



Photo: Zoe Phillips

2024 REPORT

16 YEARS OF FOCUSED
CONSERVATION



WILDLIFE ACT
FOCUSED CONSERVATION

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Overview

Wildlife ACT was founded in 2008 by Chris Kelly, Dr. Simon Morgan and Johan Maree, who felt a collective responsibility to contribute to the conservation of Africa's wildlife on a practical level. With diminishing public conservation budgets and increasing threats such as poaching and habitat loss, the founders felt duty bound and committed to preserving what remained of Africa's iconic and endangered species. The simple question that ignited it all was: how can we protect what we don't understand? Daily wildlife monitoring provides the answers.

The organisation embarked on a necessary and passion-filled journey with management-oriented monitoring at its heart. Wildlife ACT brought sustainable funding models, resources and expertise to the monitoring of key species such as African Wild Dogs, Rhinos, Vultures, and Cheetahs, while also addressing some of the key threats that face them.

Today, our team of 55 provide wildlife monitoring services that are essential to wildlife and ecosystem conservation across many of KwaZulu-Natal's public, community-owned, and private reserves, particularly as public funding for protected areas continues to decline.

Our Vision

Wildlife ACT's vision is to see landscapes that have **thriving wildlife, resilient ecosystems** and **empowered people**. We believe that this is achievable if: **biodiversity is recovered** and **ecosystem integrity is secured**.

These can only be sustainably maintained if these natural spaces are fully supported by **people** and informed by quality **data**.



OVERVIEW: HIGHLIGHTS



Hours in the field:

13, 736



Tracking devices fitted:

100



Website users:

120k



Kilometres driven:

140 712 km



Individuals treated / saved:

21



Volunteers Joined:

224

Strengthening Vulture Conservation Across KwaZulu-Natal

Wildlife ACT advanced its Vulture Conservation Programme through targeted awareness work that highlighted the essential ecological role of Vultures and the risks they face across the province. In Zululand, the team continued critical research to understand the extent of lead exposure in KwaZulu-Natal's Vulture populations. A new initiative to deploy tracking units on Hooded Vultures marked a major step forward, supporting efforts to understand their breeding behaviour and movements for the first time in the province.

A Significant Step Forward for Vulture Recovery

Another proud moment came in May when four rehabilitated Cape Vultures were successfully released into the Southern Drakensberg through a partnership between Wildlife ACT, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and FreeMe Wildlife. Their return to the wild is an important contribution to regional Vulture recovery efforts.

Mzimkulu Vulture Hide Opens to Strong Support

The launch of the Mzimkulu Vulture Hide in the Southern Drakensberg has created a sustainable safe feeding site for Vultures and offers new opportunities for public awareness and conservation tourism. Developed in partnership with Riverlea Farm and supported by Invicta Wildlife, CHEP, the European Outdoor Conservation Association, Laetitia Steynberg and local Underberg farms, the hide has welcomed more than 180 visitors in its first nine months and now hosts important educational programmes for local schools and communities.



CONTINUED

Supporting Rhino Conservation Efforts

Wildlife ACT continued to support Rhino conservation through daily monitoring, adaptive data collection and direct involvement in preventative measures.

On Somkhanda Game Reserve, a three day dehorning operation funded by the Rhino Recovery Fund and others helped reduce poaching risk for this vulnerable population. Partnerships remained central to this work, ensuring that field teams and protected area staff had the support they needed for this critical conservation action.

Launching the Integrated Big Cats Programme

A major development in 2024 was the formal integration of the Cheetah, Leopard and Lion monitoring projects into the unified Big Cats Programme. This shift aligns Wildlife ACT's work with the government's Biodiversity Management Plan for big cats and supports coordinated, data informed decision making across species.

Continued support from partners such as the Forever Wild Foundation, Invicta Wildlife Fund and Aurex Constructors strengthened efforts to understand and protect these apex predators across KwaZulu-Natal.

Ongoing Collaboration in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park

Wildlife ACT is proud to have continued its long standing collaboration with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park. Daily monitoring, rapid response and species specific support once again played a key role in safeguarding priority wildlife across one of Africa's most important protected areas.

A Landmark Three Year Collaboration for Coexistence

In partnership with People Nature Connect and with funding from the WWF Nedbank Green Trust, Wildlife ACT launched a three year initiative focused on improving human wildlife coexistence in Hluhluwe iMfolozi Park's surrounding communities.

This project aims to strengthen cooperation between conservation authorities and communities, enhance livelihoods and support informal sector businesses while creating safer conditions for wildlife and people.

ENDANGERED AND PRIORITY SPECIES **CONSERVATION PROGRAMMES**

Wildlife ACT exists to protect and restore Africa's most threatened species through professional, science-led conservation. Our Endangered and Priority Species Conservation Programmes form the foundation of this work, providing daily monitoring, data collection, and protection services that directly support biodiversity recovery across KwaZulu-Natal and beyond.

These programmes operate in close collaboration with conservation authorities, landowners, and partners to fill critical capacity gaps in under-resourced protected areas. Our teams work year-round in the field, tracking and recording wildlife movements, identifying emerging threats, and supporting emergency response operations. Every dataset collected contributes to evidence-based decision-making that improves the management and survival prospects of the species we serve.

Through a commitment to consistency and collaboration, Wildlife ACT helps safeguard species such as the African Wild Dog, Black and White Rhinoceros, Cheetah, Lion, Leopard, Elephant, and Vultures. Each project plays an important role in restoring balance to ecosystems, strengthening genetic diversity, and maintaining the ecological processes upon which countless other species depend.

By combining scientific rigour with practical fieldwork, these programmes demonstrate the power of data, partnership, and perseverance in driving measurable conservation impact.



VULTURE CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

Vultures are vital to the health of ecosystems, serving as nature's sanitation system by rapidly removing carcasses and preventing the spread of disease. All six Vulture species found in South Africa are listed as Vulnerable, Endangered, or Critically Endangered, with the Bearded Vulture and Cape Vulture facing particularly severe declines.

Wildlife ACT's Vulture Conservation Programme works to stabilise and recover these populations through research, awareness, and direct protection efforts. Operating through the Southern Drakensberg Conservation Project and the Zululand Vulture Project, the programme combines scientific monitoring, education, and partnerships to address major threats such as poisoning, collisions, lead contamination, and food scarcity.

Meet the Team:



Anel Olivier

Species Conservation
Director, Vulture
Conservation
Programme Manager



Gareth Robinson

Senior Field Technician:
All Species



Tegan Goldschmidt

Vulture Data Technician,
Mzimkulu Vulture Hide
Manager



Phillip Swart

Technical Solutions
Coordinator



Steve Williamson

Vulture Impact
Coordinator

Key Successes

In 2024, the Vulture Conservation Programme focused on strengthening Vulture awareness and data collection through expanded monitoring, education, and infrastructure. The new Mzimkulu Vulture Hide, launched in February, became a hub for both research and community learning as part of the Southern Drakensberg Conservation Project. Educational sessions were introduced for local schools, supported by the development of age-appropriate activity booklets designed to inspire young conservation ambassadors.

In Zululand, the team continued its investigation into lead exposure among Vultures, building on previous data to guide management decisions. A new project was initiated to fit tracking units to Hooded Vultures for the first time in KwaZulu-Natal to determine their breeding locations and movement patterns. This work will support targeted conservation action for the species and strengthen regional knowledge.



Goals for the Year:

- Strengthen fundraising to sustain and expand field operations.
- Build team capacity through the appointment of a senior field technician and a new conservation coordinator.
- Continue improving the coverage and consistency of annual nest surveys.
- Enhance the use of live tracking systems and data management tools to support real-time decision-making and reporting.



Achievements and Highlights

During 2024, the Vulture Conservation Programme made measurable progress in both scientific research and field implementation. The finalisation of the scientific paper “Widespread lead exposure of vultures across south-eastern southern Africa” marked an important milestone and will be presented at the South African Wildlife Management Association Conference in Windhoek.

The Mzimkulu Vulture Hide was launched in February, serving as both an educational platform and a monitoring base. Age-appropriate learning materials were developed to accompany school visits, strengthening engagement and long-term awareness. Construction also began on a new Vulture hide at a key Bearded Vulture feeding site in Lesotho, in partnership with the Bearded Vulture Recovery Programme.

The team doubled the number of active tracking units, improving emergency response capacity and enabling more adaptive conservation action. The most extensive ground-truthing nest survey to date was completed, with over 100 nests recorded, while new lead sample collections provided essential data for continued analysis.

Scientific collaboration remained a strong focus, with support provided to an MSc thesis titled “Seasonal Age Dynamics of Bearded and Cape Vultures at Two Supplementary Feeding Sites in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa” by Irem İğdeli in partnership with Wageningen University.

The programme also played a role in public engagement through the Rhino Peak Challenge and related awareness campaigns, while continuing to work closely with partners in Zululand and the Southern Drakensberg to maintain coordinated monitoring and safe food provisioning.

These efforts directly contribute to South Africa's National Vulture Conservation Strategy and the Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures. The programme continues to provide reliable data and leadership through national and regional working groups, including the Bearded Vulture Recovery Programme, Zululand Vulture Project, and National Vulture Task Force.





2024 STATISTICS



31

TRACKING UNITS
DEPLOYED



290

NESTS
MONITORED



97

TAG AND RING
RE-SIGHTINGS
RECORDED



48

SAMPLES
COLLECTED FOR
LEAD TESTING



7

REHABILITATED
VULTURES
RELEASED BACK
INTO THE WILD

Contribution to the Larger Picture

The Vulture Conservation Programme contributes directly to South Africa's National Vulture Conservation Strategy and the Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP). Through consistent nest and population monitoring, Wildlife ACT provides vital data to national and international conservation groups, including the Bearded Vulture Recovery Programme, Zululand Vulture Project, and National Vulture Task Force.

Ongoing monitoring, emergency response, and awareness work strengthen the understanding of species status, inform conservation policy, and ensure that local action contributes to national and continental recovery efforts.

Planning Ahead

The programme will focus on expanding its impact through collaboration, improved systems, and targeted awareness. Priorities include increasing understanding of lead's effects on wildlife and people, promoting lead-free alternatives, and strengthening live monitoring and data systems such as EarthRanger.

A key focus will be developing a strategy to address intentional poisoning, the greatest threat to Vultures in KwaZulu-Natal. The team will continue growing the lead-awareness campaign, deepening partnerships to combat wildlife crime, building capacity, and improving coordination around safe food provisioning with conservation partners.

Partners



BIG CAT CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

The Big Cat Programme brings together Wildlife ACT's work on Cheetah, Leopard, and Lion under a unified framework that supports informed management and long-term species sustainability. This integration aligns with the government's development of a Biodiversity Management Plan for Big Cats and reflects Wildlife ACT's commitment to a coordinated approach to carnivore conservation.

Through targeted monitoring, applied research, and collaboration with partners, the programme aims to enhance understanding of population dynamics, improve genetic diversity, and ensure the continued survival of these keystone species across KwaZulu-Natal.

Meet the Team:



Danielle Theron
Big Cat Programme
Manager



Corrie van Greunen
Leopard Survey Field
Technician



Key Successes

This year marked the formation of the Big Cat Programme, which united Wildlife ACT's work on Cheetah, Leopard, and Lion. The programme focused on delivering integrated monitoring and data collection to guide adaptive management and strengthen collaboration between conservation partners. Core priorities included expanding the scope of leopard camera trap surveys, improving Cheetah collaring efforts, and supporting informed decision-making across KwaZulu-Natal's protected areas.



Photo: Jonathan Dutt

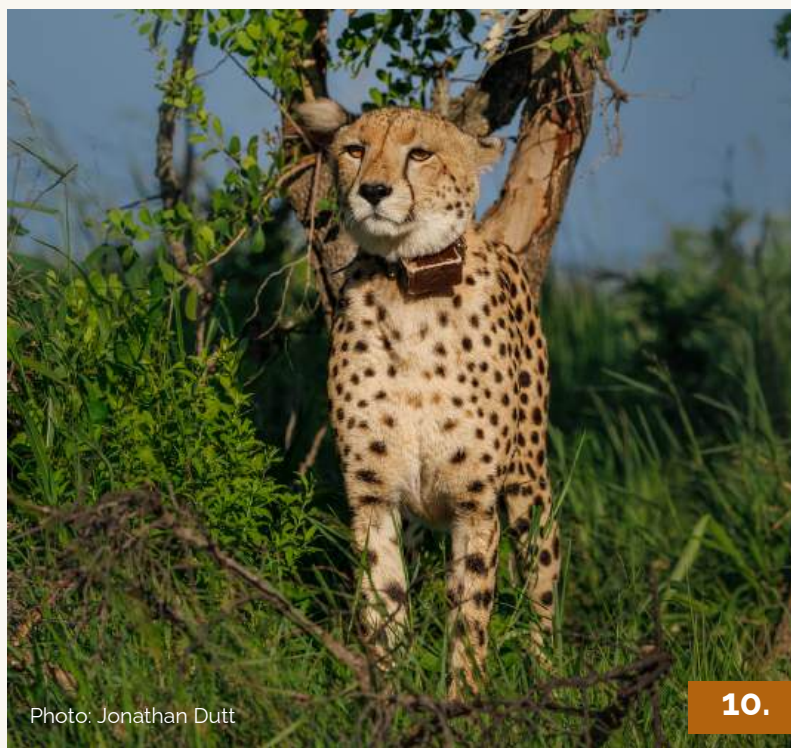


Photo: Jonathan Dutt

Goals for the Year:

- Expand Leopard camera trap surveys and Cheetah collaring to build comprehensive data for population and movement studies.
- Improve data collection methods and integrate information across stakeholders using platforms such as African Carnivore WildBooks and EarthRanger.
- Strengthen collaborations with conservation organisations, local authorities, and key stakeholders to support Big Cat conservation.

Achievements and Highlights

Five Leopard camera trap surveys were completed, capturing 828 Leopard images and generating valuable population data across 94 500 hectares of Protected Area. A Master's student joined the project to further analyse Leopard population dynamics and refine population estimates.

Within the Cheetah Conservation Project, collaborative efforts contributed to a measurable increase in the provincial Cheetah population, reinforcing its role as an important sub-population within South Africa's national metapopulation. Two Lions were collared, and two translocated, improving population management and genetic exchange within the landscape.

Collectively, these efforts have provided vital data for biodiversity management and supported the development of the national Biodiversity Management Plan for Big Cats. By contributing to this larger framework, Wildlife ACT ensures that provincial monitoring directly informs national conservation strategies, strengthening population resilience and genetic diversity for these species.



2024 STATISTICS



1050

BIG CAT CAMERA
TRAP IMAGES
CAPTURED



710

BIG CAT
SIGHTINGS
RECORDED



7

CHEETAH
COLLARED



2

LIONS
COLLARED



2

LION
TRANSLOCATIONS
COMPLETED



1

MASTER'S
DEGREE ON
LEOPARD
COMPLETED

Contribution to the Larger Picture

Monitoring efforts through the KwaZulu-Natal Leopard Monitoring Project have captured critical data on Leopard populations across 94 500 hectares of Protected Area, providing essential insights that support informed management decisions and contribute to broader biodiversity goals. Similarly, initiatives of the Cheetah Conservation Project have led to substantial growth in the Cheetah population, significantly advancing national conservation strategies.

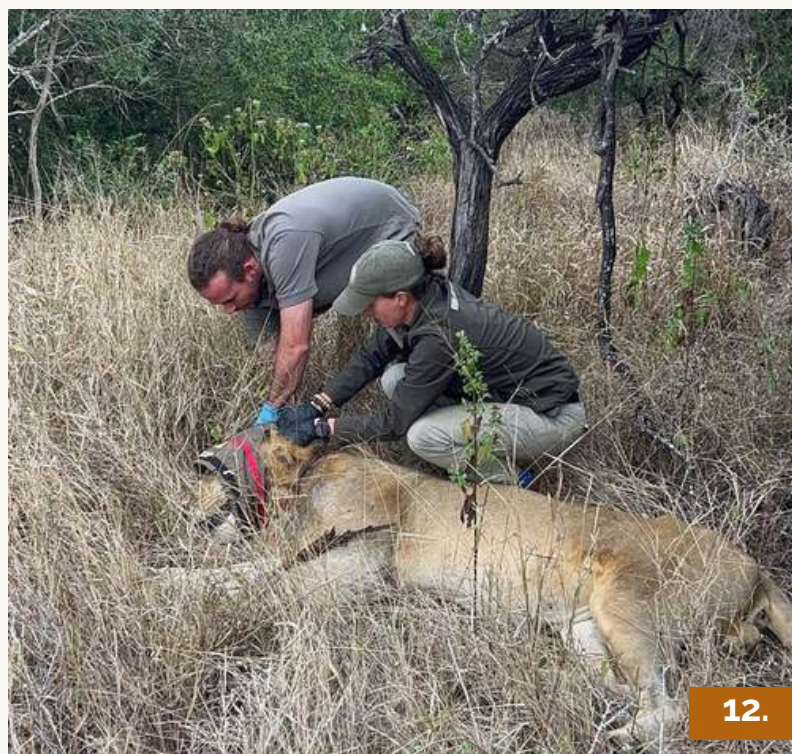
The growth of the Cheetah population, facilitated by collaborative partnerships, strengthens the overall metapopulation in South Africa. This bolsters genetic diversity and population stability and aligns with national objectives to improve the resilience and sustainability of key species. Long-term monitoring by Wildlife ACT contributes directly to the development of the Biodiversity Management Plan for Big Cats, ensuring that conservation decisions are guided by robust data and collaborative action.

Planning Ahead

The programme will continue expanding leopard monitoring efforts through new surveys across additional protected areas in KwaZulu-Natal. A PhD study will build on existing datasets to deepen understanding of leopard ecology within fragmented landscapes.

In Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, the team will increase Cheetah collaring and monitoring to sustain genetic diversity and inform adaptive management. Continued collaboration with partners will remain central, alongside broader engagement with new stakeholders to address threats through proactive management. The programme will also contribute to the formalisation of the national Biodiversity Management Plan to ensure that conservation decisions are guided by current data and best practice.

Partners



COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AND COEXISTENCE PROGRAMMES

Wildlife ACT's Community and Coexistence Programmes form a long-standing, community-anchored conservation initiative based in Zululand, KwaZulu-Natal. These programmes address both biodiversity protection and human development by working directly with communities living adjacent to Protected Areas. The work is rooted in the understanding that lasting conservation success can only be achieved when the people who live closest to wildlife are supported, included, and empowered to be part of the solution.

Over more than a decade, Wildlife ACT has developed and refined an integrated conservation model that combines environmental education, practical human-wildlife conflict mitigation, and rapid emergency response. Together, these components form a unified strategy that operates across complex landscapes, particularly in areas beyond formal Protected Area boundaries.

The approach is led by locally employed Community Conservation Liaisons and Monitors who deliver education, facilitate coexistence, and strengthen relationships between communities and conservation authorities.

The programme's vision is one of thriving wildlife, resilient ecosystems, and empowered people. By aligning conservation outcomes with socio-economic development and long-term capacity building, Wildlife ACT demonstrates what is possible when communities are not only included in conservation, but lead it.



Meet the Team:



PJ Roberts

Nature and People
Director



Zama Ncube

Community
Conservation Manager



Thembani Maluleke

Community Conservation
and Coexistence
Programmes Coordinator



Jabulani Nkwanyana

Human-Wildlife Conflict
Officer



Sboniso Mazolo

Community Conservation
Liaison



Makhosi Mpontshane

Community Conservation
Liaison



Dumsile Fakude

Community Conservation
Liaison



Zime Khanyile

Community Conservation
Liaison



Nzuzo Siyaya

Community Conservation
Monitor



Nhlakanipho Myeni

Community Conservation
Monitor

Key Successes

In 2024, the Community Conservation and Coexistence Programmes focused on consolidating years of progress and identifying key leverage points to maximise long-term impact. These included strengthening Environmental Education, consolidating previous education efforts, recruiting key personnel, and identifying new opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.

The team worked closely with communities and partner organisations to assess challenges and opportunities for coexistence, deepen understanding of human-wildlife conflict, engage stakeholders on key pain points, and identify mechanisms that promote coexistence.

Goals for the Year:

In 2024, the primary goal was to launch critical projects in Wildlife ACT's operational areas while reinforcing existing work. This included:

- **Strengthening Community Conservation Liaisons (CCLs)**

The CCLs of Wildlife ACT continued to play a central role across Zululand through environmental education lessons, youth mentorship, immersive conservation experiences, and bush camps in Protected Areas.

- **HiP Immersive Environmental Education Project**

This project focused on empowering youth in communities surrounding Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park through the Hlabisa Ambassadors Club and an immersive internship programme. Fifteen interns participated in hands-on conservation work and community-based environmental activities, building networks and capacity for long-term stewardship. This resulted in the growth of the Hlabisa Ambassador Club, which was organically formed by past interns.

- **Human-Wildlife Coexistence, Cooperation and Economic Integration in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park Project (WWF Nedbank Green Trust)**

This project officially started half way through 2024 and is focused on strengthening human-wildlife coexistence and enhancing community livelihoods through innovative partnerships. The HiP project aims to tackle human-wildlife conflicts (HWC) by fostering collaboration between park stakeholders, including communities, NGOs, government, and private entities. Workshops will be held to identify threats to coexistence and spearhead solutions, supported by data collected by Community Conservation Monitors (CCMs) and participation by key stakeholders.

- **HiP Community Conservation Collaboration**

Wildlife ACT has played a key part in facilitating and spearheading the formation of a platform for engagement, knowledge sharing and collaboration in the form of a Community Conservation Collaboration around Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park.

This is a collaborative network of organisations focused on collaborating to safeguard the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park in the present and future by maximising inclusive and sustainable economic activity for the communities that live on the borders of the Park, raising environmental awareness, and promoting human-wildlife coexistence.

Through coordinated efforts, the network is seeking to maximise impact, support efficient utilisation of resources, and foster long-term sustainability across the HiP landscape. We are proud of what it has developed into so far, and are optimistic about the future impact that this network can have for the landscape.

- **Conserving Nature's Clean-Up Crew**

The Conserving Nature's Clean-Up Crew project focuses on protecting vital scavengers such as the African White-backed Vulture, Lappet-faced Vulture, Leopard, and Spotted Hyaena, all of which play an important role in maintaining the health and balance of savanna ecosystems.

The initiative includes training local individuals in Poison Response and increasing their capacity to address wildlife poisoning incidents. The goal is to mitigate these threats, as these species help prevent the spread of diseases by consuming rotting carcasses. Additionally, it aims to raise awareness about the importance of these "clean-up crew" species through educational programs, particularly targeting local school children.

The project addresses the growing threats these species face in Zululand, particularly from poisoning and human-wildlife conflict occurring outside protected areas.

Through specialised training in poison response, local individuals are gaining the skills and tools needed to detect and respond to wildlife poisoning and other conflict-related incidents more effectively.

Central to this work are Community Conservation Monitors who are locally employed to help identify potential conflict before it occurs and to support both communities and conservation authorities with rapid response actions. The appointment of four additional monitors through the WWF Nedbank Green Trust project has expanded this work to two more communities surrounding Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, strengthening efforts to safeguard both livelihoods and wildlife.



HiP Livestock Owner Training

Wildlife ACT, together with agricultural partners and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, launched the first livestock owner training workshop focused on The Basics of Animal Health for farmers living around Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park. Twenty-five farmers from the Nhlanganwe community took part, gaining practical knowledge on disease prevention, vaccination, herd health, and market readiness.

The training supported improved livestock productivity, encouraged peer learning, and strengthened economic resilience in a community that has faced frequent human-wildlife conflict. By building local capacity in responsible livestock management, the initiative helps reduce conflict risk, lowers the chance of disease transmission between livestock and wildlife, and fosters more positive relationships with the park.

This pilot forms the foundation for expanding similar training to other hotspot communities, creating a growing network of informed livestock owners who are aligned with long-term coexistence efforts.

Achievements and Highlights

The awarding of WWF Nedbank Green Trust funding for the Human-Wildlife Coexistence, Cooperation and Economic Integration in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park (HiP) Project was a major milestone for Wildlife ACT's community-focused conservation efforts. This multi-year initiative supports coexistence and sustainable livelihoods for communities.

The HiP Community Conservation Collaboration also gained momentum, strengthening partnerships between Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Wildlife ACT, and local stakeholders. This coordinated approach has improved conflict response, awareness, and community dialogue around conservation challenges and opportunities.

Recruitments within both the Community Conservation Programme and the Human-Wildlife Coexistence Programme have expanded local capacity. Their involvement enhances rapid response, data collection, and engagement reach, ensuring that conservation continues to be locally led and inclusive.



2024 STATISTICS



56

AMBASSADOR
CLUB MEETINGS
HELD



252

PATROL DAYS
COMPLETED BY
CCMS



92

SNARES
DISARMED



15

YOUNG ADULT INTERNS
GAINING KNOWLEDGE,
EXPERIENCE, AND
EMPLOYABILITY



580

CHILDREN ENGAGED
IN CONSERVATION
EDUCATION

Contribution to the Larger Picture (Global Goals)

This year, the work of the CCCP has made strides towards some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, the work of the programme supports the alleviation of poverty (SDG 1) by employing young adults from impoverished communities and building resilience against environmental challenges through biodiversity conservation and Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) mitigation.

It also promotes quality education (SDG 4) by providing environmental education on sustainable development and offering bursaries to high-achieving members for further studies. Furthermore, the programme fosters economic growth and decent work (SDG 8) by mentoring youth for careers in sustainable tourism and conservation. It works toward protecting life on land (SDG 15) by conserving ecosystems, protecting biodiversity, and reducing illegal wildlife poaching.

Finally, strong partnerships (SDG 17) remain central to the programme's success, as it relies on collaboration between communities, conservation organisations, and key stakeholders to achieve shared goals for people and nature.

Planning Ahead

The team remains strong and motivated, with a shared understanding of upcoming priorities. Expanding the Environmental Education footprint will be a key focus, along with broadening the understanding of human-wildlife conflict across the province. Community Conservation Monitors and field staff will continue to play a vital role in identifying and responding to conflict.

Strengthened partnerships and immersive education experiences will remain central to the programmes' approach as Wildlife ACT continues building capacity and fostering coexistence across KwaZulu-Natal.

Partners



SPECIAL PROJECTS

PROTECTED AREAS

HLUHLUWE-IMFOLOZI PARK BOUNDARY PROJECT

Overview

The HiP Boundary Support project is an essential component of safeguarding Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park. Perimeter fences play a critical role in reducing rhino poaching risk and preventing wildlife from moving into neighbouring communities. In 2024, Wildlife ACT continued to strengthen this work through the HiP Boundary Support Team, established with support from the Rhino Recovery Fund, Dry Creek Foundation and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

The team conducted daily fenceline inspections, repaired damage, and provided fast responses to incursions and fence tampering. The project also provides meaningful employment for community members living adjacent to the park, helping to reinforce local support for conservation and build stronger relationships between the park and surrounding communities.

By combining routine maintenance, swift reporting, and integrated collaboration with the Human-Wildlife Coexistence Programme, the team helped reduce potential breakouts, protect livestock and community livelihoods, and maintain a safer, well-functioning protected area.

Key Focus for the Year

The focus for 2024 was to strengthen perimeter security through consistent fence maintenance, daily inspections, and rapid responses to incursions or damage. This included responding quickly to wildlife breakouts to prevent damage and supporting stronger engagement with neighbouring communities through coexistence-linked activities. These efforts aimed to reduce human-wildlife conflict, minimise poaching risk, and reinforce positive relationships between the park and adjacent communities.

About the Team

The HiP Boundary Support project was coordinated by Jabulani Nkwanyana during the first part of the year, with the role later transitioning to Phillip Swart.

Together, they led a team of ten locally employed fence support staff who worked in close collaboration with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife to maintain and secure the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park boundary.

Partners



DRY CREEK
FOUNDATION



2024 Statistics

142

under-fence
holes repaired

15

deteriorated
fence sections
restored

43

fence-cutting
incidents
reported and
repaired

384

metres of
stolen fence
and poles
replaced

HLUHLUWE-IMFOLOZI PARK CAMERA TRAP PROJECT

Overview

Camera traps have become one of the most important tools in ecology, providing a way to record wildlife presence, movement and behaviour at a scale that is not possible through direct observation. Wildlife ACT is supporting the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique on a long-term research project funded by the BNP Paribas Foundation that aims to understand how changing environmental conditions affect predator-prey interactions in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park.

The project envisions an evenly spaced grid of camera trap sites across the park to gather continuous information on predator and prey distribution and how these patterns shift over time. This dataset will help guide ecological management, improve rapid response to wildlife injuries or poaching threats, and confirm the presence of priority species in areas that are difficult to access through regular monitoring.

Key Focus for the Year

The focus for 2024 was to launch the pilot phase of the project and refine the grid methodology needed for long-term deployment. Two cluster sites of ten cameras each were installed to test logistics, image quality, and placement efficiency.

Additional work involved preparing the full set of cameras for rollout across the protected area. By the end of 2024, the aim was to complete the planning required for establishing eighty camera trap sites across the park, excluding designated wilderness areas reserved for preservation.

This work lays the foundation for a robust monitoring system that will improve ecological understanding, strengthen detection of priority species, and support more effective park management.



About the Team

The project is coordinated by Camera Trap Monitor Migail Nieman, who leads the deployment and management of camera traps across Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park. Migail works closely with Wildlife ACT staff, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife teams and international research partners to ensure the effective collection and processing of camera trap data.

Partners



2024 Statistics

2

**pilot cluster
sites
established**

20

**cameras
deployed during
the pilot phase**

160

**cameras prepared for
installation across 80
planned sites**

SOMKHANDA GAME RESERVE PROGRAMME

Wildlife ACT works closely with the Protected Area Management Company to support the Emvokweni Community Trust in the long-term monitoring and management of priority and endangered species on Somkhanda Community Game Reserve. This work aligns with Wildlife ACT's mission to enable broad-scale biodiversity conservation through strategic partnerships and science-led conservation action.

Monitoring on Somkhanda provides important information on animal movements, habitat use, population demographics, poaching incidents and wildlife breakouts. These insights support key management decisions, including predator introductions, population management and planning conservation interventions that reduce the risk of human-wildlife conflict with surrounding communities. The programme also contributes to upskilling and supporting staff members from the local community.

Through consistent fieldwork, predator monitoring and strategic Rhino dehorning operational support, along with the deployment of new technologies, the programme continues to contribute to the long-term protection of Somkhanda's wildlife and the wellbeing of the people who depend on this landscape. These efforts reflect Wildlife ACT's commitment to practical, collaborative conservation that benefits both biodiversity and local communities.

Meet the Team:



Anel Olivier

Species Conservation
Director



Chris du Toit

Conservation Coordinator:
Emergency Response &
Somkhanda Project



Lucy Chimes

Field Technician:
Somkhanda



Gareth Robinson

Senior Field Technician

Key Successes

Somkhanda recorded several key conservation successes during the year. A group of Lionesses was released into the reserve following a period in the predator boma, along with a new male Lion introduced later in the year. Post-release monitoring helped ensure their safe integration and reduced the potential for wildlife breakouts or conflict with neighbouring communities.

Somkhanda recorded several key conservation successes during the year. A group of Lionesses was released into the reserve following a period in the predator boma, along with a new male Lion introduced later in the year. Post-release monitoring helped ensure their safe integration and reduced the potential for wildlife breakouts or conflict with neighbouring communities.

Technological capacity on the reserve improved significantly with the expansion of the LoRaWAN network, now covering around eighty percent of Somkhanda. Multiple Rhinos were fitted with LoRa tracking pods, allowing their movements to be remotely monitored through EarthRanger and contributing to faster response times and more efficient reserve management.

Goals for the Year:

- Strengthen the overall monitoring and management support of priority and endangered species on Somkhanda Game Reserve.
- Support predator introductions and ensure effective post-release monitoring.
- Expand and enhance conservation technology through continued LoRaWAN rollout.
- Promote human-wildlife coexistence by building local capacity and strengthening proactive security measures that reduce snaring, poaching, and breakout incidents.

Achievements and Highlights

The Somkhanda Team recorded several important conservation achievements throughout the year, including the release of a group of Lionesses into the protected area following a period in the predator boma, along with a new male Lion introduced later in the year. Post-release monitoring supported their safe integration and helped reduce the potential for breakouts or conflict with neighbouring communities.

Rhino conservation efforts were strengthened through strategic dehorning operations in high-risk areas, aimed at reducing poaching pressure. Genetic samples were collected during these procedures for inclusion in South Africa's national Rhino database, and three young Rhino individuals were notched to support long-term identification and monitoring across the protected area.

The expansion of the LoRaWAN network increased coverage to around eighty percent of the reserve, supported by additional solar-powered gateways and satellite-enabled backup systems. Multiple Rhinos were fitted with LoRa tracking pods, allowing their movements to be monitored remotely thereby improving response times and enhancing situational awareness.



2024 STATISTICS



1050

BIG CAT CAMERA
TRAP IMAGES
CAPTURED



710

BIG CAT
SIGHTINGS
RECORDED



7

CHEETAH
COLLARED



2

LIONS
COLLARED



2

LION
TRANSLOCATIONS
COMPLETED



1

MASTER'S
DEGREE ON
LEOPARD
COMPLETED

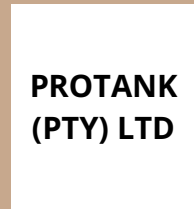
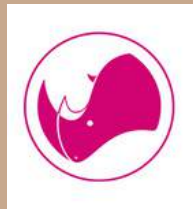
Contribution to the Larger Picture

This programme contributes to the protection of several endangered and priority species including White and Black Rhinos, Elephants, Lions and Leopards; as well as overall biodiversity monitoring on Somkhanda. By reducing poaching risk, improving emergency response, strengthening monitoring capacity and helping prevent human-wildlife conflict, the project supports the long-term ecological integrity of the protected area.

Planning Ahead

The programme will continue to strengthen species monitoring, respond to snaring incidents and wildlife emergencies, and implement ongoing Rhino dehorning. Further expansion of the LoRaWAN network and integration of new technologies will enhance management capacity. Ongoing engagement with neighbouring communities will support improved tolerance of predators and contribute to a resilient wildlife economy that benefits both conservation and the Gumbi community.

Partners



VOLUNTEER MODEL PROJECTS

Wildlife ACT's volunteer and conservation experience programmes form an essential part of our conservation model. These initiatives provide the practical support that enables our monitoring teams to operate consistently across key protected areas, while creating meaningful opportunities for people to contribute directly to wildlife conservation.

Across Zululand, the Southern Drakensberg, and North Island in Seychelles, volunteers and ecotourists join professional field teams in daily monitoring, data collection, and priority conservation tasks that strengthen endangered and priority species protection. Their involvement increases capacity on the ground, extends the reach of our monitoring operations, and helps sustain the long-term presence required for effective conservation action.

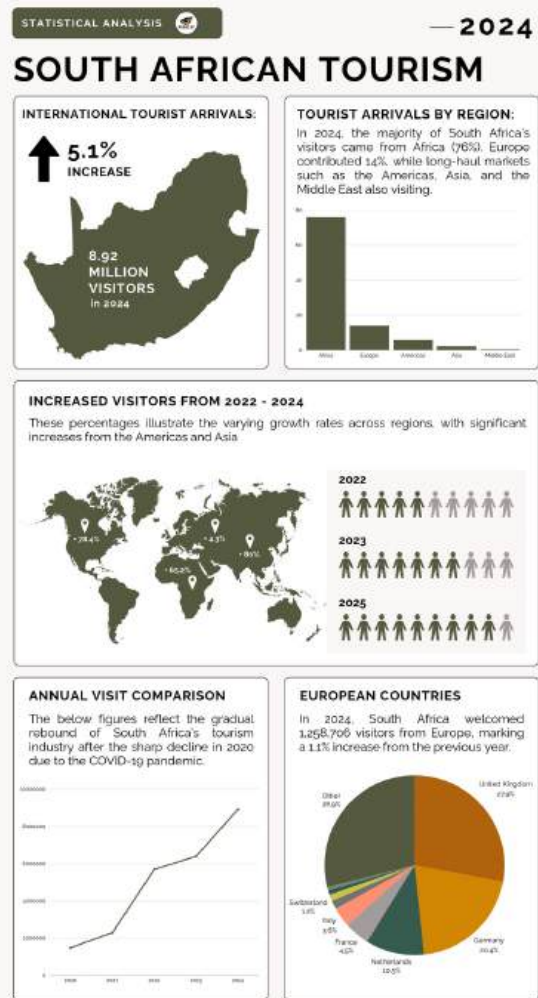
Our model is grounded in ethical, science-led practices. Participants are integrated into real conservation work that responds to the needs of protected areas, provides critical field data, and supports collaboration with conservation authorities.

Through the African Wildlife Conservation and Habitat Management Course and our Conservation Safaris, we also offer structured learning experiences that build ecological understanding, strengthen conservation skills, and inspire long-term commitment to protecting wildlife and ecosystems.

The current state of tourism in South Africa:

Tourism in South Africa is rebounding post-Covid-19, with the sector gradually recovering as global travel restrictions ease. While international arrivals have been slowly but surely rising, the industry continues to face challenges while conservation needs are ever-rising.

The national focus is now on sustainable tourism that supports local communities and conservation efforts, ensuring that recovery benefits both the economy and the environment.



Volunteer impact in 2024:



Hours in the field:
27 060



Volunteers Joined:
224

HLUHLUWE

Photo: Tim Jamboula / Yet.Agency

The Hluhluwe Monitoring and Volunteer Team focused on intensive monitoring of endangered and priority species to support effective wildlife management. By tracking movements, dispersal behaviour, and demographic patterns, the team contributed valuable data that strengthened early intervention responses and supported informed decision-making across the protected area.

Meet the Team:



Megan Hudson

Operations and Wildlife
Monitoring Director



Kayleigh Webber

Node Manager



Marumo Nene

Priority Species Monitor:
Hluhluwe



Mohau Marwane

Priority Species Monitor:
Hluhluwe

Key Successes

- Successfully guided the Munywaneni Pack back into Hluhluwe Park boundaries after an escape event.
- Documented the natural formation of a third pack from dispersing African Wild Dog individuals.
- Assisted in the darting, treatment, and recovery monitoring of the female African Wild Dog Sheni.
- Supported park-wide Rhino dehorning operations.
- Completed successful Hyaena and African Wild Dog call-ups that enabled the collaring of two dispersing males.
- Recorded an increase in Vulture nests during the annual nest survey.

2024 Statistics:

318
priority species
sightings

134
camera trap
captures of
priority species

4 529.5
volunteer
hours
contributed

73
volunteers and
students
hosted

15 390
kilometres
driven for
monitoring



IMFOLOZI

Photo: Tim Jamboula / YetAgency

The iMfolozi Monitoring and Volunteer Team prioritised the monitoring of African Wild Dogs and Cheetahs, with daily efforts focused on dispersal individuals, coalition dynamics, and new pup and cub recruitment. Incidental monitoring of Lions, Spotted Hyaena, Black and White Rhinoceros, Vultures and Southern Ground Hornbill contributed to broader protected area management.

Meet the Team:



Megan Hudson

Operations and Wildlife
Monitoring Director



Kayleigh Webber

Node Manager



Gareth Robinson

Senior Field Technician



Wesley Price

Priority Species Monitor:
iMfolozi



Elsabé Vosloo

Priority Species Monitor:
iMfolozi

Key Successes

- Collared a priority Cheetah individual, resulting in a significant increase in verified sightings.
- Recorded the formation of a coalition of three male Cheetah and monitored their movements.
- Recollared CM22, contributing to detailed behavioural and spatial data.
- Collared a key member of the Munywaneni Pack following natural pack formation.
- Monitored dispersal behaviour of Msasaneni Pack individuals from the 2022 litter, contributing to the formation of the New Pack and Munywaneni Pack.

2024 Statistics:

609
priority species
sightings

6
priority
individuals
collared

86
volunteers
hosted

1 705
field hours
completed

20 000
kilometres
driven for
monitoring



MANYONI

Photo: Tim Jamboula / Yet Agency

The Manyoni Monitoring and Volunteer Team expanded its capacity through the addition of two new monitors whose commitment and expertise strengthened daily conservation operations. .

Key work focused on Lion population growth, Cheetah management, and African Wild Dog interventions to safeguard both wildlife and neighbouring communities.

Meet the Team:



Danielle Theron

Node Manager



Musa Mthembu

Priority Species Monitor:
Manyoni



Jacqueline Edwardes

Priority Species Monitor:
Manyoni

Key Successes

- Reintroduced and collared two Cheetahs, one recovered from another protected area and one relocated from a community zone.
- Relocated an African Wild Dog pack after boundary testing posed a risk to surrounding rural communities.
- De-collared Lions and Cheetahs that had successfully settled following their introductions.
- Deployed multiple collars on Lions and Cheetahs to support close-range monitoring.
- Interventions in 2024 included 4 Cheetahs collared, 2 Cheetahs and 1 Lion de-collared, and support provided for 1 Rhino foot treatment
- Supported identification of dehorning candidates.

2024 Statistics:

86
volunteers hosted

4
Cheetah
collared

1
Cheetah
located and
retrieved

4 058.6
field hours
completed

59 622
kilometres
driven for
monitoring

SOUTHERN DRAKENSBERG

Photo: Casey Pratt / Love Africa Marketing

The Southern Drakensberg Team saw a year of major growth, marking the busiest period for the project to date. With the addition of new team members and much-needed equipment, the team was able to strengthen its work for Bearded and Cape Vultures.

Increased engagement with local schools and communities, together with enhanced monitoring infrastructure, supported deeper impact and growing public awareness of Vultures and their ecological significance.

Meet the Team:



Phillip Swart
Programme Manager



Malibongwe Sibiya
Programme Assistant



Winders Chauke
Programme Trainee

Key Successes

- Developed and improved safe feeding sites through more sustainable carcass collection, better handling systems, and enhanced live monitoring infrastructure.
- Strengthened safety and efficiency in securing safe and suitable food for Vultures.
- Completed the construction and successful launch of the Mzimkulu Vulture Hide, providing an important community education space and a future source of sustainable income for the project.
- Expanded community and school engagement, hosting awareness sessions that helped build greater understanding and appreciation for Vultures and the critical ecological services they provide.
- Broadened biological survey efforts across the region, improving knowledge of species diversity.

2024 Statistics:

4
rehabilitated
Vultures released

171
carcasses
provided at safe
feeding sites

198
learners reached
through
educational
sessions

9
volunteers
supported the
project

45
hours on nest
monitoring and
emergency
response



Wildlife ACT's long-standing partnership with North Island in Seychelles continued to thrive in 2024, strengthening a conservation model that combines ecotourism with meaningful marine and coastal species monitoring. Through this collaboration, ecotourists join the island's conservation team to support the monitoring of Green and Hawksbill Sea Turtles, as well as key coastal and endemic bird species, contributing directly to long-term biodiversity protection on the island.

This year, Wildlife ACT supported 39 ecotourist placements on North Island. Their involvement helped maintain consistent data collection during the nesting and hatching season, supported beach patrols, and assisted with ongoing monitoring of priority species. The ecotourism model continues to enhance conservation capacity while building a global network of ambassadors committed to the protection of Seychelles' unique biodiversity.

The success of this partnership reflects the value of aligning ethical ecotourism with science-led conservation, ensuring that both people and wildlife benefit from a protected and well-managed island ecosystem.

CONSERVATION AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT COURSE



Photo: Tim Jamboula / Yet.Agency

Wildlife ACT's African Wildlife Conservation and Habitat Management Course continued to grow in 2024, providing an intensive 28-day field training experience based at Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park. The course equips participants with practical conservation skills through hands-on learning in wildlife monitoring, telemetry, camera trapping, data collection, and protected area management.

This year, seven training courses were hosted. Two were delivered in collaboration with the Community and Coexistence Programme, supporting skills development for YES interns and Community Conservation Programme interns. A further course was held in partnership with the University of Illinois through Wildtrax, strengthening international learning opportunities and contributing to global conservation capacity.

The course continues to play an important role in developing future conservationists, supporting local skills development, and reinforcing Wildlife ACT's commitment to practical, science-led conservation training.

CONSERVATION SAFARIS



Photo: Tim Jamboula / Yet.Agency

Wildlife ACT's Conservation Safaris offer participants a meaningful way to experience wildlife while directly contributing to priority species protection. These safaris blend traditional wildlife viewing with hands-on conservation activities, allowing guests to join experienced field teams in tracking, monitoring, and selected veterinary or research procedures.

By engaging with real conservation work, participants gain a deeper understanding of the challenges facing endangered and priority species and play an active role in supporting ongoing management and protection efforts. This model strengthens conservation capacity and builds long-term advocates who carry these lessons beyond their time in the field.

In 2024, Wildlife ACT welcomed two Conservation Safari groups who contributed directly to rhino and pangolin conservation. Their involvement supported critical field operations, generated valuable monitoring data, and helped raise awareness for two of Africa's most threatened species.

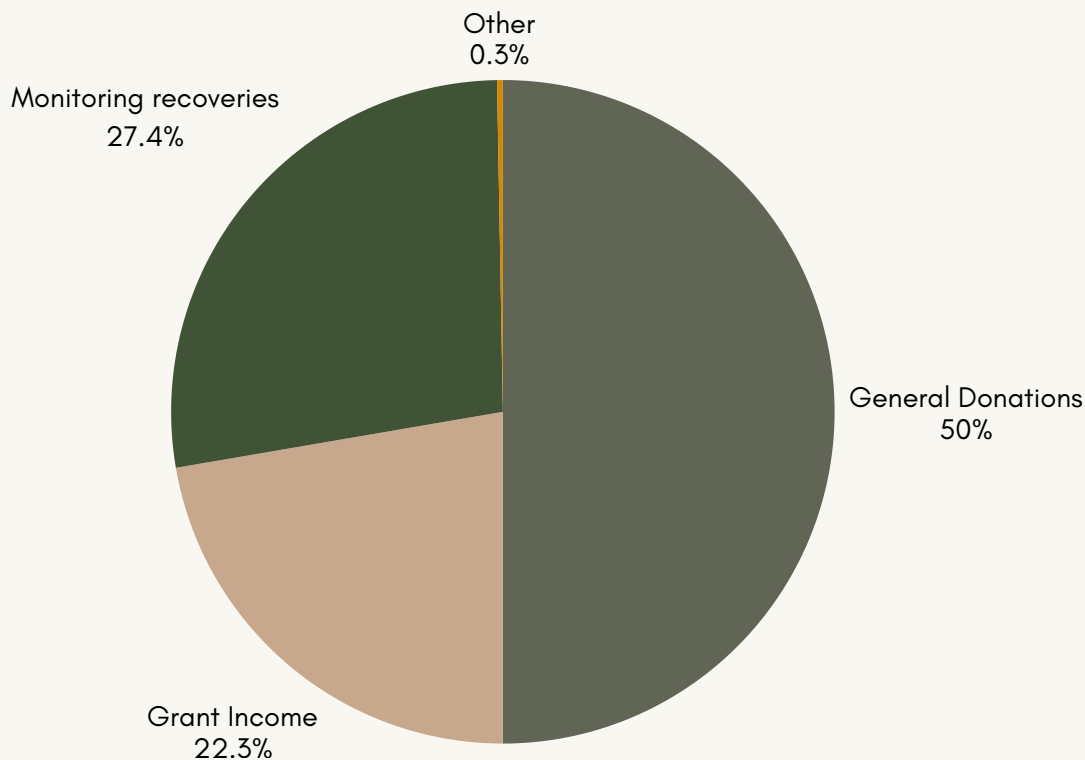


Photos: Tim Jamboula / Yet.Agency

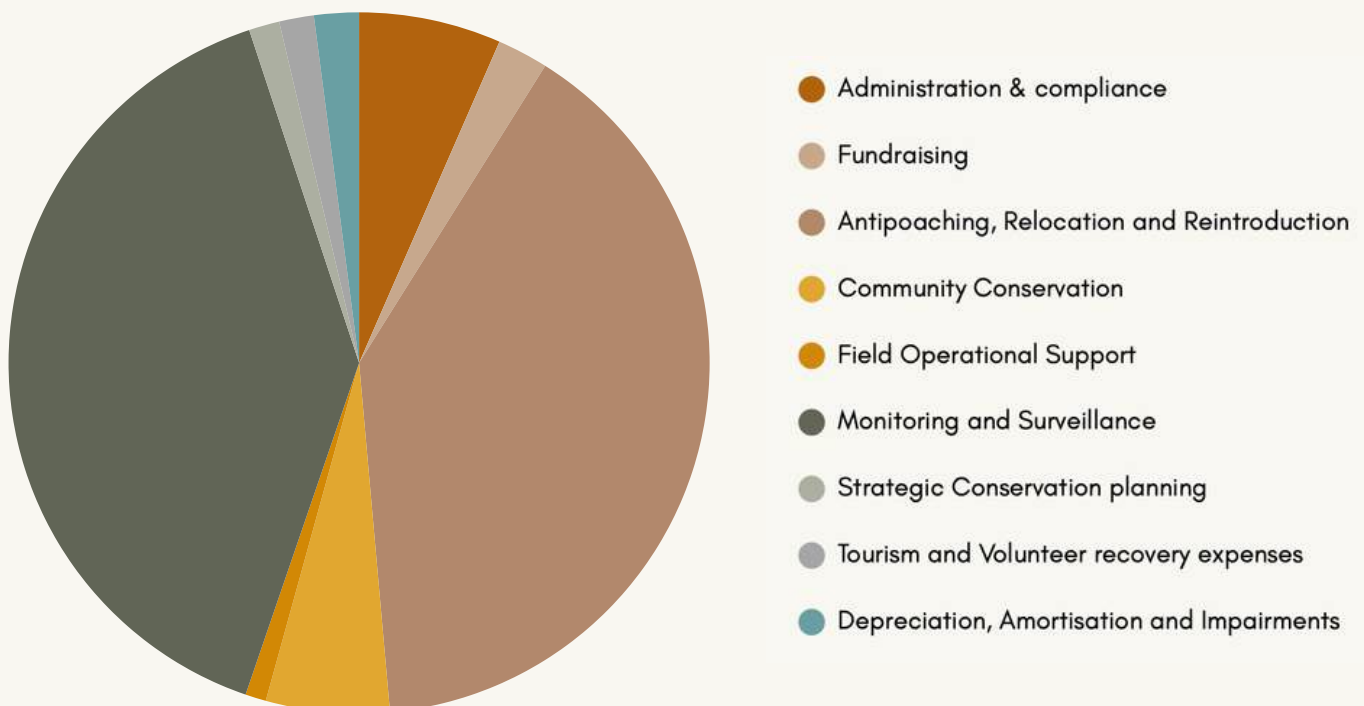
FINANCIAL REPORT

Wildlife ACT received income of R13 909 124 for the 2023/2024 Financial Year, and expenses amounted to a total of R14 698 643.

INCOME BREAKDOWN



EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN



WHO WE WORK WITH

Wildlife ACT has partnered, and is associated, with a number of organisations across the globe. These organisations fully endorse our vision and efforts to protect and sustain the priority and endangered species that we work with.

The support and guidance we receive is invaluable and we are extremely grateful. We wouldn't be able to do what we do without the following exceptional organisations:



EMVOKWENI COMMUNITY TRUST



north island

SEYCHELLES



A WORD OF THANKS

Wildlife ACT depends on public support, sponsorships, and grants to carry out its essential conservation work. Without this backing, our impact would be greatly reduced, and we are committed to nurturing the valuable relationships established between our various programs and their sponsors.

We extend our sincere thanks to the following organisations for supporting Wildlife ACT and its partners in our conservation and community initiatives:



We extend our heartfelt thanks to each volunteer, donor, partner, Wildlife ACTIVE member, and supporter for your invaluable contributions in 2024. None of what we accomplish would be possible without you.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Wildlife ACT exists to safeguard endangered wildlife and the natural spaces they depend on. Our teams work every day of the year to protect species, restore ecosystems, and support the expansion of protected conservation areas across Africa.

We rely on dedicated global support to keep these efforts moving forward, from ecotourists who join us in the field to funders who help sustain long-term conservation action. Every contribution directly supports impactful, science-led work on the ground and strengthens our ability to secure a future where wildlife and people can thrive.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Volunteer

Join us in meaningful, hands-on conservation work that contributes directly to protecting Africa's wild spaces. Our volunteer projects offer real field experience, helping participants understand the challenges facing our natural world and the important role each of us can play in safeguarding it.



Photo: Tim Jamboula / Yet.Agency

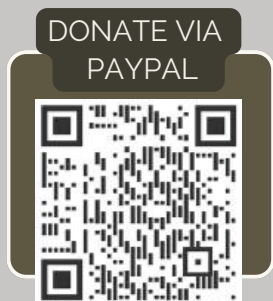
Donate

From purchasing monitoring and lifesaving equipment to relocating endangered species and educating local communities, every donation directly supports our fight to protect priority species. *Please consider donating to Wildlife ACT.*

Donate through GivenGain [HERE](#).

Donate through GlobalGiving [HERE](#).

Donate through PayPal [HERE](#).



WILDLIFE ACT'S BANKING DETAILS:

ACCOUNT HOLDER	WILDLIFE ACT FUND TRUST
BANK NAME	FIRST NATIONAL BANK
ACCOUNT NUMBER	62292413665
BRANCH CODE	201511
REFERENCE	VULTURES + YOUR NAME

Support our Wishlists

Our field team requires crucial equipment to monitor endangered and priority species daily. Sponsorship of wishlist items is greatly appreciated.

Please view our wishlists [HERE](#).



Corporate Partnerships

Wildlife ACT partners with businesses that are committed to making a measurable impact on conservation. By aligning your company with our award-winning initiatives, you can contribute directly to the protection of endangered species and support community conservation efforts.



Please visit our social media platforms, read our blogs and spread the word about what we do at Wildlife ACT!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.

