



NRT NEWSLETTER

JULY 2023





NRT Newsletter

July 2023 Issue

Dear NRT Partners,

The open sea is a fisher's office. For fishers in Kiunga Community Conservancy, a successful day at the office is when they cast out their net and catch the biggest fish for sale.

Recently, however, there had been growing concern in Kiunga's industrious fisher community over the sizes of fish caught, as they had begun to dwindle, drastically affecting the income generated from fishing.

Why were the fish caught getting smaller? How could this be stopped?

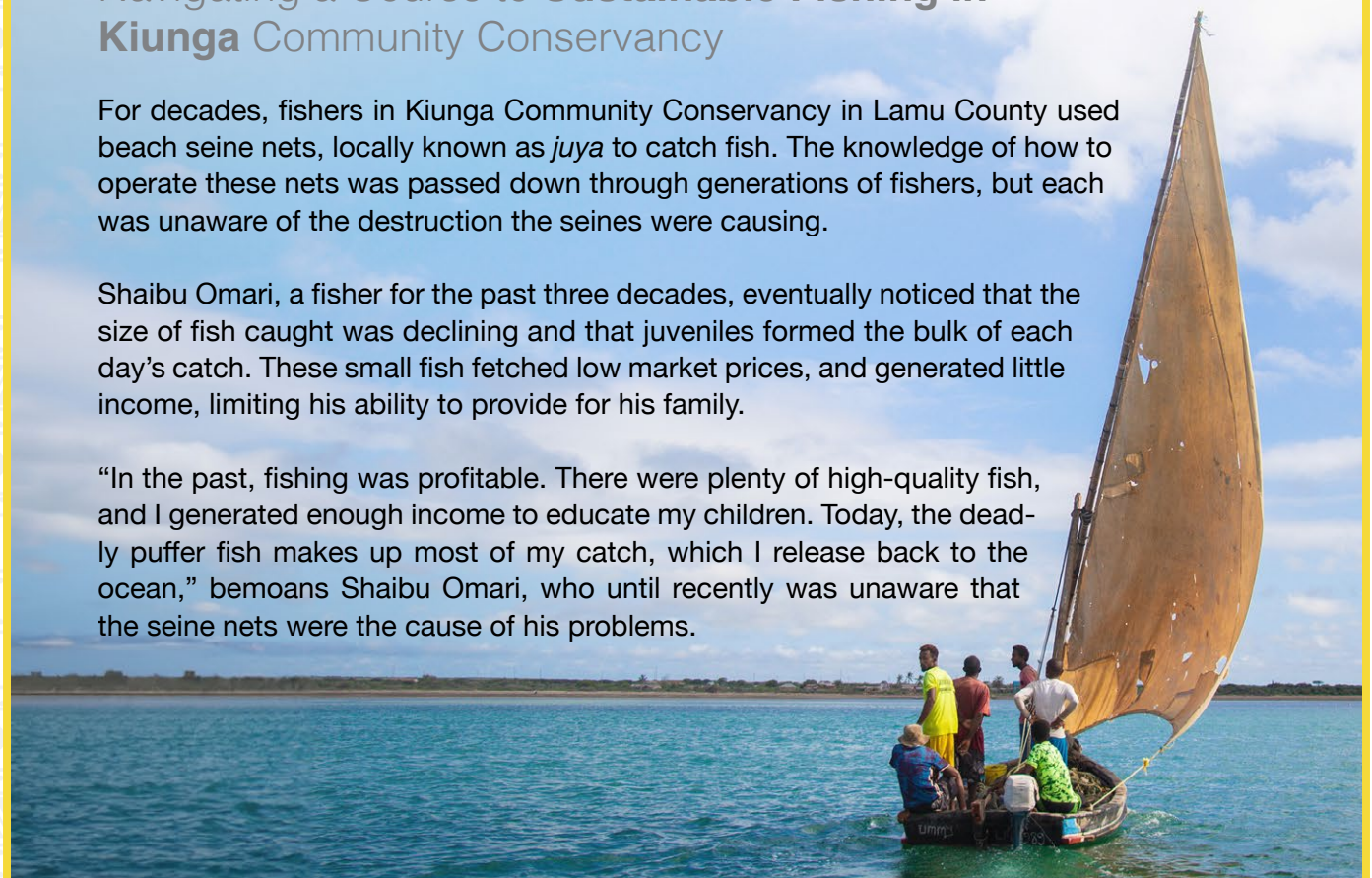
This issue of our monthly newsletter reveals the innovative approach we used to protect and grow fishers' livelihoods in coastal Kenya, working in collaboration with the Kiunga community and our partners, and provides you with fresh updates from across the NRT landscape.

Navigating a Course to **Sustainable Fishing** in **Kiunga** Community Conservancy

For decades, fishers in Kiunga Community Conservancy in Lamu County used beach seine nets, locally known as *juya* to catch fish. The knowledge of how to operate these nets was passed down through generations of fishers, but each was unaware of the destruction the seines were causing.

Shaibu Omari, a fisher for the past three decades, eventually noticed that the size of fish caught was declining and that juveniles formed the bulk of each day's catch. These small fish fetched low market prices, and generated little income, limiting his ability to provide for his family.

"In the past, fishing was profitable. There were plenty of high-quality fish, and I generated enough income to educate my children. Today, the dead-ly puffer fish makes up most of my catch, which I release back to the ocean," bemoans Shaibu Omari, who until recently was unaware that the seine nets were the cause of his problems.





The Gear Exchange Program is a step towards modernizing Lamu's cottage fishing sector as it faces the realities of overfishing and the effects of climate change. The Lamu County Government has set aside Ksh 40 million to go towards fisheries and the blue economy development budget, as part of our commitment to improve the blue economy sector.



Hon. Issa Timamy,
Governor of Lamu County

Every day, Omari and his fellow fishers would lower their seine nets into the sea and drag them through the waters in the hope of catching large fish for sale. This would destroy sea grasses and coral reefs, which provide food, shelter, and a safe space to reproduce or raise baby fish to nearly 25% of the ocean's fish and other organisms.

Additionally, up to 75% of young fish and other non-targeted marine organisms would be caught when the fishers used seines, upsetting the marine ecosystem's natural equilibrium.

To prevent this, in June 2023, NRT, in collaboration with partners including The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Lamu County Government, Base Camp Foundation, and the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), launched the Gear Exchange Program, in which fishers voluntarily exchange their seine nets for sustainable fishing gear.

During the Program's launch, 176 beach seine fishers (11 owners and 165 crew) voluntarily exchanged their beach seine nets (representing 85% of the seines in Kiunga Community Conserv-



176

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ancy) for new sustainable fishing gear issued by the Conservancy. The seines, which are currently in the custody of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), will be recycled.

Speaking during the event, The Nature Conservancy Africa's Fisheries Strategy Manager, George Maina, said, "With Kenya focused on the blue economy, we must play our role in protecting the oceans. The Gear Exchange Program is a key component of our broader efforts to achieve our goal of protecting at least 30% of land, fresh water, and ocean by 2030."

The exchange was preceded by a training of the fishers on how to use the new gear and

marked a significant milestone achieved in the protection of marine life in Kiunga Marine National Reserve.

In addition to the new fishing equipment, the fishers will also benefit from NRT Coast's Fish-to-Market Program, which links them with a buyer, Kumbatia Seafoods. This prevents exploitation by middlemen, increasing the fishers' income.

NRT's Marine Program seeks to protect marine habitats, reduce fishing pressure in nearshore areas, provide a community-driven approach to reef and mangrove restoration, and promote livelihood diversification in NRT Coast.



[Watch how the fishers in Kiunga Community Conservancy have embraced sustainable fishing](#)

Sera Makes History as First Community Conservancy to Perform Black Rhino Ear Notching in Kenya

On the 13th and 14th of July, Sera Rhino Sanctuary in Sera Community Conservancy in Samburu County made history by conducting Kenya's first black rhino ear notching and transmitter fitting exercise.

Six endangered black rhinos had their ears notched and transmitters implanted in them during the procedure, enhancing their protection and conservation and enabling researchers and conservancy scouts to easily identify and track them during daily patrols.

The exercise was conducted by the Kenya Wildlife Service, led by the Senior Assistant Director and Head of Capture and Veterinary Services, Dr. Isaac Lekool, and in partnership with Sera Community Conservancy, NRT, and the Samburu County Government.

Ear notching is normally performed on rhinos aged two and a half years or calves that have been separated from their mothers. However, during this exercise, rhinos aged between

three and six and a half years that had lived in Sera Rhino Sanctuary for the last eight years were selected for the procedure. A V-shape mark was placed on them to facilitate their identification throughout their lifetime.

“Through the concerted efforts of the government and dedicated stakeholders, we have successfully reversed the decline in rhino numbers in Kenya over the past three decades. This accomplishment is a testament to our unwavering commitment to safeguarding and conserving these magnificent creatures for upcoming generations,” said Dr. Lekoolool.

Sera Rhino Sanctuary is East Africa’s first and only community-run black rhino sanctuary. Established in 2015 with a founder population of 10 black rhinos, it is now home to 21 black rhinos.

“The Conservancy’s primary focus is growing the population of these endangered rhinos and safeguarding their habitat,” explains Sera’s Conservancy Manager, Reuben Lendir.

The Sanctuary’s rhino protection initiatives have not only facilitated low-impact tourism activities, creating employment opportunities for local community members, but also generated revenue for community development priorities, including the provision of education bursaries and access to clean water.

Thanks to a dedicated team of conservancy scouts and strong community and partner support, no poaching incidents have been recorded in Sera Rhino Sanctuary since its establishment.



Ufugaji Bora Mashinani Program: Building Herders' Resilience Against Climate Change

For a herder in northern Kenya's arid landscape, losing livestock to a raid or drought is their worst nightmare come to life, as livestock are a pastoralist's primary source of livelihood.

When Isaac Lekoloi, a 26-year-old herder from Kalama Community Conservancy in Samburu County lost hundreds of his family's livestock to raiders, his family's dreams of educating his siblings were shattered.

Having no alternative source of livelihood and in need of a means to help his family recover from their devastating losses, in 2022, Lekoloi joined a herders' training session organized by NRT Trading's Ufugaji Bora Mashinani Program.

Supported by USAID's Local Works Program, Ufugaji Bora Mashinani strives to increase herders' production capacity through improved livestock husbandry. The Program trains select pastoralist groups in 10 NRT member community conservancies in Laikipia, Isiolo, Samburu, and Marsabit Counties, using the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach.

Through Ufugaji Bora Mashinani, Lekoloi discovered the importance of quality animal feeds, livestock disease identification, management, and control, improving breeding management, and increasing access to quality pasture, fodder, and milk, among other livestock products. "This new-found knowledge made me realize who I wanted to become—a supplier of supplementary feeds," says Lekoloi.

He established a livestock input shop in Lerata Centre, ensuring a consistent supply of various livestock feeds and mineral salts, and providing a glimmer of hope as the community endured a prolonged drought.

Lekoloi's small business has become a lifesaver for desperate herders in Kalama and its surrounding areas, supplying them with certified livestock feeds for their precious herds and enabling him to preserve the livelihoods of the herders in his community.



155 Morans Take Part in **Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution** Forum



The historic drought that dominated 2022 damaged northern Kenya's natural resources.

To prevent the loss of their livestock, many herders migrated to other areas in search of pasture and water, often encroaching on restricted land, including national reserves. This triggered conflict and insecurity, characterized by stock theft and ethnic tensions which persist to this day despite the 2023 rain season bringing some relief.

To address the evolving crisis, NRT's peace team convened a two-day multi-ethnic peacebuilding meeting in Nasuulu Community Conservancy, attended by 155 morans, peace ambassadors and elders from Sera, Nakuprat-Gotu, Kalepo, Kalama, Westgate, Meibae, Cherab, Biliqo-Bulesa, Il Ngwesi, Leparua, Nannapisho, and Melako Community Conservancies.

"Everyone, including the youth, is critical in the peacebuilding process," denotes Josephine Ekiru, NRT's Peacebuilding Coordinator. She adds, "The involvement of morans was crucial as they usually participate in frontline conflicts but rarely in conservancy matters."

These peacebuilding efforts culminated in a peace and security forum presided over by the Secretary of the Peacebuilding and Conflict Management Directorate of the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, Jacob Narengo.

He underscored the importance of developing alternative livelihoods for youth to curb organized crime in the region, and pledged governmental support for local peacebuilding efforts, stating, "My Directorate will hold similar engagements with more morans. And we will be interested in learning what they plan to do after reforming."

National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs) from Isiolo, Meru, Laikipia, Samburu, and Marsabit Counties, security committee members, and religious leaders also attended the forum, during which resolutions to end the long-standing strife across the landscape— that had been discussed and unanimously agreed upon by the participating groups— were presented for further action by the Government.

The forum was supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the Lucille Foundation, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), and the European Union-funded Kenya Rangelands Ecosystem Services Productivity (RangER) Program.

Improving Access to Clean Water: Ngare Ndare Community Conservancy Distributes 60 Water Tanks

Ngare Ndare Community Conservancy provided 60 water tanks, dam liners, and polyvinyl chloride pipes and fittings to 120 households, facilitating sustainable water harvesting, expanding small-scale irrigation, and improving crop yield.

This initiative was supported by the Innocent Foundation.



Newsbytes from the Conservancies

REGIONAL NEWS

NRT West

- All four NRT West community conservancies (Pellow, Ruko, Kaptuya, and Masol) conducted a wildlife-comms monitoring exercise in which they tracked wildlife trends, reviewed the progress made in the first half of the year, addressed capacity needs, and identified solutions for the day-to-day challenges the Region's conservancy scouts face.
- The Finance Committee of each of the four conservancies in the Region met with their respective conservancy manager to perform an external audit of the 2021-2022 financial audit.

NRT Coast

- 42 youth conservation champions from NRT Coast underwent training in the first module of the Leadership and Management Program (LAMP), empowering them to exercise their human rights, and actively participate in natural resource management ins.

This youth-centered LAMP training was conducted in line with NRT's gender and social inclusion goal of increasing women, men, youth, and special groups' participation in community conservation.

NRT Mountain

The Region's team attended an event held to launch Naibor Amani Primary School, which was organised by the Laikipia North Member of Parliament, Hon. Sarah Korere, and The Nature Conservancy, among other conservation partners.

The School will help foster peace and harmony among the diverse communities in Laikipia North and serve as a focal point for conservation.

NRT Centre

NRT Center trained all its conservancy managers, rangelands coordinators, wardens, and accountants on human rights and the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) process. NRT continues to adhere to social safeguard policies in its operations, to control risks and prevent unintended harm to communities, its employees, and the environment.

NRT East

- The community conservancies in Marsabit County (Jaldesa, Shurr, Songa and Melako) held their second Council of Elders (CoEs) forum to discuss the progress the conservancies had made during the first half of the year, their successes, challenges, and plans for the remainder of the year.
- The Region's rangelands team, in collaboration with the National Drought and Management Authority (NDMA), held an integrated three-day training on weather information, climate change, rangelands management, and the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project (NKRCPP), which was attended by 53 people from seven of the Region's community conservancies.



CONSERVANCIES



Westgate Conservancy

NRT Trading’s BeadWORKS team held a product development review meeting with 30 women from the Conservancy, to update records of raw materials, review product quantities, and determine labor requirements.

The Conservancy hosted a team from the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) who had undertaken an exposure tour to learn about conservancy governance, management structure, and conservation projects. The team recognised the Conservancy’s positive impact on the community, including livelihood improvement.



Kaptuya Conservancy

NRT Trading’s Ujuzi Manyattani Program was launched in the Conservancy. The Program is currently training 30 community members in hairdressing, beauty therapy, tailoring, and dress-making.



Kalama

Mobile patrol equipment worth Ksh 1.5 million was handed over to conservancy scouts to enhance mobile patrols within and outside the Conservancy.



Ltungai Community Conservancy Trust

Ltungai, Ngilai, Kalepo

The conservancies’ newly hired accountants and conservancy managers underwent a three-day training on finance systems, accounting, and payroll.



Nkoteiya

A meeting was convened to raise awareness of clean energy sources. Community and Conservancy Board members attended the meeting.



Ruko

The Conservancy successfully held a meeting on rangelands management to educate herders on the importance of adhering to grazing plans and protecting Ruko Giraffe Sanctuary.



Melako

Conservancy members democratically elected new Conservancy Board and Grazing Committee members to serve for the next three years.



Nasuulu

The Conservancy's team met with herders in Eremet to review and discuss the implementation of the Conservancy's dry season grazing plans.



Leparua

The Conservancy received Ksh 157,876 in conservation fees from NRT Trading's BeadWORKS Program. These funds will be used to support conservancy operations.



Video of the Month



Not all heroes wear capes. This is especially true of NRT's world-class Canine Unit, which is a game changer in tracking down poachers, locating snares, averting road banditry, and finding injured wildlife. Watch our canine members in action here:

The Canine Unit is participating in the ongoing Wildlife Ranger Challenge organized by Tusk Trust. Please take a moment to show your support for our canine team members by clicking here:

wildlife.rangerchallenge.org/campaigns/northern-rangelands-trust-2023

[Watch their story here.](#)



In the Media

FASTCOMPANY

Fast Company

[How Africa's largest IoT conservation network supports wildlife protection](#)



NTV

[Mikakati ya amani Kaskazini: Mbinu mpya ya kupatanisha jamii za wafugaji zinazozana](#)



KBC

[Northern Kenya adopt new approach towards conflict resolution](#)

LOOK UP TV

Look Up TV

[Wizi wa Mifugo Unahusishwa na Morans](#)

Look Up TV

[Morans wahusishwa katika makabiliano ya wizi wa mifugo na wadau wa amani mkoa wa Kaskazini](#)



Nomad Times

[Inter-Ethnic Morans Peace-Building Engagement at Nasuulu Conservancy](#)

We remain steadfast in our commitment to enabling NRT member community conservancies to build resilience against climate change.

We are grateful to all our partners and donors who share our commitment and whose unfailing support ensures we can provide the resources NRT member community conservancies across northern and coastal Kenya and Uganda require to achieve this goal.



ASANTENI SANA

The Northern Rangelands Trust would like to thank the following principal donors, partners, and investors (with many more listed on our website) for their invaluable support.

