



Joint Partners Scoping Mission to Central Kajiado Landscape Field Visit Report



22nd-24th May 2024

“If RAMAT Wildlife Society is removed from the landscape, we’ll have killed wildlife connectivity in Southern Kenya” - Evan Mkala, IFAW Program Manager

Background

Central Kajiado is experiencing a remarkable emergence of group conservancies under the leadership and support of Ramat Wildlife Society, a newly established conservancy membership support organization.

These conservancies are currently found in the Matapato North and South administrative wards, a 4200sq km region situated in the northern periphery of the Amboseli Ecosystem and West of the Namanga – Nairobi Highway. The landscape is a wildlife dispersal zone that also borders the Kenya – Tanzania border and has had minimal conservation investment for a very long time. The area is mostly occupied by the Maasai, who subdivided community group ranches into individuals holdings.

Ramat Society has mobilized 15 conservancies majority of which are under the emerging phase in the defunct Meto, Mailua and Oldoinyo Orok group ranches, covering an estimated 100,000 Ha with other potential conservancies identified in 4 other group ranches namely; Osilalei, Nentanai, Ilpartimaro, Lorngoswa in the southern rangelands.

Following a recent visit to the RAMAT offices by representatives from the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), an agreement was reached to carry out a scoping visit to conservancies within Mailua to understand the connectivity of the area to the Amboseli landscape. IFAW developed a map showcasing collared elephants from Amboseli to Mailua area. Further KWCA and Narok-Kajiado Economic Bloc (NAKAEB) have been working with 5 landscape conservancy associations to carry out joint fundraising and collaboration to enhance connectivity in Southern Kenya.

Mission Objectives

1. Engage officials of emerging conservancies; Osewan, Oltepesi, Olchoro Olborr and Ileisai from Kajiado Central to understand their role in facilitating connectivity between the Amboseli Ecosystem and the rest of Kenya’s Southern Rangelands.
2. To explore threats and challenges affecting the landscape, especially fences that disrupt wildlife and livestock movement.
3. Explore unfenced ranches between Bisil and Ng’ataek and garner interest from landowners in establishing a new cross-highway conservancy to protect one of the last remaining elephant crossing areas along the 130km stretch of the Namanga Highway.
4. Develop an action plan of the next steps for Central Kajiado landscape.

Summary of Scooping Mission and Next Steps

The four partners IFAW, KWCA, NAKAEB and RAMAT raised the following issues of concern on wildlife conservation in the region

- **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Mailua area is a hotspot for HWC with at least 6 cases of human death reported in the past year
- **Land sales and fencing:** Increased poverty levels has forced landowners to put up their land for sale and there is a risk that conservation might not pay in the long run
- **Carbon Markets:** The conservancies have engaged Soils for the Future Africa, a carbon developer, and signed an MoU with the conservancies to carry out a feasibility assessment in the area. There is concern that RAMAT and conservancies may not be well-informed and equipped to support carbon credits projects since the conservancies are still emerging stage.
- **Invasive Alien Species:** Ipomea Carnea and Pythenium has infiltrated the grasslands of central Kajiado diminishing grazing lands for the community and affecting their livelihoods
- **Community Empowerment:** Communities are not well informed on community-based natural; resource management which might affect their negotiations right with partners.
- **RAMAT'S Institutional capacity:** While there is goodwill among the county government and community on the role of RAMAT in supporting conservancies in the region, the organization lacks adequate capacity to support the needs and concerns of the conservancies. They currently do not have funding to support operations and project activities. The secretariat is managed by three volunteers who get a monthly stipend from board members. Current partners include Kajiado County Government and KWCA
- **Coordination and connectivity gap in Kajiado West:** It was noted that the areas around Elangata Wuas to Loita had a coordination gap in mobilizing communities to establish conservancies as a key wildlife area
- **Transboundary territory movements:** Identify transboundary partners in Tanzania and Kenya.

There was collegial and constructive discussion among the partners to;

1. Support the operationalization of RAMAT Society to be a strong independent conservancy support organization that will support conservancies to;

- a. Re-register the conservancies to have strong legal regimes that would enable them to enter into contractual obligations with private sector partners. All conservancies are currently registered as community based organizations (CBOs)
 - b. Coordinate conservancies in central Kajiado to hold effective AGMs and ensure the independence of conservancies is maintained
 - c. Ride on the political goodwill of the county government to advocate the implementation of the county land use plans and conservancy bill
 - d. Enhance conservation and education awareness on the conservancy model which is still nascent among landowners
 - e. Carry out governance training for conservancy board members and empower communities on the conservancy model
 - f. Recruit conservancy rangers to address human-wildlife conflicts.
2. Support the development of RAMAT's strategic plan and budget to guide their growth in the short term.
3. Mobilise resources and partners to support the operational costs of RAMAT and project activities that address conservation threats such as human-wildlife conflicts and fencing.
4. Showcase the tourism potential of the landscape by mapping out experiences and road connectivity linking Amboseli to central Kajiado to Narok as a tourism circuit that could be included in NAKAEB's tourism strategy.
5. Map out the fauna and flora of the area by carrying out a biodiversity assessment to ascertain the biodiversity hotspots of the area. Currently, the area is endowed with wildlife such as wild dogs, elephants, gazelles, the black leopard, and many bird species. The area also has cultural and religious sites such as caves that could be identified as potential tourism products.
6. Undertake a peer learning visit to Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA) whose conservancies land tenure system is similar to Central Kajiado conservancies to learn about building effective governance and management structures.
7. Review the current Central Kajiado map and overlay it with the group ranches map to include the proposed conservancies.
8. To enhance awareness and understanding of FPIC, especially under the carbon markets program, and support conservancies with negotiation skills.

Mission Participants

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| 1. Solomon Lupempe – RAMAT Staff | 4. Mayian Lemayian – RAMAT Staff |
| 2. Simon Sosoika – RAMAT
Chairperson | 5. Ruth Seita- Kajiado County |
| 3. Jacinta Nkaiserry –RAMAT Board
Member | 6. Rose Kinki-RAMAT Staff |
| | 7. Evan Mkala – IFAW |
| | 8. Benard Tuleto- IFAW |

9. Dickson Kaelo – KWCA
10. Joyce Mbataru – KWCA
11. Nancy Neema – KWCA

12. Joseph Njogu - KWCA
13. Morgan Siloma -NAKAEB

Day 1:

1) Briefing at RAMAT Offices:



The Ramat team briefed the team and shared some updates of the society as follows;

- a. **The Society:** RAMAT Wildlife Society was registered in March 2022 as a society to represent conservancies in Central Kajiado in the Matapato Rangelands. The board comprises of chairpersons of member conservancies, founders, and experts and has three volunteers coordinating and supporting conservancy association's activities. The offices are located at the. Neighbours Initiative Alliance building in Kajiado town.
- b. **Mapping:** RAMAT in partnership with KWCA developed a conservancy's map for the central Kajiado landscape showcasing wildlife and livestock migratory corridors. The map provides geographical information on the emerging and proposed conservancies in former Mailua and Meto group ranches. The map needs to be updated to include Mailua proposed conservancies and other proposed conservancies in the Oldoinyo Orok group ranch. The map includes Ilanguronyoni Conservancy in Amboseli to showcase connectivity.
- c. **Member Conservancies:** The organization has supported the formation of 10 conservancies in the landscape with 5 conservancies proposed.

These are;

Member conservancies	Proposed Conservancies
1. Kisapuk Conservancy	1. Olgirra

2. Oldoinyo Sampu Conservancy 3. Parsilet Conservancy 4. Kikesen River Conservancy 5. Noosikitok Conservancy 6. Lorbetera Conservancy 7. Ileisai Conservancy 8. OlchorroOiborr Conservancy 9. Oltepesi Conservancy 10. Osewan Conservancy	2. Kaparasi 3. Ilumbwa 4. Murtuna 5. Oldoinyiorok
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d. Land use Plans: Launched in 2023, the Kajiado Land Use Plan has zoned the different administrative units into different land uses, Central Kajiado zoned as a tourism and livestock area. While the plan minimizes minimal land subdivision and discourages land sales, the area is still challenged with fencing.

e. Carbon Markets: Soils for the Future Africa a carbon project developer identified RAMAT as a partner to engage conservancies with the potential for carbon credits. Soils for the Future has entered into a two-year MOU with all the 15 conservancies to permit them to carry out research and undertake soil sampling, vegetation and insects for verification. Soils for the Future and Converge will undertake capacity-building training on grazing plans management for the conservancies in partnership with RAMAT.

2) Courtesy Call to the CECM Gender, Cooperatives, Culture, Tourism and Wildlife



The Mission team paid a courtesy call to the CECM in charge of Tourism and Wildlife, Ms. Janet Sereu and other county officials to inform them of the partners mission. The following issues were highlighted in the discussion;

- a. There is strong political and policy commitment by the current county government for community wildlife conservation. The County has developed a conservancy bill that proposed a county fund to fund conservancies. However, the Bill is yet to be signed. The County has also enacted Kajiado County Land use plan which will address land sales in wildlife areas issues. IFAW have already signed MOUs with the county government to support wildlife efforts in the county.
- b. The County has partnered with the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, state Department of Tourism to market Kajiado as a domestic tourism destination. In the next supplementary budget, the county will allocate budgets for 15 designated stopover amenities along the Kajiado Namanga Highway to boost tourism activities
- c. The CECM thanked KWCA for the support to visit Samburu County and learn about the conservancies fund which allowed them to reflect on ways they could advance the conservancy bill. The CECM called on KWCA to formalize an MOU with Kajiado County if it provides a strategy for mobilizing resources
- d. KWCA recently signed an MOU with the Council of Governors to advance wildlife conservation policies in the county and advocate for inclusion of county governments in the review of the Wildlife Act.
- e. John Ole Nyika chairs the wildlife directors caucus in the COG and offered to support KWCA to convene wildlife directors to go through the Wildlife Act review.
- f. The county is in the process of developing the Tourism Bill and the Cultural Tourism Bill.

3) Meeting with landowners of the proposed Trans-Highway Conservancy

The proposed transboundary highway conservancy in Lenkishon village is one of the remaining unfenced ranches between Bisil and Ng'atataek, The area represents one of the last remaining elephant crossing areas along the 130km stretch of the Namanga Highway. This was the second meeting held by RAMAT to create awareness on wildlife conservation and land protection through the conservancy model. The following were the issues discussed;

Mzee Nalala started the meeting with the following remarks;

“We are happy that we have amongst visitors some Maa speakers so we can fully understand. We have young and old and I urge the youth to listen well. Many years ago

people like our visitors came and introduced education, the church, and land subdivision, those who listened to the visitors became the main beneficiaries and today leaders and wealthy families, those who ignored the message from visitors lost, and are now poor. Even ideas were brought and we refused and others came and benefitted from it, let us not be people who ignore ideas.” Nalala Ole Meteu

- The meeting noted that RAMAT was a new organization helping to support 15 conservancies in the early stage of development. Wildlife corridors are closing through fencing hence the need to manage land through conservancies. A conservancy brings development and wealth but it takes time and effort. For many years the Maasai had no benefit yet wildlife has been an asset.
- The area is a key wildlife corridor and there is an urgent need to secure the area for open grazing and wildlife and the next generation. Wildlife and cows are similar and have the same needs managing them together yields double benefits. Community lands are utilized by wildlife during drought hence are important areas that can generate benefits.
- IFAW supports conservancies through leases and bursaries with over 300 students finishing university through bursaries and now employed. They have also employed over 200 scouts with salaries that benefit the communities. IFAW is also supporting women through the Inua Kijiji project to buy food for rangers. In Olgulului group ranch there are 6 operational conservancies with kshs 6,000-9,000 benefiting an individual landowner and now a new investor has been identified to increase the benefits.
- Amboseli National Park will be reverted to the county government and only those with conservancies can demand a fair share of the benefits.
- To set up a conservancy is a difficult undertaking and yet it is not a new idea. It builds on the idea that land has to be managed and kept open to ensure open access for livestock and wildlife. The concept is similar to ‘*enkaroni*’, a dry season area where everyone owns the land but grazing is managed for everyone.
- The community requested for another planned meeting to seek more understanding of the concept.



Day 2:

a) Detour of Osewan Conservancy

The team visited Osewan Conservancy through Ng'atataek Town and experienced the following;

Threats and challenges affecting the region

1. Land Sales and fencing
2. Invasive Species
3. Increase of crop agriculture introduced by new landowners
4. Human-Wildlife Conflicts:
5. Youth unemployment



Ipomea Carnea Invasive Alien species is spreading across central Kajiado



Fencing is a growing threat in the region

b) Meeting with Osewan, Oltepesi, Olchorro Oibor, Ileisai and Illanguronyoni conservancy officials



The meeting was held at Osewan church, Osewan village with officials of six conservancies one of which was from Amboseli. The Chief Isaac Paswa and Chief Charles Tanako welcome the participants. The following was discussed on;

RAMAT

- The community noted the collaboration RAMAT and the conservancies. Several meetings have been held to sensitize communities on conservancy establishment and carbon trading.
- The conservancy committee members were recognized for their voluntary efforts to create awareness on conservation and conservancies to the larger community. The conservancy model was recognized as a tool for managing land and promoting unity among the four villages. However, concerns were raised on the shrinking of land and noted the need to create jobs for the educated youth and creation of enterprises for the women.
- Women exclusion was noted at the meeting with majority of the participants being men. There is need to sensitize more women to participate in future conservancy meetings.
- The Marapasha hills is a water catchment area which has tourism potential with an area at the hill top set aside for tourism. The landscape features are attractive and can attract investment from third parties.

IFAW

- Benard Tulito of IFAW praised the community for their conservation efforts despite challenges of predation and wildlife kills and commended them for embracing the conservancy model. He praised RAMAT's commitment to enable the community to take their own actions and partner with others.
- The community noted the other side of Amboseli had received more support from IFAW and requested the same support be extended to the new conservancies towards construction of water pans and provision of bursaries and jobs. The conservancies requested that the new partnership with Ramat result in planning and action.
- Human wildlife conflict is the biggest challenge in the area. In the last 2 years the community has lost 4 people from elephant deaths and 6 lion injuries and crop raids from elephants with retaliatory killings such as poisoning and spearing of elephants reported. It was noted that Emotorogi area was a HWC hotspot. IFAW committed to support RAMAT to ensure the issue is reversed. Delays in compensation has also not been helpful hence the need for consolation programs.
- Osewan is a key elephant area and actions to conserve the habitat must be given priority. The Osewan community could learn from Amboseli community on their conservation efforts.
- Illaingarryoni chairperson Lesinko Shunkur shared their experience from Amboseli and urged good neighbourliness among conservancies in Central and South Kajiado. He explained that rangers should work across boundaries and leaders should also share experiences. He noted that conservancies were established in community grass banks known as Nkaron, and this means that a conservancy first benefit is livestock.

NAKAEB

- Morgan Siloma Informed the meeting about NAKAEB and outlined several priorities the organization was working on within the Maa counties among them; unity of the community, connectivity between Mara and Amboseli through tourism, roads infrastructure, conservation and migration of wildlife.
- They have prioritized road from Mara through Mosiro to Magadi and to Amboseli and plans are ongoing to design another road. The proposed road Ngatataek-Mailua-Amboseli is envisioned to pass through key areas of attractions and conservancies to Amboseli National Park to promote tourism, community access and attract other investments.
- NAKAEB is also supporting the development of Narok and Kajiado Conservancy Acts using lessons learnt from Samburu County to fund conservancies. They also convened the inaugural Maa Festival in Narok which was a historical unity event. The next festival is scheduled to take place in Samburu County.

KWCA

- Dickson Kaelo recognized that four conservancies from the landscape had already registered with KWCA. He noted that the conservancy institution is beneficial in managing land, improving grazing and conserving wildlife and can create jobs through tourism. He noted that the ongoing visit has exposed an area of immense opportunities and challenges and thanked the community for making decision to form conservancy even with low knowledge on what it is.
- He reported that the government had demonstrated support to conservancies prioritising investments in access roads and water points. He urged the conservancies to work with Ramat closely to ensure coordination. Forming a conservancy is a long journey, he urged members for patience and persistence, he urged that conservancies formalize their boards, set up offices, and engage staff when funds become available. He thanked all those who participated in the meeting
- He urged the community to focus on securing livestock grazing lands as this is the means for conserving wildlife but also to keep livestock with grass in dry seasons. He noted a conservancy is also a way to hold on to land and noted that land sales and fencing posed the biggest threat to the livestock culture. He shared that in the last drought many kajiado herders survived the drought in Mara conservancies, and that conservancies should be supported as a grazing management plan. He Urged conservancy leaders to ensure transparency in their work and open communication

Day 3:

Participants debrief and Action Planning

The meeting deliberated on Ramat key priorities in 2024 and next steps as follows;

1. Strengthening the secretariat with staffing, salaries, office rent, vehicle
2. Governance training for Ramat board members
3. Conservancies governance strengthening
4. Develop organizational policies and resource mobilization plans
5. Develop an organizational strategic plan
6. Support conservancy develop conservancy management plans.

Key actions needed to support conservancies in central Kajiado

1. Review the current registered conservancy legal instruments that can allow the communities to enter into effective contractual obligations. Support the re-registration from to a trust or a company limited by guranteeship.
2. Building governance capacity for committees to understand their roles
3. Recruitment of staff and rangers
4. Infrastructure development for conservancies



Action Plan

No.	Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
1.	Advocate for Kajiado County Conservancy Bill	NAKAEB	
2.	Carry out a comprehensive mapping exercise to identify water points, roads, potential tourism facilities, fenced and unfenced areas	KWCA & IFAW	
3.	Map out potential conservancies and overlay them within the group ranches map in central Kajiado to get accurate acreage sizes.	KWCA	
4.	Development of a concept note to support RAMAT's fundraising efforts	KWCA	
5.	Carry out a biodiversity assessment		
6.	Link RAMAT with CABI an International Organization to address invasive species management and make a case for central Kajiado Conservancies	KWCA	
7.	Support the operationalisation of RAMAT and recruit staff	KWCA & IFAW	
8.	Build RAMAT's governance and management capacity	KWCA & IFAW	
9.	Develop RAMAT's Strategic plan	KWCA & IFAW	
10.	Share tools on FPIC processes and ensure community mobilization documentation and minutes for establishing a conservancy is made available how they made the decision of a conservancy	KWCA	
11.	Carry out a baseline desktop research of the area to measure against progress.	RAMAT	
12.	Carry out a peer learning visit to Maasai Mara to learn about the conservancy model	KWCA	
13.	Carry out a tourism investment prospectus	NAKAEB	
14.	Sensitization of carbon markets and inclusion of RAMAT as community carbon champions	NAKAEB & KWCA	
15.			