



COAST REGION

# BIANNUAL REPORT

## 2023

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Two members of the Mtangawanda Women Association Group from Pate Marine Community Conservancy (PMCC) share a laugh during a break from Mangrove seedlings planting.

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# OVERVIEW

## The Northern Rangelands Trust

### Our Mission

The Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) is a membership organisation owned and led by the 43 diverse community conservancies it serves in northern and coastal Kenya and Uganda. Since its inception, NRT has made significant strides in developing resilient community conservancies that transform lives, promote peace, and conserve natural resources. Three pillars underpin NRT's approach to conservancy resilience:



**Good Governance:** community-driven decision-making that results in strong community ownership, equitable benefit distribution, and transparent and accountable conservancy boards and administration.



**Effective Management:** the proficient administration of conservancies and the successful implementation of programs.



**Financial Viability:** the availability of sufficient and reliable funding for current and future conservation operations.

### Sustainability

NRT is focused on sustainability across all aspects of its work. After achieving proof of concept at a large scale, NRT's next step is to ensure that this can be translated into long-term success. In order to realize its sustainability strategy, NRT has taken the following steps:

- Conservancies in Northern Rangelands Trust-Coast Region (NRT Coast) and Marsabit have been at the forefront of developing fundraising proposals and raising funds to support their operations and community projects. This is a significant step towards conservancies becoming financially independent and NRT achieving its long-term sustainability goals.
- NRT has developed its 2023-2027 Strategic Plan to set the course for the next five years. The document examines our accomplishments, gaps, and areas for growth, and aligns with our Vision 2050, which is a road map of how we intend to achieve our quest of building resilient community conservancies that transform lives, build peace, and conserve natural resources.
- To increase its effectiveness, NRT has adopted a new organisational structure based on the results of an organisational review conducted last year. Additionally, NRT has completely decentralized its governance and set up regional offices to better serve our member community conservancies. These offices are already executing local initiatives and serving as a first point of contact for conservancies and county governments.
- To ensure that all stages of development of conservation projects deliver enhanced outcomes and a positive impact on communities and nature, NRT continues to roll out human rights and Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) trainings, while upholding human rights, managing risks, and adhering to all social safe guard policies, procedures, and measures.
- Women and youth are becoming increasingly involved in community conservancy activities, a positive step towards closing the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) gap and encouraging inclusive and sustainable natural resource use and management.

## Together, we are the Coast Region of the Northern Rangelands Trust



## Where We Work



### Coastal Community Conservancies



## From the CEO's Desk



NRT's community conservancy model has always been about making a real difference in indigenous communities through conservation.

The first six months of the year presented numerous opportunities to actualize this vision as many of the communities in our member conservancies experienced a challenging start to the year. Despite encountering strong economic headwinds brought on by the ripple effects of a prolonged drought, NRT Coast continued to be a catalyst for growth and development, improving the lives and livelihoods of the indigenous communities it serves.

The region made history when it launched the Kiunga Gear Exchange Program in which 85% of fishers in Kiunga Community Conservancy owning illegal beach seine nets voluntarily agreed to replace their nets with legal, sustainable fishing gear. This is a leap in the right direction that has reduced the destruction of the ocean floor, improved fishers' livelihoods, enhanced the Indian Ocean's effectiveness as a carbon sink, and bolstered the fight against climate change.

The women in NRT Coast have remained a beacon of light for marine and forest conservation in the Region and beyond, planting 146,284 mangroves in Pate, Kiunga, and Lower Tana Community Conservancies, over the last four years. It is our greatest honour to continue supporting these phenomenal women in their conservation endeavours.

NRT Coast and the member community conservancies in the Region are reaching for the sun and leading in fundraising across the NRT landscape. Their applaudable efforts to be self-sustaining have been rewarded as they secured Ksh 155.3 million (USD 1,150,370) from the Water Sector Trust Fund for sanitation and water services and resource management.

As NRT Coast continues to make a real difference in the region, I take this opportunity to thank our staff for their dedication. These members of our team have proven that no distance is too far, and frequently travel by land, sea and air, to the most remote parts of the country, despite the dangers, to address our member community conservancies' needs.

We value our long-standing relationships with the Lamu, Tana River, and Garissa County Governments, who have been instrumental in accelerating the realisation of community conservation goals in NRT Coast. We will keep working to build upon these associations.

I would also like to express my profound gratitude to our partners and donors for their unfailing support. Your cooperation and collaboration enable us to carry on with the work we do. *Asante sana!*

To our esteemed Board members and Council of Elders, your guidance, support, and direction remain the cornerstone of our growth and the reason for our success across the NRT landscape. A heartfelt thank you goes to each one of you.

Finally, to you, who support our work in NRT Coast in multiple meaningful ways, thank you! You continue to play a vital role in our community conservation journey.

**Tom Lalampaa,**  
Chief Executive Officer, Northern Rangelands Trust

## Message from the Regional Director



The first community conservancy at NRT Coast was established in 2007, while the region was operationalized in 2011. Today, NRT Coast supports seven member community conservancies spread across three counties in coastal Kenya, with a population of 93,120 community members, 165 of whom are employed. Of the seven NRT Coast member community conservancies, four feature coastlines, while two Pate (an island) and Kiunga depend more heavily on fishing than the others.

The NRT Coast landscape is rich in biodiversity and home to dozens of globally endangered animals and plants. The area contains one of East Africa's last largely intact forest ecosystems, 60% of Kenya's mangroves, coastal wetlands, coral reefs, and beaches.

Since its founding, NRT Coast has worked to solve issues pertaining to governance, socioeconomics, and biodiversity in natural resource management. The region has sought to address overfishing and damaging fishing practices, increasing marine litter, illegal logging and poaching, excessive dependence on the natural environment, weak governing institutions in the community, lack of market-based incentives for sustainable economic practices, poverty, habitat degradation, and climate change.

Over the last decade, NRT Coast has led the preservation of vital biodiversity including fisheries, wildlife, and forests. The region has bolstered the community conservancies' efforts and governance of fisheries, promoted livelihood diversification, and secured long-term investments and partnerships that benefit the community. The Region also supported

the model's customization for a marine context and connected community conservancies to fisheries' Beach Management Units (BMUs) and Community Forest Associations (CFAs).

NRT Coast's efforts have borne fruit, as the community's skills and capacity in resource management have increased, and gender and social inclusivity have been mainstreamed in community conservancies and associated institutions, including BMUs and CFAs.

The region's conservation activities have improved the community's access to deeper fishing grounds, and fisheries' co-management by supporting fishers in creating locally managed marine areas to protect critical marine habitats and improve harvests. Thanks to regional efforts, 85% of the destructive beach seine nets operated within Kiunga Community Conservancy have been replaced with sustainable fishing gear.

Transforming lives remains at the heart of NRT's work at the coast. Through conservation, NRT Coast has successfully developed new livelihood options for the community, increasing household income. The region has also enhanced access to portable clean fresh water and education, and the protection, restoration, and management of terrestrial and coastal habitats, including forests, mangroves, and coral reefs. Further, NRT Coast is spearheading the management of marine litter and plastics on coastal beaches, rangelands management, and conservation of endangered species, including the sea turtle and hirola, the world's rarest antelope.

Looking ahead, we will continue to work hand in hand with NRT Coast conservancies, supporting their community conservation and development priorities, providing technical oversight, and building their resilience against climate change. It is now my greatest pleasure to invite you to read about the impact we accomplished together in the first half of 2023.

**Hassan Yussuf,**  
Regional Director, Northern Rangelands Trust - Coast

# NRT'S STRATEGIC PLAN AND OBJECTIVES

## Transforming Lives, Securing Peace, and Conserving Natural Resources

Success for NRT is achieved when the communities it supports experience a positive shift in their lives because of increased peace and the conservation of their natural resources.



### Goal 1: Transform Lives

Communities within conservancies are benefitting from conservation. NRT continues to invest in community development priorities to improve their lives and create the conditions necessary for job creation and business growth.



### Goal 2: Secure Peace

NRT's Peace Program is a non-political platform that brings people in conservancies together, resulting in a safer environment for them, their families, and their livestock. While there were insecurity incidences in both the coast and the north in the first half of the year, the presence of conservancies made individuals living in unsafe areas feel safer during uncertain times.



### Goal 3: Conserve Natural Resources

NRT now supports 43 community conservancies spanning over 6,409,532 hectares in Kenya and Uganda and supporting a population of 630,896 people. NRT continues to provide outstanding protection for endangered species including elephants and rhinos, with only one case of ivory poaching being reported in its member community conservancies in the first six months of 2023.

While there are very few cases of ivory poaching, elephants continue to die as a result of human-wildlife conflict. To address this, NRT has taken a proactive approach and where practicable, is implementing customized interventions. Bushmeat poaching remains a significant threat to wildlife in parts of the NRT landscape, especially in some areas in the NRT Coast Region.

NRT's wildlife protection teams and community conservancy scouts are laser-focused on reducing poaching cases to zero.



I am very happy with what NRT is doing to reseed some of our environmentally degraded areas. I want to promise you the collaboration, the working together, and the partnership of the Government of Kenya in working on matters environment. We are going to do everything possible to ensure that we conserve the environment and make sure that wildlife, human beings, and biodiversity live together in harmony.

H.E. Dr. William Ruto, President of Kenya

Speaking when he visited NRT's booth at the 2023 Rhino Charge competition held in Nkoteiya Community Conservancy by the Rhino Ark Kenya Charitable Trust.



# Impact Highlights January-June 2023

## Governance



**30** people (15 new board members and 15 partners) from Ishaqbini Community Conservancy trained in good governance, leadership, and financial management.

**42** new youth conservation champions from Kiunga, Pate, and Lower Tana Delta Community Conservancies underwent Leadership and Management Program (LAMP) training.

**10** women leaders participated in NRT's third Women's Leadership Summit held in Baringo County, joining women leaders from northern Kenya in celebrating International Women's Day and amplifying their voices in conservation.

## Livelihood Development



An education scholarship program worth **Ksh 7.5 million** launched under the Kiunga Gear Exchange Program to benefit **20** students from the local fishing community in Kiunga Conservancy over the next four years (2023-2026).

**88** boats from **7** beach management units in Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies engaged in the Fish to Market Project.

**232** fishers recruited into the Fish to Market Project; trained on sustainable fishing methods and proper fish handling, processing, and reduction of post-harvest losses.

**10.3 tonnes** of fish sold under the Fish to Market Project in Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies, generating over Ksh 2 million (USD 14,814) for fishers.

**30** youth from Ishaqbini Community Conservancy graduated from the Ujuzi Manyattani Program after undergoing vocational training.

**80** female entrepreneurs from Pate and Ishaqbini Community Conservancies trained in entrepreneurship, business models, and financial literacy under the Biashara Mashinani Program.

**2,400** grafted mangoes distributed to 120 farmers in Ndera Community Conservancy to replace aging mango trees and increase farmers' yields.



## Wildlife



**79** sea turtle nestings recorded and 4 sea turtles rescued after being caught as by-catch in Kiunga Community Conservancy.

**5** new hirola births recorded in Ishaqbini Hirola Sanctuary.

**50,909** heads of livestock from 334 households in Ishaqbini Community Conservancy vaccinated against various diseases including black quarter, anthrax, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, and sheep and goat pox.

## Forests & Mangroves



**90** new mangrove restoration experts recruited from indigenous communities and partners in Lower Tana Delta Community Conservancy.

**50,790** mangrove seedlings planted, and nurseries holding 18,593 propagules established in Lower Tana Delta and Pate Community Conservancies.

**2** CFAs, Lamu and Pate-Ndau-Awer, launched participatory forest management plans and signed forest management agreements with the Kenya Forest Service.

## Marine



**176** fishers from Kiunga Community Conservancy issued with new alternative sustainable fishing gear, replacing 11 destructive beach seines (representing 85% of beach seines) operating in Kiunga Marine National Reserve.

**2,646** kilogrammes of octopus harvested after the reopening of octopus closures in Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies, generating Ksh 669,018 (USD 4,955) for fishers.

**3** new locally-managed marine areas successfully established and demarcated.

For this report: Ksh 135 = US\$ 1



# FOCUS ON NRT COAST'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

## Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators and Targets for NRT Coast's Strategic Objectives and High-Level Outcomes



### Output 1: Well-governed Community Conservancies

#### Governance

For community conservancies to be strong, autonomous, sustainable, well-managed, local institutions that truly involve the community in decision-making, good governance is a necessary prerequisite.

#### The Leadership and Management Program

Our bespoke Leadership and Management Program (LAMP) training increases conservancy leaders' and community members' governance capacity while fostering peacebuilding.

Members of well-governed conservancies can establish institutional frameworks for effective co-management of the natural environment, i.e., wildlife, forest, and fisheries resources.

42 new youth conservation champions underwent a customized LAMP training, bringing the total number of LAMP trainees since 2016 to 293.

This was the first-ever LAMP training for youth conducted in the NRT landscape. It sought to empower young people from fishing communities to effectively participate in conservation activities including fish catch monitoring, community-based sea turtle conservation, and coral reef restoration.



Youth Conservation Champions undergo LAMP training.

## Harnessing the Power of Gender Inclusivity in Community-based Conservation

We continue to strategically identify Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) gaps and promote culturally appropriate solutions to ensure that all community conservancy members and leaders—regardless of gender—can fully participate in and benefit from our conservation efforts and livelihood improvement activities.

10 women leaders from NRT Coast attended NRT’s Annual Women’s Leadership Summit in Baringo County, which sought to promote gender diversity in leadership, strengthen women’s leadership skills and expand their networks, increase aspiring women leaders’ understanding of gender equity in conservation and community development, and remove the barriers women face through capacity building, economic empowerment, and mentorship.

During the Summit, the women leaders from coastal Kenya joined those from northern Kenya in reviewing NRT’s Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy. They also celebrated International Women’s Day.

A gender survey was conducted in Pate, Kiunga, Awer, and Lower Tana Delta Community Conservancies to assess the progress made in incorporating gender and social inclusion in the operations of community conservancies and associated institutions (including beach management units and community forest associations). Survey data will also inform the review of NRT’s Marine Strategy and the development of NRT Coast’s Gender Action Plan.



Women leaders from NRT Coast attend NRT’s 2023 Women Summit and International Women’s Day Celebrations in Baringo.

## Marine Governance



NRT Coast, in partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), kicked off the development of Kiunga Marine National Reserve’s (KMNR) Management Plan, which will improve the co-management and effectiveness of the Reserve.

A consultation workshop was held for stakeholders to scope the Plan, marking the first step in its development process in line with KWS’ Protected Area Planning Framework. At the end of the workshop, a 13-person core planning team was constituted to lead the Plan’s formulation and a blueprint created for the process.

As part of KMNR’s Plan’s development process, a resource-based inventory was created for the Reserve, and a geographic information system database was established through a participatory process that included desktop reviews and field visits.

## Regional Community-driven Fundraising

The NRT Coast regional office and member community conservancies ramped up fundraising efforts in the first half of the year.

- The regional office secured new grants amounting to Ksh 44,706,330 (USD 331,158) for running NRT Coast's operations.
- Pate Community Conservancy in collaboration with its women's fisher groups secured Ksh 20,520,000 (USD 152,000) from Kenya Marine Fisheries and Socio-Economic Development (KEMFSED) for conservation and livelihood projects.
- Kiunga Community Conservancy was granted (Ksh 2,295,000) USD 17,000 in funding by the Lamu Environment Foundation for its ocean plastic recycling initiative, locally known as the Bahari Moja Project.



## Community Conservancy Governance

All seven community conservancies in NRT Coast held quarterly board, sub-committee, and awareness meetings to deliberate on conservancy plans, progress made, management issues, challenges encountered, and other decisions regarding conservancy governance.

Other governance activities that took place at the conservancy level in the first half of the year include the following:

- 30 people from Ishaqbini Community Conservancy (15 new board members, 15 local partners) were trained in good governance, leadership, and finance management.

- NRT Coast convened its biannual regional council of elders meeting and discussed the progress the Region had made, the challenges encountered, and plans for the future. Present at the meeting were regional staff, chairpersons and women representatives of the Region’s conservancies, and key partners including the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association, who raised awareness of the community land registration process, in accordance with the 2016 Community Land Act.
- Annual audits were conducted at all NRT Coast community conservancies, and feedback on the critical areas requiring improvement provided to the respective conservancy managers.

### Engaging the National and County Governments, Assemblies, and MPs

NRT Coast continues to prioritize the relationships it has with community members and all government stakeholders. To engage these stakeholders, the Region conducted the following activities in the first half of the year:

- Hosted 13 community members from Diani Kwale County at Pate Community Conservancy during an exchange visit in which they learnt about effective fisheries co-management, NRT’s community conservation model, and gender programs.
- NRT Coast’s marine community conservancies in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Heritage, the Kenya Wildlife Service, and the Wildlife Training and Research Institute, among other government stakeholders, commemorated World Sea Turtle Day at an event held in Mombasa County on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June.

During the event, 148 endangered green sea turtle hatchlings were released into the ocean, and 410 kilogrammes of ocean plastic were collected from the beach. The event also raised awareness among coastal communities of the importance of conserving marine life and the dangers that sea turtles face, including habitat loss, pollution, climate change, poaching, and being caught as by-catch.



- A team from KWS' headquarters and regional office visited the community conservancies in NRT Coast to learn about the Region's conservation work and identify priority areas for future collaboration and support, including wildlife conservation and management. The KWS team pledged to provide a patrol boat to be stationed at Mongo Sharif Camp in Kiunga Community Conservancy to enhance marine patrols, monitoring, and enforcement.



KWS team field visit and meeting with Kiunga (left) and Pate (right) Community Conservancies' leaders.

- NRT Coast attended a public participation workshop held as part of the development process for the National Maritime Transport Policy and Maritime Education and Training Policy. These policies seek to drive the sustainable growth of the maritime sector and create a conducive environment for maritime transport operations, by ensuring the availability of competent maritime professionals.



The NRT Coast team at the public participation workshop held during the development process for the National Maritime Transport Policy and Maritime Education and Training Policy.

- The Region attended a multistakeholder workshop organized by the Tana River County Government to validate the County's draft Climate Change Action Plan and Participatory Climate Risk Assessment (PCRA), which were then amended to include the stakeholders' input. The County's development of climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions will be guided by the five-year Plan.



## Output 2: Transforming Livelihoods and Businesses

### Livelihoods and Enterprise

For developing communities, the improvement of livelihoods, education, and infrastructure are among the key incentives for safeguarding natural resources. The value of livelihood investment is inextricably linked to ecosystem health and the success of conservation efforts.

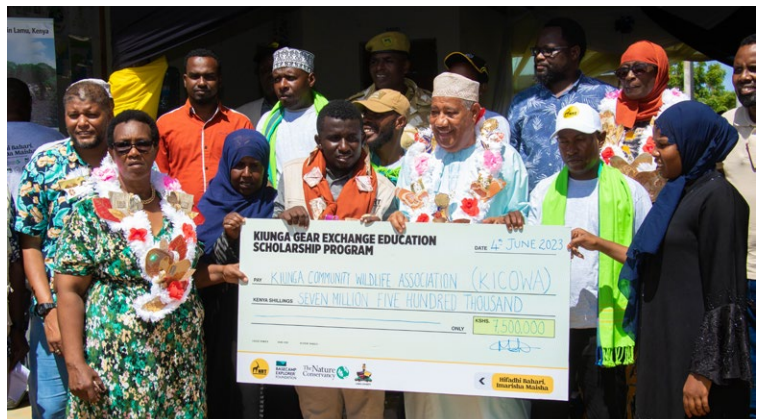
### Livelihoods Highlights

In the first half of the year:

- An education scholarship program worth Ksh 7.5 million (USD 55,555) was launched under the Kiunga Gear Exchange Program. A total of 20 students (five every year) from Kiunga Community Conservancy's fishing community will benefit from the scholarship program, which will run for four years.

The five beneficiaries (two boys joining secondary school and three girls enrolling in university/college) for the 2022/2023 financial year have been selected in line with the scholarship program's implementation criteria, and their fees have been fully paid.

Lamu County Governor, H.E. Issa Abdalla Timamy, launches the Kiunga Gear Exchange Education Scholarship Program.



- 30 youth (18 female, 12 male) from Ishaqbini Community Conservancy graduated from NRT Trading's Ujuzi Manyattani Program after undergoing three months of business management training. Upon graduation, the youth were issued startup toolkits, enabling them to launch their own businesses and gain self-employment.
- The Ujuzi Manyattani Program was launched in Kiunga Community Conservancy, with 30 youth enrolling for vocational training in tailoring (17) and outboard motor repair and maintenance (13).
- 80 women from Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies underwent training in entrepreneurship, business models, and financial literacy under NRT Trading's Biashara Mashinani Program.
- 2,400 grafted mango seedlings were distributed to 120 farmers in Ndera Community Conservancy to replace the farmers' aging mango trees and increase their yields.
- 15 women from Ndera Community Conservancy underwent training on value addition to locally available products. Among other skills, they learnt how to make jam from mangoes and oranges and soap from neem and aloe vera.





Ujuzi Manyattani Graduation Ceremony in Ishaqbini Community Conservancy.

Lamu County Governor, H.E. Issa Abdalla Timamy, presides over the launch of Ujuzi Manyattani in Kiunga Community Conservancy.



## Enterprise Highlights

### ■ The Fish to Market Project

The Fish to Market Project aims to increase access to markets for sustainably caught seafood, provide marketing support, and promote value addition and marine conservation as key pillars of community development.

In the first half of the year:

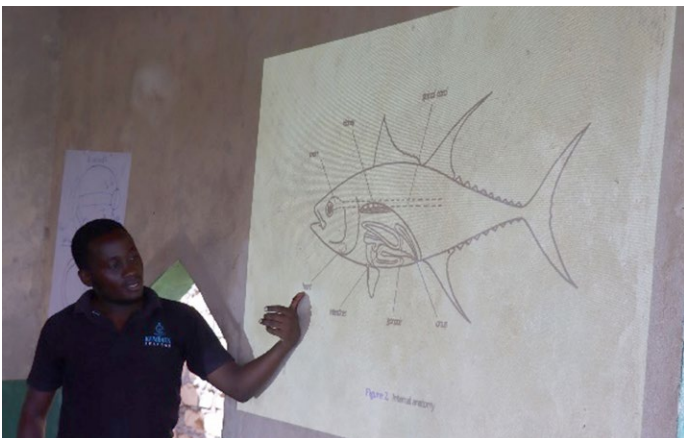
- The number of Beach Management Units (BMUs) in Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies that are part of the Fish to Market Project increased from 2 to 7.
- Consultation meetings regarding the expansion of the Fish to Market Project were conducted in 7 BMUs in Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies with fishers in villages.
- 88 fishing boats from the 7 BMUs in Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies were recruited into the Project, bringing the total number of boats and fishers involved in the Project to 106 and 291 respectively.
- Fishers were made aware of the fishing gear to use, the kinds and sizes of fish that are needed, consistency in supply, how to process the fish, buyer requirements, fish quality and hygiene, and other crucial factors.

- Data of all fishers in the Project was compiled into a database. The fishers currently involved in the Project are all pelagic fishers who have been reported using legal and non-destructive gear while fully complying with landing site rules.



Community consultation meetings regarding the expansion of the Fish to Market Project.

- All the 291 fishers involved in the Fish to Market Project were trained on sustainable fishing methods, proper fish handling, processing in accordance with buyer requirements, hygiene, and reduction of post-harvest losses.



53 fishers from Kiunga Beach Management Unit during training on sustainable.

- 10 kill bags, 5 cooler boxes, and 1 solar freezer were procured for fishers in the Project, reducing their post-harvest losses.
- 2 Beach Management Units (Faza and Kiwayu) involved in the Project sold 10.3 tonnes of fish to Kumbatia Seafood, generating Ksh 2,060,000 (USD 15,259) for fishers.

## The Women’s Micro-finance Program



The Women’s Micro-finance Program provides support to small businesses owned by women and youth, through a revolving fund that is accessible to community conservancy members who actively participate in conservation programs.

1,128 women and 206 male youth small business owners in NRT Coast have been economically empowered by the Program, whose beneficiaries have recorded high savings rates and consistent loan repayment.

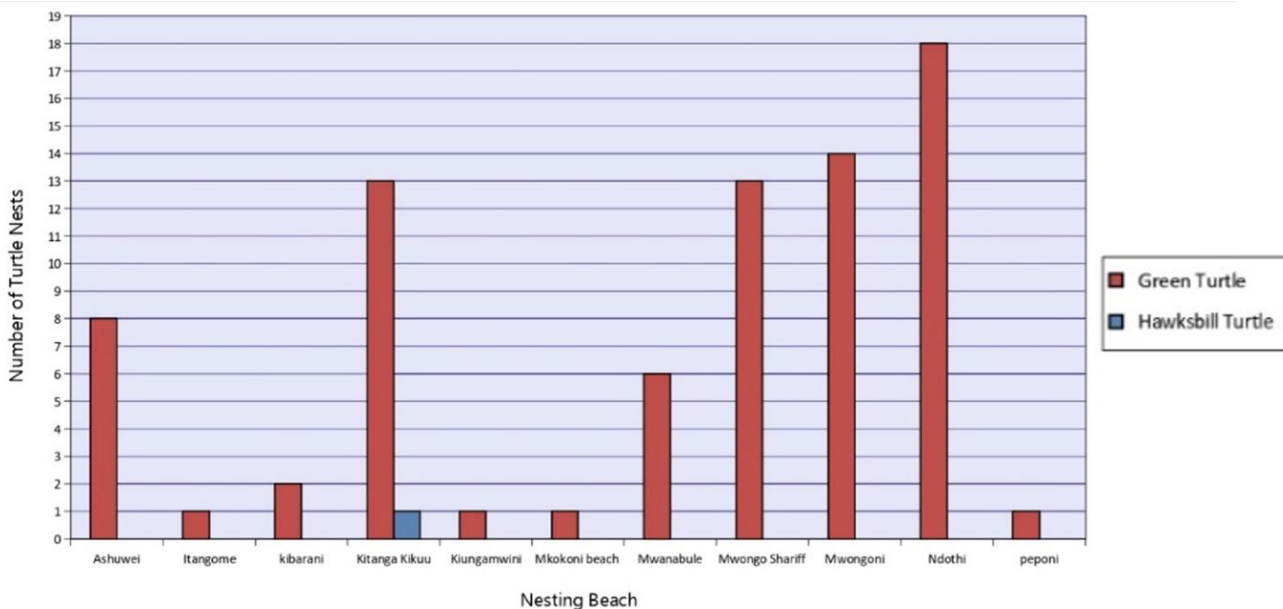


### Output 3: Natural Resource Conservation

#### Community-based Fish and Sea Turtle Conservation

Kiunga Community Conservancy, in collaboration with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and fisheries’ beach management units, recorded 79 sea turtle nests in the first half of the year, while 4 sea turtles were rescued after being caught in fishing nets as bycatch.

Turtle Nests by Species and Nesting Beach Recorded in January-June 2023





A Kiunga Community Conservancy scout translocates nests of the green sea turtle to safer ground.



A joint team of KWS rangers, Kiunga community conservancy scouts, and BMU patrol committee members rescue sea turtles caught as bycatch.

## Ishaqbini Hirola Sanctuary

The hirola is the world's most endangered antelope, with an estimated global population of around 500 individuals.

Since 2012, Ishaqbini Hirola Community Conservancy in Garissa County has been spearheading the recovery and protection of the endangered hirola. The Conservancy's Ishaqbini Hirola Sanctuary is the first community initiative of its kind in Kenya.

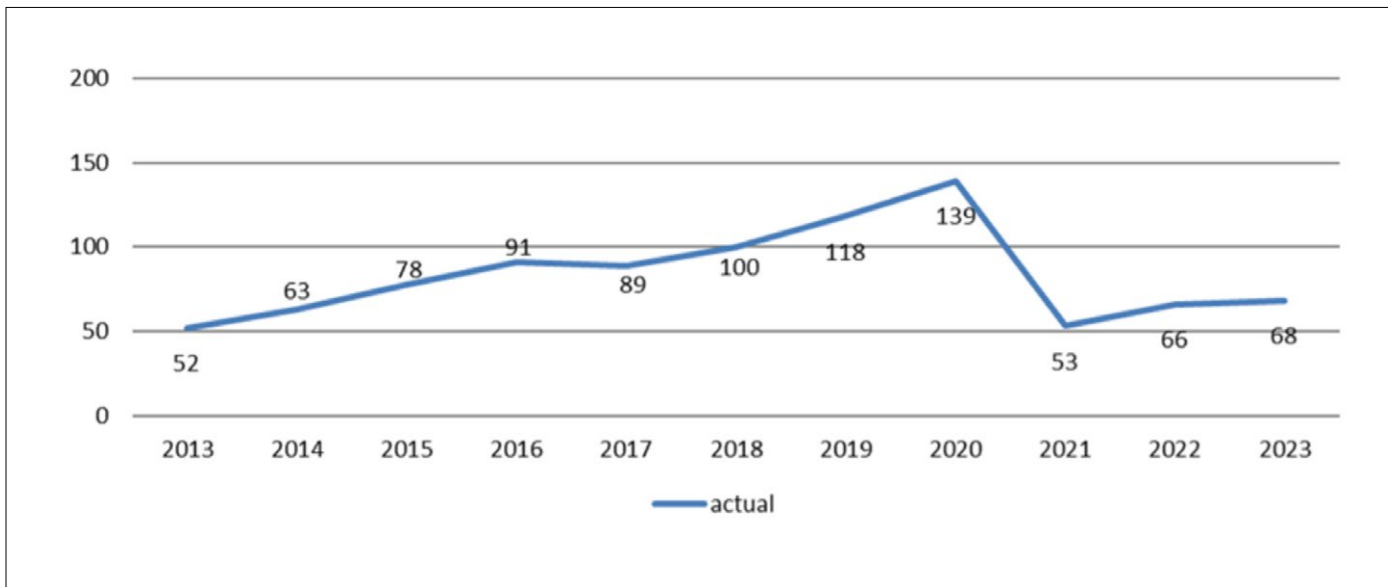
In 2021, a severe drought persisted in northern Kenya, adversely impacting the critically endangered hirola antelope in Ishaqbini Hirola Sanctuary.

To reduce overpopulation in the Sanctuary and increase the hirola species' chances of survival as the region grappled with the drought, 64 hirola antelope were released from the Sanctuary in 2021, nearly halving its population.

Since the release, hirola numbers in the Sanctuary have steadily increased from 53 in 2021 to 68 in 2023.



### Ishaqbini Hirola Sanctuary's Hirola Population (2013-2023)



### Safeguarding Community Livelihoods and the Hirola

Ishaqbini Hirola Community Conservancy organized a campaign in which 50,909 heads of cattle, sheep, and goats were vaccinated against several livestock diseases including black quarter, anthrax, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, goat pox, and sheep pox.

This vaccination exercise was conducted to prevent diseases that affect livestock—threatening pastoralists’ livelihoods—and protect the critically endangered hirola in the area, which are susceptible to the same diseases.



Livestock vaccination exercise in Ishaqbini Hirola Community Conservancy.



## Output 4: Forests

### Forests and Mangroves

NRT Coast is actively involved in forestry operations as forests are not only crucial water catchment areas but are also home to a wide variety of species.

To safeguard forests, the Region spearheads various forest conservation activities including registering Community Forestry Associations (CFAs) and aligning them with conservancy governance structures, mapping and monitoring forest conditions, protecting and managing forests, establishing tree nurseries, undertaking tree planting exercises, and developing Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMPs).

The formulation of PFMPs is mandated by law to ensure sustainable conservation, management, and restoration of public forests, mitigate the effects of climate change, and improve forest cover and livelihoods of communities living near forests through sustainable utilization of forest-based products.

### Forests

Lamu and Pate-Ndau-Awer (PANDAWE) CFAs launched Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMPs) in the first half of the year. The two CFAs also signed Forest Management Agreements (FMAs) with the Kenya Forest Service, demonstrating their commitment to long-term forest management.



Lamu and PANDAWE Community Forest Associations launch PFMPs and sign FMAs.

## Mangroves

As part of ongoing efforts to rehabilitate mangrove ecosystems, during the last six months:

- 50,790 mangrove seedlings were planted and 18,593 propagules were established in nurseries, bringing the total number of mangroves planted since 2018 to 146,284.



Women from community conservancies plant mangrove propagules in NRT Coast.

- NRT Coast and partners conducted a field-based ecological mangrove restoration training for communities in Pate and Lower Tana Delta Community Conservancies.



Field-based ecological mangrove restoration training in Lower Tana Delta Community Conservancy.

- 90 new mangrove restoration experts were selected from the community and partners in Lower Tana Delta Community Conservancy.



## NRT Coast Women: Saving the World from Climate Change, One Mangrove at a Time

The perfect time to experience all the delights the Lamu archipelago has to offer is low tide.

From swimming in turquoise blue waters to soaking in the warm rays of a beautiful sun while lounging on the beach, to enjoying the spectacular panoramic view of the Indian Ocean, low tide is your cue to step outside and engage in a variety of leisure activities.

For 37-year-old Zulfa Hassan, a local mangrove expert, low tide is synonymous with call time for work. Her moniker, 'Mama Mikoko' (Mother of Mangroves), is befitting of her as when the tide is low, she assembles her team of 30 women from Mtangawanda Village in Pate Marine Community Conservancy (PMCC) and begins the day's task of planting mangroves.

For years, these women watched helplessly as the unrestrained logging of mangrove trees decimated fishing, their primary source of income. Both fish and crabs give birth in waters filled with mangroves, and the felling of the trees also destroyed their habitats.

Beyond Lamu, globally, thousands of acres of mangroves have been lost as the trees are felled for farming or to provide timber and charcoal, threatening fishers' livelihoods. While Lamu is still the most densely forested stretch of Kenya's coastal shore, making up 59% of the 61,000 hectares of mangrove ecosystem, roughly 40% of its mangrove areas are degraded.

In 2018, the women unanimously agreed to stop the destruction of mangroves, which are salt-tolerant trees, and voluntarily plant and protect them. To reverse the adverse





effects climate change and deforestation had had on mangroves while simultaneously enhancing their livelihoods, the women started planting mangroves every year during the March-July and September-November planting seasons.

Mangrove forests are critical habitats for marine life, contribute significantly to biodiversity conservation, filter pollutants, stabilize the coastline ecosystem, and prevent erosion.

Since the women started restoring mangroves, fish and crab populations have increased in the area.

NRT, with the support of partners, including the KFS, TNC, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, and the Lamu County Government, trained the women on various aspects of mangrove restoration, paving the way for the Mangrove Restoration Program to thrive in three NRT Coast conservancies: PMCC, Kiunga Community Wildlife Association (KICOWA), and Lower Tana Delta.

“We did not know there were nine different mangrove species and that they grew in different places and soils, so our initial attempts at mangrove restoration were unsuccessful as very few survived. The survival rate of mangroves is currently very high because of the training we received,” adds Zulfa, who also serves on the PMCC board and is the chairperson of the Mtangawanda Women Association Group.

Having honed their expertise in mangrove restoration, the women have so far planted and restored over 146,284 mangroves across 15,000 hectares of forest since 2018. This has increased the number of fisheries and their income.

“We used to rely on our spouses to take care of our households’ needs. Now, we are supporting entire families. Mangrove restoration has transformed our lives and enabled us to generate an income from small businesses and crab sales, reducing poverty levels,” Zulfa explains.

The women practise sustainable harvesting and plan to collaborate with partners to restore 35,000 hectares of mangroves over the course of five years.





## Output 5: Marine

Our robust Marine Program protects habitats, reduces fishing pressure on near-shore areas, provides a community-driven approach for reef restoration, and creates additional livelihood options.

### Community-based Fish and Sea Turtle Conservation

To enhance the monitoring of fish catch in Beach Management Units (BMUs) and provide valuable reporting and feedback to communities and partner organizations, in the first half of the year, 26 youth (17 male and 9 female) from 13 BMUs in Pate and Kiunga Community Conservancies underwent training on fish data collection.

The last six months also saw four sea turtles rescued in Kiunga Community Conservancy after being caught in fishing nets as bycatch.

### Ocean Plastic Collection and Recycling

The Kiunga Plastic Collection and Recycling Project, locally known as the 'Bahari Moja Project,' aims at cleaning up beaches—which are nesting sites for endangered sea turtles—by collecting plastic debris.

In the last six months, 3.82 tonnes of plastic waste were collected from the nesting beaches in Kiunga Community Conservancy and sorted for recycling. 67 tonnes of plastic have been collected since the Project began in 2019.

The Project's beach clean-up initiatives have enhanced sea turtle populations, with 79 sea turtle nestings being recorded in Kiunga between January and June.



Community conservancy members during a beach cleanup exercise.



## Fisheries Co-management

### Curbing the Use of Destructive Beach Seine Nets

NRT Coast, in collaboration with the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), The Nature Conservancy, Basecamp Foundation, and Fauna & Flora, among others, continues to make a concerted effort to combat the use of destructive beach seine nets through a voluntary gear exchange program to promote sustainable fisheries management, protect marine ecosystems, and improve the livelihoods of community members.

In June, Kiunga Community Conservancy launched the Gear Exchange Program (GEP) at an event in which 176 beach seine fishers (11 owners and 165 crew) voluntarily agreed to cease using beach seine nets, and 85% (11 out of 13) of Kiunga's seine nets were replaced with sustainable fishing gear.

The beach seine nets submitted by the fishers were verified, inspected, and approved for exchange by the GEP Implementation Committee. A letter of acceptance was then signed by each program beneficiary.

Before the Program was launched, 50 fishers from 8 BMUs in Kiunga as well as partners were trained on the effects of various fishing gear on fish populations and the environment, enabling them to understand the ecological and socio-economic benefits of a successful gear exchange program. Following the training, the fishermen consented to the establishment of the GEP.

To accelerate the achievement of the Program's goals, an additional 232 fishers who recently joined the Fish-to-Market Pilot Project were trained on safety at sea, sustainable fishing methods, proper fish handling, processing, hygiene, and reduction of post-harvest losses.



Lamu County Governor, H.E. Issa Timamy, presides over the launch of the Gear Exchange Program in Kiunga Community Conservancy.

“

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.

H.E. Issa Timamy, Lamu County Governor



## Locally Managed Marine Areas

NRT Coast's Marine Program empowers the fisher community in Pate and Kiunga Conservancies to adopt sustainable fishing practices, preventing the loss of livelihoods caused by illegal and destructive fishing on nearshore reefs.

Three new locally managed marine areas (LMMAs) and fish replenishment zones in Kiunga Conservancy were established in collaboration with fisheries' BMUs, the KWS, local fishers, and the County Fisheries Department, increasing the number of LMMAs in Kiunga and Pate Conservancies from six to nine with a coverage of 746.64 hectares.

Ground truthing was also done before the institution of the three new LMMAs to determine the suitability of the sites, after which they were mapped and demarcated with boundary markers (buoys). A two-week awareness campaign was also conducted to sensitize fishers on the new LMMAs.

Each of the existing LMMAs has a unique management approach that includes the establishment of temporary octopus closures, no-take-zones, and gear restriction areas.

As a result of the closures:

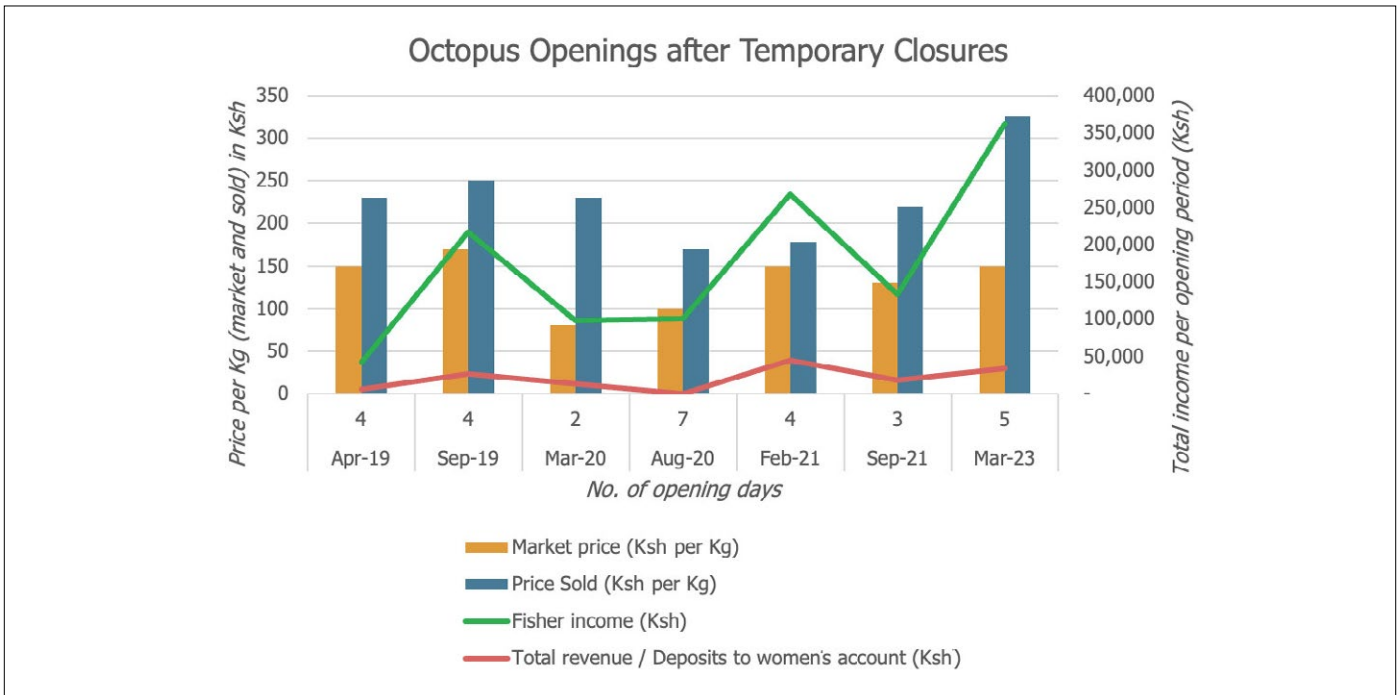
- Octopus catch and size increased, with 2,646 kilograms of octopuses being harvested in Pate and Kiunga Community Conservancies in March 2023 and the highest individual octopus weighing 4.46 kilograms.
- The market price for octopus doubled, increasing the income generated by the fishers, who ultimately earned Ksh 669,018 (USD 4,955).
- The population of other fish species in the closures increased, according to observations made by fishers, proving the closures positively impact the entire marine ecosystem.



Opening of octopus closures at the Mwamba Mkuu site in Kiunga Community Conservancy.

In Ndau area on Pate Island, additional accommodation facilities were constructed for community conservancy scouts, enhancing marine patrols and LMMA monitoring in Pate Community Conservancy.

To further boost marine conservation efforts, 23 community members and 4 BMU patrol sub-committee members from Pate and Kiunga Community Conservancies were trained on Fishery Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS), and standard operating procedures, including adherence to the Human Rights Framework.



## Artificial Coral Reef Restoration

Pate and Kiunga Community Conservancies conducted biannual conservancy scout-based coral reef monitoring surveys in their wider conservation areas and the locally managed marine areas (LMMAs).

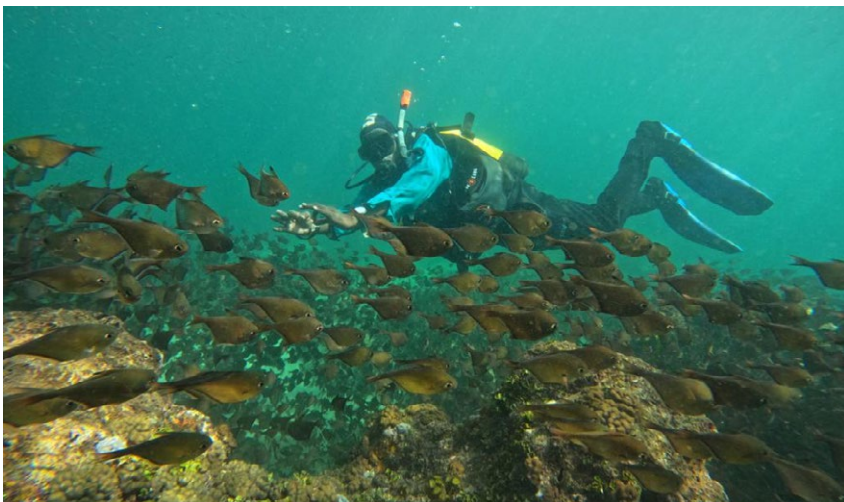
The surveys covered 18 sites in Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies and focused on assessing benthic cover, densities of fish of high commercial value, and invertebrate indicators of ecosystem health. Data collected from these surveys is crucial for guiding management decisions and actions such as patrols at the community conservancy level.

Scientific, scuba-based surveys were also conducted in 26 sites in the two conservancies to assess the ecosystem ahead of the Kiunga Marine National Reserve's (KMNR) Management Plan review.

Data collected during the surveys centered on adult coral, recruits, coral condition, coral genus abundance, fish abundance, and macroinvertebrates.

Seagrass percentage cover, shoot density, and canopy height were also studied during the surveys, whose findings will guide the development of fisheries' co-management strategies, expand the coral reef inventory, provide insights on the effectiveness of the LMMAs, and facilitate the development of best practices for resilience-based coral reef management.

NRT Coast conducted the surveys in partnership with the KWS, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, The Nature Conservancy, Fauna & Flora, Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO) East Africa, Pate and Kiunga Conservancies and members of the community.



## Looking Ahead

Our member community conservancies are making steady progress in their efforts to be self-sustaining. Moving forward, we will continue to support them in increasing their resilience against climate change and its effects, to ensure they remain the gold standard for achieving economic development through community-led conservation.

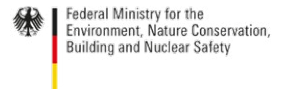
## Asanteni Sana!

The Coast Region of the Northern Rangelands Trust would like to thank the following principal donors and partners for their invaluable support, which enables the Region to transform lives, build peace, and conserve the natural resources along Kenya's northern coast.

### County Governments



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