



REPORT OF THE CROSS BORDER STUDY TOUR TO NORTHERN RANGELANDS TRUST CONSERVANCIES-ISIOLO-KENYA

APRIL 20-23, 2016



**Report compiled by;
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Acknowledgment

The project team would like to thank the organizing teams who supported in identification of Northern Range land Trust (NRT) as a suitable site for study tour. ICRAF thanks NRT for organizing with local communities to allow the delegations from IGAD, Somalia and Kenya to visit its conservancies to appreciate field knowledge on collaborative biodiversity management. In particular ICRAF would like to thank Garry Gullen, Tom Lalampaa, Tom Letiwa, Latif Boru and Susan Ochoo who supported the field activity planning process and during the excursion to the conservancies. Their support is highly appreciated. The project organizing team would also like to thank the participants for their cooperation, time, active participation and patience to learn from NRT during the visit during the event. ICRAF thank Dr. Serge who represented IGAD for participation and support. ICRAF administrative unit was instrumental for success of the event and their administrative support is appreciated.

Executive Summary

ICRAF facilitated delegation from Somalia and Kenya to visit NRT and its conservancies to enhance their capacity in collaborative biodiversity management. Delegates were drawn from project implementing partners including stakeholders representing local communities, government agencies and consultants working on different activities commissioned by the project. The team visited the NRT headquarters in Lewa, Namunyak and Westgate conservancies. The team aimed to get field experience of how different communities conserve the wildlife, ecosystem and forest biodiversity. During the visit, participants were briefed on the experiences of NRT in setting up conservancies, their challenges and best practices in adopting conservancy model to promote collaborative biodiversity management.

The NRT management depicted conservancy model as a good tool to promote collaborative biodiversity management. The conservancy allows different ethnic community to work together with other biodiversity conservation stakeholders on collaborative conservation approach such as promotion of social cohesion, conflict resolution mechanisms, rangeland management, alternative income generating enterprises and benefit sharing. The NRT appreciate that though

the model takes time from initiation to adoption, once adopted it is self-sustaining as the communities take lead in managing their resources.

On the last day of the field excursion ICRAF administered a structured questionnaire to capture responses from participants on their opinions on the extent to which their expectations were met. The participants noted that NRT site in Isiolo was relevant and that they had improved their knowledge on collaborative biodiversity management. In particular the Somalia participants expressed enthusiasm on the idea of conservancy model and would love to see such in Somalia. The participants appreciated the fact that although the conservancy model takes quite sometimes from initiation to adoption, it is worth investing in.

Introduction and Background information

IGAD BMP program support a number of activities in Kenya Somalia cross border area. Among the activities is project Activity 10 – on Biodiversity conservation capacity building which aims at “building capacity in biodiversity conservation at local level for ecosystem management to stakeholders from the cross border area”. The visit aimed at building capacity in biodiversity conservation envisaged to contribute towards expected activity result linked to project Log frame indicator (LFI) 2.4: *Cross border exchange visits are organized to strengthen the skills of stakeholders from the selected demonstration sites in collaborative biodiversity management by Q4_2015*”

To achieve the expected results, ICRAF facilitated delegation from Somalia and Kenya to visit Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) and its conservancies to strengthen their capacity in collaborative biodiversity management. The theme of the study tour was; *“Strengthening Cross-border cooperation in biodiversity Management between Kenyan and Somali stakeholders”*. The NRT based in Isiolo Kenya hosted the activity.

The main objective of the visit was to strengthen the skills and knowledge of participants in cross border biodiversity conservation. Participants appreciated the description of the historical biodiversity degradation trend and the social change process, which led to mobilization of actors to develop an environmental friendly, sustainable and secure utilization of natural resources.

Approximately half of all NRT conservancies are home to Samburu, who are wealthy of knowledge built up through decades of farming the harsh terrains of northern Kenya. But as changing times bring increased pressure on natural resources, grazing cattle has become a volatile livelihood. By joining NRT, pastoralists can combine their traditional knowledge with modern science to more sustainably manage their rangelands, and other members of the community have means of diversifying their income through alternative livelihoods, so as not to rely so heavily on livestock.

The NRT’s trading programme is an innovative approach to the marketing challenges faced by pastoralists in the region. The Beef Works programme provides an alternative market, paying fair

prices, purchasing directly from the conservancies, and buying selectively to reward good conservancy performance. This market aims to incentivize conservancies to practice effective, transparent governance and sustainable natural resource management by linking local livestock owners in high performing conservancies to ready markets. So far (from 2011 up to 2014) direct purchase of livestock put 168.5 million Kenyan Shillings (approximately 1.75 million USD) in the hands of over 2,000 pastoralists.

DAY 1: APRIL 20TH, 2016: VISIT TO NRT HEADQUARTERS

The participants arrived to NRT headquarters in Lewa down where they were welcomed by Latif Boru, the coordinator of community activities in NRT. Latif gave a brief presentation on NRT <https://www.dropbox.com/s/t8hm9ohrnva9w1x/NRT%20presentation.ppt?dl=0> and outlined the program of activities during the study tour (Annex 1).



Figure 1: Right; Mr. Latif Boru standing to the right of Mr. Josephat Nyongesa (BMP project manager) briefing the participant on NRT and its activities Left; Mr. Boru during his presentation (photo by Wilfred Muriithi ICRAF).

DAY 2: April 21st, 2016: VISIT TO NAMUNYAK CONSERVANCY

Namunyak conservancy is located in Ngilai West and Central and is portioned into two group ranches (Sarara and Sabache) and two community land (Ndonyo Wasin and Ngare Narok) in Samburu. Namunyak began as two group ranches, and over 15 years it has expanded to include the four neighboring group ranches surrounding the Mathews forest. It was one of the first community conservancies in northern Kenya to be established, along with Il Ngwesi. The main ethnic community is Samburu and the total population in the area is 13,200 people. The land tenure is a group ranch without title in the ranches and community land and as a trust land in the core conservation area. The extent of land is 394,000 hectares with pastoralism and tourism as the main livelihood. The conservancy has an operating budget of approximately US\$ 230,000. Namunyak conservancy was registered in 1995 and has employed 76 community members. The conservancy is rich in biodiversity resources such as; Elephant, leopard, reticulated giraffe, buffalo, African wild dog, greater kudu and monkey.



Figure 2: One of the community board members sharing their experiences with participants, (photo by Wilfred Muriithi, ICRAF)

Namunyak is divided into three management units; Naluwuon, Ngilai, and Kalepo. Each unit has its own HQ, management staff, board, rangers and grazing committees, and run independently under the Namunyak Conservancy umbrella. There is an umbrella manager and an umbrella board with representation from the unit boards

Given the extent of the Conservancy, and the high concentration of elephants, Namunyak is of particular focus for poaching which was the main reason for establishment of the conservancy to reverse the poaching trend and promote sustainable utilization of elephants. During the establishment of the conservancy, rangers were trained by former British army officers, given advanced medical training, and weapons to fight against poaching. Between 2012 and 2014, the conservancy rangers contributed to a 43% reduction in elephant poaching in NRT conservancies.

Achievements of Namunyak Conservancy

Namunyak hosts two very successful luxury tented camps:

1. Sarara camp which opened in 2005 is an important part of Namunyak's conservation and community development efforts. In 2009, revenue to the conservancy from Sarara Camp totaled more than \$90,600, and in 2012 this figure rose to \$161,700. As with all lodges in community conservancies, 60% of this revenue are used to fund community projects (such as school bursaries or water projects) while 40% goes towards the annual operations a cost of the conservancy.
2. Kitich Camp has existed since the 1960s, it was established as a rhino monitoring camp, to support the local forest community. It was taken over by tourist operators Cheli & Peacock in 2009, and joined the Namunyak Wildlife Conservation Trust.



Figure 3: Participants relaxing in Sarara lodge a project of Namunyak conservancy, (photo by Wilfred Muriithi, ICRAF).

The tourism operation employs 80% of its staff from local communities and the conservancy receives income from the operation through conservation fees charged to guests on a per person per night basis. Namunyak has the highest gross tourism revenue of any NRT member conservancy. Tourism income totaled US\$ 184,850 in 2013 and US\$ 176,200 in 2014.

Elephant sanctuary in Namunyak conservancy

In 1980's Namunyak conservancy was at the center of elephant poaching where hundreds of elephant were killed for their ivory. NRT having realized this took the initiative to create awareness among the local people that the wildlife had no future unless they (local communities) participated in its protection. NRT informed local communities that the wildlife is a source of income.

After sensitization, the local herdsman were provided with radios to allow them report poaching incidents. With time the community began to understand the benefits of having wildlife on their land, visitors started visiting the place, and with them came a source of income. Currently, Samburu people of Namunyak have learnt that the wildlife can generate a more sustainable income for the community and also protect the elephant herds and their habitat.

The Future for Namunyak

With assistance from NRT and partner organizations, Namunyak aims to achieve the following in the coming years:

- To convene, along with all other NRT community conservancies, in annual general meetings to share plans and progress
- To take part in a livelihood baseline survey, commissioned by NRT, with a view of determining the status and priority of education, health, water, jobs, food security, infrastructure and current availability of government services
- To continue the strengthening of wildlife security and monitoring within the conservancy
- To sign a partnership memorandum of understanding, along with all other community conservancies, between themselves and NRT
- To register as not-for-profit
- To develop a conservancy management plan endorsed by the constituent community
- Implement a conservancy constitution, with the aim of building accountability, transparency, equity and effective representation in Namunyak.
- To take part in peace building exercises with surrounding communities
- Train community members in effective management of existing water infrastructure
- To establish forest management plans, and training of forest management committees



Figure 4: Dr. Serge (R) interacting with Namunyak conservancy manager Mr. Tom Letiwa in black and white T-shirt and Latif Boru (L) during a plenary session about the Namunyak conservancy (photo by Wilfred Muriithi ICRAF).

Dr. Serge noted that NRT is doing a good job in adopting a conservancy model which promotes social cohesion, economic development while ensuring sustainable use of biodiversity resources. He was curious on the income generation from the conservancy and its distribution. Mr. Letiwa informed Dr. Serge that the conservancy generates its income from ecotourism, livestock and lodges. The conservancy takes 40% of the income for its operation and 60% is invested on community project based on priority. Revenue distribution is transparent as the board members who are drawn from the community are part of the process of distributing the income generated.

Aside from the financial sustainability and income generation Dr. Serge was keen on community participation in the conservancy. Mr. Letiwa noted that the conservancy management is drawn from the community, the staff members are employed from the community and security is provided by the community through its rangers.

Table 1: Plenary session on Namunyak conservancy

Question/comment	Responses
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How do you manage to bring different communities together to work towards achieving conservancy goals?	It was not easy at the beginning; NRT created community awareness on the importance of avoiding poaching and instead conserve it. It took NRT thirteen years before the communities could adopt the conservancy model, after adoption the communities are actively involved in conservation.
How long did it take from initiation of the program to adoption by local communities?	13 years
What are some of the conflict resolution techniques?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board members have representation from all the community in the area, ▪ The conservancy has a model for range land management ▪ The conservancy organize peace meetings ▪ The conservancy help to recover stolen livestock ▪ In case of conflict, the management of the conservancy invite the fighting communities and discuss on the causes and possible solutions to the conflicts
How do the communities benefit from the conservancy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scouts and rangers training ▪ Ecotourism ▪ Development of social amenities and schools ▪ school bursary ▪ Market for livestock and livestock products ▪ security
Where do you get finances to manage the conservancy?	Ecotourism and fund raising with support from NRT
Are you financially stable	Not yet,
how do you elect the board members	The community members vote to elect their leaders, NRT tries to make the leadership as transparent as possible
What are some of the challenges that you face?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cattle rustling, this has however reduced significantly ▪ Election process is sometimes a challenge ▪ Ethnic fights for pasture was a challenge in the past but with range land management the situation has improved

DAY 3 April 22, 2016: VISIT TO WESTGATE CONSERVANCY

Westgate conservancy is located in Ngutuk Ongiron Group Ranch in Samburu East. It has a population of 5,000 people. The land tenure is group ranch without a title deed and extent to 40,350 hectares. The conservancy was registered in 2004. West Gate conservancy was initiated by the owners of Ngutuk Ongiron Group Ranch, who realized the importance of conserving the Grevy's zebra, as well as a sustainable rangeland for the Samburu and their livestock. Today, West Gate stands as one of the most successful NRT conservancies, and is frequently visited by other communities who want to see community conservation in action.

West Gate provides a platform for sustainable protection and utilization of resources' with the aim of enhancing the livelihoods of its participating communities. This is achieved through ecotourism and sustainable grazing management. The region is dominated by open grassland plains which provide an important grazing resource for both domestic livestock and wild herbivores including the endangered Grevy's Zebra.



Figure 5: Left; Participants being briefed on Westgate conservancy by the conservancy manager Mr. Chris Lekupe; Right; Conservancy member standing (last row left) make his contribution during the discussion, photo by Wilfred Muriithi ICRAF).

The conservancy has four main programmes focusing on; Wildlife, Rangeland management, Community development and Tourism.

One of the objectives of Westgate conservancy is to unite communities and improve security in its region for equitable sharing of resources. To achieve this, the conservancy has employed 35 rangers from the community who enhance security in West Gate which has helped boost wildlife numbers and in turn, tourist numbers. Rangers play a critical role in raising conservation awareness, gathering intelligence, managing conflict and gathering basic wildlife data. They were

trained with funding from NRT and generous support from the Kenya Wildlife service, at the Manyani Training School in the famous Tsavo National Park.

Reducing the reliance on livestock is another objective for West Gate. Under the NRT Trading programme, 18 women groups in the Conservancy can now sell beaded products to a worldwide market, and also have access to alternative business, leadership, accounting, and marketing training. Not only does this give their families an alternative income, but it also empowers women to become decision makers and business owners.

As part of NRT's focus on integrating ethnicities, West Gate is one of the four community conservancies to hold a sport for peace event, where members from any position of the community can compete and connect with other communities.

West Gate was the first conservancy in NRT to pilot grazing and rangeland management programs, which involves land use planning and integrating new ways of grazing. The first phase involved 200 head of cattle owned by 20 pastoralists, on 1,200 hectares of land designated by the grazing committee. The conservancy also conducted a perennial grass reseeding programme and began eradicating the invasive *Acacia reficiens* species. Oryx, Grevy's zebra and other wild herbivores started to return to these areas they had previously shunned for lack of forage too.

West Gate also works closely with Ewaso Lions, a community based organization who work to conserve lions and other large carnivores. Their flagship programme, Warrior Watch, trains Samburu warriors in conflict mitigation, basic data collection and the ecology of their area, so that they may build on their traditional protection role in their community by mitigating lion-human conflict in their area more effectively. Although the main role of the programme is to increase community engagement in conservation, the warriors also collect important data on wildlife presence, and assist West Gate conservancy rangers in security operations and wildlife monitoring.

Conservancy rehabilitates large areas under invasive species through application of indigenous knowledge. The invasive species are cut to allow natural regulation of grass and indigenous tree species.

Human Wildlife conflict is used as a tool to conserve biodiversity. In that, if biodiversity is conserved, the grass will be enough for the browsers; browsers will have enough to feed on and will multiply. The predators will then have enough prey (browsers) to hunt and feed, livestock and crops will be safe from wildlife destruction and humans will have enough to eat. This will ensure no conflict between humans and wildlife as biodiversity will be in harmony, livestock, humans, wild animals mutually living together as each will have enough to eat.

Achievement of Westgate conservancy

Westgate opened a luxury 18 bed tented camp nestled on the banks of the Ewaso Nyiro River called Sasaab. Over 60% of the revenue generated from the lodge goes into community projects such as school bursaries, water pumps and infrastructure, while 40% goes towards the annual operating costs of the conservancy. Community conservancy members are benefiting from employment (for example teachers and rangers), feeding programmes, youth and moran programs, additional income from selling grass to other conservancies and exchange visits (in 2009, eleven (11) community leaders visited Zimbabwe to learn Rangeland management aimed at imparting skills on integrated management and planned grazing).

Like Namunyak conservancy, Westgate conservancy looks forward to;

- Sign a partnership memorandum of understanding, along with all other community conservancies, between themselves and NRT
- Take part in peace building exercises with surrounding communities
- Take part in a livelihood baseline survey, commissioned by NRT, with a view of determining the status and priority of education, health, water, jobs, food security, infrastructure and current availability of government services
- Register as a not-for-profit company

- Acquire the funding to repair the airstrip
- Convene, along with all other NRT community conservancies, in annual general meetings to share plans and progress
- Co-ordinate the trans-location of giraffe, impala and zebra from other community conservancies in order to supplement existing populations.

Table 2: Plenary based on visit to Westgate conservancy

Question/ comments	Responses
What is required for me to start a conservancy in Somalia?	First you need to create awareness among local communities on what a conservancy is, its role, benefits and challenges. Once the capacity is build, one need to review existing policies and regulations governing such structures Identify stakeholders to be involved and define their roles Source for fund to support each activity The conservancy manager informed members that they should be patient as the process is long and the benefits takes time before they are realized.
How have the communities benefited from range land management?	The conflict has been reduced significant as different community have their own grazing field as discussed and endorsed by their respective leaders. It has also helped in managing degradation of land as over grazing is controlled
Are you financially sustainable?	Not yet, this is our desire, we fundraise and write proposals to seek for funding.

Collaboration between NRT and other stakeholders in biodiversity conservation

NRT informed the participants that they work closely with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and Kenya Forest Service (KFS) in conserving wildlife and forest biodiversity. To ensure effective collaboration, NRT promote support to both KFS and KWS in terms of capacity building and training of scouts and rangers who ensure security of both wildlife and forest resources.

At the end of the day's activities, the participants had an opportunity to interact with the Samburu community below are some of the pictures captured during the interaction process.



Annex 1: Program of the study tour

IGAD BMP Action 2.4: Cross border Exchange Visits to NRT and Conservancies

Strengthening Kenya and Somalia stakeholders on cross-border cooperation in collaborative biodiversity Management

Date	Time	Activity
20/4/2016	1400hrs- 1700hrs	Meeting with key NRT staff and plenary session
21/04/2016	0800hrs-1030hrs	Travel from Nanyuki to the Elephant sanctuary
	1030hrs-1130hrs	Visit the sanctuary and have discussion around the establishment and impacts
	1130hrs-1300hrs	Travel to the conservancy Hq and visit Sarara Lodge
	1300hrs-1400hrs	Lunch and prayers
	1400hrs-1530hrs	Meeting manager, head of security and some board members
	1530hrs-1800hrs	Travel back to Nanyuki
22/04/2016	0800hrs-1000hrs	Travel from Nanyuki to Westgate
	1000hrs- 1200hrs	Visit grass site
	1300hrs-1400hrs	Lunch and prayers
	1400-1500hrs	Visit Saruni lodge
	1500hrs	Travel back to Nanyuki
23/04/2016	0800hrs-1000hrs	Travel from Nanyuki to Nairobi

Annex 2: List of participants who engaged in the study tour.

Sno	County /Names	Affiliation	Email
SOMALIA			
1	Mohamed Yusuf Omar	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Minerals	dalacada18@hotmail.com
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3	Ugas Omar Abdi	Local Community	
4	Abdihakim Jimcale Aden	Ministry of Livestock	allaqabe28@gmail.com
5	Ahmed Hassan Omar	Ministry of Agriculture	
6	Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed	Ministry of Health	
7	Abdullahi Hassan Kahin	Badhaade District	
8	Ali Said Awol	Local Community	
9	Dahir Ahmed Abdullahi	Afmadow District	
1	Mohamed Ahmed Abdi	Lower Juba region	
1	Suldan Farah Ahmed Suldan	District representative	suldan_farah@yahoo.com
1	Osman Gedow	Consultant	Osmangedow10@gmail.com
1	Abdi Ahmed	Consultant	ahmed@raasom.org
KENYA			
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