



## Anguish in the hirola's geographic range as drought worsens



Reports of the ongoing dry spell have been the order of the day across all our conservancies. The prolonged ongoing drought reported in many parts of Kenya, is in crisis phase within the hirola's geographic range and has affected both wildlife and livestock. Despair is in the air as pastoralists migrate to search for better pasture and water – apparently, these areas are key wildlife concentrations areas including conservancies. Water and pasture is getting scarce thus escalating into numerous human wildlife conflict in the conservancies. More and more pastoralists have been seen migrating further into the moist coastal forests while some have been stopped while encroaching in to the hirola dry season concentration areas. Recent press release by the government also predicts depressed rainfall in the coming months (See [forecast](#)).



## VIDEO



Help us realize our vision of documenting the struggles of the world's most endangered antelope.

## IN OTHER NEWS

Our Director recently had one of his research articles published in a leading conservation journal, *Journal of Applied Ecology*. This was highlighted by various international media outlets. Below are links to the publication and some of the media reports.

## PUBLICATION

**Journal of Applied Ecology:** [Resource selection and landscape change reveal mechanisms suppressing population](#)

Despite this challenging situation, our hirola rangers have continued to report wildlife sightings in the conservancies. The rangers have been working very hard to patrol the vast conservancies while reporting sightings of poachers and other wildlife threats in the area.

Here are the updates for the month of February as reported by our rangers stationed across the hirola's geographic range.

### Bura East Conservancy.

The ongoing dry spell has continued to cause havoc in the conservancy with desperate pastoralists seen migrating with their camels, cows, goats and sheep across the hirola's geographic range. Our Grevy's zebra monitoring rangers were also able to report sightings of the Grevy's zebra (two groups, average=5; range=4-7) groups that have been sighted in the area. So far, these efforts have resulted in providing both wet and dry season ranging data of the monitored herds in Bura East Conservancy.



In this month alone, our rangers have also managed to collect 15 snares that were set in wildlife corridors along the banks of Tana river. Our rangers in partnership with other agencies arrested two young men with dikdik bushmeat who were warned and later released. Two cases of illegal charcoal burning were also reported and the culprits warned to stop the vice or risk arrest.

recovery for the world's most endangered antelope

### Media Coverage

- ✓ The Applied Ecologist's Blog: Why hirola are the world's most endangered antelope and, what it will take to save them.
- ✓ UW Researchers: Decline of Grass Threatens World's Most Endangered Antelope.
- ✓ Mongabay: Increasing tree cover threatens world's most endangered antelope.
- ✓ Science Daily: Decline of Grass Threatens World's Most Endangered Antelope.

### Other News

- ✓ The Houston Zoo Blog: Saving the World's Most Endangered Antelope.
- ✓ Rainforest Trust: Haven for the Hirola: Protecting Vital Habitat for the World's Rarest Antelope.

### SOCIAL ICONS

Please find us on social media using the icons below.



## Ishaqbini Conservancy

The situation is no different in Ishaqbini conservancy as well. The conservancy has been affected by the ongoing dry spell except in the sanctuary where livestock are not allowed at all. The incursions from the pastoralists witnessed at the start of last month have had a terrible effect in the conservancy. If these conditions persist, both wildlife and livestock are bound to suffer in the conservancy in the long run.

A total of twenty-three hirola individuals belonging to the three groups (total=23, average=8, range= 4-11) resident in the conservancy were also reported this month. However, no hirola births have been reported in the conservancy for this month. Other common wildlife sightings included the common zebra (6 groups, average=11, range= 4-19), and the reticulated giraffes (4 groups, average=13, range=6-20) etc. The available grass is now completely nibbled to the ground level and the remaining biomass is very dry as well.



The Ishaqbini conservancy management have managed to contain the pastoralists incursions and this month was rather a sigh of relief as no one was arrested. In adjoining community areas at the outskirts of the conservancy, two goats and two sheep were reported to have been killed by hyenas.



### Hirola Predator Proof Sanctuary

The predator free sanctuary seems to be doing just fine despite the raging drought. The landscape in the sanctuary unlike the conservancy is teeming with wildlife. Our rangers stationed in the conservancy have continued to report sightings of hirola groups totaling (8 groups, total=129, average=12, range=7-15), plain zebra (4 groups, total=40, average=10; range: 4-16), giraffe (5 groups, total=42, average=11; range: 3-14) among other wildlife sightings. One challenge facing the sanctuary is the apparent tick menace, which is suspected to be partly responsible for the deaths recorded in the predator free sanctuary. This has forced the management to introduce cattle, from the community to help reduce the rather high tick load experienced in the sanctuary. One hirola male died in the sanctuary mid this month as a result of a fight for territory that ensued between two males in the resident bachelor group.



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## Sangailu Conservancy

Sangailu is the worst hit of all the conservancies. The neighboring forests have become constant targets of the encroaching pastoralists as they ran away from the raging drought. Their continued forays into the forests nearby has resulted in flushing out wildlife who have now become a common sight around the villages. Emaciated buffaloes, plain zebras and baboons are now a common sighting around the remaining water holes shared by man, livestock and now wildlife. Twenty cows and a dozen goat and sheep have been reported dead this month alone. This has forced the communities to dig deep into their pockets and buy water from vendors. The communities have rather been so helpful as they give way to the thirsty animals as they come to quench their thirst at the waterhole.



Away from the ongoing raging drought, our scouts have continued to report sightings of hirola (total=30, 4 distinct groups, average=8, range=5-10), among other wildlife species in the area. Two adult buffalo were reported to have succumbed to the drought as they got stuck in the waterholes. Efforts by the community to get them out and offer them water were in vain. A pack of wild dogs (10 individuals) were also reported this month to have killed two goats in Sangailu area.

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## Meet a reformed poacher now saving hirola

In order to appreciate the efforts of our able ranger team, we would like to introduce one of our poacher-cum-ranger, Mr. Aden Muhumed, 44 years old, who has decided to concentrate his efforts to conservation after over two decades of being a notorious poacher ([please read more about him in our blog section](#)).



Hirola Conservation Programme (HCP)

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