



# **BIG LIFE**

## FOUNDATION

### **QUARTERLY REPORT**

**OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER**

**2020**

Photo: Jeremy Goss

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I'm sure I speak for us all when I say "good riddance" to 2020. It was a year filled with unimaginable challenges. And if it was hard for us, then I'm sure it was equally difficult for our supporters around the world. I am overwhelmed with gratitude that we were able to keep our rangers in the field and our core operations running at a time when so many could not. It would not have been possible without our supporters and partners.

We had some tremendous successes in spite of the odds. Reviewing our numbers, I have to pinch myself: it's another year with ZERO elephants and ZERO rhinos poached in our area of operation. These 10 plus years building up our anti-poaching programs with our community rangers have really paid off.

Our rangers excel at being nimble and adapting to rapidly changing conditions. In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, they also arrested 10 suspects for bushmeat poaching and 26 for trophy possession, removed 95 snares, prevented 25 crop-raids by elephants, prevented 4 lions hunts with our partners, and responded to 23 bushfires.

But our rangers aren't the only ones who had to make dramatic changes to their operations on account of COVID-19. Our community programs also took a huge hit. Since it wasn't safe for people to gather at clinics, we instead organized back-pack nurses to provide remote assistance. And our community health volunteers were able to safely conduct household visits, reaching more than 21,000 people with information about both COVID prevention and family planning. Schools are also starting to reopen, which is so critical for the student's development and the health of the community overall.

New challenges await us of course, especially as we fight to keep habitat safe from development for wildlife and livestock to continue to use. We'll keep you posted as everything unfolds.

In the meantime, from the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU for seeing us through 2020.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Bonham". The signature is fluid and cursive.

*Richard Bonham,  
Director of Operations, Big Life Kenya*

## WHERE WE WORK

**Big Life Foundation's (Big Life) Area of Operation (AOO)** covers approximately 1.6 million acres across the Amboseli-Tsavo-Kilimanjaro (Greater Amboseli) ecosystem in East Africa. Our team of 500+ helps to protect and secure wildlife and critical habitat stretching from the rangelands north of Amboseli to the Chyulu Hills and Tsavo West National Parks in the east, and south to Kilimanjaro National Park. The area is a central connection point for migrating wildlife and contains some of the most important habitat left in Africa. Big Life was the first organization in the region to conduct collaborative cross-border patrols between Kenya and Tanzania.

Our AOO is divided into a core area with a permanent ranger presence and regularly patrolled by mobile units, a non-core area where mobile units respond based on need and are actively covered by our intelligence network, and adjacent areas where we provide support as needed. The level of Big Life support provided varies between outposts.

**Core AOO:** Eselengei Group Ranch, Kimana Area, Mbirikani Group Ranch, Rombo Group Ranch, Chyulu Hills National Park, and Enduimet Wildlife Management Area (Tanzania)

**Non-Core AOO:** Merrueshi Ranch, Taveta Area

**Adjacent\*:** Kuku Group Ranch, Mailua Ranch, Olgulului Group Ranch, Tsavo West National Park



\* Except for intel-related arrests, incidents that occurred in adjacent areas are not reflected in this report.

## WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Big Life strives to prevent the poaching of all wildlife within our area of operation. We track and apprehend poachers and collaborate with local prosecutors to ensure that they are punished to the fullest extent of the law. One of the largest employers of local Maasai in the ecosystem, Big Life's community rangers are expertly trained and well-equipped to tackle a variety of wildlife crimes.

Since our inception, poaching of all animals has dramatically declined in our area of operation.

Our **2020 Q4** activity in Kenya is summarized below (Tanzania on pages 8-9):

## ANTI-POACHING

Big Life employs Maasai rangers from local communities who work collaboratively with a vast informer network and a number of tools to undertake a variety of anti-poaching activities.

Total Field Staff: <b>450+</b>	Rangers: <b>323</b>
Ranger Units: <b>42</b>	Tracker Dogs: <b>2</b>
Mobile Ranger Units: <b>5</b>	Permanent Outposts: <b>30</b>
Aerial Surveillance Hours: <b>54.8</b>	Rangers Trained: <b>60</b>
Kilometers Patrolled This Quarter: On foot: <b>25,811</b> By vehicle: <b>106,763</b> <b>Q4 TOTAL: 132,574</b> <b>YTD TOTAL: 484,248</b>	Total Kilometers Patrolled Since Inception (2011): On foot: <b>875,395</b> By vehicle: <b>2,536,295</b> <b>TOTAL: 3,411,690</b>

## WILDLIFE CRIME & ANTI-TRAFFICKING

Following the arrest of suspects by Big Life rangers, our Prosecution Officer monitors court cases to ensure that maximum penalties are pursued. Meanwhile, Big Life's intelligence team remains actively involved in investigating wildlife trafficking, both in the immediate ecosystem and beyond.

<b>SUSPECTS ARRESTED</b> Poaching - Bushmeat: <b>10</b> Trophy Possession: <b>26</b> Wildlife Trafficking: <b>1*</b>  <i>*1 suspect was arrest for both trophy possession &amp; wildlife trafficking</i>	<b>RECOVERED ITEMS</b> Ivory: <b>36.8 kg</b> Animal Skins: <b>13</b> (4 croc, 6 python, 3 puffadder) Snares: <b>95</b> Other: bird eggs ( <b>11</b> ), bird traps ( <b>6</b> ), bushmeat ( <b>150+</b> ), lion hairballs ( <b>5</b> ), lion claws/teeth ( <b>32</b> ), pangolin-live ( <b>1</b> ), pangolin scales ( <b>2 kg</b> ), sandalwood ( <b>86 kg</b> )
<b>INCIDENTS</b> Bushmeat Poaching: <b>5</b> Trophy Possession: <b>16</b> Wildlife Trafficking: <b>1*</b>	<b>PROSECUTIONS</b> Cases - Concluded: <b>0</b> Cases - Ongoing: <b>495</b> suspects

<b>MORTALITIES - ELEPHANT</b> Human-Elephant Conflict: <b>0</b> Poaching: <b>0</b> Natural Causes: <b>0</b> Unknown: <b>0</b>	<b>MORTALITIES – OTHER</b> ( <i>excluding large predators</i> ) Bushmeat Poaching: eland ( <b>17</b> ), gazelle ( <b>1</b> ), giraffe ( <b>3</b> ), hartebeest ( <b>11</b> ), zebra ( <b>1</b> ) Other ( <i>human-related</i> ): gazelle ( <b>3</b> ), giraffe ( <b>2</b> ), impala ( <b>3</b> ), wildebeest ( <b>1</b> ), zebra ( <b>4</b> )
<b>INJURIES - ELEPHANT</b> Elephants Injured: <b>2</b> Elephants Treated: <b>2</b>	<b>RESCUES/TREATMENTS - OTHER ANIMALS</b> Hartebeest ( <b>1</b> )

## RHINO INTENSIVE PROTECTION ZONE

There are **eight** known Eastern black rhinos in Big Life’s area of operation. They spend most of their time in the densely-forested Chyulu Hills National Park, protected by dedicated Big Life rangers and the Kenya Wildlife Service. In addition to monitoring and protecting the resident rhinos, Big Life has been working to improve and maintain infrastructure in the rhino area, the goal of which is to maintain Intensive Protection Zone (IPZ) status, which will allow for the future inbound translocation of rhinos from other territories.

Rhino Mortalities: <b>0</b>	Rhino Snares Found: <b>0</b>
Rhino Protection Rangers: <b>57</b>	Dedicated Rhino Outposts: <b>7</b> Dedicated Rhino Units: <b>10</b>
<b>RHINO MONITORING</b> Direct Sightings: <b>1</b> Indirect Sightings ( <i>via camera trap</i> ): <b>32</b> Spoor Sightings: <b>48</b>	<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b> Fencing: <b>70+ km</b> constructed by SWT to date Water Points: <b>3</b> maintained Camera traps: <b>33</b>

### NOTABLE UPDATES (click to read):

- WATCH OUT FOR THE WOMEN OF BIG LIFE – Big Life’s [female rangers](#) make arrest
- ARRESTED FOR “BYCATCH” – [2 suspects arrested](#) with lion teeth & claws
- CATCHING THE (REALLY) BAD GUYS – Big Life arrests [bushmeat poachers](#)



**HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT MITIGATION**

Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) takes three primary forms across Big Life’s area of operation: crops raided by wildlife, particularly elephants; livestock killed by predators, such as lions; and humans injured or killed due to living in close proximity with wildlife.

Our **2020 Q4** activity is summarized below:

**HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT MITIGATION**

Poaching continues to pose a significant threat, but many elephants face an even bigger challenge: conflict with humans. As the human population increases, so do competing land uses, such as farming and cattle grazing. As humans compete for limited resources like water, land, and grass for livestock, we further encroach onto what were once wild lands. With less space to share, people and animals now come into direct contact at an alarming rate and often with deadly results.

Crop-Raiding Incidents: <b>18</b> Crop-Raiding Incidents Involving Elephants: <b>18</b>	Acres Damaged: <b>6.75</b> Acres Damaged by Elephants: <b>6.75</b>
Crop Raids Prevented by Big Life: <b>25</b>	Elephant Retaliatory Hunts Attempted: <b>0</b> Elephant Retaliatory hunts stopped: <b>N/A</b>
Crop-Protection Rangers: <b>24</b> Crop-Protection Fence Constructed to Date: <b>100 km*</b> Crop-Protection Fence Maintenance Workers: <b>31</b> <i>* new construction on hold due to COVID</i>	Non-crop-raiding, elephant-related incidents: <b>3</b> <i>*including water tanks/pipes damaged by elephants, boma destruction, etc.</i>

**PREDATOR PROTECTION**

Big Life protects vulnerable predators in the ecosystem in collaboration with partners and local communities. The core component of Big Life’s predator protection program is livestock compensation, which reduces the motivation for retaliatory killing in response to livestock depredation.

The Predator Compensation Fund (PCF) pays Maasai livestock owners a portion of the value of their livestock lost to predators, on the condition that no predators are killed in retaliation. Big Life manages the PCF on Mbirikani Group Ranch, Eselengei Group Ranch, and the Kimana Conservancy. Given the success of this program, the goal is to continue expanding the PCF across the entire ecosystem.

The second part of Big Life’s predator protection program is the Maasai Olympics, which was established in 2012 as an alternative for the traditional killing of lions. At the Maasai Olympics, young warriors can compete for recognition, prove bravery, and attract girlfriends through a sports competition based on traditional warrior skills. The next games were meant to occur in December 2020, but due to COVID-19 have been postponed until 2021.

Lion Mortalities: <b>3</b> – <i>all snared</i> Lion Mortalities in Violation of PCF: <b>0</b>	Lion Retaliatory Hunts Prevented*: <b>4</b> <i>* Often in collaboration with our partners at Lion Guardians and Kenya Wildlife Service.</i>
Compensation Issued for: <b>62</b> Cows: \$8,498 <b>695</b> Sheep/Goats: \$19,425 <b>4</b> Donkey: \$141 <b>Q4 TOTAL: \$28,064</b> <b>YTD TOTAL: \$88,151</b>	Livestock Killed by Predators: Cheetah: <b>77</b> Hyena: <b>520</b> Jackal: <b>101</b> Leopard: <b>10</b> Lion: <b>53</b>
Additional Predator Mortalities: Hyena: <b>3</b> - <i>unknown (2), vehicle (1)</i>	Other: <b>1</b> incident of problematic predators moved away from bomas to avoid depredation (by chasing or translocation)

## ADDITIONAL WILDLIFE CONFLICT

Humans Injured: <b>1</b>	Wildlife Responsible for Injuries: buffalo (1)
Humans Killed: <b>0</b>	Wildlife Responsible for Deaths: N/A

### NOTABLE UPDATES (click to read):

- WORLD CHEETAH DAY – PCF is working to protect predators like [cheetah](#)



## ENDUIMET WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Many species in the Greater Amboseli ecosystem, including elephants and lions, don't observe man-made boundaries, like international borders, and as part of their endless search for food and water, wildlife regularly cross from Kenya into Tanzania. Just on the other side of the border is an important 350,000-acre Wildlife Management Area called Enduimet (EWMA).

Big Life partners with EWMA, The Nature Conservancy and other stakeholders to undertake critical cross-border wildlife protection.

Our **2020 Q4** activity in Tanzania is summarized as follows:

### ANTI-POACHING & WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Big Life employs Maasai rangers from the EWMA who work collaboratively with their communities, informers, and their Kenyan counterparts to undertake a variety of wildlife protection activities.

Trained Rangers: <b>20</b>	Ranger Units: <b>2</b> (mobile)
Kilometers Patrolled This Quarter: On foot: <b>9,588</b> By vehicle: <b>16,017</b> <b>Q4 TOTAL: 25,605</b> <b>YTD TOTAL: 78,918</b>	Total Kilometers Patrolled Since Inception (Jul-2018): On foot: <b>64,880</b> By vehicle: <b>124,572</b> <b>TOTAL: 189,452</b>
<b>SUSPECTS ARRESTED</b> Community Crimes: <b>5</b> Habitat Destruction: <b>20</b> Bushmeat Poaching: <b>4</b>	<b>RECOVERED ITEMS</b> Snares: <b>2</b> Other: bird trap ( <b>1</b> ), bushmeat ( <b>3 bags</b> ), charcoal bags ( <b>39.5</b> ), kilns destroyed ( <b>20</b> )
<b>INCIDENTS</b> Community Crimes: <b>4</b> Habitat Destruction: <b>11</b> Bushmeat Poaching: <b>4</b>	Cross-Border Operations: <b>0</b> Intelligence-led incident response: <b>11</b>

<b>MORTALITIES - ELEPHANT</b> Human-Elephant Conflict: <b>0</b> Poaching: <b>0</b> Natural Causes: <b>0</b> Unknown: <b>0</b>	<b>MORTALITIES - OTHER</b> ( <i>excluding large predators</i> ) Bushmeat Poaching: dik-dik ( <b>5</b> ), gazelles ( <b>6</b> ), lesser kuku ( <b>2</b> ), warthog ( <b>1</b> ), wildebeest ( <b>1</b> ) Other ( <i>human-related</i> ): impala ( <b>1</b> )
<b>INJURIES - ELEPHANT</b> Elephants Injured: <b>0</b> Elephants Treated*: <b>0</b>  <i>*Thanks to EWMA partners at MAKOA Farm.</i>	<b>OTHER OPERATIONS:</b> Monthly wildlife counts Snared buffalo treated Lost livestock found

### HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT MITIGATION

Like their Kenyan colleagues, EWMA rangers assist communities in responding to and minimizing human-wildlife conflict. This primarily takes the form of rangers chasing wildlife out of farms, confirming livestock killed by predators and assisting community members who have been injured or killed by wildlife.

Crop-Raiding Incidents: <b>2</b> Crop-Raiding Incidents Involving Elephants: <b>2</b>	Acres Damaged: <b>1.75</b> Acres Damaged by Elephants: <b>1.75</b>
Crop Raids Prevented by Big Life: <b>3</b>	Elephant Retaliatory Hunts Attempted: <b>0</b>

Livestock Killed: <b>6</b> Cows <b>41</b> Sheep/Goats <b>0</b> Donkeys <b>TOTAL: 47</b>	By Predators: Cheetah: <b>0</b> Hyena: <b>11</b> Jackal: <b>0</b> Leopard: <b>2</b> Lion: <b>11</b> Wild dog: <b>23</b>
Predator Mortalities: Lion ( <b>1</b> ) - <i>natural</i>	Lion Retaliatory Hunts: <b>1</b> Lion Hunts stopped: <b>1</b>

Humans Injured: <b>1</b> ( <i>indirectly</i> )	Wildlife Responsible for Injuries: elephant
Humans Killed: <b>0</b>	Wildlife Responsible for Deaths: N/A

## SECURING WILDLIFE HABITAT

The human-wildlife conflict in the ecosystem is a direct result of wildlife and local communities competing for limited resources on the same shrinking land areas. In order to reduce conflict, wildlife habitat must be strategically protected, an increasingly urgent program focus for Big Life.

Our **2020 Q4** activity is summarized below:

## CONSERVANCY DEVELOPMENT

Big Life's engagement in conservancy development is composed of two specific parts. The first is paying annual leases to hundreds of owners of 60-acre parcels of land located in the Kimana Corridor. These lease payments are intended to limit destructive development of the land, other than that which is compatible with conservation and pastoralism, and made possible thanks to the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust. The second involves working with local communities to protect land that is strategically important either as wildlife movement corridors or dispersal areas, but is also valuable to the local livestock economy as a grazing resource. This protection can be achieved through the establishment of conservancies, including the legal and management systems necessary for their effective functioning, and assisting to develop income-generating opportunities such as tourism.

**Kimana Sanctuary**, at the easternmost part of the Kimana Corridor, was one of the first community-owned and run wildlife conservancies in East Africa. After years of mismanagement, at the request of the community, Big Life took over management in 2017. The Sanctuary is an area frequented by some of Amboseli's biggest bull elephants, and acts as an important dispersal area for many wildlife moving to and from Amboseli National Park. Thanks to support from the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and the D.N. Batten Foundation, Big Life rangers continue to [secure this special place](#).

Landowners benefitting from Lease fees: Kimana Sanctuary: <b>844</b> Kimana Corridor: <b>338</b>	Paying visitor days: Kimana Sanctuary: <b>748</b>
Infrastructure: Tourism road network: <b>42 km</b> built to date	Other: Land lease fees paid to members; Conservancies opposing illegal commercial farm development; Bee/honey livelihoods project initiated

## NOTABLE UPDATES (click to read):

- HOW MANY AVOCADOS IS AN ELEPHANT WORTH?  
– Big Life is protecting [vital habitat and corridors](#)

## RANGELANDS MANAGEMENT

The Maasai are traditionally a pastoralist society, their wealth directly associated with their livestock. Large herds of cows, sheep, and goats graze across the ecosystem continually. Managing the impacts of grazing on the rangelands for the overall health of the ecosystem has become a major program focus.

Our **2020 Q4** activity is summarized below: clarification

### LAND

Big Life has helped to establish a sustainable farming program, the farm based at a local school, in addition to working with communities to improve livestock grazing to manage livestock movements and improve the condition of existing pasture. Rangers also actively protect the land by fighting against habitat destruction such as illegal logging or charcoaling. Lastly, we've partnered with local communities, partner NGOs, and local government to implement a [carbon credit program](#) in the Chyulu Hills to protect it from deforestation and overgrazing.

Suspects Arrested* for Habitat Destruction: <b>10</b> Habitat Destruction Arrest Incidents: <b>2</b> <i>*Sometimes released depending on severity of crime</i>	Sustainable Farms: <b>1</b> Sustainable Farming Manager: <b>1</b>
Non-Arrest Habitat Destruction Incidents: <b>27</b> <i>(bushfires - 23)</i>	Incidents of Community Grazing and Conservancy Rules Enforcement: <b>6</b>

### WATER

Water is one of the most precious resources in the African bush. Big Life rangers actively work to reduce illegal water extraction and ensure that river systems are free and flowing.

Total Rainfall (at HQ) This Quarter: <b>121 mm</b>	Water-Related Incidents: <b>1</b>
Liters of Fuel Provided for Pumping Water to Both Community and Wildlife (to reduce conflict): <b>800 L</b>	Water Points Repaired: <b>1</b>



Winning the hearts and minds of the community and providing a mutual benefit through conservation is the only way to protect wildlife and wild lands far into the future. To that end, Big Life provides a number of services in support of the community generally, including education and healthcare initiatives, and also lesser-known activities, such as using ranger vehicles as ambulances, arresting criminals for community crimes (e.g., theft), conducting human and/or livestock search and rescue operations, and more.

Community Crime Incidents: <b>2</b>	Suspects Arrested: <b>2</b>
Human Search and Rescue Incidents: <b>7</b>	Livestock Search Incidents: <b>2</b>
Other Community Support Incidents: <b>3</b> - <i>emergency transport (2), body recovery (1)</i>	

## EDUCATION

Big Life invests in the future of participating communities by funding teachers' salaries, providing scholarship funds for local students, and implementing conservation-specific curriculum in classrooms and communities.

Our **2020 Q4** activity is summarized below:

<p>Teachers' Salaries Paid: <b>4*</b></p> <p><i>*Management of 13 additional teachers taken over by Great Plains Foundation</i></p>	<p>Long-Term Student Scholarships Awarded: <b>300</b> Boys: <b>145</b>      Girls: <b>155</b></p> <p>One-Time Student Scholarships Awarded: <b>0*</b></p> <p><i>*Schools largely closed due to COVID-19, only Class 4 &amp; 8, and Form 4 returned to finish their 2020 year</i></p>
<p>Tertiary-Level Graduates: <b>2*</b></p> <p><i>*Degrees in: Urban Planning &amp; Development, and Law</i></p>	<p>Students Reached by Conservation Curriculum: <b>853</b></p> <p>School Visits: <b>16</b></p>

### NOTABLE UPDATES (click to read):

- CONSERVATION EDUCATION – [adapting](#) in response to COVID-19



**HEALTHCARE**

Big Life works in partnership with the Kajiado South Sub-County Department of Health to implement mobile health clinics focused on primary healthcare and family planning. Additional services provided include immunization, antenatal check-ups and HIV testing, counseling and more.

Our **2020 Q4** activity is summarized below:

Mobile Health Clinics Conducted: <b>0*</b>	Primary Healthcare Recipients: <b>0*</b>
Back-Pack Medical Outreaches: <b>37</b>	People De-wormed: <b>1,569</b>
CHV Household Visits: <b>6,952</b>	People Vaccinated: <b>1,554</b>
People Reached with Family Planning Information (and COVID prevention): <b>21,337</b>	Family Planning Services Provided: <b>1,180</b>
Men’s Dialogue Days: <b>33</b>	<i>*Mobile clinics cancelled due to COVID-19</i>
Men Reached with Family Planning Information: <b>701</b>	



**Thank you to our wonderful partners and supporters for helping make our work possible. Together we can save wildlife and wild lands - now and for future generations. Please consider making a life-saving [donation](#) to support the critical programs mentioned in this report. Thank you for your support**