

Community wildlife conservation initiatives

Amboseli Ecosystem Trust

Spearheading the Implementation of

Amboseli Ecosystem
Management Plan
(AEMP),
2008-2018

The management plan identifies the course Amboseli Ecosystem stakeholders intend to follow in the next 10 years to ensure that wildlife continue to thrive and contribute sustainably to the enhancement of community livelihoods in Amboseli.

The plan outlines specific management programs and action plans:

1. Ecological Management Programme

Critical Wildlife dispersal areas and corridors to and from Amboseli to the National Parks of Chyulu, Tsavo and to Kilimanjaro national Park in Tanzania through the Kitenden Conservancy and other Community Conservancies in the surrounding group ranches.

2. Tourism Development and Management Programme

Tourism development in the Amboseli Ecosystem has, and continues to play an important role in the socio-economic development of the local people through generating revenues and employment. Wildlife based tourism has been adopted by some land owners as an alternative land use option through the establishment of sanctuaries and leasing of concession areas to private investors.

3. Community Partnership and Education Programme

Three things stand out as key in conservation of wildlife in community owned land in Amboseli ecosystem i.e. increasing community participation in decision making to create an environment for sound land use planning; creating economic incentives for conserving wildlife; and reducing the cost of living with wildlife through implementing prudent measures to manage the escalating human-wildlife conflict.

- **Reconstitute the conflict resolution committee (CRC)**
- **Expand the conflict consolation scheme to cover the entire ecosystem**
- **Develop and implement benefit sharing systems in each group ranch**
- **Improve the management and leadership of nature based enterprises**
- **Livestock productivity and Marketing improved to enhance community livelihoods**
- **Design a conservation education outreach Programme based on the local community's social stratification and alternative livelihood diversifications such as Sports and Athletics**

4. Security Programme

- The government mandated KWS is supported by the activities of community game scouts to enhance wildlife security outside the Park; Biglife Foundation and Eselenkey Porini are private bodies supporting the Community rangers within the group ranches under the aegis of the Amboseli/Tsavo Game Scouts Association (ATGSA).
- Liaise with Tanzania's wildlife authorities on cross-border natural resource protection

5. Ecosystem Operations Programme

- **Establish Amboseli Ecosystem Trust (AET) was established** to bring a balance between conservation and development. To spear head the implementation of the AEMP and managed the undertaking of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as the first, which led to the official Gazettement of the Plan by the National Government; subsequently the adoption by the County Government of Kajiado imbue the Plan into the Spatial Plan for that part of the County.

The Core Planning Team which is the Project Implementation Team of the plan is led the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust comprise of the

Cultural Values and Authentic Maasai culture

What makes the Maasai culture famous is the fact that the culture has remained largely unchanged in the midst of western influence. The traditionally semi – nomadic Maasai tribe has held on to their culture. Their largely livestock grazing lifestyle has been important in conserving wildlife resources in the Amboseli Ecosystem.

Rich history

Mount Kilimanjaro: The Amboseli-Kilimanjaro ecosystem boasts of a rich history. The Wachagga people of Tanzania talk of Mawenzi receiving fire for its pipe from his younger brother Kibo. Another of their legends talks of demons and evil spirits living on the mountain and guarding immense treasures. Arab and Chinese traders and historians tell of a giant mountain lying inland from Mombasa. Slave traders passed below it and sometimes raided the villages of the Wachagga but it was not till the middle of the 19th century that a more serious interest was taken in the mountain and attempts were made to scale it. In 1848 Johann Rebmann, a missionary from Gerlingen in Germany, while crossing the plains of Tsavo, saw Mount Kilimanjaro. Rebmann's report stimulated great interest in Germany and in the following years several expeditions were organized.

Cultural sites of local importance

Although many of the cultural and sacred sites are not well documented in the Amboseli Ecosystem, there is rich history that needs to be well understood and protected. These include areas used by the Maasai for various cultural ceremonies such as circumcision. Other cultural sites include the Maasai Moran Manyattas, and the Chyulu caves.

Social Values and the Plan Foundation

Amboseli as a Biosphere Reserve

Amboseli ecosystem is a member of the global network of biosphere reserves which are areas of terrestrial and coastal/marine ecosystems or a combination thereof, which are internationally recognized within the framework of UNESCO's programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB). They are nominated by governments to promote solutions to reconcile conservation and sustainable use.

Amboseli ecosystem was listed as a biosphere reserve in 1991 becoming the fifth biosphere reserve² in Kenya. The core area of the reserve is the protected Amboseli National Park while the buffer zone comprises of the six group ranches, Olgulului/Olorarashi, Eselengei,

Mbirikani, Kimana, Kuku, and Rombo.

Traditional pastoralism

Pastoralism of the semi-nomadic, transhumant variety has been the land use of choice for hundreds of years in the Amboseli ecosystem. Emerging land use activities in the ecosystem, whether agriculture- or wildlife-based, have to compete not only economically, but culturally and spiritually with pastoralism.

Community wildlife conservation initiatives

Amboseli/Tsavo Group Ranch Conservation Association (ATGRCA): The AmboseliTsavo Group Ranch Conservation Association (ATGRCA) was established in 1997 to provide a platform for Group Ranch representatives to coordinate conservation activities that impact across Group Ranch boundaries. It is credited with the establishment of the Amboseli-Tsavo Game Scouts Association (ATGSA).

Amboseli/Tsavo Game Scouts Association: The Amboseli-Tsavo Game Scouts Association (ATGSA) is an umbrella body that coordinates all the game scout activities in the ecosystem. It was formed originally under the auspices of ATGRCA (with the purpose of enhancing wildlife conservation and management in the group ranches. Community game scouts are natural resource managers based at the village level that are involved in day-to-day management of wildlife in the group

Long term research programs

The Amboseli Baboon Project: The Project was started in 1963 and it focuses on baboon research at the individual, group, and population levels. The **Amboseli Conservation Program (ACP)** was started in 1967 and centers on providing long-term data on the structure, dynamics and changes of the Amboseli ecosystem and technical support for its conservation. The Amboseli Trust for Elephant (ATE) started in 1972 and hence makes the Amboseli elephants one of the most studied non confined elephants in the world.

Members of the PIC comprise of:

1. Amboseli National Park, Senior Warden
2. Benson Leyian-Manager, AET
3. Koikai Oloiptip- Coordinator, ATGRCA
4. Kajiado County Government Physical Planner, Kajiado
5. Planning Office, KWS Headquarters
6. African Conservation Centre (ACC)
7. African Wildlife Foundation (AWF)
8. International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)
9. Biglife Foundation
10. Min. of Agriculture
11. Water Resources Management Authority (WARMA)
12. Chairman Kajiado County Wildlife Conservation and Compensation Committee (CWCCC)