River of Grass stopped flowing, and 90 percent of its wading birds vanished.

Now America wants its swamp back. Grunwald shows how a new breed of visionaries transformed Everglades politics, producing the \$8 billion rescue plan. That plan is already the blueprint for a new worldwide era of ecosystem restoration. And this book is a cautionary tale for that era. Through gripping narrative and dogged reporting, Grunwald shows how the Everglades is still threatened by the same hubris, greed and well-intentioned folly that led to its decline.

## Saving Arcadia A Story of Conservation and Community in the Great Lakes



**S**aving Arcadia: A Story of Conservation and Community in the Great Lakes is a suspenseful and intimate land conservation adventure story set in the Great Lakes heartland. The story spans more than forty years, following the fate of a magnificent sand dune on Lake Michigan and the people who care about it. Author and narrator Heather Shumaker shares the remarkable untold stories behind protecting land and creating new nature preserves. Written in a compelling narrative style, the book is intended in part as a case study for landscape-level conservation and documents the challenges of integrating economic livelihoods into conservation and what it really means to "preserve" land over time.

This is the story of a small band of determined townspeople and how far they went to save beloved land and endangered species from the grip of a powerful corporation. Saving Arcadia is a narrative with roots as deep as the trees the community is trying to save, something set in motion before the author was even born. And yet, Shumaker gives a human face to the changing nature of land conservation in the twenty-first century. Throughout this chronicle we meet people like Elaine, a nineteen-year-old farm wife; Dori, a lakeside innkeeper; and Glen, the director of the local land trust. Together with hundreds of others they cross cultural barriers and learn to help one another in an effort to win back the six-thousand-acre landscape taken over by Consumers Power that is now facing grave devastation. The result is a triumph of community that includes working farms, local businesses, summer visitors, year-round residents, and a network of land stewards.

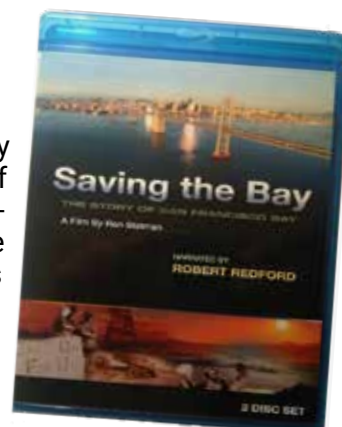
A work of creative nonfiction, Saving Arcadia is the adventurous tale of everyday people fighting to reclaim the land that has been in their family for generations. It explores ideas about nature and community, and anyone from scholars of ecology and conservation biology to readers of naturalist writing can gain from Arcadia's story.

# Wetland Wonders on Screen

By Sharon Wawira

## Saving the Bay: The Story of San Francisco Bay

A four-part series about the history and restoration of San Francisco Bay wetlands. Narrated by Robert Redford, *Saving the Bay* explores the history of one of America's greatest natural resources - San Francisco Bay - with four one-hour episodes tracing the Bay from its geologic origins following the last Ice Age through years of catastrophic exploitation to restoration efforts of today. This spectacular high-definition series takes viewers on an unforgettable journey around the waters of San Francisco Bay and the larger northern California watershed from the Sierra Nevada mountains to the Farallon Islands in the Pacific Ocean. The series also highlights the story of three women who rallied an entire region to save San Francisco Bay from becoming little more than a river. Spearheaded by three women in the East Bay hills, the story of how the Bay was saved is not only compelling in its own right, but offers an invaluable lesson about how ordinary citizens can have an impact on protecting and enhancing our natural environment.



## Into the Okavango

The Okavango River Basin provides a vital source of water to about 1 million people, the world's largest population of African elephants and significant populations of lions, cheetahs and hundreds of species of birds. However, this once unspoiled oasis is now under siege due to increasing pressure from human activity. From National Geographic Documentary Films, *Into the Okavango* chronicles a team of modern-day explorers on their first epic four-month, 1,500-mile expedition across three countries to save the river system that feeds the Okavango Delta, one of our planet's last wetland wildernesses.

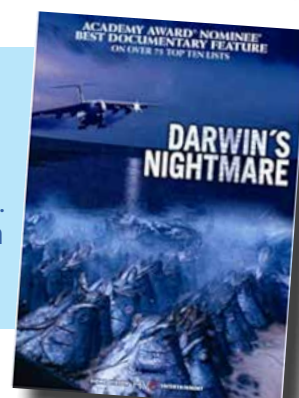
## Wetlands, the legacy of Luc Hoffmann

Luc Hoffmann was a passionate ornithologist and scientist. He was the first to launch studies in the 50's to demonstrate the importance of wetlands. These rich habitats for biodiversity are also vital for the survival of humans on our planet. This film takes us on a journey to discover Luc Hoffmann, this humanistic and visionary man, who acted discreetly and with no need for recognition or reward. We will discover his great work and understand the importance of the preservation of wetlands, these ecosystems that are essential to combat climate change issues.



## Darwin's Nightmare

A documentary on the effect of fishing the Nile perch in Tanzania's Lake Victoria. The predatory fish, which has wiped out the native species, is sold in European supermarkets, while starving Tanzanian families have to make do with the leftovers.



**S**ue Perkins' journey along the Mekong River highlights the importance of this vital waterway and the challenges it faces. The Mekong River is a lifeline for millions of people, and it is crucial that we work together to protect it. She starts her journey in the remote Yunnan province of China, where the Mekong River begins, and travels southwards through Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam, before reaching the river's delta region in the South China Sea.

During her journey, Sue meets a diverse range of people who live along the river and depend on it for their livelihoods. She visits remote villages, bustling cities, and ancient temples, and experiences the unique cultures and traditions of each country. Sue also learns about the environmental challenges facing the Mekong River and the efforts being made to protect it.



## Bridging the Gap:

# African and Western Perspectives on Animal Welfare

## - A Realistic Approach

by Dr. Mwenda Mbaka

**T**he Industrial Age in the Global North marked a shift in human-animal relationships as rapid urbanization separated people from rural ecosystems and daily interactions with animals. This detachment, particularly in industrialized societies, transformed animals into commodities within profit-driven production systems and cultivated sentimental or anthropomorphic perceptions. Such worldviews laid the foundation for animal rights ideologies, often divorcing animals from their practical roles and viewing them as moral equals to humans.

In contrast, Africa's relationship with animals remains culturally embedded and deeply practical. Animals are integral to livelihoods, providing food, labor, and other essential resources. This Africa-centric approach to animal welfare focuses on ensuring the wellbeing of animals to sustain their vital roles in human survival, aligning with global principles like the Five Freedoms and the Reduction principle within the 3Rs. For instance, the WOAHA guidelines provide practical frameworks that African farmers adapt to local conditions, such as improving housing and feeding practices for livestock to enhance productivity while minimizing stress and discomfort.

However, misconceptions equating animal welfare with animal rights often hinder progress in Africa, creating resistance among communities reliant on livestock for economic and social stability. To advance animal welfare effectively, African traditional knowledge and practices must be integrated into research, education, and policy frameworks, ensuring solutions are culturally appropriate, sustainable, and globally relevant. This perspective bridges the gap between African and Western approaches, advocating for mutual respect and balanced coexistence that promotes animal welfare without undermining cultural realities and livelihoods.

### The Urban Disconnect: Industrialization Redefines Human-Animal/Ecosystem Relationships

The Industrial Age brought about rapid urbanization as people migrated to cities in search of employment in factories and industries. While this shift freed

rural land for large-scale agriculture, it also created a profound separation between humans and rural ecosystems, including daily interactions with animals, which had been central to agricultural life (Smith, 2010). In rural settings, animals were integral to livelihoods - providing food, labor, and companionship—cultivating a relationship of coexistence and mutual reliance (Jahnke, 1982).

However, urbanization severed this connection. Animals were no longer directly associated with the food and products they provided; instead, a commercially driven middleman emerged, mediating the processes of production, processing, and distribution (Jones, 2015). This shift transformed animals into mere commodities within a value chain driven by profit motives, where their wellbeing as sentient beings was increasingly overlooked (WOAHA, 2023). The shift was incorporated into the academic systems that shaped the models for animal husbandry, leading to a profit-driven animal production enterprise that often overlooked environmental and animal-centric impacts (Fraser, 2008). Gradually, the moral values that had once ensured animals' welfare and sustainable ecosystems eroded, and animals and the land came to be seen not as partners in survival but as distant beings and features (AU-IBAR, 2023).

Over time, this detachment cultivated societal perceptions that viewed animals sentimentally or anthropomorphically - admired as if they possessed human-like qualities (Jones, 2015; Jahnke, 1982). This transformation laid the groundwork for modern views of animal welfare and rights, particularly in industrialized societies where direct, daily interactions with animals had become uncommon (WOAHA, 2019).

### Africa-Centric Animal Welfare: A Balanced View

The African perspective of animal welfare is grounded in the balance between animal wellbeing and human benefit. It aligns with the widely accepted "Five Freedoms of Animals," which ensure freedom from hunger, discomfort, pain, fear, and the ability to express normal behavior (WOAHA, 2023). For Africans, these principles are not abstract rights but practical tools to guarantee animals' health and

productivity, which, in turn, sustain human livelihoods (AU-IBAR, 2023).

Further, the principle of Reduction within the “3Rs” (Reduction, Replacement, Refinement) resonates deeply with traditional African diets. Historically, Africans relied on plant-based proteins supplemented by occasional meat, milk, and eggs. This cultural reliance mirrors sustainable principles - consuming responsibly and sparingly while ensuring animals’ welfare and ecosystem health (WOAH, 2023; AU-IBAR, 2023; Fraser, 2008).

### Overcoming Misconceptions

One of the greatest challenges to advancing animal welfare in Africa lies in its conflation with animal rights. When animal welfare advocacy is mistakenly associated with radical ideologies that reject the use of animals altogether, it creates resistance among African communities whose lives and economic wellbeing are intertwined with livestock (Smith, 2010; AU-IBAR, 2023; WOAH, 2019). For this reason, it is crucial to differentiate African animal welfare - centered on wellbeing - from animal rights, which often reject the human-animal partnership (Jahnke, 1982).

### Incorporating African Knowledge into Global Conversations

Africa’s unique relationship with animals should be incorporated into scientific research, education, and policies. Traditional African knowledge offers insights into animal care, sustainable production, and harmonious coexistence that are often overlooked in Western paradigms (Jones, 2015; Jahnke, 1982). For instance, pastoralist communities in East Africa have long used rotational grazing systems to maintain grassland health and reduce overgrazing, while also ensuring sustainable livestock production. This practice exemplifies how traditional knowledge contributes

*While Western views of animal welfare may differ due to societal distance from animals, Africa’s approach remains grounded in the animals’ practical roles and their wellbeing.*

to both ecological balance and animal welfare (AU-IBAR, 2023).

Integrating Africa-centric perspectives into global animal welfare dialogue can enhance mutual understanding and ensure policies are contextually relevant, practical, and culturally respectful. Recognizing and valuing African traditions will not only advance animal welfare on the continent but also promote sustainable development and ecological justice globally (WOAH, 2023; AU-IBAR, 2023; Fraser, 2008).

### Conclusion

While Western views of animal welfare may differ due to societal distance from animals, Africa’s approach remains grounded in the animals’ practical roles and their wellbeing. This Africa-centric perspective is neither inferior nor incompatible with global principles. Instead, it presents a valuable, balanced approach that harmonizes animal welfare with human needs and environmental sustainability (WOAH, 2023; AU-IBAR, 2023).

For Africa to fully champion animal welfare, we must overcome misconceptions linking it to animal rights. Upholding traditional values and ensuring they are reflected in research, education, and policy will allow Africa to advance animal welfare in a way that is meaningful, sustainable, and culturally appropriate. For example, AU-IBAR (2023) has successfully incorporated these traditional values into its Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa, promoting policies that align with local cultural and ecological realities. It is worrisome that with the accelerated urbanization sweeping across Africa, modern-day Africans are being removed from contact with animals, which is crucial to maintaining practical respect for them and their wellbeing. Consequently, it is crucial to incorporate practical African traditional knowledge and practices about animal welfare into the education system and policies across Africa.

### Disclaimer

The perspectives of this article do not reject global principles such as the Five Freedoms or the 3Rs but rather situate them within an African lens that emphasizes balance, wellbeing, and responsible coexistence.

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Of Paws and Feet:

# Harmony Between People and Animals in Africa's Wetlands

By Felix Kioko Musyoka

**A**frican wetlands, encompassing swamps, deltas, mangroves, and floodplains, are vital ecosystems that store and purify water, act as carbon sinks, and mitigate flooding. These wetlands also host unique biodiversity. For instance, the Okavango Delta teems with elephants, zebras, and over 400 bird species, while mangroves along East Africa's coast shelter fish nurseries and protect shorelines from erosion (Wetlands International Africa, 2024). On the human side, wetlands sustain livelihoods.

According to the World Wetlands Day Report (2024), wetlands provide direct jobs for over one billion people globally. In Africa, rice farming, aquaculture, and tourism tied to wetlands are lifelines for many. The Nile Delta, for example, supports agriculture and fisheries crucial to Egypt's economy, while the Zambezi floodplain benefits small-scale farmers during seasonal floods (World Wetlands Day, 2024).

The interaction between people and wildlife in these habitats reveals both heartwarming partnerships and significant challenges. Africa harbors over 30% of the world's biodiversity, making these wetlands critical for conservation and climate resilience (African Wildlife Foundation, 2024). However, conflicts arise—how do you ensure a thirsty herd of elephants doesn't trample a farmer's crops,



or that fishing practices don't harm aquatic biodiversity?

While wetlands provide a haven for wildlife, their welfare faces increasing threats. Climate change has intensified environmental stress on both livestock and wildlife. Severe droughts, such as those in the Horn of Africa from 2020 to 2022, have resulted in habitat loss and malnutrition for millions of animals (International Livestock Research Institute, 2024).

In many communities near wetlands, animals are not just companions but partners in survival. Along Lake Victoria, fishing cats patrol the wetlands, keeping invasive species like rats in check, benefiting both the ecosystem and local farmers. The Maasai, on the other hand, have long coexisted with wildlife, balancing livestock farming with conservation efforts (African Wildlife Foundation, 2024).

Wetland-based tourism further underscores human-wildlife cooperation. Visitors flock to see iconic species like the Nile crocodile and African fish eagle, generating revenue that funds conservation. However, poorly managed encounters can lead to conflicts, underscoring the need for responsible tourism practices (World Wildlife Fund, 2024).

Semi-aquatic antelope such as waterbucks, lechwes, and sitatungas face mounting pressures, including habitat loss, poaching, and urban development. Kenya's Saiga antelope population, for instance, was recorded at just 473 individuals in the 2021 Kenya Wildlife Census, with most habitats located outside protected areas and increasingly threatened by anthropogenic activities (Kenya Wildlife Service, 2021).



Balancing human needs with animal welfare in wetlands is fraught with hurdles. Encroachment, pollution, and illegal poaching remain pervasive threats. Wetlands are also disappearing at an alarming rate due to deforestation, agriculture, and urban sprawl. For example, Lake Chad has shrunk by 90% since the 1960s due to overuse and climate change, significantly impacting human and wildlife communities (WWF, 2024). The loss of wetlands accelerates biodiversity decline, threatening species like the shoebill stork and African lungfish, which depend on these habitats. Human communities also suffer, with reduced fish stocks, diminished water supplies, and increased vulnerability to natural disasters (National Wetlands Indaba, 2024).

Innovative projects offer hope. The Resilient African Feed and Fodder Systems Project (RAFFS) focuses on improving ecosystem resilience and reducing resource conflicts between humans and wildlife (International Livestock Research Institute, 2024). Community-led initiatives, such as the Tuungane Project in the Lake Tanganyika basin, empower local fishing communities to establish sustainable practices like no-fishing zones and alternative livelihoods, helping biodiversity recover while reducing human-wildlife conflict (The Nature Conservancy, 2024). Restoration projects are gaining momentum. For instance, mangrove planting in Kenya's Gazi Bay has restored over 500 hectares, reducing carbon footprints and supporting local



*The loss of wetlands accelerates biodiversity decline, threatening species like the shoebill stork and African lungfish, which depend on these habitats*

fisheries. Similarly, ecotourism initiatives in Uganda's Nabajjuzi wetland have fostered community buy-in for conservation (World Wildlife Fund, 2024). The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands promotes sustainable use, and over 40 African wetland sites are designated Ramsar sites, prioritizing biodiversity protection while allowing sustainable community practices (Ramsar Convention, 2024).

Efforts to protect the headwaters feeding Angola's Okavango Delta include reforestation and improved agricultural practices. International organizations like Wetlands International are also restoring degraded mangroves along Africa's coasts to enhance fishery yields and protect communities from climate

impacts (Wetlands International Africa, 2024).

Technology plays a critical role in conservation as well. Satellite monitoring and community-led mapping are helping track wetland health, providing early warnings for degradation. These tools, combined with community-driven conservation, represent a promising avenue for protecting Africa's wetlands (The Nature Conservancy, 2024).

That is why I refer to wetlands as a place of magical interplay of feathers, fur, and feet—where people and animals coexist in delicate harmony. Their health reflects our ability to manage shared resources. By investing in sustainable practices and empowering local communities, Africa's wetlands can remain a sanctuary for all. So, next time you see a heron poised at the water's edge, remember: it's part of a bigger story of survival, resilience, and coexistence. Let's ensure that story continues, one drop at a time.

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## Expert Perspectives that

# Address the Missing Focus on Animal Welfare in the Kampala Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Declaration



*The Kampala CAADP Declaration, adopted during the Extraordinary AU Summit in January 2025, marks a significant milestone in Africa's quest to build resilient and sustainable agrifood systems. This Declaration comes in the wake of a decade-long review of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) 2014-2024, which identified critical gaps in implementation. The review highlighted challenges such as inadequate alignment with emerging issues like climate change, gender inclusivity, animal welfare, and human and animal nutrition, alongside the need for more actionable frameworks to guide Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).*

*The Kampala Declaration seeks to address these shortcomings by reaffirming commitments to sustainable agriculture while introducing targeted strategies to tackle gaps. In this feature, Catherine Jerotich Chumo chats with Dr. Mwenda Mbaka who has been a long-serving Animal Welfare Expert for the Secretariat of the African Platform for Animal Welfare (APAW) at the AU-IBAR. The article delves into the commitments outlined in the Declaration and examines how they aim to strengthen Africa's agrifood systems, with insights on how the African Union (AU) and its Member States can implement these objectives effectively. Through addressing the following gaps, the AU can ensure that animal welfare contributes to the successful implementation of the Kampala CAADP Declaration and the broader vision of sustainable agrifood systems in Africa.*

*The Kampala CAADP Declaration emphasizes resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, but it does not explicitly mention animal welfare. Why is animal welfare critical to achieving the goals outlined in the Declaration?*

Animal welfare is an essential component of resilient and sustainable agrifood systems. Well-treated animals are healthier, more productive, and less prone to diseases, reducing the risk of zoonotic outbreaks. The environments they are produced are less prone to exposure to pollution and the unsustainable exploitation of the ecosystem, such as biodiversity loss. Moreover, animal welfare aligns with sustainable farming practices, ensuring ethical treatment and maintaining environmental balance. By including animal welfare in agrifood systems strategies, we promote productivity, sustainability, food safety, and other aspects of veterinary public health, which are fundamental to achieving the Declaration's goals.

*Given the Declaration's high-level nature, how can AU Member States and RECs address animal welfare without contradicting the AU's principles of subsidiarity and sovereignty?*

To respect subsidiarity and sovereignty, the AU Specialized Technical Offices, including those under Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment [DARBE], can develop generic frameworks for animal welfare. These frameworks would provide guiding principles, best practices, and adaptable models. Member States and RECs could then customize these frameworks to fit their specific contexts, ensuring alignment with national and regional priorities while adhering to the overall objectives of the Declaration.

*Member States and RECs might struggle to unpack the commitments in the Declaration due to limited access to the expert recommendations used in drafting it. How can this gap be addressed?*

The AU Specialized Technical Offices can play a critical role in bridging this gap, since

they are the ones who came up with the recommendations in the first place, during the review of the lapsed CAADP towards the 2025-2035 period. They should translate the expert recommendations [which form the essence of the commitments in the Declaration] into user-friendly documents, such as policy briefs, toolkits, and technical guidelines, tailored for policymakers and implementers at the national and regional levels. Additionally, regular capacity-building workshops and knowledge-sharing platforms, convened by the AU Specialized Technical Offices, can ensure that the MS and REC stakeholders have access to and can implement these recommendations effectively.

*How can the AU ensure that animal welfare becomes a priority for Member States and RECs during the implementation of the Declaration?*

The AU can prioritize animal welfare by integrating it into the performance indicators for the CAADP Biennial Review. This would incentivize Member States and RECs to adopt and report on animal welfare standards. Furthermore, aligning animal welfare with broader agendas like One Health and sustainable development will highlight its relevance to public health, food security, and environmental conservation, encouraging Member States to include it in their policies.

*Would the development of sector-specific strategies and action plans for animal welfare conflict with the Declaration's overarching objectives?*

No, developing sector-specific strategies and action plans for animal welfare would complement the Declaration's objectives. These strategies would focus on the ethical and sustainable treatment of animals across agrifood systems, ensuring their health, productivity, and contributions to food security. By linking animal welfare with commitments to resilience, climate adaptation, and sustainability, such plans can enhance the Declaration's outcomes without conflict.

*What role can partnerships with international organizations and civil society play in addressing the gaps related to animal welfare in the Declaration?*

Partnerships with international organizations, NGOs, and civil society are crucial for technical expertise, funding, and advocacy. These partners can help Member States implement animal welfare initiatives by providing training, resources, and policy support. Additionally, they can promote awareness and drive demand for humane practices, aligning local actions with global standards. Collaborative efforts will ensure that animal welfare receives the attention it deserves within the Declaration's framework.

*What steps can AU Specialized Technical Offices take to ensure animal welfare is effectively integrated into the implementation of the Kampala CAADP Declaration?*

AU Specialized Technical Offices can adopt the following steps to promote and integrate animal welfare into the Kampala CAADP Declaration implementation:

Create adaptable generic animal welfare frameworks that Member States and RECs can customize to their specific contexts. These frameworks should address the welfare of farmed, aquatic, working, and wild animals.

Organize targeted workshops and training sessions to build technical expertise and institutional capacity for implementing animal welfare practices, towards the fulfilment of the Kampala CAADP Commitments.

Align animal welfare initiatives with the One Health approach to emphasize their role in preventing zoonotic diseases, safeguarding public health, and promoting environmental sustainability.

Produce simplified, accessible documents such as policy briefs, toolkits, and guidelines. These materials should translate expert recommendations into actionable steps for policymakers and implementers.

Incorporate animal welfare as a key performance indicator in the CAADP Biennial Review. This will encourage Member States to prioritize animal welfare by linking it to measurable outcomes and mutual accountability mechanisms.

Through implementing these steps, AU Specialized Technical Offices can ensure that animal welfare becomes a vital component of Africa's sustainable agrifood systems transformation.





## Livestock Development in Africa:

# The Paradox for Human, Animal, and Environmental Wellbeing

By Dr. Mwenda Mbaka and Janice H. Cox



The industrialization of Africa's livestock systems is modeled after the Global North, and greatly impacts on human and animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and cultural heritage. While industrialization aims to boost productivity, it has accelerated environmental degradation, exacerbated climate change, and undermined the African value system of Ubuntu. Discussions at COP 29 highlighted Africa's marginalization in global climate finance, despite its vulnerability to climate change, with only 3-4% of funds allocated to the continent. This paper proposes a transformative framework based on the 3Rs - Reduction, Refinement, and Replacement - to guide the development of humane, sustainable livestock systems. Through the prioritization of ethical practices and revitalizing Ubuntu principles, Africa can redefine its livestock sector, addressing the interconnected challenges of development, sustainability, and resilience.

**T**he livestock sector in Africa contributes 40% of the continent's agricultural GDP, serving as a cornerstone for food security, livelihoods, and cultural heritage. However, the push for industrialized agricultural practices - imported from the Global North - has disrupted traditional systems, leading to environmental degradation, climate change, and diminishing animal welfare. This paper examines these paradoxical impacts, underscoring the erosion of Ubuntu, the African philosophy of interconnectedness and respect for all living beings.

Industrial agriculture has replaced sustainable practices with high-input, productivity-focused systems, driving biodiversity loss, pollution, and public health crises. The concept of "ecological debt" highlights the disproportionate harm endured by African communities due to the Global North's exported industrial models. Despite Africa's minimal contribution to global emissions, it faces severe climate impacts and receives inadequate climate finance. This paper argues for a just transition to sustainable food systems, guided by the 3Rs framework and aligned with One Health principles.

### Traditional Roles of Livestock in Africa

Cattle have been central to African cultures, fulfilling multiple roles, including milk, meat, manure, draught power, and sociocultural functions. They serve as wealth stores, risk management assets, and contributors to soil fertility. Robust and genetically diverse, African cattle embody sustainability and resilience, which industrial systems often undermine.

### Industrial Livestock Development and Economic Growth

The “Livestock Revolution” of the Global North, characterized by mechanized, high-input systems, introduced Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). These systems prioritize productivity at the expense of genetic diversity, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability. Monoculture feed crops, high chemical inputs, and antibiotic use have caused pollution, biodiversity loss, and public health risks, including antimicrobial resistance.

Africa’s agricultural sector was further destabilized by structural adjustment programs in the 1980s, which dismantled farm sector protections, exposing agriculture to exploitative global markets. Industrial systems prioritized economic growth over poverty alleviation, food security, and sustainability, exacerbating inequalities and undermining traditional practices.

COP 29 reaffirmed the environmental costs of industrial agriculture, with meat and dairy industries projected to surpass fossil fuels in greenhouse gas emissions. These systems have also contributed to Africa’s

increasing dependency on imported technologies, undermining local resilience and Ubuntu principles.

### Environmental and Ecological Challenges

Industrial agriculture’s environmental toll is immense, accounting for up to 30% of global greenhouse gas emissions and driving deforestation, soil degradation, and biodiversity loss. The FAO’s “Livestock’s Long Shadow” report highlights how monocultures for feed crops deplete soil and harm ecosystems. Chemical inputs and waste create pollution, dead zones, and health risks.

Africa’s minimal emissions contrast with its heavy burden of climate impacts. Climate finance discussions at COP 29 revealed a significant disparity, with Africa receiving only 3-4% of global funds. Increased grants and concessional financing are essential to support Africa’s transition to sustainable food systems.

**Ubuntu and Ethical Livestock Development**  
Ubuntu emphasizes interconnectedness and respect for all life, offering a strong ethical foundation for sustainable livestock practices. Traditional Ubuntu values have been undermined by industrial systems that prioritize profit over harmony. The Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA) aligns with Ubuntu, advocating for humane practices that promote animal welfare, environmental stewardship, and human well-being.

### The Magnitude of Animals at Risk

Africa’s livestock sector involves billions of animals, with many subjected to poor



husbandry, transport, and slaughter practices. Industrial systems exacerbate animal suffering through confinement, overcrowding, and routine mutilations. Exotic breeds, poorly adapted to local conditions, increase disease susceptibility and mortality rates, undermining sustainability.

**Alternative Pathways:** The 3Rs Framework  
The proposed 3Rs framework - Reduction, Refinement, and Replacement - offers a roadmap for humane and sustainable livestock systems:

**Reduction:** Address food waste, promote plant-based diets, and redirect feed crops for direct human consumption. Awareness campaigns can reduce environmental impacts, targeting overconsumption patterns in wealthier regions.

**Refinement:** Improve animal welfare through better systems and management practices, investing in veterinary and extension services.

**Replacement:** Develop alternatives to meat and dairy, leveraging indigenous crops for sustainable plant-based diets. Innovation in food systems can mitigate livestock farming's environmental impact.

### Animal Welfare Policy and International Investment

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) underscores robust policy frameworks for animal welfare. However, policies require financial support. The Global North must reframe investments, prioritizing humane and sustainable agriculture. Funding should support indigenous breeds, welfare training, and regenerative systems, reducing animal suffering and promoting sustainability.

### Discussion

Historical injustices, colonial exploitation, and structural adjustment programs have compounded Africa's socio-ecological challenges. The concept of "ecological debt" emphasizes the need for reparations and investment in sustainable practices. Climate finance should prioritize humane and sustainable food systems, addressing the interconnected crises of environmental degradation, animal welfare, and human well-being.

Africa's revitalization of Ubuntu and adoption of ethical livestock practices can set a global precedent for sustainability. The AWSA and international collaborations must protect animal welfare while ensuring food systems contribute positively to human and environmental health. The Global North must acknowledge its ecological debt and support Africa's transition to a sustainable, compassionate future.

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# LOCAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## LOCAL NEWS

### 2025 Kicks Off as Twin Elephants Make Their Grand Entrance in Kenya

**I**t was with grand celebration, excitement and musical ululations that Kenya meets the news in the elephant world in the new year. On January 2, the Kenya Wildlife Service shared on its social media platforms the exhilarating news that a mother elephant with twins were spotted in Shimba Hills National Reserve! A good sign of many successes to come. This marks the third case of twin births of elephants in the country in three years! Twin births in elephants is extremely rare occurring approximately less than one per cent of the time among elephant births. This rarity of twin births is due to several biological and ecological factors. To begin with, elephants have the longest breeding period of any mammal, lasting between 18 and 22 months. Therefor carrying two calves simultaneously would place immense strain on the mother's body. Environmental conditions can also affect twinning rates. But despite these factors it has not stopped these latest twins to start their new lives fresh in 2025!



- Rédaction Africanews and AP, January 2025

### 200 Security Officers in Training to Protect Kenya's Natural Treasures



*Photo Credit: Mara Conservancy*

**O**ver 200 security officers based in Narok and Kajiado counties have received a one-week training on Wildlife Conservation and Protection in a bid to promote tourism. Speaking to journalists, when he officially closed the training, Wildlife Conservation Secretary Dr John Chumo expressed optimism that the rampant illegal poaching at the Maasai Mara Game Reserve and Tsavo National Park will be a thing of the past. Chumo explained the purpose of the training is to build the capacity of officers who include the Kenya Police Service, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and all other staff that deal with cases on poaching and animal protection. The officers were trained on scientific methods and the new technology to detect and arrest poachers as they protect wild animals. The Wildlife Secretary observed that both Tsavo National Reserve and Maasai Mara Game Reserve border the Tanzania country, where poachers escape to avoid arrest. To curb this illegal trend, he reiterated, a similar training was undergoing in Tanzania to equip their security agents with

necessary capacity to detect and arrest poachers. "The law is clear on poachers. Those found capable can get a life sentence or heavy fines. That is why it is dangerous to engage in such criminal activities," he observed.

Narok County Commissioner Kipkech Lotiatia on his part called on collaboration between the members of the public and the police to arrest those with ill-intention of poaching wild animals. "The Maa community has done a great job in protecting the wild animals. It is against their beliefs and norms to poach wild animals for food. This means that most of the people involved in the illegal poaching could be coming from other counties," said Lotiatia. He underscored the security agents will not relent in their duty to protect wild animals as they are a source of revenue in the county. This year, Narok County was named among the top counties in revenue collection, an initiative that is attributed to the collections made at the Maasai Mara National Reserve. The county governor Patrick Ntutu recently announced that the county targets to raise the Own Source Revenue from Sh.3.2 billion collected in the financial year 2022/2023 to Sh6 billion in the current 2024/ 2025 financial year. The Maa community has often been praised for boosting conservation and protecting wild animals that loiter in their homesteads looking for food and water. Despite the community's efforts to protect the wild, the number of poachers has been increasing following the high demand of trophies outside the country and increasing sale of bush meat to unsuspecting consumers.

- KNA, Ann Salaton, December 2024

## Kenya Gears Up for Livestock Vaccination Exercise Set to Begin in January



*The Kenyan government will roll out a national livestock vaccination exercise starting January 2025, Agriculture and Livestock Development Cabinet Secretary Andrew Karanja has said.*

**T**he country wide vaccination of livestock, which is an initiative of President William Ruto, will see vaccination of 22 million cattle against Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and 50 million sheep and goats against Peste des petits ruminants (PPR) across the Country. Speaking when he toured the Kenya Veterinary Vaccines Production Institute (KEVEVAPI) to assess preparations, Dr Karanja said that the livestock industry is one of the sectors with potential to significantly contribute to economic development and job creation and therefore should be safeguarded. "We need to trade the animals for meat and in order to do so, we need to create a disease-free country, and that is the reason we are advocating for vaccination of our animals," Karanja said.

The CS urged wananchi to disregard propaganda peddled by detractors saying that all those bad things that are being said about the vaccinations are not true, terming them as conspiracy theories. Veterinary vaccines, he noted, have had, and continue to have, a major role in protecting animal health and public health, reducing animal suffering, enabling efficient production of animals to feed the growing human population. "This process greatly reduces the need for antibiotics to treat food and companion animals. The achievement of a disease-free status will facilitate access to markets for our livestock, livestock products and by-products and job creation along the value chain," he added.

The CS assured those who are saying the government will import the vaccines that all the vaccines will be sourced from KEVEVAPI since it has enough locally produced vaccines and even more as they are exporting to nine countries in Africa. He explained that the production of major vaccines has increased steadily over time due to an increased demand by the counties as well as enhanced access to regional and international markets particularly in Uganda, Mali, Senegal, Somaliland, UAE, Sudan and Southern Sudan. "Our vaccines are not expensive, they are affordable, and the counties are able to access them across the Country," he noted and asked KEVEVAPI to also go beyond and have centres across the country as a last mile initiative of being closer to the users.

Dr Karanja further said that KEVEVAPI has put in place systems where vaccines are tested locally and also externally by the African Union Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre (AU-PANVAC) and have been found fit for use in the country and beyond. Over the years, the CS noted that the government has supported the Institute to grow its vaccine manufacturing capacities. And currently has capacity to produce up to 75 million doses of vaccines that are also sold to private veterinarians, counties, as well as exported to countries in Africa and beyond.

The CS told livestock farmers that the government means well in carrying out the vaccination exercise

and that KEVEVAPI, which has been around since 1964, has the expertise and facilities to produce fifteen (15) livestock vaccines that are considered important in the Country and internationally. "The vaccines are safe, there is nothing to worry about and we want to ensure that all are comfortable so we are engaging the County Governments and stakeholders, as we roll out this exercise and so am urging farmers to come out in large numbers and offer their animals to be vaccinated," the CS said.

Director of Veterinary Services (DVS) Dr Allan Azegele said this is the first time in the country that the government has deliberately taken steps towards facilitating vaccination programmes for animals in the country. He thanked the government for this and noted that they were keen to ensure that all livestock keepers are sensitised about the vaccination programme. "We have been undertaking awareness programmes through County teams led by the Directors responsible for extension and we will even be engaging them further as we approach the roll out of the vaccination," he said.

Dr Azegele assured farmers that the vaccines have been produced in Kenya and that the DVS undertook quality assurance of all the vaccines used. "The Director has the authority under the law and has the mandate to clear every animal input be it vaccines, drugs or animal feeds that are used in production because health of the animal is critical to growth of the livestock sector in the country," he said.

The DVS called upon farmers to be ready and available, present their animals for vaccination once the programme is rolled out saying, "This programme is premised on the mantra prevention is better than cure. It is cheaper to prevent disease from causing infection in the animals, it will be productive, 0020 and you will earn more money".

**- KNA, Wangari Ndirangu,  
December 2024**

## Veterinary Community Celebrates 2024 Milestones with Commitment to Advance Animal Welfare



**U**nder the sparkling lights of the Argyle Grand Hotel in Nairobi, the Kenya Veterinary Association (KVA) celebrated a night of triumph, commitment, and camaraderie during the Vet of the Year Awards (VOYA) Dinner. This prestigious event, a beacon in the veterinary calendar, united professionals from all corners of the country to celebrate outstanding achievements and groundbreaking innovations in veterinary medicine. Dr Samson E. Muchelule, CEO of KVA, delivered an inspiring keynote address, reflecting on the year's milestones and challenges. "This past year has been filled with challenges, opportunities, and moments of triumph," he remarked. "Each person in this room has played a vital role in our collective success."

Dr Muchelule highlighted the resilience and dedication of Kenya's veterinary community, emphasizing the teamwork that has driven the industry forward. "The achievements we recognize today are stepping stones to even greater success tomorrow. Together, we've proven that there's no limit to what we can accomplish when we combine our talents, expertise, and passion," he added. The VOYA gala is not just an occasion to reward individual excellence but also a celebration of the collective effort and commitment of veterinarians to advancing animal health and welfare in Kenya. The evening featured awards recognizing outstanding contributions in veterinary practice, research, and community service. As the veterinary sector continues to evolve, Dr Muchelule urged attendees to look forward with optimism and determination. "Let's celebrate our wins, learn from our experiences, and recharge our spirits for the exciting journey ahead," he concluded. The event underscored KVA's commitment to fostering growth, innovation, and shared success within the veterinary profession. Guests left the gala motivated and inspired, ready to tackle the challenges of the coming year.

- Citizen Digital, December 2024

## Animal Welfare Experts Push for Healthier Diets, Maternity Leave for Donkeys

**T**he dwindling donkey numbers is a matter of concern to the animal welfare community as it is a warning of a soon-to-be extinct animal species, if owners and trafficking curtails are not tamed. In the African setup, donkeys are kept not as pets but as human co-workers since they make work easy. The idea of donkey entitlement to mating, a maternity leave and well-balanced diet in most cases is neither here nor there.

Majority of people within communities which bank on donkeys have been accused of mistreating and violating donkey rights while at the same time expect their unwavering service. Curtailing donkeys mating rights, opportunity to go on a maternity leave, corporal punishment, denying them medical attention, overlooking sheltering them, overloading as well as overworking them are considered working animal mistreatment, which animal supporters feel should be offence under the prevention of cruelty to animal protection laws. The animal experts have observed that, a majority of donkey owners in Kenya have reservation and a criterion marred with beliefs of the sexes of donkeys to keep and why; It is habitual to either castrate or inject female donkeys with chemicals to prevent them from giving birth. The reason for stopping the animals from reproducing is so as not to disrupt donkey working cycle.

Researchers have observed that, in most cases women prefer to work with female donkeys due to the belief that they are well-mannered and humble and not as stubborn as their male counter parts. Men who use donkeys, prefer working with male sexes due to the belief that they're hardworking and reliable to work longer hours, unlike their female counterparts believed to be lazy.

In the past years, donkey numbers have continuously dropped drastically for several reasons, which need solutions to save the donkey species from extinction. Between 2016 and 2019, an increase in the international demand for donkey meat and skin led to the establishment and licensing of donkey slaughterhouses. Kenyan authorities licensed four donkey slaughterhouses, and around that time, a successful lobby led to the closure of the slaughterhouses. However, illegal donkey skin and meat trafficking is still a major hindrance to donkey population.

It is alleged that donkeys are still being slaughtered in secrecy and skin is illegally



*Photo Credit: Big3Africa*

exported while meat is sold to unsuspecting Kenyans. The Kenyan government banned commercial slaughter of donkeys following rise in animal theft which is yet to be tamed. Extreme weather conditions like prolonged droughts deprive donkey owners of the precious animal despite of it being among the animals that can tolerate dry weather over a period of time.

“Biological orientation is another hindrance to donkey population; a donkey is such that twinning is rare and Artificial Insemination (AI) can’t be done on donkeys,” said Samuel Theuri, Senior Advocacy and Innovation Officer of Brooke East Africa (BEA). According to research by PubMed Central, it is universally accepted that insemination is more complicated in donkeys, since the lumen of a donkey cervix is narrowed and tortuous, plus the vaginal portion of the cervix may have various conformations; the aspects representing a challenge for routine intrauterine procedures such as Artificial Insemination (AI), hence reporting of lower pregnancy cases by several authors. Due to their chromosome orientation, donkeys rarely give birth to twins and when they do the last born would be relatively smaller as a result of chromosomal imbalance.

A donkey matures at one year and undergo a gestation period of 12-14 months that is a year or more, meaning one donkey can only give birth to one once every year, good enough females typically enter into heat regularly hence they are pretty easy

when it comes to the conditions that they need to reproduce.

The donkey community has advised donkey owners to keep both male and female donkeys without interfering with their reproduction system whatsoever, to allow them mate regularly to boost donkey population. The livestock specialists have emphasized on the importance of the donkey and its contribution to the well-being of households and boosting the economy of a nation.

“A donkey should be allowed to go on a maternity leave and have healthier diet during gestation period. Donkeys directly contribute to your well-being and it needs kind treatment,” explained Dr Vincent Oloo, an animal welfare officer at Brooke East Africa (BEA). “Do you know that a donkey is entitled to your plate of sukuma wiki? Look at it this way, for kales to reach your home they must have come from a farm somewhere in a village where the famer used a donkey to ferry a sack to the market.” An expectant donkey needs a feeding plan to boost body nutrients. For a pregnant donkey, there should be limited grazing, they should be feed on moderate quality roughage, protein rich concentrate and minerals for instance barley straw, forage balancer, short chop hay replacer.

**- Citizen Digital, Agnes Oloo, October 2024**

## REGIONAL NEWS

## Uniting Efforts to Train Focal Points in Advancing Animal Welfare Across Africa

**A**U-IBAR is a fervent proponent of animal welfare in Africa, having been instrumental in the establishment of the African Platform for Animal Welfare (APAW) and the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA). These endeavours unite a diverse array of stakeholders to promote the humane treatment of animals across the continent. AU-IBAR participated in a Regional Training Seminar for National Focal Points for Animal Welfare, which was hosted by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), as part of this mission. The purpose of this training was to share best practices and enhance collaborative efforts.

The training, taking place from September 3 to 5, 2024, addresses a variety of animal welfare topics; commencing with sessions for newly appointed focal points, which were succeeded by discussions on global and regional strategies. Practical challenges associated with animal transport and slaughter, updates on WOAH standards, and experiences were also addressed during the training. Presentations were delivered to WOAH Focal Points regarding the UNEA Resolution and AU-IBAR's outreach initiatives, with an emphasis on the implementation of AWSA.

Dr Huyam Salih, Director of AU-IBAR, delivered the presentation on AU-IBAR's outreach through AWSA during the meeting, and underscored the critical significance of advocating for humane animal treatment. She emphasised that the AWSA, which was established in 2018 with the support of Chief Veterinary Officers, WOAH, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Animal Welfare Organisations, and other key stakeholders, offers a comprehensive framework for African Union Member States to develop and implement their own animal welfare strategies. Nevertheless, she recognised that AWSA is confronted with obstacles, including inadequate financial resources and technical capabilities, which have contributed to inadequate implementation.

"AU-IBAR acknowledges the necessity of enhancing the capacity of Country Animal Welfare Focal Points (CAWFs) to address technical gaps and improve performance within the current financial constraints. CAWFs are instrumental in the domestication and implementation of AWSA, as well as the monitoring of progress," Dr Salih stated.

The CAWFs are indispensable in guaranteeing that national strategies are consistent with AWSA and WOAH standards. Additionally, they offer technical assistance to stakeholders, monitor progress by



monitoring advancements and identifying obstacles in the implementation of animal welfare initiatives, and provide training.

"AU-IBAR is in the process of creating a comprehensive set of training resources for animal welfare in response to the necessity for robust training and capacity building." Dr Salih further stated that these resources will equip CAWFs and other stakeholders with the necessary tools and information to effectively fulfil their duties.

In order to fortify these critical focal points, AU-IBAR is dedicated to working in close partnership with WOAH to accomplish shared objectives. Dr Salih also emphasised that the African Union has taken a significant step by prohibiting the slaughter of donkeys in Africa for their hide, which underscores the organisation's dedication to the preservation of these animals. "AU-IBAR is overseeing the creation of a Pan-African Strategic Framework to protect the welfare of donkeys and provide assistance to the communities that depend on them." "This initiative is designed to mitigate the hazards associated with the donkey skin trade and guarantee the longevity of this indispensable resource," stated Dr Salih.

The meeting underscored the significance of CAWFs in the advancement of animal welfare throughout Africa by surmounting current obstacles through strategic frameworks, capacity development, and collaborative endeavours.

AU-IBAR is instrumental in the coordination, support, and guidance of the implementation of AWSA in its capacity as the secretariat of the African Platform for Animal Welfare. The Africa General Assembly for Animal Welfare (AGAAW) is a component of APAW that incorporates representatives from African Union Member States, Regional Economic Communities, and other animal welfare stakeholders throughout the continent. The Coordination Committee of Animal Welfare in Africa (CCAWA) supervises APAW, which is comprised of stakeholders from AGAAW.

**- Africa Union -InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), September 2024**

## African Parks Closes Deal to Manage Ethiopia's Gambella National Park



**Endangered Nile Lechwe in Gambella National Park. Image courtesy of African Parks.**

**S**outh Africa-based conservation NGO African Parks has signed a long-term deal with Ethiopian authorities to manage Gambella National Park. The park is Ethiopia's largest protected area, a 4,575-square-kilometer (1,766-square-mile) landscape on the border with South Sudan. Its savannas, floodplains, and woodlands host some of the highest concentrations of wildlife in Ethiopia, including threatened species such as its largest remaining population of savanna elephants (*Loxodonta africana*), as well as Nubian giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis*) and Nile lechwe (*Kobus megaceros*), a type of antelope.

Julian Bayliss, who worked with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) as a technical adviser told Mongabay that the Ethiopian government is likely hoping African Parks can help increase the number of visitors to Gambella. "Tourism to the parks in Ethiopia, except for the Simien mountains, is very, very low. There are not many coming, and there should be, because it's a very exciting landscape. It's full of interesting animals, it's got good numbers, it's got good diversity, it's got good species," he said. Gambella forms part of a wider landscape that encompasses two parks across the border in South Sudan: Boma National Park and Badingilo National Park, both of which are also managed by African Parks. Last year, the group announced findings of an aerial survey that showed an annual migration of 6 million antelopes between the three parks. "[That's] double the size of the Serengeti

wildebeest migration, which makes it the largest in Africa," Bayliss said.

Not far away in the region, African Parks also manages Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Chinko Nature Reserve in the Central African Republic. Adding Gambella to its portfolio brings the total protected area under the group's management to more than 200,000 km<sup>2</sup> (77,200 mi<sup>2</sup>) – larger than the country of Senegal – with 23 parks in 13 countries. The Gambella management deal follows a plan announced by CEO Peter Fearnhead in New York last September to increase that number to 30 by 2030. The group said there will be a year-long "transition phase" before it assumes control of Gambella, during which it plans to assess the sociopolitical dynamics around the park and build relationships with surrounding communities.

"Improving infrastructure and accessibility, as well as a tourism development plan, will be a focus as soon as the transition period is complete, and we are more established on the ground," Jean Labuschagne, director of conservation development at African Parks, told Mongabay in an email. During this period, African Parks plans to "gather the necessary understanding and knowledge to ensure that future plans and strategies are tailored to the local context, with the input of and collaboration of local communities living in and around the park," she wrote. The deal marks a return to Ethiopia for African Parks after an absence of nearly 20 years. Ethiopia was one of the first countries where

the group operated, but it withdrew from Nech Sar and Omo national parks in 2007 after only a few years. "Both parks face considerable challenges arising from the unsustainable use by one or more ethnic groups, often in competition and conflict with each other," the group wrote at the time.

Gambella is likely to present its own difficulties. The area around the park has been conflict-prone for decades, with violent clashes regularly occurring between Nuer and Anuak communities, including in recent years. Historically, these disputes arose over access to land, as Anuak farmers accused migrant Nuer pastoralists from South Sudan of encroaching on their territory. Violence worsened during years of conflict in Sudan, when the Gambella region was used as a staging ground for cross-border attacks by rebels with ties to Sudanese Nuer communities and the Ethiopian government. The park has also faced encroachment by agricultural investors, leading to a 500-km<sup>2</sup> (193-mi<sup>2</sup>) reduction in its total area. These projects caused the forced displacement of Anuak communities from areas near the park, exacerbated by a "villagization" policy implemented by the Ethiopian government in the early 2010s. Poaching of Gambella's wildlife continues to be a problem, carried out by both Sudanese refugees and locals, some of whom live in towns in and around the park that were established by the Ethiopian government in the 1980s. In 2015, a team of wildlife surveyors reported seeing "multiple killings" of wildlife by soldiers.

In a statement published alongside the deal's announcement, the president of the Gambella regional government said the agreement marks a new chapter for the park. "By working together with African Parks and EWCA, we'll not only conserve our wilderness but also create economic opportunities for local communities. This is a significant step towards a more prosperous and sustainable future for our region," Alemitu Umod said.

**- Mongabay, Ashoka Mukpo,  
January 2025**

## Catastrophic 76% decline in the average size of African wildlife populations in just 50 years, reveals WWF's Living Planet Report 2024

*Report reveals a 'system in peril' as Africa faces dangerous, irreversible tipping points driven by nature loss and climate change*

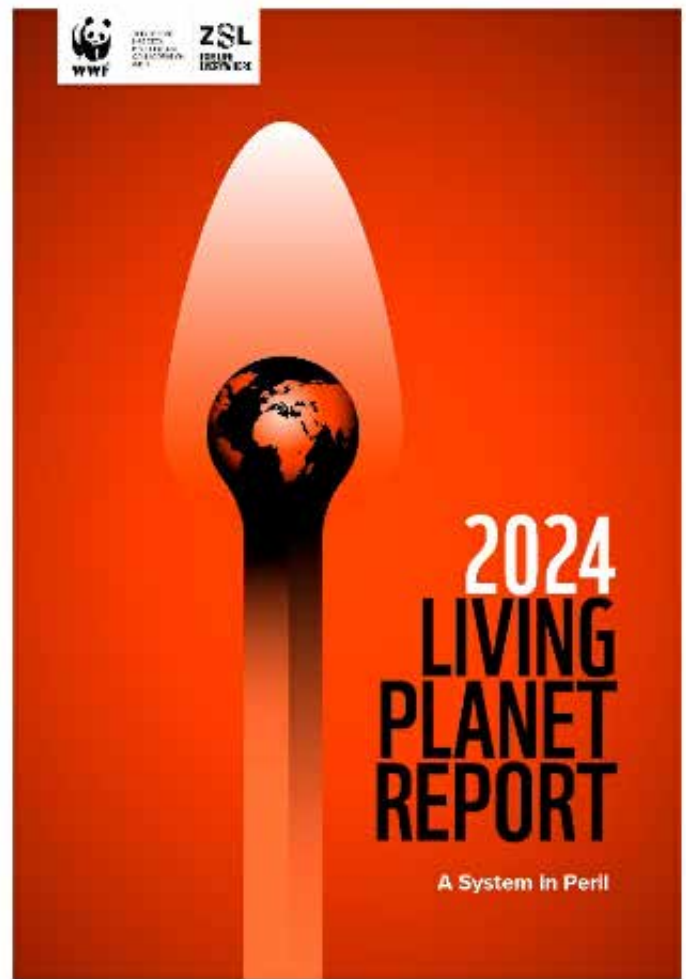
**W**orld's biodiversity is under threat as WWF's Living Planet Report 2024 reveals significant declines in the average size of populations of wildlife across the globe and Africa. According to the report, the world has experienced a decline of 73% with Africa's at 76% in the size of monitored vertebrate wildlife populations between 1970 and 2020, driven primarily by habitat loss, overexploitation, pollution, and the impacts of climate change. This alarming trend highlights the urgent need for transformative action to safeguard Africa's natural ecosystems and the livelihoods that depend on them.

Despite the alarming overall decline in species population shown in the Living Planet Index, the population of priority species in Kenya such as the African lion, the African elephant, and the black rhino have stabilized or increased as a result of effective conservation efforts. The rebounding of the black rhino in Kenya, from the 400s individuals recorded in the 1980s to the current 1,004 in 2023 is a huge milestone for this critically endangered species.

However, the report warns that the continued degradation of ecosystems could push the continent past critical tipping points without immediate interventions. As ecosystems cross these thresholds, their ability to support both wildlife and sustainable development becomes compromised, with severe consequences for food security, water availability, and climate resilience.

Based on an examination of the science, the report underlines the urgency of the world in meeting global goals on nature, climate and sustainable development by 2030. To achieve this, it presents proven solutions to transform conservation and the energy, food and financial systems in a fair and inclusive way.

Mohamed Awer, Chief Executive Officer, WWF-Kenya, said: "Kenya is at the forefront of making significant contributions to fight climate change and restore nature, having committed to the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement among other global and national commitments. The country's National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPS) make ambitious targets present a unique opportunity to mobilize capacity and financial resources in a coordinated manner to help restore ecosystems, enhance sustainable use of biological diversity and champion fair and equitable benefits sharing. The redoubling of the nation's ambition to the Bonn Challenge through the 15 billion-commitment to restore 10.6 million hectares of degraded landscapes, is a step in the right direction.



The stabilizing populations of priority species offer a shimmer of hope that consistency in a truly whole-of-society approach and collaborative interventions will not only help save species from extinction but also ensure they thrive. However, if we are to stop nature loss at the scale needed to avoid global and devastating tipping points, climate finance must flow from the global level to nations most affected for their effective implementation of national commitments and action plans, and to the grassroots to build the resilience of indigenous and local communities bearing the biggest brunt of nature loss and climate change."

Jackson Kiplagat, Head of Conservation Programmes at WWF-Kenya, stated: "Flagship species such as the African lion, the African elephant, and the black rhino remain endangered but there is hope that the continued interventions by stakeholders will stop the decline and stabilize their populations. The rebounding of the black rhino in Kenya, from the 400s individuals recorded in the 1980s to the current 1,004 in 2023 is a huge milestone for this critically endangered species. This is a clear testament of the power of concerted and consistent efforts by all stakeholders, from the global to the local level. The implementation of targeted recovery and action plans will ensure that these species do not become extinct but rather thrive."

**- World Wildlife Fund, October 2024**

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Northern Ireland will start training veterinary nurses to degree level in 2025 with two new undergraduate degrees

**T**eddy the cocker spaniel (left) and Scott the springer spaniel visit Ulster University in Coleraine ahead of the new Veterinary Nursing degree getting underway in September 2025.

Northern Ireland will begin training veterinary nurses to degree level in 2025 with the establishment of two new undergraduate degrees at Ulster University in Coleraine.

The first of their kind in Northern Ireland, teaching on the Veterinary Nursing and Advancing Animal Healthcare and Practice degrees, which are designed to address the growing demand for skilled veterinary professionals across Northern Ireland, will begin in September at Ulster University.

With an embedded placement year in veterinary practice, the BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing degree will enable students to gain

hands-on experience in veterinary practices, fostering real-world skills and professional readiness and producing competent and compassionate veterinary nurses who are well-equipped to make meaningful contributions to animal health and welfare.

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and producing competent and compassionate veterinary nurses who are well-equipped to make meaningful contributions to animal health and welfare.

From 2029, it is expected that 30 veterinary nurses will graduate from the course each year.

**- News Letter, Gemma Murray, January 2025**

### Türkiye's Antalya Wildlife Park treats over 1,000 animals in 2024

*Wild Animals like Lemurs and other species live at Antalya Wildlife Park, Dec 31, 2024 (AA Photo)*

**A**ntalya Wildlife Park in southern Türkiye has treated a total of 1,171 animals under its clinical services throughout 2024, with 802 successfully returned to their natural habitats. The park's director, Aygül Arsun, shared insights into the ongoing efforts to treat injured wildlife and emphasized the importance of the facility in supporting endangered species. The treatment process at the park is not limited to animals housed within the facility. Wild animals brought in by individuals or authorized institutions also receive care at the park's clinic. Arsun explained that the primary reasons for treatment include poisoning, electrocution from electric wires or injuries caused by other environmental hazards. As Antalya lies along a crucial migration route, a variety of migratory bird species, including eagles, hawks, falcons, kestrels and herons, are among those treated. Under a protocol signed with the Antalya Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, injured wild animals are brought to the park for rehabilitation.



One of the most notable ongoing treatments is for an endangered snake eagle. On Jan. 5, a snake eagle was found in a mountainous area in Burdur, severely injured with a broken leg and weakened condition. Arsun reported that the bird's rehabilitation is challenging, as it suffers from a serious leg fracture and complete loss of sensation in its other limb. "We will try to treat it, but it might need amputation. It might not be able to return to the wild," she stated. In addition to treating injured wildlife, the park also works to combat the illegal wildlife trade. Animals seized as part of these efforts are brought to the park for rehabilitation. Commonly seized species include primates such as green monkeys, ornamental monkeys and baboons, often captured as infants or adults. Arsun revealed that two monkeys were recently seized, one from a home and the other from a bus station. The park also receives reptiles, such as snakes, which are taken from illegal trade networks.

**- Daily Sabah, January 2025**

## Notre-Dame: A Monument of Biodiversity

**T**hanks to the efforts of BirdLife's International's Partner, La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO), the official reopening of Notre-Dame Cathedral last December brings hope for the return of several protected species, such as the Common Kestrel, that have called the site home for centuries. More than just a cathedral, Notre-Dame de Paris is an urban ecosystem. Its towering structure and countless hidden crevices offer a sanctuary to species that have adapted to the challenges of city life. The façade's original openings, designed in the Middle Ages to accommodate construction beams, have become essential nesting sites for birds.

As Paris modernised, the cathedral became an important refuge, as other nesting and wildlife sites in the city diminished. The most common residents of the area include the Common Kestrel (*Falco Tinnunculus*) whose population across Paris has dwindled to fewer than 30 pairs and the House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), whose numbers plummeted by 75% in just two decades. But you can also find pipistrelle bats, a species of tiny, insectivorous bats.

The devastating fire on April 15, 2019, which destroyed a significant part of the cathedral, drove away much of the wildlife that had long inhabited its surroundings.

Fortunately, LPO was committed to ensuring Notre-Dame once again became a sanctuary for city wildlife. Since 2022, the organization has been working closely with the teams responsible for rebuilding Notre-Dame, integrating ecological considerations into the restoration efforts.

This collaboration included technical assessments to identify and evaluate potential nesting sites, along with proposals for habitat enhancements. Construction teams and artisans received training to recognise and protect wildlife during their work, while LPO naturalists conduct regular inventories of



the species present on the site. Additionally, the Paris municipal government expressed its intention to designate the squares surrounding the cathedral as LPO Refuges, which is the largest network of in France. Thanks to six years of hard work with the LPO, the restoration has been carried out in a way that preserves access for birds and bats. Victor Hugo's cathedral birds can now finally return home.

"The LPO is very proud to contribute to integrating ecological aspects into the renovation of Notre-Dame. Culture and nature are two invaluable and fragile elements of our shared heritage, which we must work together to protect and pass on to future generations," says Allain Bougrain Dubourg, President of the LPO.

Notre-Dame's restoration is part of a larger movement by the LPO to protect biodiversity in historic and cultural sites. In 2022, for instance, LPO PACA installed nesting boxes for swifts and swallows on the Notre-Dame-et-Saint-Arnoux Cathedral in Gap. The organisation also





conducted ecological assessments for seven cathedrals in the region under the direction of the Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs. Meanwhile, LPO Occitanie has monitored a pair of peregrine falcons nesting on Albi Cathedral since 2001.

For over a decade, the LPO has also partnered with the Centre des Monuments Nationaux to enhance biodiversity in parks and gardens across France. Currently, nine sites, including the Château d'Angers and the Saint-Cloud National Estate, are part of the LPO Refuges network.

The efforts to restore Notre-Dame as both a cultural and ecological treasure highlight the potential for harmony between heritage preservation and biodiversity conservation. The restored cathedral not only stands as a testament to architectural resilience but also as a beacon of hope for urban wildlife, proving that even in the heart of a bustling city, nature can find a home.

*- BirdLife International, January 2025*



## Scientists Closer to Bringing Woolly Mammoth Back from Extinction with Scientific Breakthrough

**W**oolly mammoths went extinct around 4,000 years ago, but scientists claim America will soon see the prehistoric animal in 2028. Colossal Biosciences, a Texas-based biotechnology and genetic engineering company, is on a mission to 'de-extinct' the creature and other long-lost species. The company announced it has raised \$200 million in a new round of funding to make it happen in the next three years. It has raised \$435 million since launching in 2021.

Scientists aren't exactly sure why they disappeared from the planet, but theories include a shifting climate, overhunting or a combination of both. But Ben Lamm, CEO and founder of Colossal Biosciences, has said he's 'positive' the first woolly mammoth calves will be born in the next few years. 'Our recent successes in creating the technologies necessary for our end-to-end de-extinction toolkit have been met with enthusiasm by the investor community,' Lamm said in a statement. 'This funding will grow our team, support new technology development, expand our de-extinction species list while continuing to allow us to carry forth our mission to make extinction a thing of the past.'

Colossal, now valued at \$10.2 billion, has already sequenced a mammoth genome and found a way to produce elephant stem cells capable of giving rise to several different cell types — two important steps toward resurrecting the mammoth.

*- Daily Mail, Ellyn Lapointe, January 2025*



*Ben Lamm, CEO and founder of Colossal Biosciences, says he is 'positive' that the first woolly mammoth calves will be born in late 2028*

## WWF-Led Research Highlights 'Invisible' Wildlife Benefits People Receive But Could Lose If Biodiversity Crisis Ignored

*New WWF-led research reveals that the vital benefits wildlife provides to people's everyday lives are vastly underrepresented across science and policy discussions. This oversight could have detrimental consequences for achieving global conservation targets, explain the researchers.*

**T**he study, published today in the first ever issue of Nature Reviews Biodiversity, shows that while the concept of Nature's Contributions to People (NCP) is well-established in science, business, and policy, it often assumes that protecting a habitat or ecosystem will automatically preserve the benefits people rely on. This assumption overlooks the importance of wildlife species and the myriad roles they play.

Out of the 18 NCP categories defined by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the research found that at least 12 are directly supported by wildlife. These range from material benefits, like food and livelihoods from fish or game species, to non-material values such as ecotourism, medicinal uses, and a sense of identity or well-being. Wildlife also plays critical roles in regulating ecosystems, such as controlling prey populations, pollinating plants, dispersing seeds, and reducing disease risk, as seen with sharks, bats, monkeys and vultures, and illustrated in a report accompanying the paper, titled Nature's Technicians.

"WWF's latest Living Planet Report shows that monitored vertebrate populations have shrunk by an average of 73% since 1970," says Becky Chaplin-Kramer, WWF Global Biodiversity Lead Scientist and lead author of the paper. "These figures demonstrate a loss of genetic diversity that weakens wildlife resilience against climate change, disease, and habitat loss. Declines in the number of individual animals or plants can upset entire ecosystems, with far-reaching consequences for people and economies."

"If people don't recognize the full spectrum of values wildlife offers our society, including the sometimes 'invisible' benefits – they might miss the actions needed to protect it. We have to account for the roles wildlife play across ecosystems, and the impact of their decline on human well-being in conservation policy and management," adds Chaplin-Kramer. One well-known example of the impact of species loss is the case of North American sea otters. The 19th-century fur trade decimated their populations, causing an explosion in sea urchins, which destroyed kelp forests. This had dire consequences for fish populations, local fishing communities, and coastal ecosystems, making the area more vulnerable to storms and erosion and reducing the resources available to Indigenous communities that relied on kelp.



"The long-term loss of wildlife will lead to declines in its contributions to people and ultimately harm their wellbeing," says Nathan Bennett, WWF's Global Oceans Lead Scientist and co-author of the paper. "This is especially true for Indigenous Peoples and resource-dependent communities that depend heavily on wildlife for subsistence harvesting. Wildlife can also support local ecotourism businesses and jobs."

Robin Naidoo, WWF's Lead Wildlife Scientist, and co-author of the paper explains: "Wildlife has been the protagonist of artwork and music for millennia, and hundreds of products and services have been inspired by nature's efficient systems evolved over billions of years. Many Indigenous communities also view animals as important teachers or as kin. The value of wildlife goes beyond physical metrics like a kilogram of meat or a tonne of carbon stored. It's spiritual, and experiences with wildlife can bring much enjoyment and connection with nature to people." The research calls for greater recognition of wildlife's contributions in global biodiversity policies, such as the Global Biodiversity Framework. By connecting wildlife to the benefits they provide, policymakers and wildlife managers can generate broader support for conservation efforts, ensuring these benefits continue.

The study also highlights gaps in large-scale monitoring and modelling, emphasizing that advancements in satellite technology, AI, environmental DNA, acoustic sensing, and citizen science could improve knowledge and data, ensuring conservation resources are deployed efficiently. Such advancements however require a greater injection of funding.

"It's been two years since the adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework, and we're still lacking a clear path to mobilizing the resources needed for its implementation," adds Wendy Elliott, Interim Practice Leader for Biodiversity at WWF. "At the resumed session for COP16 in Rome next month, Parties must remember the vast 'invisible' benefits of wildlife that support our societies, and the risks we face if the biodiversity crisis is not addressed. Equally urgent is agreement on a financial package that meets the immediate needs of countries to safeguard these benefits for current and future generations."

- World Wildlife Fund, January 2025





Welcome, young animal enthusiasts, to the wild and wacky wetlands of Africa!

This exhilarating section is a pass to fun in the swampy, splashy, and sensational world of wetlands. Get ready to wade through marshes, paddle down rivers, and hop like frogs as we embark on hilarious and thrilling escapades.

You will uncover the craziest animal secrets, learn how to be the best wetland protector, and maybe even discover your own superpowers! From the majestic hippos lumbering through the water to the cheeky birds fishing along the shores, the pages are bursting with fun facts, exciting tales, and amazing activities that will turn you into a wetland superhero.

So, don your explorer gear, and let's leap into the zany wonders of Africa's wetlands together!



# WETLAND

Y U Q B W Y D R O T A G I L L A X  
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WATERBUG BEATLE

ALLIGATOR

CRAYFISH

TURTLES

CATTAIL

SNAKE

SWAMP

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FROG

HAWK

DUCK

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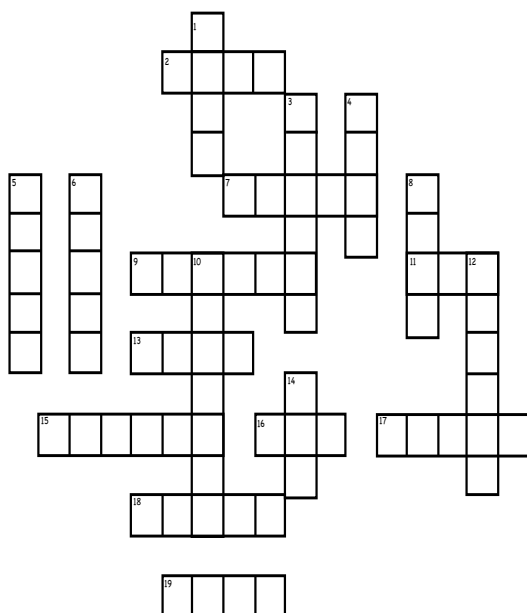
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## FUN FACTS

**Wetlands Act as Nature's Filtration System:** In an average wetland, a combination of soil and plants help filter the water. Because of this, we have access to clean water in our lakes and rivers.

**Wetlands are the Most Biologically Diverse Ecosystems on the Planet:** they support an astonishing range of plant and animal species — including many endangered species.

**There Are 5 Different Types of Wetlands.** The 5 types of wetlands are known as marine wetlands, estuarine wetlands, riverine wetlands, lacustrine wetlands, and palustrine wetlands.

**Wetlands Can Store Floodwater.** An acre of wetlands can store anywhere from 1-1.5 million gallons of floodwater, becoming a natural buffer during storm surges and reducing the powerful effects of the storm.

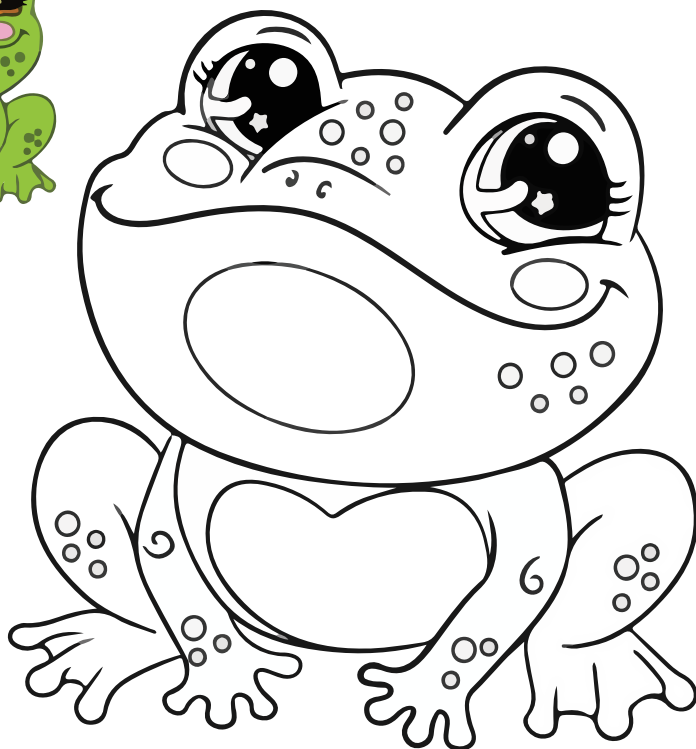
**Wetlands Have Different Names.** People may know them by an entirely different name. Some of these names include mangrove, estuaries, marshes, deltas, and bogs.

**Wetlands Control Erosion.** Wetlands are not only an important barrier during storms, acting as nature's first defense against flooding and storm surges, they also help control erosion.

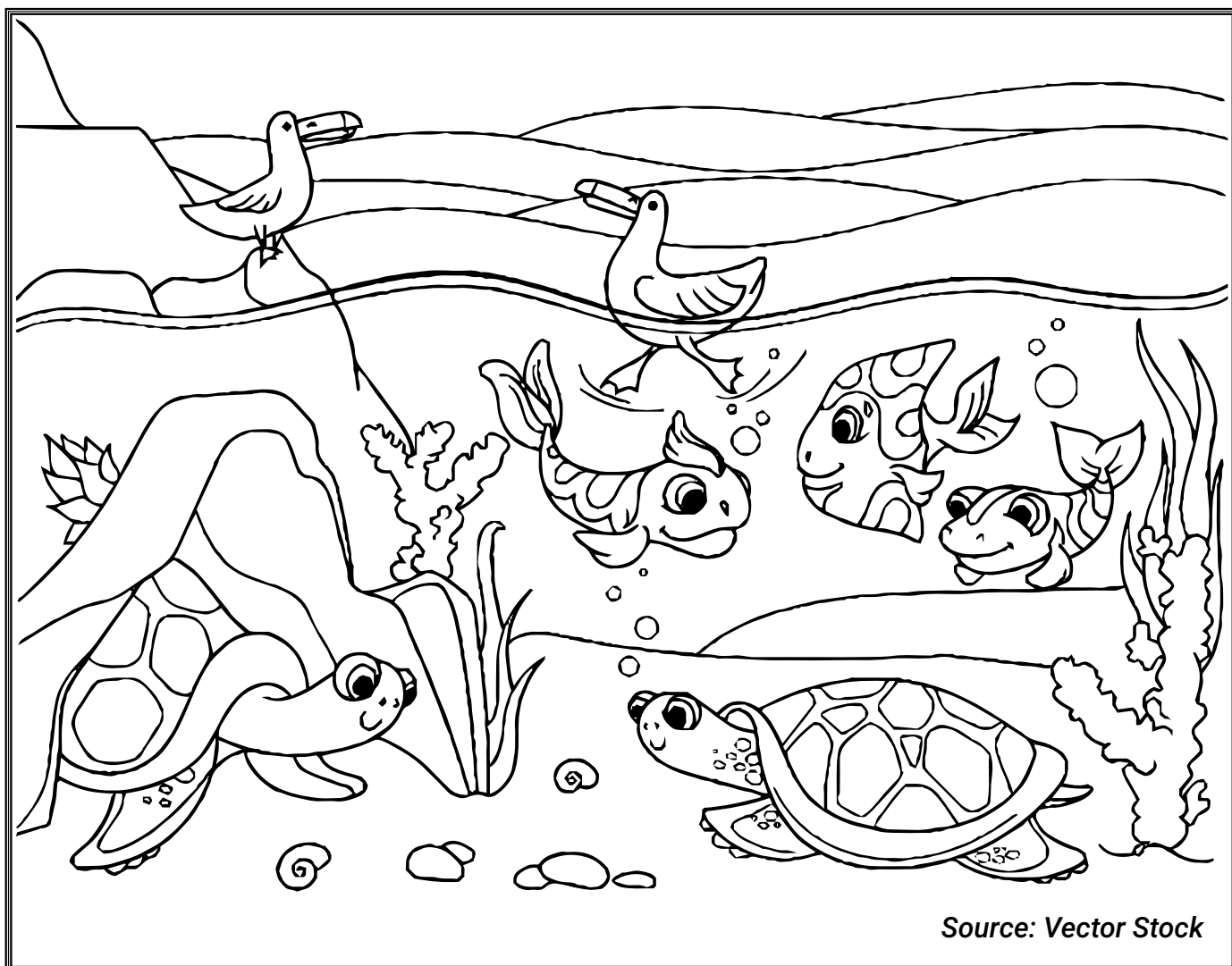
**Coastal Wetlands Help Us Combat Climate Change.** Older freshwater wetlands help remove more carbon than they emit, effectively helping us combat climate change and reduce climate change impacts over time.

**The Pantanal is the Largest Tropical Wetland in the World.** Spanning more than 42 million acres, the Pantanal is the largest tropical wetland in the world — and it's one of the most pristine, too. It sprawls across Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay, and supports millions of people there, as well as communities downstream.

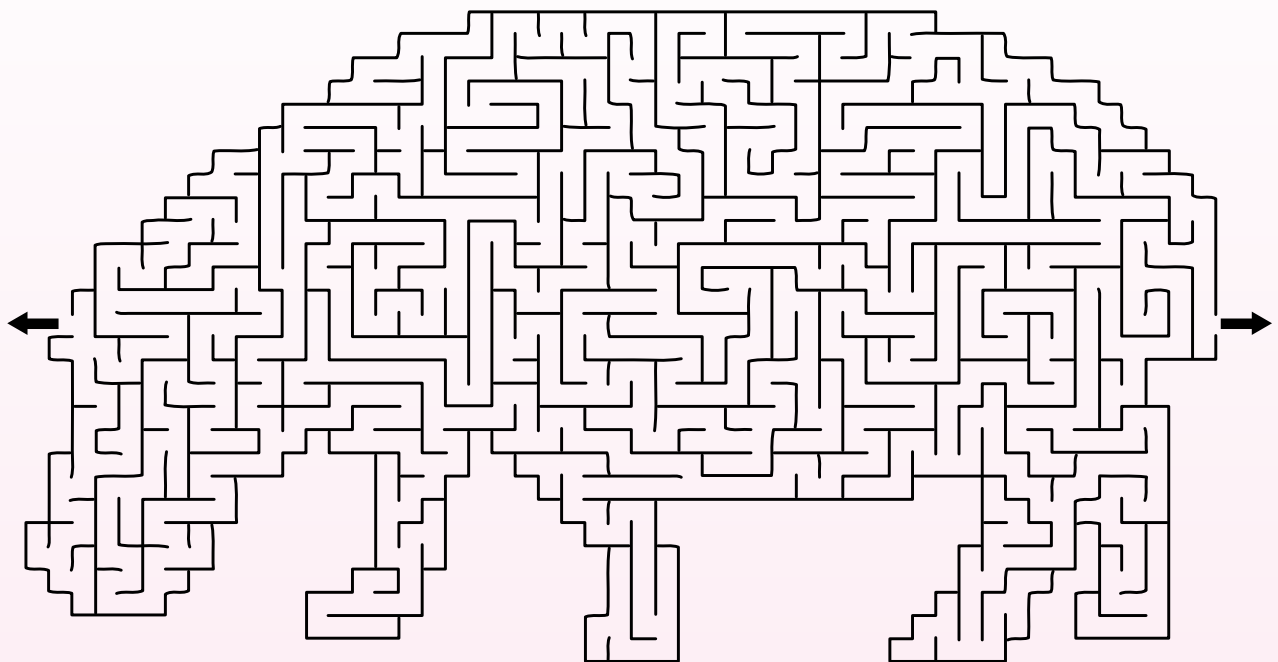
Source: [www.onetreeplanted.org](http://www.onetreeplanted.org)



Source: Freepik



Source: Vector Stock





## Animal Superpowers!

### Adapted to the Magical Wetlands

*How animals survive in wetland ecosystems*

**Wetland animals have amazing superpowers and have various adaptations to thrive in these dynamic environments:**

**Aquatic Adaptations:** Many wetland animals have adaptations for life in water, such as webbed feet, streamlined bodies, and specialized respiratory systems to extract oxygen from water.

**Ability to Tolerate Waterlogged Conditions:** Wetland animals have adaptations to cope with waterlogged or anaerobic soils. They may have modified respiratory systems, such as lung-like structures or gills that allow them to extract oxygen from low-oxygen environments.

**Camouflage and Defense Mechanisms:** Wetland animals have evolved various camouflage strategies and defense mechanisms to blend in with their surroundings or deter predators. Their coloration, patterns, or behaviors help them avoid detection or protect themselves.

**Feeding Adaptations:** Wetland animals have specialized feeding adaptations to extract the available food resources. For example, birds may have long bills for probing into the mud to catch invertebrates.

**Migration and Life Cycle Strategies:** Many wetland animals undertake seasonal migrations between wetland habitats and other ecosystems to find suitable breeding grounds, food sources, or overwintering sites. They rely on the interconnectedness of wetlands and other habitats to complete their life cycles.

**It's why we often say local action has global impacts. A bird migrating along the Pacific Flyway from Alaska to South America needs places to rest and eat.**

[www.wetlandsconservancy.org](http://www.wetlandsconservancy.org)

# Be A Wetland Protector as an Animal Welfare Champion

Imagine wetlands as nature's enchanted realms, where lush greenery breathes life into magical ecosystems. Upland vegetation stands tall like guardians, fringing vegetation forms a protective embrace, and aquatic plants dance in the water. These plants are masterful shape-shifters, having adapted to thrive in the whimsical conditions of dampness and salinity. In these mystical wetlands, ecosystems thrive through a fascinating energy exchange between the living and non-living worlds. Picture leaves and branches falling like confetti from overhanging trees and shrubs, transforming into a delightful feast for microbes, bacteria, and fungi. This enchanted banquet then becomes a gourmet meal for larger creatures within the food web.

1. Care in the gardens which can help the wetlands immensely. Limit your use of chemicals in fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides or fungicides, and use organic remedies.
2. Be careful while discarding plants or seeds. Our non-native household plants can be invasive and dominate over native flora.
3. It is best to keep pets indoors or under supervision. Cuddly pet animals can be quite destructive. Cats are known to prey upon native species – turtles, frogs and even lizards. Rabbits can wreak havoc on plants by binging on them, any fresh regrowth and seedlings.
4. Reduce the use of plastic, whether it is plastic water bottles or disposable plastic containers, straws and cutlery. Reuse and recycle to the maximum possible extent. Waste materials are harmful to animals.
5. Reducing pollution can begin at home with some relatively small but consistent steps. Be conscious of your choices. Buy organic, eco-friendly and sustainable products.
6. Be energy-conscious and use energy wise appliances. Avoid throwing away stuff carelessly. If you find litter in public parks or wetlands, be considerate, pick it and throw it in the bin. Every step counts.
7. Lifegiving water is central to wetland health. Observe the wetland vegetation. Their leaves, limbs, roots and other remarkable features help them conserve water. Even wetland wildlife is adept at using water, a vital resource.
8. Turn off the tap when not in use and use only as much as you need. Check your pipes and fittings regularly for any leakages. Harvest rainwater. During the warm months, water your plants early in the mornings.
9. Help in the conservation and rehabilitation efforts – by planting native flora, creating habitats for wildlife and participating in citizen science projects and initiatives.
10. Advocate for wildlife protection in wetlands. There are many ways in which we can help these animals.
  - Much like the wetland vegetation, wetland wildlife too is exposed, fragile and susceptible. Turtles that live in the swampy wetlands are known to venture out, cross busy roads or polluted areas in search of suitable nesting sites.
  - Snakes and bobtails too are known to sneak-out to bask in the sun during winter months. Accidents are common and animals get run over. It is also common for animals to get entangled and hurt in the plastic debris. Animals sometimes venture into homes and gardens, looking for nesting sites or grounds to lay eggs.
  - We must look out for them, helping them get to their destination and protecting their eggs or hatchlings.
11. Apart from the permanent wetland residents, some migratory birds use the wetlands for resources. The dwindling bush and fringing vegetation and the changing environmental conditions are posing a serious threat to all their lives.
12. It can be useful to locate and carry information on local bodies responsible for wildlife rescue, wetland rehabilitation and conservation work, and research organizations. This can be especially significant if you reside in an area close to wetlands.
13. Wetlands are fascinating worlds that open doorways to some interesting natural activity. Take the initiative to deep dive and learn about the wetlands – their mysteries and intricacies.
14. While there are several avenues for learning, there are also avenues for teaching, educating and spreading awareness.



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Warm Regards,  
Animal Welfare Magazine Team.





# THE 9<sup>TH</sup> AFRICA ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE ACTION 2025

**THEME:** *Strengthening Actions for Animal Welfare and Environment  
for a Sustainable Future and Resilient Planet.*

**DATE:** 28 - 30 July, 2025  
**VENUE:** Yaoundé Cameroon

For more information:  
**Call:** +254 727 234 447  
**Visit:** <http://www.aawconference.org>

