



Wildlife
Conservation
Action

Strategic Plan

2024-2028

Contents

Letter from the Chair of the Board 4

Letter from the Executive Director 6

About Wildlife Conservation Action 8

What We Do 12

- Human-wildlife Conflict Mitigation
 - Climate smart livelihoods
 - Conservation Science and Leadership
 - Community Awareness Program
-

Where We Work 17

- WCA Achievements
-

Situation Analysis 21

- Strengths
 - Areas of Improvement for WCA
 - Opportunities
 - Threats
-

Strategic Framework 26

- Our Values
 - Vision
 - Mission
 - Value proposition
-

Our Theory of Change 28

Goals & Objectives 30

- Goal 1: Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation 31
 - Goal 2: Climate Smart Livelihoods 34
 - Goal 3: Research & Conservation Leadership 37
 - Goal 4: Environmental Education & Awareness 39
-

Our Implementation Approach & Priorities 41

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Letter from the Chair of the Board



Dear valuable stakeholders,

It is my pleasure to present the inaugural Wildlife Conservation Action Strategic Plan for 2024

-2028. Our strategic plan is built upon the firm foundations of our mandate to enhance community driven wildlife conservation action towards addressing threats to wildlife species and habitats while enhancing local livelihoods.

As we navigate the dynamic conservation landscape, this strategic plan will ensure WCA's position as a leader in developing seamless pathways that enhance community-driven human wildlife conflict mitigation and coexistence initiatives in line with national, regional and international wildlife conservation policy goals. This strategic plan is a product of honest and bold feedback from our strategic partners, board team members and the local communities who are pivotal to the achievement of our wildlife conservation action initiatives. The plan reinforces the key tenets of our foundational wildlife conservation activities since the inception of WCA and provides insight to help refine our goals and set new conservation action priorities. This plan ultimately reflects the voices and lived experiences of local communities who bear the costs of living with wildlife, yet are pivotal in maintaining viable wildlife populations across conservation landscapes.

The engagement and support of local communities in our area of operation is core to our work at WCA. We applaud and recognize the financial support/ assistance from our funders to WCA that enables continued grassroots participation, research, training, and capacity building towards fulfilling our community based wildlife conservation agenda. Financial assistance helps bridge the gap to achieve work that otherwise would not be possible. We also recognize the important role our youth and women will play in many of the strategic initiatives outlined in this plan. Threaded in each part of this plan is our focus on building strong community-based collaborations and partnerships; youth and gender empowerment; cultural diversity, inclusion and belonging. Moving forward, we commit to embrace and promote a culture of resiliency and inclusion as we grow and dedicate ourselves to the values of respect, excellence, and compassion across our conservation personnel.

We are thrilled to share this inaugural strategic plan for 2024-2028, and invite you to collaborate and partner with us as we continue to build on the strengths of our mission to champion ambitious and novel wildlife conservation action both within and beyond our walls.

Olga Laiza Kupika
Chair of the Board

Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Staff, Friends, Partners:

I am excited to share with you our Strategic Plan for Wildlife Conservation Action (WCA). This

is the first Strategic Plan for WCA since its formation in 2019. The Plan provides a roadmap of how we will execute our mandate, sets out our strategic vision, and outlines our priorities for the next five years from 2024 to 2028.

This Plan provides the foundation for significant milestones we hope to achieve in the next five years. If we robustly execute our mandate during this period, we will be able to significantly reduce the incidences of human-wildlife conflict in our areas of operation and across the country.

We aim to establish ourselves as the go to organization for human-wildlife conflict mitigation in Zimbabwe. This Strategic Plan will help us to build our brand and forge a diverse array of partnerships and fundraising opportunities. Under this Strategic Plan, we will seek to build on the successes we have achieved since our formation in 2019.

This Strategic Plan will propel us towards achieving our mission of strengthening the capacity of local communities to mitigate the negative effects of human-wildlife conflict for enhanced livelihoods and thriving wildlife populations. The

development and operationalization of this Plan has come at a time when human-wildlife conflict is now one of the major threats affecting wildlife conservation in the country and beyond.

Our 2024 – 2028 Strategic Plan provides a coherent, systematic and sustainable roadmap that anchors our operations. It spells out goals and objectives we seek to achieve during the implementation period. Overall, we envisage that the implementation of the Plan will lead to communities that are resilient to the negative impacts of human-wildlife conflict, and who are coexisting with and protecting wildlife.

As Wildlife Conservation Action we endeavor to continue working with communities to improve their lives and livelihoods and secure critical wildlife populations. I invite you to join us on this journey of impact.

Moreangels M. Mbizah
Executive Director



About Wildlife Conservation Action

Wildlife Conservation Action (WCA), founded in 2019, supports and empowers local communities to mitigate human-wildlife conflict in Zimbabwe. WCA was formed in response to an alarming increase in such clashes in communal areas adjacent National Parks. Since 2000 Zimbabwe has experienced a surge in livestock predation, crop raids, human injuries and deaths as a result of conflicts with wildlife. Between 2016 and 2021, for example, human-wildlife conflict (HWC) cases increased by nearly 300 percent. In 2021 and 2022, a total of 138 human lives, and over a thousand livestock were lost due to HWC. Meanwhile, substantial crop losses occurred primarily as a result of raids by elephants. Human settlements encroaching into wildlife habitats, increase in both human and wildlife populations, changing wildlife species behaviors, and climate change are the main reasons for this escalating problem.

In addition, since 2000 Zimbabwe's prolonged economic recession has significantly diminished the resources available to the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) and Rural District Councils (RDC) to attend to problem wild animals. Furthermore, the communities in Zimbabwe have no legal mandate nor capacity to effectively deal with problem animals, leaving them vulnerable to increasing conflict. This has intensified conflict between local communities and wildlife resulting in negative attitudes towards the same, RDCs, ZPWMA and conservation programs in general. Communities perceive conservation programs as the root cause of the rising conflicts with wildlife. As a result, some local communities have resorted to retaliatory killings and poaching, threatening wildlife populations in communal areas, prompting WCA to seek solutions with communities that will protect wildlife and enhance people's livelihoods.

WCA's primary focus is mitigating **human-wildlife conflicts**, **conducting research** and **raising awareness** about HWC issues within local communities. Our overarching goal is to foster harmonious coexistence between humans and wildlife. For us, this implies that local communities are leading in HWC mitigation and subsequently benefiting through improved livelihoods. As a **community-oriented organization**, our approach is to create a mutually beneficial environment for both local communities and wildlife populations. We collaborate closely with local **communities, bridging the gap between their traditional and modern institutions** to better understand their plight, and together innovate best practices for dealing with human-wildlife conflicts. We recognize the intrinsic value of indigenous knowledge, that it is invaluable in formulating **locally relevant and culturally acceptable mitigation measures for local communities to coexist** with wildlife. We blend local knowledge with our **unparalleled scientific knowledge** of wildlife species, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the final human-wildlife conflict mitigation services products. Through field trials of and continuous co-learning about hybrid methods, we tailor, improve and adapt mitigation strategies to suit the needs, culture and available resources of local communities and individual farmers. **Our approach is to implement non-lethal, cost effective, and simple methods that intentionally yield positive downstream livelihoods and wellbeing outcomes.**

WCA is dedicated to nurturing future conservation leaders who appreciate, value, and safeguard natural resources. To advance this, we run an internship program and a field-based training for university undergraduates for them to gain hands-on experience in the conservation field. We also run an environmental conservation program for school children as a way of developing generations of environmentally conscious citizens.

To amplify WCA's impact, we partner with various institutions, including government bodies such as the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA), Rural District Councils (RDCs), Environmental Management Agency (EMA), and the Forestry Commission (FC).

We support and enhance their capacities through targeted resources mobilization and technical backstopping. We also partner with World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF), African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), USAID/Zimbabwe Resilience ANCHORS Activity, Lion Recovery Fund (LRF), Tusk Trust and Great Plains Foundation, each supporting WCA to implement projects across various landscapes. We have made inroads with potential partners and funders including Oak Foundation. We have also maintained close collaborations with Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) and other local universities to further expand our influence and overall reach.





What We Do

WCA has a number of interconnected programs to address various aspects of our mission and engage with our community stakeholders. Our program areas encompass human-wildlife conflict mitigation, conservation science and research, education and awareness, livelihoods, and mentoring interns and women in conservation leadership. Within each of these overarching areas, we have several specific projects.

Human-wildlife Conflict Mitigation

Community guardians

Through our locally recruited Community Guardians, known as “Batabilili”, we engage closely with communities to safeguard their livestock, crops, and lives from the potential danger and destruction caused by wildlife. Our multifaceted approach includes **responding to conflict incidents**, collecting valuable conflict data, monitoring wildlife movements, alerting farmers to the presence of problem wild animals, and **conducting awareness campaigns**. Additionally,



we conduct comprehensive **kraal assessments** across communities, providing advice to farmers on how to fortify their kraals to ensure maximum livestock protection. We also actively support local communities in **strengthening their kraals** or adopting **mobile bomas** as protective measures. Furthermore, our dedicated community guardian team diligently monitors compliance with conservation agreements, such as those related to cattle herding, consistently assessing grazing lands to ensure adherence to responsible livestock management practices.

Climate smart livelihoods

In addition to reducing human-wildlife conflict and improving community livelihoods, the non-lethal and climate smart HWC mitigation measures such as the use of mobile bomas, chilli farming, bee keeping and holistic land and livestock management also contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation by promoting sustainable agriculture practices, carbon sequestration, and enhancing ecosystem services.



Chili farming

Under our chili farming program, we assist local farmers in cultivating chilies as the crucial component in the production of chili-based deterrents. Such deterrents play a pivotal role in safeguarding crops against the encroachment of elephants and other herbivores, effectively reducing HWC and protecting community livelihoods. Furthermore, we facilitate market linkages for chili farmers, enabling them to generate income from surplus chili, which in turn enhances their overall well-being.

Conservation Science and Leadership

Originally focused on the **Shangani Ranch Research Project** in Zimbabwe, our conservation science initiative was aimed at addressing threats facing wildlife, their habitat and entire ecosystems. The project primarily assessed the opportunities for large carnivore conservation on private land, using cutting-edge technology such as GPS collars and camera trapping to understand wildlife abundance, distribution, movement and behavior for management and conservation decisions.



We are recasting our conservation science to research work to encompass a broader, cross cutting approach that informs all of our programs. At the same time, we intend to be more targeted, doing research that responds to specific critical issues arising in our intervention sites, whether they pertain to social or natural sciences. Furthermore, we are now directing

our internship students to focus on topics relevant to our local target communities. These will include in-depth understanding of site-specific wildlife species such as hyenas, lions, wild dogs, leopards and elephants, as well as conducting social science research to explore people's perceptions, willingness, economics and priorities. Insights from such research will inform our interventions and increase our impact on both local communities and conservation.

Women in Conservation

Our **Women in Conservation mentorship** program provides mentorship and support to young women who are about to embark on their conservation career. The mentorship program pairs young women in conservation with experienced conservation professionals. The program will also create a network of mentors and mentees that can share knowledge and resources and support each other through a sisterhood.

Community Awareness Program

Our **Community Awareness program** is focused on informing the general public about conservation issues and encouraging community participation in conservation activities. Our approach here will be more focused, departing from the traditional awareness campaigns to more targeted awareness raising and information sharing, creating discussion platforms so that there is information flow in both directions. We target young men, young women, adult men and women, seniors, school-age youth, livestock owners, specific villages, etc. We intentionally select the content depending on user demands.



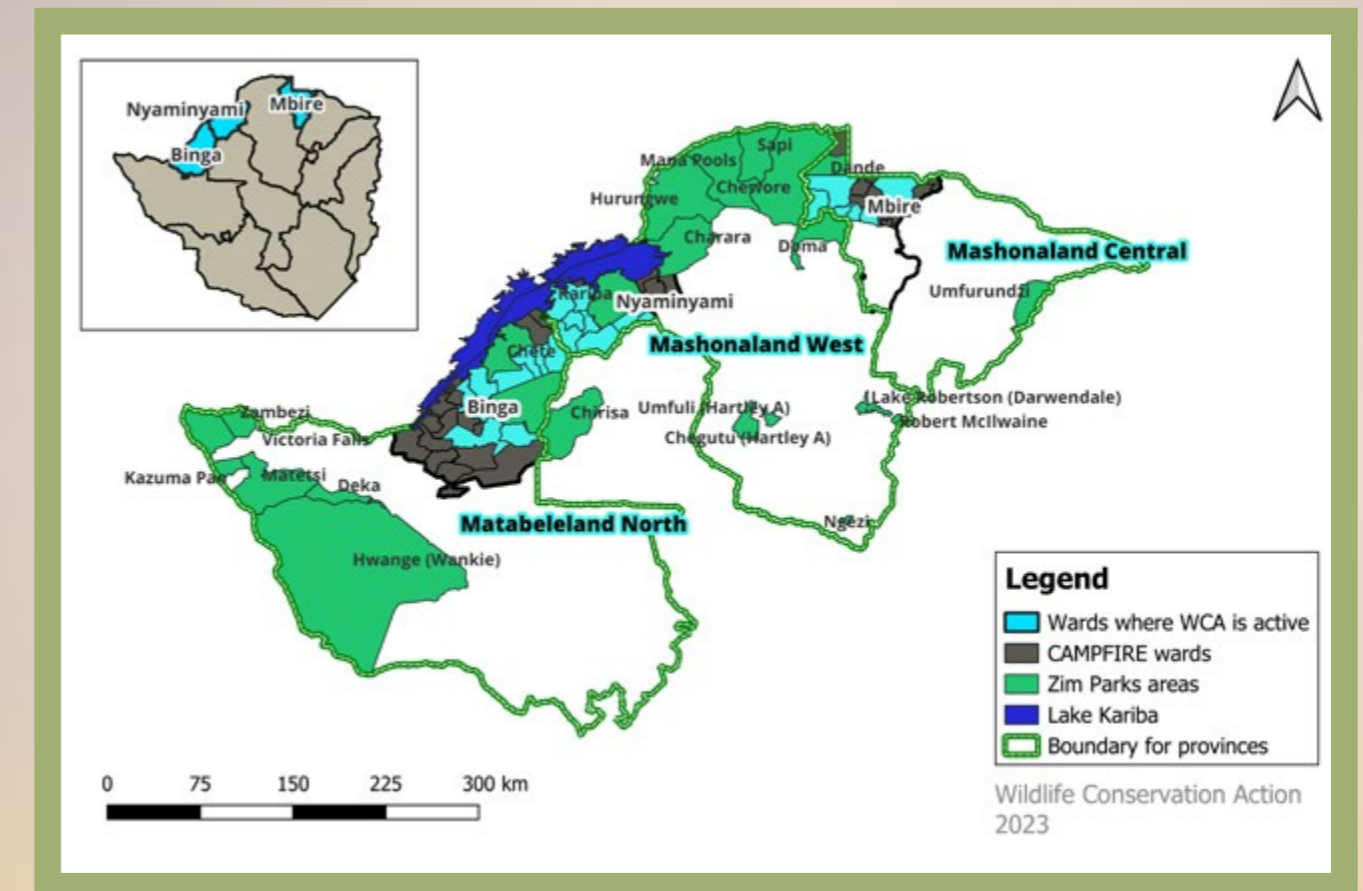
Guardians of the Wild (GOTW) program

Our Guardians of the Wild (GOTW) program is aimed at educating school children about the importance of conservation and sustainable development, through conservation clubs in schools across the country. The program also supports the inclusion of conservation content in the school curricula and the connection of children with nature through visits to wildlife areas. WCA has reached out and is working with over 37 schools in both rural and in urban areas of Zimbabwe.



Where We Work

WCA has programs in communal areas adjacent to wildlife protected areas in Zimbabwe. Currently, we have programs operating in Nyaminyami and Mbire rural districts, and we have recently expanded into Binga rural district. These districts implement the CAMPFIRE program, and are important wildlife corridors where communal people share their space with wildlife.



Legal provisions for addressing HWC in communal areas of Zimbabwe

WCA works in CAMPFIRE districts—the Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) which was initiated by Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) in the late 1980s. The program allows communal people to manage and benefit from wildlife in their area. Since its inception, both human and wildlife populations in the respective areas have risen, and inevitably increased HWC. However, the legal mandate for addressing HWC lies predominantly with institutions outside the local communities.

The Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975 and subsequent amendments establish the legal framework for addressing human-wildlife conflicts. The primary authorities responsible for managing human-wildlife conflicts are the Minister of Environment and Tourism, the ZPWMA and various local districts that hold appropriate authority status (AAs) to oversee land and water resources, including the environment committees within Rural District Councils (RDCs). According to the Act, in national parks, the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, may authorize the killing of an animal that is deemed a threat to human safety or is causing property damage. However, in lands outside national parks, the Minister, in coordination with the RDC's environment committee has the authority to approve the control of animals causing excessive damage. Moreover, the Minister, in consultation with the ZPWMA, possesses the authority to regulate problem wildlife on any land to manage disease outbreaks or safeguard human life and property.

The Act allows the killing of wildlife without a permit solely in cases of self-defense or defense of another person, if immediately and absolutely necessary. The burden of proof for demonstrating that the animal was killed in self-defense or defense of another person rests with the person who took the action. The Act mandates that anyone who kills an animal in such circumstances must report the incident within seven days to the appropriate authority responsible for the land where the animal was last sighted. Alternatively, this report can be filed at the nearest Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority or police station, or at the office of the local authority overseeing the relevant area. However, the Act does not recognize the killing of wildlife in defense of property as a valid defense, and authorization for such actions can only be granted by the Authority, the Minister, or the relevant environment committee of an RDC. The legal and institutional arrangements for HWC mitigation remove all agency from local communities. In cases where the institutions responsible for HWC are under-capacitated, the impact of HWC on local communities is exacerbated. In addition, many of the HWC cases happen in remote areas where communication and reporting of HWC cases as set out at law is difficult.

Opportunity for transformation from the 2022 draft wildlife policy for addressing HWC in communal areas of Zimbabwe

The government of Zimbabwe has established a set of policy provisions to effectively address HWC while recognizing the rights and responsibilities of various stakeholders.

- ☑ The state grants the rights of appropriate authority (AA) to local communities, local authorities, and other entities. The AA status grants power to these entities to make decisions and take actions to manage and mitigate HWC in their respective areas. This decentralized approach empowers local stakeholders to play a significant role in resolving conflicts that arise from the coexistence of humans and wildlife.
- ☑ The government acknowledges the presence of both costs and benefits associated with wildlife in areas that are home to various wildlife species. To reflect this in decision-making, the government devolves user rights to both community and private landowners. This decentralization of user rights allows for more flexible and context-specific management of wildlife and HWC.
- ☑ Regarding the engagement of stakeholders to develop strategies for HWC, the government takes an inclusive approach. Relevant stakeholders are brought together to collaboratively devise effective solutions to address HWC. The approach ensures that the input and perspectives of those directly affected by wildlife conflicts are considered in the decision-making process.
- ☑ Appropriate authorities are compelled to develop participatory district and/or local level land use plans. These plans are designed to incorporate HWC management and mitigation strategies into the broader land use systems. By integrating these strategies into land use planning, the government aims to proactively address HWC issues and minimize potential conflicts.
- ☑ The government acknowledges the crucial role civil society plays in this new framework. Their mandate includes raising public awareness about wildlife management, which is essential in promoting a shared understanding of the importance of coexisting with wildlife, strengthening the implementation of CBNRM initiatives by providing capacity building and support for community-based enterprises, and they are involved in conducting research to inform evidence-based decision-making in managing HWC.

WCA Achievements

By the end of December 2023 WCA had achieved the following:

Internship and schools conservation program: To date, WCA has provided internship opportunities to nine individuals. Moreover, we are actively engaged with 37 schools in Nyaminyami and Harare, where we are fervently promoting environmental education

51 school teachers were trained as Environmental Club Patrons and participated in all program activities. The program now has **630 registered students**

WCA has become the **go-to organization for human-wildlife conflict mitigation** in Zimbabwe

Trained and recruited **29 Community Guardians**

We have established **90 mobile bomas** and strengthened **over 700 traditional cattle kraals** which have been 100% effective in protecting corralled livestock

10 households have benefited from lion-lights and **12 households** have been assisted with raised kraal construction

Reduced human carnivore conflict by 59.5% from 141 incidents in 2021 to 57 incidents in 2023 in our program areas

Our boma interventions have yielded positive downstream benefits such as **increased soil fertility**, subsequently boosting the productivity of the respective plots

Innovative activities for community wildlife guardians included supporting communities to **strengthen kraals against wildlife**. The 29 community guardians have consistently monitored herding practice, scouting for stray animals and herds without herders, bringing the livestock to their owners.



Situation Analysis

Strengths

Community centered approach: WCA's conservation model is centered on local communities who live in HWC hotspot areas. Our primary objective is to improve community livelihoods by reducing vulnerability to problem wildlife. Over time, WCA has developed a deep understanding of these communities, and built strong working relations and trust. For example, WCA hires some staff at various levels, from program assistants to field personnel, directly from these communities. Additionally, our Community Guardians, a crucial component of our team, are exclusively local individuals stationed within their respective communities.

Expertise in wildlife research: WCA was founded on its expertise in carnivore research, strong leadership and knowledge about the local context. Our Executive Director is recognised locally and internationally, with several international awards. The team comprises individuals who are experts in lion, leopard, spotted hyena and wild dog research, and is developing expertise in wild herbivore mitigation, in response to strong demand from all our local communities. At the core of our interventions is the commitment to scientific rigor, and we are consistently at the cutting edge of innovation. In all our intervention sites, we diligently collect data, starting with comprehensive baselines, and then monitoring emerging trends to inform our interventions.

Strategic in approach: As we move into the next phases of our work, we have a very clear understanding of who we are and what we are trying to achieve.

Good at collaborating: Because WCA wants the best for communities, we partner with relevant institutions to leverage collective expertise for the benefit of local communities. Our results-oriented approach underscores our commitment to bringing them tangible benefits.

Young dynamic team: WCA is an organization of young people who have a lot of energy which defines the responsiveness that is associated with how we work. The community guardians, for example, monitor grazing areas, collecting essential data on unattended livestock herds and any stray livestock, reinforcing our commitment to the communities we serve.

Areas of Improvement for WCA

Staff retention and personal development opportunities: We are a young organization in a field with big international organizations. We have not been very competitive in offering market parity remuneration for our staff. Furthermore, WCA is not as yet structured in a way that offers clear personal development opportunities to its staff – due to a constrained budget. This has affected staff morale, and we are conscious of this. We are working on a staff retention strategy, and sourcing more unrestricted funding – to help retain our high-

performing staff. We have also become very intentional in our hiring – to have a mix of young and seasoned conservationists.

Performance management: This is an area that we have not invested a lot on. Though our team is great at delivering, we have not developed performance review systems for our staff. This is an area we are working on to ensure we track and support our team to grow. In addition, we are hoping to prioritise team building and team optimization to keep staff motivated and efficient.

Overcoming inertia: While our expertise in carnivore management is well-established, we recognize the need to bolster our understanding of the social dimensions of our interventions. We have been slow to incorporate social science experts into our team. While we have been learning along the way, we would want to be responsive to the work at hand and build a strong adaptive team. To address livelihood development and human-herbivore conflicts, such as those involving problem elephants, we should consider collaborating with social scientists and organizations specializing in these areas.

Opportunities

Geographical expansion: Recent years have witnessed a concerning surge in human-wildlife conflict cases across Zimbabwe. There are very few organizations exclusively dedicated to HWC mitigation, positioning WCA in a unique niche for substantial growth. The potential for our expansion is vast.

Establishment of the center for human-carnivore mitigation and learning: Leveraging our affiliations with institutes of higher learning, our robust internship program, and our extensive expertise, we have the capacity to educate and mentor other organizations in the HWC conflict mitigation and conservation. The role of the learning center holds significant promise.

Policy advocacy: WCA has cultivated relationships with pivotal institutions, such as the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA). Through these formal affiliations, WCA possesses the capacity to disseminate its work and exert influence on national-level policies. However, this necessitates an enhancement of our skill sets to effectively engage in and shape discussions at this scale.

Service provision to other NGOs: Prominent conservation organizations, including AWF, USAID (through the Resilience ANCHORS Activity), and WWF, have expressed interest in WCA's services in regions where they are actively engaged in conservation efforts. This presents an extraordinary opportunity for our impact to resonate across diverse landscapes, further expanding our reach and influence.

Threats

Unstable political environment: Zimbabwe has a very unstable political environment and is currently under international sanctions. This has created suspicion between the government and civil society organizations, including conservation organizations. This politicization may affect management of conservation and how civil society, including WCA, access funds and implement activities on the ground.

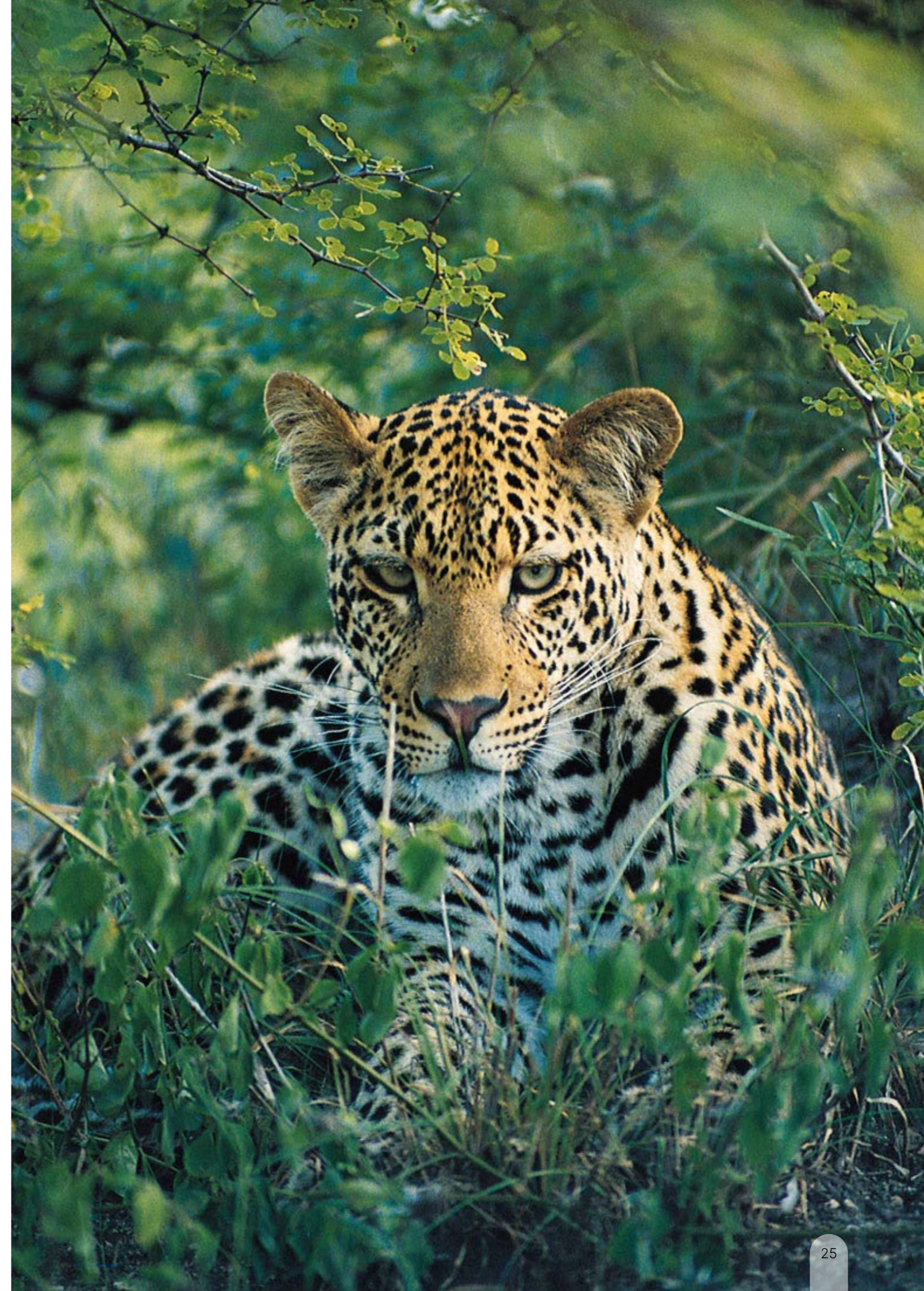
Harsh economic conditions in the country: Zimbabwe has been under economic recession since the year 2000 when it implemented a compulsory land reform program. Since then, economic development has been hindered, leading to a high unemployment rate, soaring inflation, and extreme currency instability. Thus, some donors have stopped or reduced funding to Zimbabwe, potentially posing challenges for WCA's financial sustainability.

Changing social dynamics in rural areas: Demographic changes in the landscapes where we are working has a bearing on our work. The younger population in these areas are less supportive of the traditional ways of living and push for increased agricultural production, particularly tobacco farming – associated with massive deforestation to establish fields and harvest fuelwood. This poses threats to wildlife habitats and ultimately conservation efforts.

High cost of technological equipment: WCA uses modern technology to track wildlife species and monitor predation and crop raiding incidents. However, the inhibitive cost of collars and GPS gadgets might hinder our operations.

Climate change: The districts where we operate are in a region prone to the impacts of climate change, and have become drier. As a result, local communities have resorted to reverting back to depending on wild resources for their sustenance. This shift could derail species conservation as settlements and crop fields encroach into wildlife corridors and critical habitats.

Legal and policy environment: Zimbabwe's legislative landscape has undergone changes, becoming somewhat unpredictable. The legal instruments governing the work of civil society organizations, for instance, The PVO Amendment Bill passed recently, may have negative effects on the operations of WCA. The new bill could require that all CSOs re-register, potentially risking being denied registration.



Strategic Framework

Our Values

- ▶ Our teamwork is unique, **all for each and each for all**. All team members are there to support each member to achieve his or her assigned goals, and each member is there to support all others to achieve organizational goals.
- ▶ We are **passionate and dedicated** to our work, and do it with joy and fun.
- ▶ We are very **adaptive** to navigating the constantly evolving conditions.
- ▶ We value and create space for **diversity** of perspectives, using them to guide our search for innovative solutions.
- ▶ Our motivation is to **achieve** our goals.
- ▶ We uphold a culture of **respect**, honoring everyone, in and outside our organization.

Vision

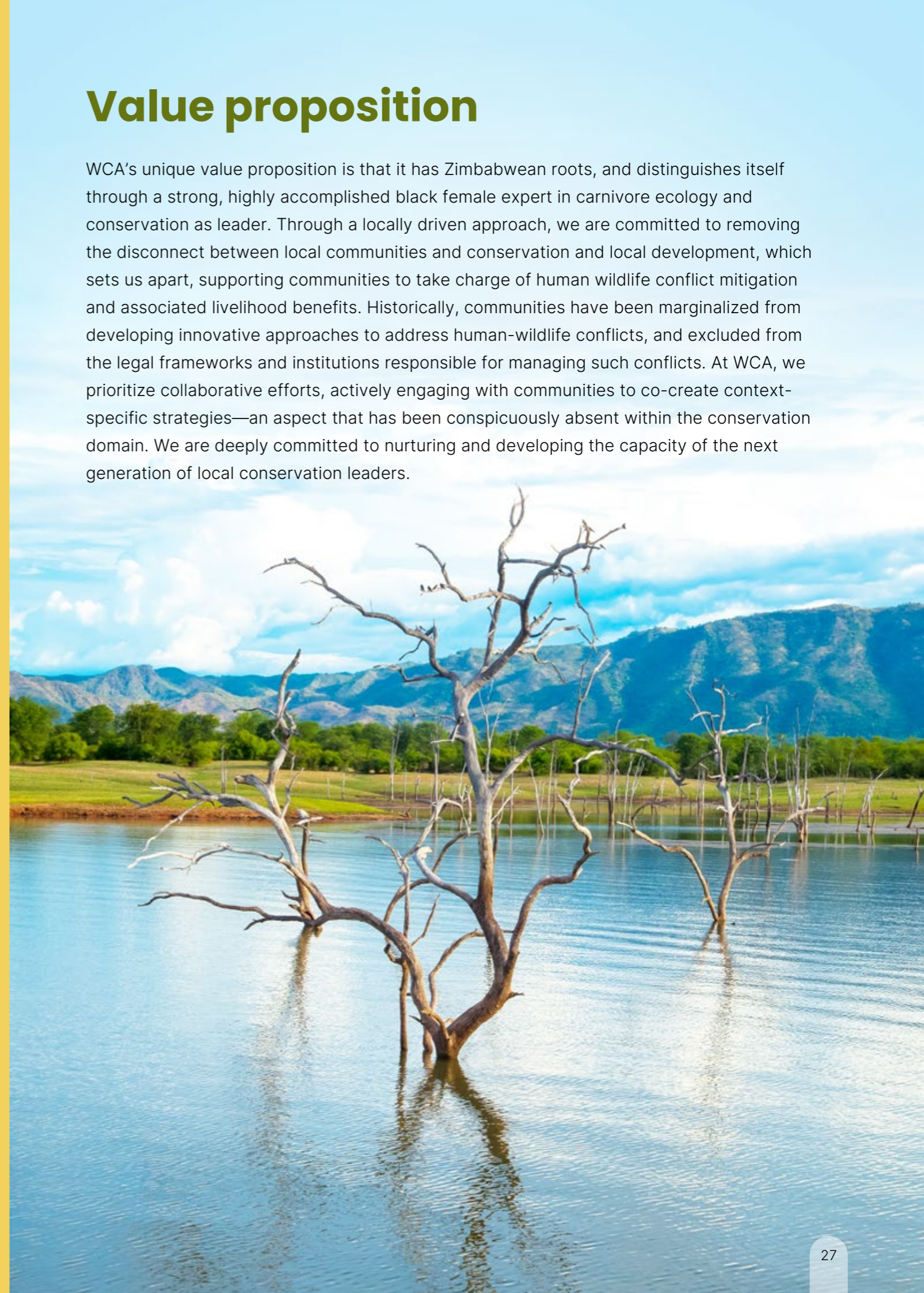
Local-led and community-driven human-wildlife coexistence for improved community livelihoods and thriving wildlife populations.

Mission

Strengthen the capacity of local communities to mitigate human-wildlife conflict in a changing climate, for improved livelihoods and wildlife conservation.

Value proposition

WCA's unique value proposition is that it has Zimbabwean roots, and distinguishes itself through a strong, highly accomplished black female expert in carnivore ecology and conservation as leader. Through a locally driven approach, we are committed to removing the disconnect between local communities and conservation and local development, which sets us apart, supporting communities to take charge of human wildlife conflict mitigation and associated livelihood benefits. Historically, communities have been marginalized from developing innovative approaches to address human-wildlife conflicts, and excluded from the legal frameworks and institutions responsible for managing such conflicts. At WCA, we prioritize collaborative efforts, actively engaging with communities to co-create context-specific strategies—an aspect that has been conspicuously absent within the conservation domain. We are deeply committed to nurturing and developing the capacity of the next generation of local conservation leaders.



Our Theory of Change

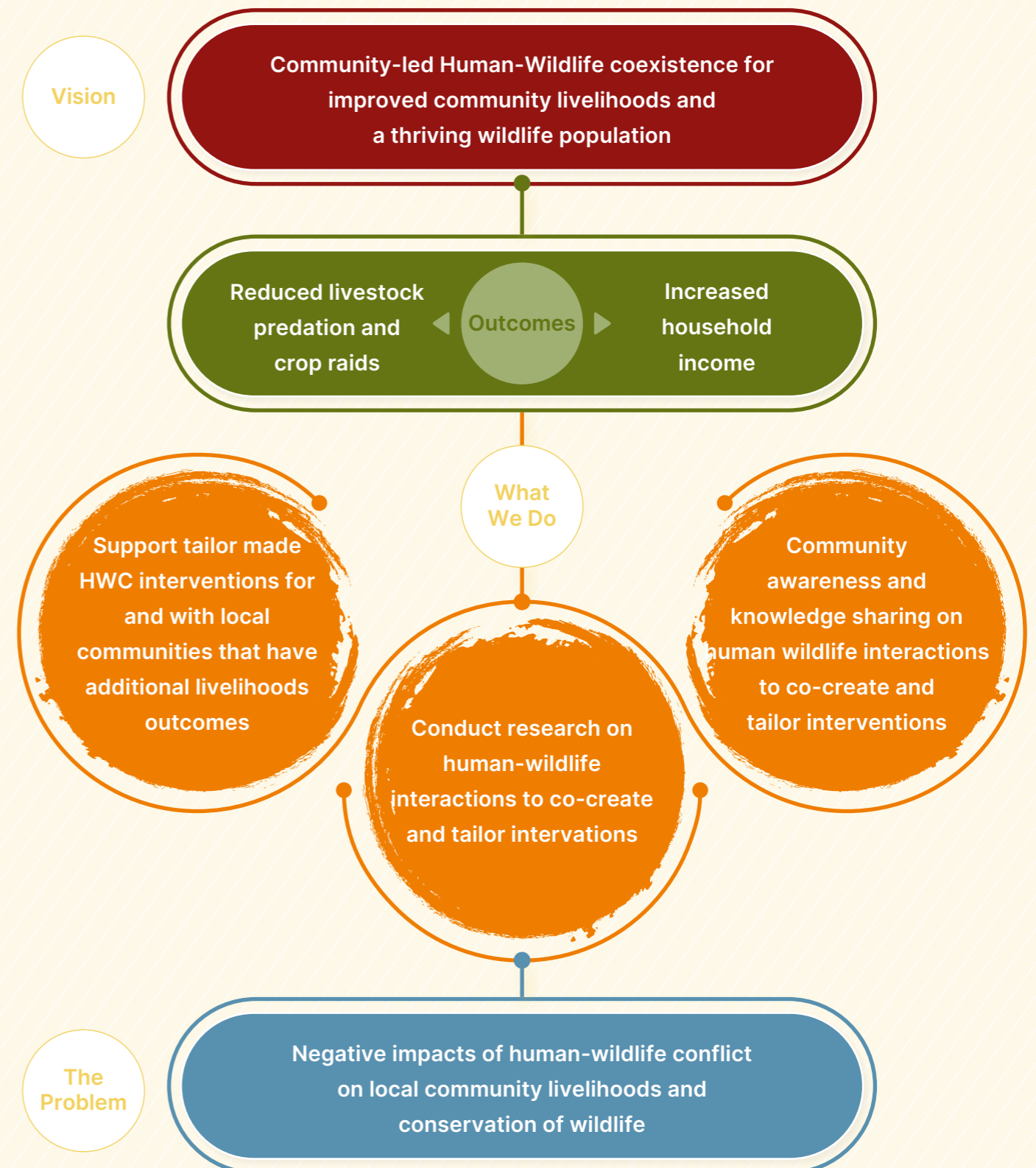
Mitigating the **negative impacts of human wildlife conflicts on community livelihoods and conservation of wildlife** is central to WCA's existence. Local communities living with wildlife experience losses through livestock predation, crop raids and attacks on humans. Local communities are often not able to reduce the losses as they have limited capacity and knowledge of alternative non-lethal and effective mitigation measures. For example, cultural practices of livestock husbandry and cropping systems are not adapted to threats from wildlife. In addition, communities are legally disempowered and excluded from dealing with problem animals. There is a lack of shared knowledge and limited understanding of human-wildlife interactions which exacerbates conflicts and results in poorer livelihoods. Local communities often respond by killing problem wildlife in retaliation, leading to a decline in key wildlife species.

In addressing these challenges, we are guided by the following principles:

- Local communities have invaluable indigenous knowledge that serves as a strong foundation for co-creation of sustainable HWC mitigation measures.
- Local communities have the potential to address the challenges they face but require a supportive framework that facilitates innovation and effective implementation of these solutions.
- Local communities can develop innovative HWC mitigation measures that are effective and foster positive livelihood outcomes.
- Positive livelihood outcomes resulting from HWC mitigation incentivize local communities to embrace HWC mitigation measures that are less detrimental to wildlife.

WCA's multifaceted approach is anchored on three core pillars. First, we will conduct comprehensive research into human-wildlife interactions to **gain a deeper understanding of the underlying dynamics, facilitating the co-creation and tailoring of effective interventions**. Second, we will raise **community awareness and promote knowledge sharing** regarding human-wildlife interactions. This will empower local communities to actively engage in the development of **context-specific interventions**. Third, we will provide **dedicated support for the implementation of tailor-made human-wildlife conflict (HWC) interventions**, forging partnerships with local communities to ensure these initiatives yield additional positive

livelihood outcomes. The anticipated outcomes of these concerted efforts include a reduction in livestock predation and crop raids, leading to increased household income and economic benefits. Ultimately, we envision the growth of a community-led paradigm for human-wildlife coexistence, one that not only enhances community livelihoods but also fosters thriving wildlife populations in harmony with people. The following TOC diagram summarizes our proposed interventions and key expected outcomes, and the ultimate impact on local communities and wildlife populations.



Goals & Objectives



Goal 1: Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation

Under this goal WCA will promote sustainable ways for communities to reduce human wildlife conflict. We see coexistence as a sustainable, yet dynamic state in which humans and wildlife co-adapt in sharing the same landscape. WCA will support human-wildlife interactions that are successfully managed by the respective local communities to ensure wildlife populations persist at tolerable risk levels. With the initiatives, we aim to influence at least three quarters of households in our sites to be tolerant of wildlife by 2028.

Objective 1. To support communities in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga districts in the mitigation of human-wildlife conflict by December 2028.

Objective 1.1: Collaborate with 18 local stakeholders working on wildlife conservation and sustainable livelihoods across the three districts (Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga) by December 2028.

- » Facilitate the development and implementation of a district level Human-wildlife Conflict Mitigation Strategy for each of the three districts by December 2028
- » Collaborate with 18 key stakeholders across the three districts by December 2028.

Objective 1.2. To facilitate the implementation of a universal Knowledge Management System on human-wildlife conflict monitoring in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.

- » Develop and implement SMART data management system on human wildlife conflicts across three districts by December 2028 (Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga).
- » Train three Project Assistants on SMART Desktop data management across three districts (Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga) by December 2028.
- » Recruit and train 39 Community Guardians on SMART Mobile data collection across three districts by December 2028 (Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga).

Objective 1.3. To support 39 Community Guardians with resources to effectively monitor human-wildlife conflict incidents

and implementation of selected mitigation strategies in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028

- » To recruit and train 30 Community Guardians (Mbire = 18 and Binga = 12) to monitor human-wildlife conflict and implement human-wildlife conflicts mitigation strategies by December 2028.
- » To equip 39 Community Guardians to monitor human-wildlife conflict and implement selected mitigation strategies across the three districts by December 2028.
- » To support 39 Community Guardians to monitor human-wildlife conflict and implement selected mitigation strategies to encourage human-wildlife coexistence by December 2028.
- » To support the Community Guardians to conduct a minimum of 37,400 patrols for monitoring human-wildlife conflict and conducting selected activities for mitigation by December 2028.

- Objective 1.4.** To set-up three early warning alert systems in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga (one per district) to minimise the risk/chances of human-wildlife conflict by December 2028.
- » Collar 28 lions with geo-fence enabled collars across three districts, to inform the early warning alert systems by December 2028.
 - » Collar 28 elephants with geo-fence enabled collars across three districts, to inform the early warning alert systems by December 2028.
 - » Register 4,600 farmers for the early warning alert system in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.

Objective 2: To reduce the number of human-carnivore conflict (HCC) incidents by 60% in target communities from Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028 through the implementation of customised human-carnivore conflict mitigation strategies.

Objective 2.1: To identify and customise at least five strategies to mitigate human-carnivore conflict by December 2028 in target communities from Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga.

- » Conduct three human-carnivore conflict mitigation strategies co-creation workshops (one per district).

Objective 2.2: 15,652 households implementing customised human-carnivore conflict mitigation strategies in target communities from Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.

- » 860 predator-proof mobile bomas installed in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.
- » 860 traditional kraals fitted with lion-lights in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.
- » 12,384 traditional kraals reinforced in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.
- » 1,548 raised kraals constructed in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga.

Objective 2.3: 15,400 community members reached through human-carnivore conflict mitigation and livestock management workshops by December 2028.

- » Conduct 120 workshops on human-

carnivore conflict mitigation in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.

- » Conduct 120 livestock management workshops in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.

Objective 3: To reduce the number of human-herbivore conflict (HHC) incidents by 60% in target communities from Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028 through the implementation of customised human-herbivore conflict mitigation strategies.

Objective 3.1: Identify and customize at least two strategies to mitigate human-herbivore conflict by December 2028 in target communities from Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga.

- » Conduct three human-herbivore conflict mitigation strategies co-creation workshops in Nyaminyami, Mbire and

Binga by December 2028

Objective 3.2: Implement customized human-herbivore conflict mitigation strategies in target communities from Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.

- » 860 households from target wards using chilli deterrents to mitigate human-herbivore conflict in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Mbinga by December 2028.
- » Objective 3.3: 15,400 community members reached through human-herbivore conflict mitigation workshops by December 2028.
- » 120 workshops on human-herbivore conflict mitigation in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.
- » 120 workshops on crop management workshops in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028



Goal 2:

Climate Smart Livelihoods

The focus of this goal is to promote livelihoods that are compatible with wildlife conservation for the communities living with wildlife. WCA will support livelihoods and income-generating activities that can thrive and be sustained for rural communities experiencing HWC. Such livelihoods and income-generating activities can either benefit directly from HWC mitigation measures, or are less vulnerable to wildlife raids and attacks. We aim to influence at least 15,000 households in our sites to adopt livelihoods that are compatible with biodiversity conservation by 2028.

Objective 1. Increase household income and economic benefits for 13,180 households that sustainably live alongside wildlife by 2028 in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga Districts.

Objective 1.1: Improve crop yields for 13,180 households involved in the project by 30% through regenerative agriculture by 2028 in Nyaminyami (8 wards), Mbire (6 wards) and Binga Districts (6 wards).

- » Support mobile boma, reinforced kraals and raised kraals beneficiaries.
- » Conduct 88 trainings to provide hands-on training and skills to 13,480 households by 2028 on regenerative farming practices such as agroforestry, cover cropping and crop rotation
- » Conduct 88 field days in order for households to look and learn from leading farmers by December 2028
- » Hold (1,058) monthly consultation meetings in order to get feedback from the farmers and provide continued support by December 2028
- » Conduct 88 surveys to collect information on crop yields for project beneficiaries through questionnaires by 2028.

Objective 1.2: Increase household income by 30% for 400 households through climate resilient chilli farming by 2028 in Nyaminyami District.

- » Conduct chilli farming training for 400 households living in elephant conflict hotspots across the target wards
- » Conduct 2 field days annually, totaling 8 field days by December 2028, to enable farmers to observe and learn from pilot projects and exemplary farmers



- » Conduct bi-monthly consultation meetings in order to get feedback from the farmers and provide continued support, totalling 408 meetings by December 2028.
- » Administer 30 surveys to collect information on crop yields for project beneficiaries through questionnaires by 2028.
- » Create market linkages for farmers to sell their chilli by 2028.

Objective 1.3: Increase income for 200 households (25 per ward) by 25% through sustainable beekeeping by 2028 in 8 wards in Nyaminyami District.

- » Conduct 8 training sessions on sustainable beekeeping to 200 households (25 households per ward) living in elephant conflict hotspots across the 8 target wards by 2028.
- » Conduct 35 field days in order for farmers to look and learn from leading farmers by 2028.
- » Hold (411) monthly consultation meetings in order to get feedback from the farmers

across the 8 wards and provide continued support by December 2028.

- » Conduct 35 surveys to collect information on quantities of honey harvested by project beneficiaries through questionnaires by 2028.
- » Create market linkages for farmers to sell honey and its by-products by 2028.

Objective 2: Increase economic benefits for 1,000 households by 20% for communities that sustainably live alongside wildlife in the 8 wards of Nyaminyami District by 2028.

Objective 2.1: Improve livestock herd health and productivity through holistic land and livestock management for 600 households in the 8 wards of Nyaminyami District by 2028.

- » Establish 8 Environmental Action Groups for the 8 wards to champion environmental management, create environmental awareness and carry out biodiversity monitoring and assessments by 2028

- » Establish 8 District Dialogue Platforms (DDP) to discuss and plan on climate change, biodiversity and watershed management activities including policy development by 2028
- » Conduct trainings on livestock herd, health and productivity through holistic land and livestock management in Nyaminyami District for 8 wards by 2028
- » Craft 8 grazing and rangeland management plans for the 8 wards with farmers by 2028
- » Conduct (405) planned livestock herding and kraaling to control grazing periods for different areas in 8 wards on a monthly basis by 2028
- » Conduct 8 trainings for 600 households on animal health, disease management and livestock management by 2028
- » Establish 12 ward livestock health committees by 2028
- » Hold (321) monthly consultation meetings across the 8 wards in order to get feedback from the farmers and provide

- continued support by December 2028
- » Create market linkages for farmers to sell their livestock by 2028
- » Conduct 18 surveys to collect information on household income for project beneficiaries through questionnaires by 2028

Objective 2.2: Provide economic benefits to 400 households in 8 wards for protecting and coexisting with wildlife through a community camera trapping program by 2028 in Nyaminyami District.

- » Conduct 8 x trainings on setting up and use of camera traps and recruit 16 local camera trapping officers by 2028
- » Hold 10 inter-ward level bi-annual competitions between the 8 competing wards to present prizes to the wards based on the species of wildlife sighted, numbers and corresponding scores recorded in each ward by December 2028
- » Hold (306) monthly consultation meetings in order to get feedback from the farmers December 2028



Goal 3:

Research & Conservation Leadership

The focus of this goal is to conduct comprehensive quantitative research to understand wildlife species ecology (population, movement patterns and behaviour) for effective management and human-wildlife conflict mitigation. This goal will also include building the capacity of the next generation of conservation leaders through field-based training and mentorship support.



Objective 1. Improve understanding of wildlife species behavior and ecology for conservation action and management

Objective 1.1: Determine the population, movement patterns and behaviour of key wildlife species in and around protected areas in the three target districts (Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga) by December 2028.

- » Conduct 9 seasonal road count surveys conducted in Chizarira National Parks by December 2028.
- » Carry out 10 camera trap surveys conducted in Chizarira National Parks by December 2028.

Objective 1.2: By December 2028, execute a comprehensive quantitative research study to understand wildlife species movement patterns and behaviour using accepted technologies and sampling methodologies for informed conservation and management strategies within Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga rural councils.

- » 7,480 direct and indirect wildlife sighting patrols conducted in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.
- » Collar of 52 lions in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga with GPS collars by December 2028.
- » Collar of 52 elephants in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga with GPS collars by December 2028.
- » 14 camera trap surveys conducted in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Mbinga rural districts by December 2028.

Objective 2. Conduct comprehensive qualitative and quantitative research to understand human aspirations and share 60 findings reports with stakeholders from target districts (Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga) by December 2028.

Objective 2.1: Reach 11,100 community members via workshops, annual surveys, and feedback surveys by December 2028 in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga.

- » 5,000 community members participated in community consultation workshops by December 2028 in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga.
- » 3,600 respondents reached via annual surveys by December 2028 in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga.
- » 2,500 feedback forms received from community members in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.

Objective 2.2: To reach 13,800 community members via livestock and cropping assessments by December 2028 in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga.

- » 6,200 community members reached via cropping system consultation workshops by December 2028 in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga.
- » 4,200 community members reached via kraal assessments in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga by December 2028.
- » 3,400 livestock herds assessed by December 2028 in Nyaminyami, Mbire and Binga.

Objective 3. Provide training and mentorship to 1675 undergraduate and early career conservationists from across the country by 2028.

Objective 3.1: Provide 25 internship opportunities for undergraduate students who are in the conservation field by 2028

- » Provide field training to five undergraduate students every year

Objective 3.2: Conduct 5 one-year women in conservation mentorship programs by 2028

- » Connect 50 women graduate students with mentors and professionals in the conservation field
- » Create Career pathways for 50 women conservation graduate students

Objective 3.3: Provide field-based training to placement for 1,600 final year undergraduate university students across Zimbabwe by 2028

- » Conduct technical and soft skills training to 1600 students by 2028
- » Create Career pathways for 1600 students by 2028



Goal 4:

Environmental Education & Awareness

Under this goal, WCA will raise awareness and share knowledge about conservation, human wildlife coexistence and solutions in target communities. The needs of the community, as articulated by the community, will dictate the content to be the basis of knowledge sharing and learning. This will allow the community members and school-going children to be co-creators of knowledge and ideas based on personal observations and social interactions. WCA will support community members to analyze, develop solutions, share and solve HWC problems in their respective communities.

Objective 1. Increase the awareness on wildlife conservation and environmental protection of 61,150 community members across 16 wards in Nyaminyami and Mbire districts by 2028

Objective 1.1: To raise awareness in 58,000 community members through public engagements on wildlife conservation and environmental protection in 10 wards in Nyaminyami district and 6 wards in Mbire district

- » Conduct 160 workshops for wildlife conservation and HWC awareness across 16 wards in Mbire and Nyaminyami districts and reach 8,000 community members
- » Conduct 45 radio shows for wildlife conservation and HWC awareness across 16 wards in Mbire and Nyaminyami districts and reach 50,000 community members
- » Conduct 20 road shows for wildlife conservation and HWC awareness in Mbire and Nyaminyami districts and reach 10,000 community members



Objective 1.2: To raise awareness on wildlife conservation and environmental protection to 150 schools and reach 3,150 students across 16 wards in Mbire and Nyaminyami Districts by 2028

- » Establish Guardians Of The Wild (GOTW) clubs in 150 schools across 16 wards in Nyaminyami and Mbire districts
- » Conduct patrons training for 300 teachers on GOTW tools and assessments across 16 wards in Nyaminyami and Mbire districts
- » Conduct 300 school club sessions across 16 wards in Nyaminyami and Mbire districts

Objective 1.3: To improve participation and appreciation for wildlife conservation and environmental protection of 3,150 students by 2028.

- » Conduct environmental awareness events in schools across 16 wards in Nyaminyami and Mbire districts
- » Conduct 5 field trips per district
- » Conduct wildlife conservation and environmental protection lessons



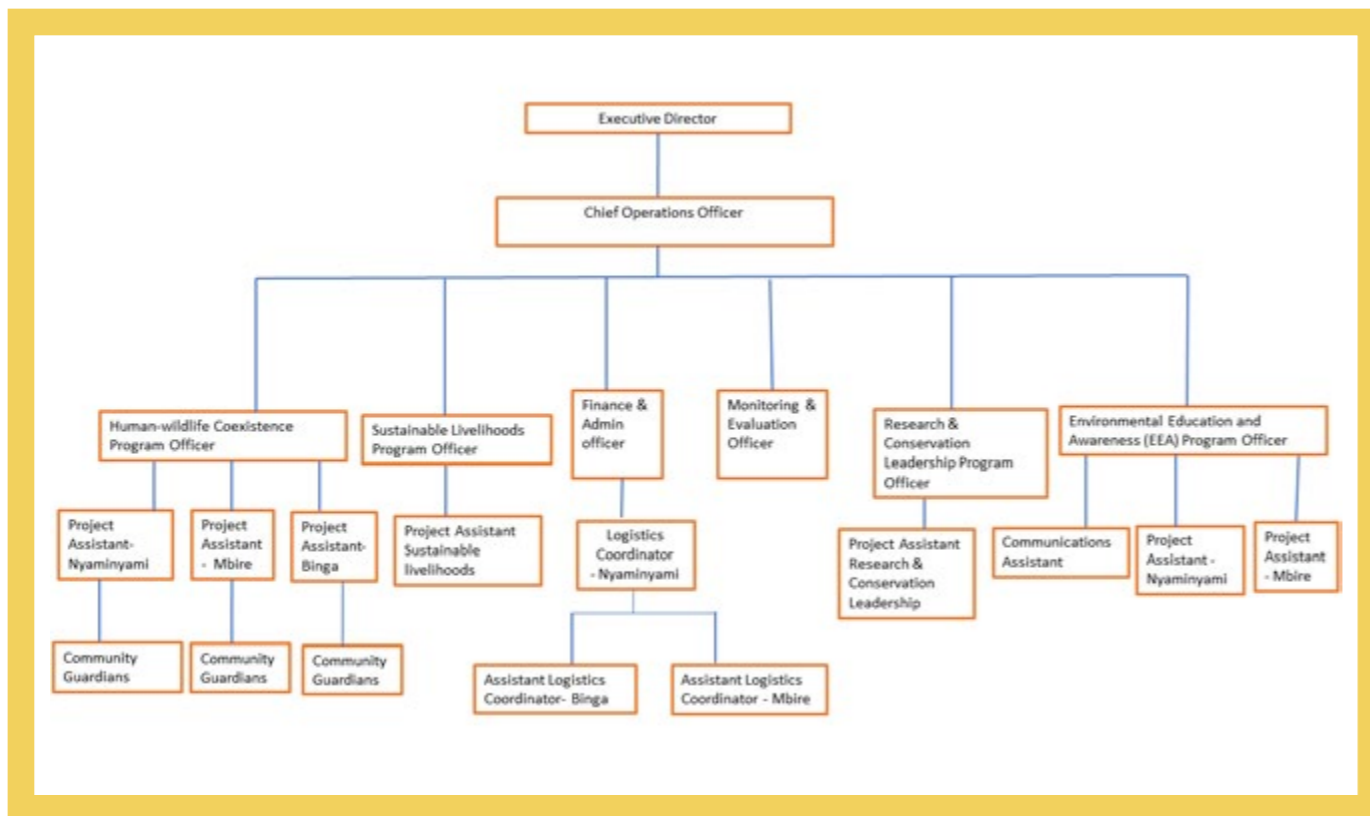
Our Implementation Approach & Priorities



To be able to implement this strategy WCA will develop the following key organizational areas:

Organizational structure

We recognize the need for a clear organizational structure that aligns to our intended strategic goal. We will restructure our organization so that command and reporting lines are clearly defined. Our current structure is too dependent on the Executive Director, and we will be adding an operations officer to redistribute key functions to lessen the burden on our ED, as well as increase efficiency. The following organogram outlines our proposed command and reporting structure. Part of the need is to hire staff for key positions such as the Chief Operations officer as well as more officers to lead the work as the work expands. This should free some space for the ED to concentrate more on fundraising and strategic networking.



Fundraising and financial systems development

Our goal is to develop a sustainable, diversified and long term funding portfolio, accompanied by a robust financial management system. To achieve this, we will develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy and provide training to equip our team with fundraising expertise. In addition, we will invest in grants and finance management systems to efficiently oversee grants, as well as enhance our capacity to attract additional funding opportunities.

We have received funding from the World Wildlife Fund, the Lion Recovery Fund, Resilience Anchors, Maliasili, Dry Creek Foundation and a number of conservation initiatives in Zimbabwe that have contracted our support for human-wildlife conflict mitigation. At this stage, we are

seeking core funding partners that will invest in our young team's development and our core human and physical infrastructure. In order to implement our strategy, we need funding to achieve the following:

- ☑ **Strengthen our human resources and pay competitive salaries to retain competent staff.**
With a staff complement of 30, and still growing, we are in need of sustainable funding to keep our work going.
- ☑ **Secure physical infrastructure** (movable and immovable-office space in all sites and Harare-main office). Office space to accommodate staff and store materials required for the work we do. Currently we rent a small three-roomed office space in Harare, while at field sites we are accommodated at schools. We have one vehicle to cover operations across all the sites. This is proving to be a big challenge as the districts are spread far apart, complicating logistics.
- ☑ **Develop internal systems for smooth implementation of projects** (financial, administrative, etc). To this end we outsource support to develop the systems and require stable financial resources to pay for full systems development.

Currently, the WCA annual budget stands at USD500,000, showcasing substantial growth from the organization's inception. For 2024, WCA fundraising target is to double its budget and thereafter steadily grow over 5 years to 1.5 million at the end of 2029.

Although the organization has kept track and consolidated its expenditure, we have scheduled our first financial audit for the 2023 operating period. To strengthen our financial management system, we have enlisted the services of a consultant to train the finance team in grant management to strengthen our reputation for financial integrity and transparency. With the targeted budget and expenditure growth, we recognize that this is a priority area for our organizational development.

Strengthen board governance

WCA has three board members. However, our board has not been fully effective in directing our previous strategies (which were not documented). We will seek training and support for our board to enhance their role in championing fundraising efforts, overseeing our budgets, and ensuring accountability and reporting. In addition, WCA will seek more strategic board members and clearly define their roles and responsibilities.

Communication strategy

WCA has made consistent efforts to communicate our work to our stakeholders. However, our approach has not been sufficiently strategic, particularly in targeting specific audiences and overall packaging of our communication products. To address this, WCA will develop a comprehensive outward communication strategy aimed at sharing our impact story with donors, communities, and the government agencies and other stakeholders. We hope that

this strategic communication will play a pivotal role in our fundraising efforts. In addition, we will also develop robust internal communications to enhance team cohesion and streamline implementation.

Management systems

Our staff play a key role in the successful implementation of this strategy. It is imperative for our senior management team to possess competencies in people management. WCA will support management training for the senior staff and those in the leadership pipeline to enhance their capacities.

Develop monitoring, evaluation and learning system

WCA has many targets and interconnected indicators that it will track to monitor how their different programs and strategies are impacting HWC conflict, spin-off benefits from conflict mitigation as well as overall improvements to household benefits and well-being. WCA will develop a simple system to monitor their impact on key indicators, starting with the establishment of baselines.

Collaboration and partnerships

WCA values strong collaborations and partnerships to amplify our impact. By teaming up with organizations and institutions that possess complementary skills and expertise we can access support that enhances our effectiveness. Furthermore, we will seek out strategic partnerships, both regionally and internationally, that may provide essential financial support for some critical activities. Government institutions at various levels are invaluable to our work as we complement their efforts. They hold the legal mandate for the initiatives we support, making them a critical stakeholder for whom we will dedicate our time to develop and nurture good working relationships. In seeking partnerships, we are keen to engage with partners who share our values, acknowledge our agency, and demonstrate a commitment to addressing power imbalances within the conservation sector.





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