

Promoting coexistence between people and large carnivores in Niassa Special Reserve.

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NIASSA SPECIAL RESERVE



IN REMEMBRANCE

On 29 April 2025, Mariri Environmental Centre was attacked by Islamic State insurgents and the entire centre was subsequently systematically looted. We honour the four Mariri scouts who lost their lives that day: Pires Jorge, Carlitos Cuteiua, Fernando Wirsono and Domingos Daude. We also honour the seven FADM soldiers who were killed while serving in defence of Mariri.

We recognise the trauma and loss suffered by our team and soldiers who were present in Mariri, particularly Merali and Mário, who were injured and the long road to recovery that Mario has faced with determination and courage. All members of our team helped with the rescue, evacuation, medical care, communication, and recovery that followed, and in many cases helped their colleagues and community without thoughts for their own safety. We honour their dedication and courage.

Our journey to recovery continues, however we all were changed forever.



VISION

A unique wilderness in Niassa Special Reserve where carnivores continue to persist and thrive with the full participation and support of local communities.

MISSION

NCP serves to conserve large carnivores and their prey in NSR by promoting coexistence and a shared respect for people, their culture, wildlife, and the environment.

GOALS

01 VALUES BASED, OUTCOMES DRIVEN To be a values based, outcomes driven conservation organisation that has a stable, well trained, inspired and inclusive team with low turnover, high wellbeing and that has the leadership skills, mentorship support, and technical skills as well as the funding, equipment and infrastructure required to fulfill the conservation objectives.	02 CONSERVATION MONITORING To devise, collect and share data on the trend in the large carnivore populations and their threats Sin NSR through development of regularly collected, cost effective and long-term indicators that will inform management actions and provide an early warning system of change with all data collected and analysed <i>in situ</i> by Niassa residents and Mozambican staff and students.	03 REDUCE THREATS To work in partnership with the NSR management team, local communities, local government and operators to secure ecologically stable leopard, lion, spotted hyaena, and African wild dog populations in Niassa Reserve, with no concomitant increase in carnivore attacks on people or livestock, by reducing direct threats(disease, illegal killing, unsustainable sport hunting, retaliatory killing) and addressing indirect threats including finding and testing locally derived alternative livelihoods and benefit sharing opportunities for local communities wherever possible that will reach a minimum of 1000 households.	04 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION To develop a local relevant, sustainable environmental education and skills training program for Niassa residents centered around the Mariri Environmental and Skills training centre to promote conservation, wellbeing, education and leadership through sponsored overnight bushvisits, wildlife clubs, sports, and outreach campaigns with at least 300-500 people visiting or attending courses at MEC a year and at least 5000 people reached across NSR with a measurable increase in knowledge of ways to coexist with wildlife.	05 COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (L5 SOUTH; 58,000 HA) To develop and maintain a legally binding, inclusive, innovative and effective conservation partnership with Mbamba Village (2000 people; 420 households) to manage L5 South as the first community partnership of its kind inside NSR with stable wildlife populations, decreased conflict with wildlife, decreased illegal activities, clear roles and responsibilities with increasing food security, socio economic benefits and opportunities for the conservation friendly development of this community.
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PROMOTING COEXISTENCE

so people and large carnivores thrive across the Niassa landscape.

NIASSA CARNIVORE PROJECT STRATEGY

GOAL 1

Leadership and Governance

To build a values-driven, Mozambican-led conservation organisation that is impactful and sustainable.



1. Opportunities to Learn 2. Succession Planning 3. Risk Management 4. Governance 5. Fundraising
6. Strategy, Culture and Values



GOAL 2

Conservation Monitoring

To monitor large carnivores and threats across the Niassa landscape, providing early warning to guide adaptive conservation action.

1. Specialised surveys 2. Community Wildlife Guardians (MOMS) 3. Threat monitoring

GOAL 3

Reducing Threats and Unlocking Benefits

To directly reduce threats to large carnivores while unlocking benefits through community partnerships and conservation-linked livelihoods.



1. Lion Coalition partnerships - antipoaching 2. Alternative livelihoods (honey, Small livestock, crafts)
3. Lion Scholarships 4. Domestic dog vaccination 5. Auditing of sport hunted carnivore trophies
6. Safe behaviours/safe shelters 7. Community Conservation performance payments



GOAL 4

Environmental Education and Outreach

To support coexistence between people and carnivores through environmental education and outreach based on shared learning and practical solutions.

1. Joy of Life, Niassa 2. Mariri Environmental centre / bushvisits 3. Wildlife Clubs 4. Lion Festival 5. Outreach

GOAL 5

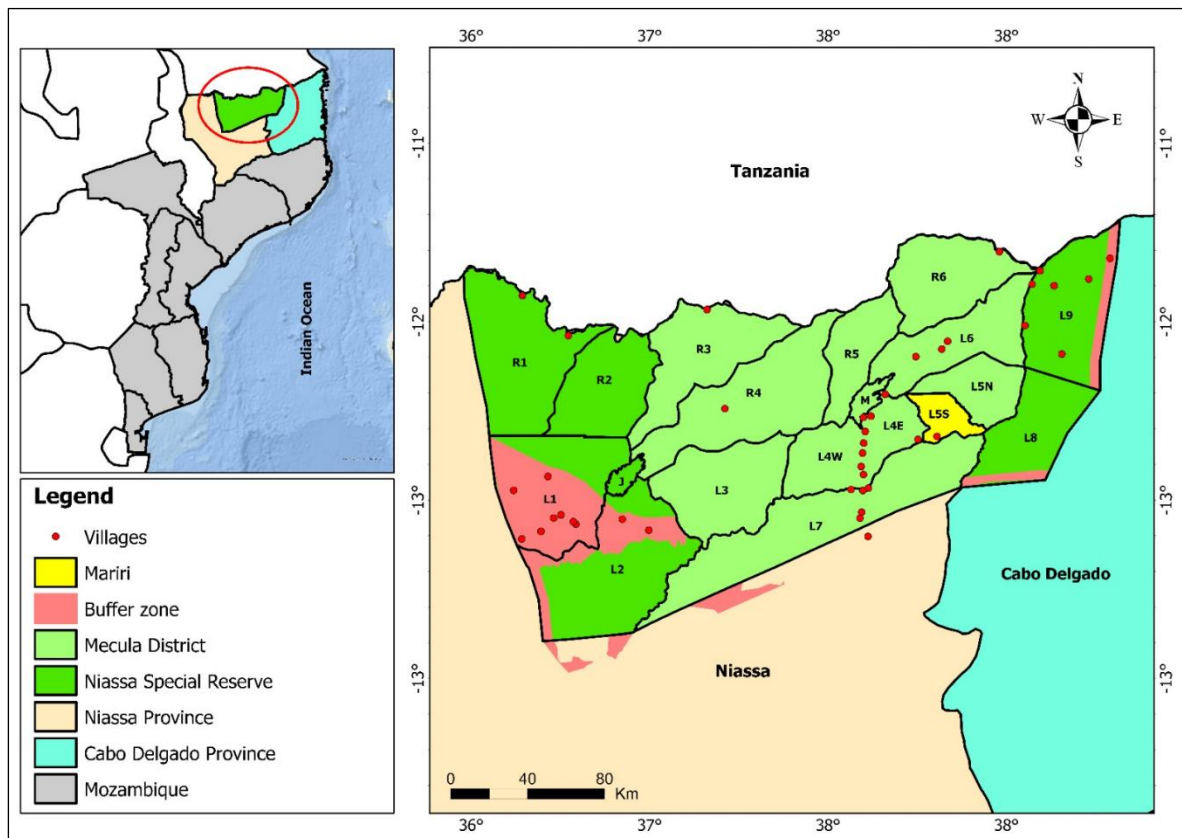
Demonstrating coexistence at scale (58,000 hectares, 2000 people)

Managing L5 South through the Tchova Tchova community conservation partnership.



1. Tchova Tchova partnership projects 2. Community tourism-Mpopo 3. Performance payments
4. Employment 5. Reducing human-wildlife conflict 6. Law enforcement 7. Landuse planning

WHERE DO WE WORK?



NSR (NSR) is one of the largest remaining conservation areas in Africa and holds Mozambique's most significant wildlife populations. Covering more than 42,000 km², NSR plays a critical role in national, regional, and global conservation efforts. It supports one of Africa's most important lion populations, estimated at 800–1,000 individuals, and at least 350 critically endangered African wild dogs. The Reserve's ecological value is extraordinary with the Lugenda River in particular providing a vital lifeline for wildlife and for the communities who live within and around the landscape. NSR has coexistence at its heart as it also home for an estimated 70 000 people spread across 45 villages.

Niassa Reserve covers part of Niassa Province and Cabo Delgado Province. It covers eight districts, six of which are in Niassa Province, including the whole of Mecula District and a large part of Mavago District. The Reserve sits within both an established conservation legal framework and a local government development framework. Its governance is complex. It includes a co-management partnership between ANAC (National Administration of Conservation Areas) and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) for overall protected area management, 16 tourism concessions that delegate management responsibilities to 13 tourism operators, one community concession, L4E, and a wider governance context that spans eight districts, two provinces, two governors, and 46 local leaders representing traditional authority structures.

A "Special Reserve" is defined as a "conservation area for sustainable use, in the public domain of the State, delimited, intended for the protection of a particular species of

rare, endemic or endangered fauna or flora, or one that denounces decline, or with recognized cultural and economic value” (NSR General Management Plan, 2024).

For more than 20 years, the NCP (NCP) has worked with partners (communities, NGO’s, tourism operators, District Government) to secure a long-term future for lions, leopards, spotted hyaenas, African wild dogs, and their prey in NSR by supporting coexistence and through a shared respect for carnivores, their prey, people and their culture. Our work is governed through a MOU with ANAC. Our work is long term and guided by a clear strategy. The MOMS community guardian program was established in 2006 and remains the foundation of our work across Niassa. It provides citizen science monitoring and keeps us connected to communities across the protected area. Many of our programs have now been in place for 10 to 20 years. They are not defined by funding cycles, but by long-term adaptive management, relationships, and trust.

NCP monitors carnivore populations, trends, and threats across NSR and shares this information with the NSR management team, ANAC, partners, and wider conservation networks to support informed decision-making and effective conservation interventions. We combine independent monitoring, applied research, direct work to reduce threats, mitigation, community partnerships and conservation performance payments, development of livelihoods, protected areas management, education, and practical conservation action.

NCP’s work is currently implemented in Mozambique through Mariri, under an MOU with ANAC, and supported by philanthropic funding raised through TRT Conservation Foundation. As part of our long-term institutional development, Fundação Leão is being established as a Mozambican foundation to provide a stronger national home for NCP’s conservation and community work into the future. Our main base is Mariri Environmental Centre, inside the 58,000 hectare L5 South concession in NSR. We are also developing Casa de Leão in Mecula, which will provide a home for our Lion Scholar boarding students and strengthen our community engagement, education, human-wildlife coexistence work, and carnivore response capacity.

L5 South -Mariri is managed by Mariri under contract with ANAC and in partnership with Mbamba Village. Mbamba has around 2,000 people and is a living example of coexistence at scale. This concession is unusual because it has both high wildlife densities and a significant resident human population. Through the Tchova-Tchova partnership with Mbamba Village, Mariri and NCP are working to support conservation and local development in the same landscape. This is a place where people, small livestock, agriculture, lions, leopards, elephants, buffalo, and other wildlife continue to share space. This work is central to Goal 5 of this report and acts as a model of what can be done in an area with both people and wildlife. It shows that coexistence is not counter to development when conservation responsibility, community partnership, local stewardship, and practical benefits are held together.

OVERVIEW

The year 2025 was the hardest year in our 24 years of work in Niassa Reserve. Insecurity increased significantly, and while we have faced many threats over the years, nothing prepared us for the events in April and May 2025.

On the 29th of April, an armed group of 40-60 people attacked the Mariri Environmental and Skills Training Centre. The attack was claimed online by IS-Mozambique, marking a troubling expansion of the conflict in northern Mozambique into one of the country's most important protected areas. While the majority of our team and main assets were evacuated from our camp on April 20, following an attack on the Kambako Safari camp by the same group on April 19, our anti-poaching scouts were present at Mariri, supported by soldiers from the Forças de Defesa e Segurança de Moçambique. The attack happened between 5 pm and 6 pm. Many residents of the nearby Mbamba Village fled into the bush for safety.

Over the next few days, our team worked tirelessly to rescue, and support affected staff and community members, both those who had been attacked as well as many in the nearby Mbamba village who had run into the bush. Tragically, four NCP scouts: Domingos Daude, Fernando Paolo Wirson, Pires Tahane, and Carlitos Cuteiua were killed. Mario Cristovao, was seriously injured and was rescued by our team after 4 nights in the field. He was suffering multiple gunshots in both legs, septic shock, anemia and malaria. He was immediately CASEVAC'd out to Mecula hospital by helicopter and the following morning a fully equipped MEDIVAC King Air ambulance flew Mario to hospital in Maputo (facilitated by GRAA's "Ranger Protect" emergency team. He has undergone 12 surgeries and is currently undergoing intensive physiotherapy to regain his ability to walk and we are hopeful he will return to work in 2026. His courage and determination have been an inspiration to us all.

In June, we returned to our camp, it had been extensively looted. The recovery period was long and challenging as we worked to overcome fear, support our team and replace the equipment lost during the looting of our camp and respond to increased security levels. Through it all, our team has remained committed, allowing us to continue our conservation efforts.

Alongside the insecurity, WCS suspended activities for 6 months, from February to September in 2025, to try and resolve ongoing challenges with the co-management agreement. WCS and several of the operators (Luwire and Chuilexi) were affected by the loss of USAID, INL, and USFWS funding for conservation activities. These three events created uncertainty, financial insecurity, and a reduce management footprint in NSR, which has yet to be resolved with a strong management presence.

KEY METRICS 2025

Our key achievement in 2025 was simply that we kept going after the April / May attacks, managed to keep the trust with our community partners and consolidate conservation gains wherever possible. Despite huge challenges in 2025, NCP remained operational and present in NSR throughout 2025 as a landscape-scale conservation program working across NSR. This is testament to the strong values and commitment of our entire team and donors.

- The NCP team is Mozambican (aside from the two founders, Keith and Colleen who are South African) and locally rooted: 104 permanent staff, 94 from Niassa Province, supported by 416 seasonal workers.
- The Lion Coalition Project supported protection across 10 concessions covering 31,348 km² of the Niassa landscape, including 24,848 km² inside NSR and 6,500 km² in Chipanje Chetu.
- Seventeen Intensive Protection Zones (IPZs) were active as part of the Lion Coalition, covering 10,628 km² of targeted lion protection areas. Two new IPZs were added in 2025.
- Lion Coalition partners employed 317 scouts, with 117 supported through NCP lion coalition funding. Partners completed 1,206-foot patrols and 62,095 km of patrol effort in 2025, removing 469 wire snares and 1,901 rope or nylon snares.
- NCP monitored 18 collared lion prides during the year, representing 84 known lions. Three prides had more than 10 individuals. The L5 South pride near Mbamba reached 17 lions, the largest pride recorded there in more than 20 years.
- MOMS remained active in its 20th year in NSR, with 54 community wildlife guardians, including 13 women, collecting data across NSR and Chipanje Chetu. Guardians recorded 22,798 special species sightings, including 3,073 large carnivore sightings.
- MOMS recorded 4,904 human-wildlife conflict incidents in 2025, mostly crop damage. Large carnivores were involved in 110 incidents, mainly hyaenas and leopards.
- No people were killed by large carnivores in 2025 however one person was injured by a lion and one by a leopard.
- The MOMS WhatsApp rapid communication was active on 335 days of the year, included 78 unique senders, and provided a live early warning layer behind the formal data system.
- The Community Camera Trapping Program reached 12 active communities in 2025, including two new villages, Erevuka and Mbamba. Communities received USD 50,475 in benefits from wildlife photographed near villages, including USD 36,200 linked directly to large carnivores.
- Across the household-level livelihood programs, NCP directly supported 325 household-level beneficiaries: 185 beekeepers, 115 small livestock breeders and 25 Kushirika artisan beneficiaries. Using 5 people per household, this represents approximately 1,625 people supported indirectly.
- The beekeeping program aimed at creating an alternative livelihood from Miombo woodland supported 185 beekeepers and 723 hives across 8 communities, processed approximately 1,216.9 kg of honey with more than USD 18 000 in income earned by individual beekeepers.

- Small livestock breeding aims to provide meat protein and income. It operated in 8 villages, with 115 breeders and 82 animals recorded across chickens, ducks and rabbits. The program was affected by insecurity, including the loss of 42 breeders in Macalange due to family movement.
- Kushirika artisan group continued despite a decrease in sales due to the closure of tourism and reduced visitors. The group produced and sold material worth USD 7 000 including 5 conservation quilts, other craft items, Lion Festival masks and school murals in Mbamba.
- The Lion Scholars Program supported 53 active scholars from 11 villages. Since 2013, 96 scholarships have been awarded, 16 scholars have completed training.
- NCP continued safe behaviour and carnivore conflict reduction work. In 2025, there were 107 livestock killed by large carnivores, mostly chickens and goats, compared with 134 incidents in 2024. Safe shelter outreach reached 1,060 families and 366 domestic animal owners in 8 communities, registering 4,883 people, 233 safe shelters and 133 unsafe shelters.
- The 6th annual rabies awareness and domestic dog vaccination campaign was implemented in Mecula and Mavago Districts with NSR, MWA, Luwire, SDAE and MOMS/SMOG guardians, reaching 14 communities in Mecula and 10 in Mavago. In total, 49% of dogs were vaccinated in Mavago and 62,3% in Mecula. Vaccination is still treated with suspicion, and we are not yet reaching the target of 75%.
- Environmental education continued despite the attack on Mariri. The Mariri Environmental Centre and bush visit program reached 107 students through adapted day visits and community sessions. Joy of Life reached 242 students in Mavago (first time to present the program in Mavago) and Mecula. Five wildlife clubs remained active. The 15th Lion Festival was held in Mbamba and reached more than 1,000 people.
- L5 South remained protected through the Tchova-Tchova partnership with Mbamba Village. No elephants were poached in L5 South since 2018. The largest pride in NSR is in this concession and now numbers 17 individuals.
- 12 Community Scouts continued working in the community development area to reduce human wildlife conflict both in fields and through trench maintenance and received training from MWA.
- The Tchova-Tchova partnership continued to deliver individual and collective benefits through 46 permanent employees and 318 seasonal workers from Mbamba as well as 578,495 MZN paid into the Tchova-Tchova community fund through performance payments. The Mbamba water project continued to be developed to create safe water supply inside Mbamba Village as the current Tchova Tchova project. Mpopo community tourism was closed with a substantial loss of income felt by Mbamba Village.
- Across all programs, the main outcome in 2025 was resilience. NCP, Mariri, Mbamba and our partners were not able to do everything planned, but the core systems did not collapse and all community agreements, payments and programs continued
- Continued insecurity inside NSR dramatically affects our abilities to deliver programs at scale, and support development. In addition, the continued lack of effective governance and delivery from the NSR co management agreement affects all partners and creates uncertainty and a breakdown in trust.

MÉTRICAS-CHAVE 2025

A nossa principal realização em 2025 foi simplesmente termos continuado depois dos ataques de Abril / Maio, termos conseguido manter a confiança com os nossos parceiros comunitários e consolidar ganhos de conservação sempre que possível. Apesar dos enormes desafios em 2025, o NCP permaneceu operacional e presente na REN durante todo o ano de 2025, como um programa de conservação à escala da paisagem, trabalhando em toda a REN. Isto é reflexo dos fortes valores e compromisso de toda a nossa equipa e dos doadores.

- A equipa do NCP é moçambicana, à excepção dos dois fundadores, Keith e Colleen, que são sul-africanos, e está enraizada localmente: 104 trabalhadores permanentes, 94 da Província do Niassa, apoiados por 416 trabalhadores sazonais.
- O projecto da coligação do leão apoiou a protecção em 10 concessões, cobrindo 31.348 km² da paisagem do Niassa, incluindo 24.848 km² dentro da REN e 6.500 km² em Chipanje Chetu.
- Dezassete Zonas de Protecção Intensiva (ZPIs) estiveram activas como parte da Coligação do Leão, cobrindo 10.628 km² de áreas-alvo de protecção do leão. Duas novas ZPIs foram adicionadas em 2025.
- Os parceiros da Coligação do Leão empregaram 317 fiscais, dos quais 117 foram apoiados através do financiamento da coligação do leão do NCP. Os parceiros completaram 1.206 patrulhas a pé e 62.095 km de esforço de patrulhamento em 2025, removendo 469 laços de arame e 1.901 laços de corda ou nylon.
- O NCP monitorou 18 grupos de leões com colares durante o ano, representando 84 leões conhecidos. Três grupos tinham mais de 10 indivíduos. A grupos de L5 South, perto de Mbamba, atingiu 17 leões, o maior grupo registado nessa área em mais de 20 anos.
- O MOMS permaneceu activo no seu 20.º ano na REN, com 54 guardiões comunitários de fauna bravia, incluindo 13 mulheres, a recolher dados em toda a REN e Chipanje Chetu. Os guardiões registaram 22.798 observações de espécies especiais, incluindo 3.073 observações de grandes carnívoros.
- O MOMS registou 4.904 incidentes de conflito homem-fauna bravia em 2025, maioritariamente danos às culturas. Os grandes carnívoros estiveram envolvidos em 110 incidentes, principalmente hienas e leopardos.
- Nenhuma pessoa foi morta por grandes carnívoros em 2025; no entanto, uma pessoa ficou ferida por um leão e uma por um leopardo.
- A comunicação rápida do MOMS por WhatsApp esteve activa em 335 dias do ano, incluiu 78 remetentes únicos e forneceu uma camada viva de aviso prévio por trás do sistema formal de dados.

- O Programa Comunitário de Armadilhas Fotográficas chegou a 12 comunidades activas em 2025, incluindo duas novas aldeias, Erevuka e Mbamba. As comunidades receberam USD 50.475 em benefícios provenientes da fauna bravia fotografada perto das aldeias, incluindo USD 36.200 ligados directamente aos grandes carnívoros.
- Em todos os programas de meios de subsistência ao nível dos agregados familiares, o NCP apoiou directamente 325 beneficiários ao nível dos agregados familiares: 185 apicultores, 115 criadores de pequenos animais e 25 beneficiários artesãos do Kushirika. Usando 5 pessoas por agregado familiar, isto representa aproximadamente 1.625 pessoas apoiadas indirectamente.
- O programa de apicultura, destinado a criar um meio de subsistência alternativo a partir da floresta de miombo, apoiou 185 apicultores e 723 colmeias em 8 comunidades, processou aproximadamente 1.216,9 kg de mel, com mais de USD 18.000 em rendimento ganho por apicultores individuais.
- A criação de pequenos animais visa fornecer proteína animal e rendimento. Funcionou em 8 aldeias, com 115 criadores e 82 animais registados entre galinhas, patos e coelhos. O programa foi afectado pela insegurança, incluindo a perda de 42 criadores em Macalange devido ao movimento de famílias.
- O grupo de artesãs Kushirika continuou apesar da diminuição das vendas devido ao encerramento do turismo e à redução de visitantes. O grupo produziu e vendeu material no valor de USD 7.000, incluindo 5 colchas de conservação, outros artigos de artesanato, máscaras para o Festival do Leão e murais escolares em Mbamba.
- O Programa bolsa de estudo de leão apoiou 53 bolseiros activos de 11 aldeias. Desde 2013, foram atribuídas 96 bolsas, e 16 bolseiros concluíram a formação.
- O NCP continuou o trabalho de comportamento seguro e de redução de conflito com carnívoros. Em 2025, houve 107 animais domésticos mortos por grandes carnívoros, principalmente galinhas e cabritos, em comparação com 134 incidentes em 2024. A sensibilização sobre abrigos seguros chegou a 1.060 famílias e 366 proprietários de animais domésticos em 8 comunidades, registando 4.883 pessoas, 233 abrigos seguros e 133 abrigos inseguros.
- A 6.^a campanha anual de sensibilização sobre a raiva e vacinação de cães domésticos foi implementada nos Distritos de Mecula e Mavago com as equipas da REN, MWA, Luwire, SDAE e guardiões MOMS/SMOG, abrangendo 14 comunidades em Mecula e 10 em Mavago. No total, 49% dos cães foram vacinados em Mavago e 62,3% em Mecula. A vacinação ainda é tratada com suspeita, e ainda não estamos a atingir a meta de 75%.
- A educação ambiental continuou apesar do ataque a Mariri. O Centro Ambiental de Mariri e o programa de visitas ao mato alcançaram 107 alunos através de visitas de um dia adaptadas e sessões comunitárias. O Joy of Life alcançou 242 alunos em Mavago, a primeira vez que o programa foi apresentado em Mavago, e Mecula. Cinco clubes de fauna bravia permaneceram activos. O 15.º Festival do Leão foi realizado em Mbamba e alcançou mais de 1.000 pessoas.

- L5 S permaneceu protegido através da parceria Tchova-Tchova com a Aldeia de Mbamba. Nenhum elefante foi caçado furtivamente no bloco L5 S desde 2018. O maior grupo da REN encontra-se nesta concessão e agora conta com 17 indivíduos.
- Doze Fiscais Comunitários continuaram a trabalhar na área de desenvolvimento comunitário para reduzir o conflito homem-fauna bravia, tanto nas machambas como através da manutenção da trincheira, e receberam formação da MWA.
- A parceria Tchova-Tchova continuou a fornecer benefícios individuais e colectivos através de 46 trabalhadores permanentes e 318 trabalhadores sazonais de Mbamba, bem como 578.495 MZN pagos ao fundo comunitário Tchova-Tchova através de pagamentos por desempenho. O projecto de água de Mbamba continuou a ser desenvolvido para criar um abastecimento seguro de água dentro da Aldeia de Mbamba, como o actual projecto Tchova-Tchova. O turismo comunitário de Mpopo foi encerrado, com uma perda substancial de rendimento sentida pela Aldeia de Mbamba.
- Em todos os programas, o principal resultado em 2025 foi a resiliência. O NCP, Mariri, Mbamba e os nossos parceiros não conseguiram fazer tudo o que estava planeado, mas os sistemas centrais não colapsaram e todos os acordos comunitários, pagamentos e programas continuaram.
- A insegurança contínua dentro da REN afecta dramaticamente a nossa capacidade de implementar programas em escala e apoiar o desenvolvimento. Além disso, a contínua falta de governação eficaz e com resultados por parte do acordo de co-gestão da REN afecta todos os parceiros e cria incerteza e uma quebra de confiança.

GOAL 1: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

To build a values-driven, Mozambican-led conservation organisation with the governance, leadership, and systems needed to be effective and sustainable over the long term.

Objective 1: Governance, leadership, infrastructure and training

To establish the governance, leadership, infrastructure, and training needed for a values-driven, Mozambican-led, outcomes-based conservation organisation by 2028.

In 2025, the NCP continued to strengthen the organisational foundations needed for long-term conservation impact in NSR. Our focus is to build a values-driven, Mozambican-led conservation organisation that is practical, accountable, locally rooted and sustainable beyond the leadership of the founders.

NCP is currently led by three co-directors (Keith Begg, Colleen Begg and Agostinho Jorge) supported by six senior Mozambican managers, three women and three men. The team is guided by the values of Respect, Tchova-Tchova, Communication, Inclusion, Teamwork and Opportunities to Learn. These values are not separate from the work; they are part of daily conversations and guide how we manage people, build partnerships, respond to crises, support communities and make decisions in the field.

A clear succession process is underway, with the intention that Colleen and Keith Begg move into advisory roles within the next five years so that the management and leadership of NCP are fully in Mozambican hands. To this end a Mozambican Foundation will be set up in 2026 to strengthen governance, ensure long-term sustainability and anchor the conservation work more firmly within national leadership structures.

Our team

In 2025, Mariri employed 104 permanent staff. The majority of the team is field-based, with only two staff members fully office-based and two others regularly spending time in the field. This reflects the nature of our work: conservation delivery in Niassa depends on people working directly on the ground, often in remote and difficult conditions. Of the 104 permanent staff, 94 were from Niassa Province and all except the founders, Colleen and Keith are Mozambican. The team includes 14 women and 90 men. While we remain strongly Mozambican and locally based, and have women at all levels of the organisation, we recognise that women remain under-represented in the workforce, and this requires continued attention as opportunities arise but is also affected by insecurity.

The team was severely affected by the April 2025 insurgent attack, in which four members of the scout team were killed and two scouts were injured. One scout, Mário Cristóvão, was critically injured and required extensive medical treatment and ongoing rehabilitation. We continue to support his recovery and the families of the four colleagues who were killed.

Despite this difficult year, the team continued to operate, adapt and support conservation and community work across L5 South and the wider Niassa landscape.

Metric	2025 result
Permanent staff	104
Mozambican permanent staff	102
Permanent staff from Niassa Province	94
Permanent staff salary cost as % of annual budget	34.6%
Top-to-bottom pay ratio	24:1
Top-to-median pay ratio	10.2:1
Permanent staff turnover	10.6%
Permanent staff hires	6

Turnover

Staff turnover in 2025 was unusual for Mariri and was strongly affected by the insurgency and resulting security concerns. During the year, four scouts were killed in the April attack. In addition, one senior manager and one camp assistant resigned, one driver was dismissed, and four scouts were retrenched. Six new permanent staff were hired. The turnover in 2025 was unusual: it was not a normal year of staff movement, but a year shaped by direct violence, trauma, insecurity and difficult operational decisions.

Pay ratio

Permanent staff salaries accounted for 34.6% of the annual budget in 2025. This is consistent with a field-based conservation organisation where program delivery depends heavily on people working on the ground, conversations and building consensus.

The top-to-bottom pay ratio was 24:1 and the top-to-median pay ratio was 10.2:1. These indicators are reviewed annually as part of the budgeting and governance process to ensure that remuneration remains equitable, proportionate and aligned with organisational values. All permanent salaries were set above the Mozambican rural living wage benchmark and there are eight salary levels between Directors and Entry level.

Opportunities to learn

“Opportunities to Learn” is one of the core values guiding NCP/Mariri. In 2025, this was expressed through both formal training and practical learning in the field with 57 training opportunities.

Training and learning opportunities included scout leadership and planning training, an accelerated ranger course (16), firearms training, fitness training (1), SMART training, driver’s licences, TFT Training for Transformation in peacebuilding and conflict

resolution (24), Mozambique Wildlife Alliance human-wildlife conflict mitigation training for community scouts (12), KoboToolbox and Power BI training (1), conservation technology learning through ACT Congress (1), and facilitated dialogue training (1).

These opportunities supported both technical skills and leadership development. They also contributed to the wider succession process by strengthening Mozambican managers, scouts, community teams and program staff. Learning remains central to how the organisation grows: through formal training, mentoring, field experience, peer learning, and creating space for staff to take responsibility.



Figure 1: Training for Issufo Alberto

In March Issufo Alberto spent 16 days learning about cross fit training in Maputo at the Massadura Fitness Centre in Maputo.



Figure 2: In June Mellivora and GOE instructors (4) completed training in leadership and patrol planning at Chipange Chetu and returned to Mariri for a second ARC course (Accelerated Ranger Course) training for the remaining 12 patrol scouts that had not received this opportunity in 2024. Six weeks of patrol mentorship were provided from 1 July to 16 Aug to improve general confidence and skills after the attack on Mariri.



Figure 3: August 2025, ANAC convened with NCP logistical and financial support an inclusive meeting of all Niassa partners (operators, conservation NGOs, WCS, ANAC, District) in Lichinga to try and galvanise a collaborative way forward to improve collaboration and impact in NSR after the suspension of activities by WCS and the insurgent attacks (independent report available)



Figure 4: In late June staff members attended a “Training For Transformation” at Mpingwe Lodge in the Zambezi valley.



Figure 5: António Chabana presented at the SMART conference held in July by ANAC at the Maputo National Park and represented NCP at the Regional Workshop on Wild dogs and Cheetah in September.



Figure 6: In November Director Agostinho Jorge attended the weeklong SMART and EarthRanger congress in Vietnam and Director Keith Begg attended to African Ranger Congress (150 rangers from 20 African countries) in Kenya (Lewa Conservancy) and presented at a panel discussion on rangers working in high-risk conflict zones.



Figure 7: On the 6th of November NCP was responsible for organising and sponsoring a high level 1,5-day workshop with 33 attendees from NGO's across the continent. A workshop report titled "Conservation in a Dangerous World" was produced in December along with various other outputs.



Figure 8: The Mozambique Wildlife Alliance (MWA) provided an intensive training course on human wildlife conflict in December at Mariri for the 12 Community scouts responsible for protecting the Mbamba village.

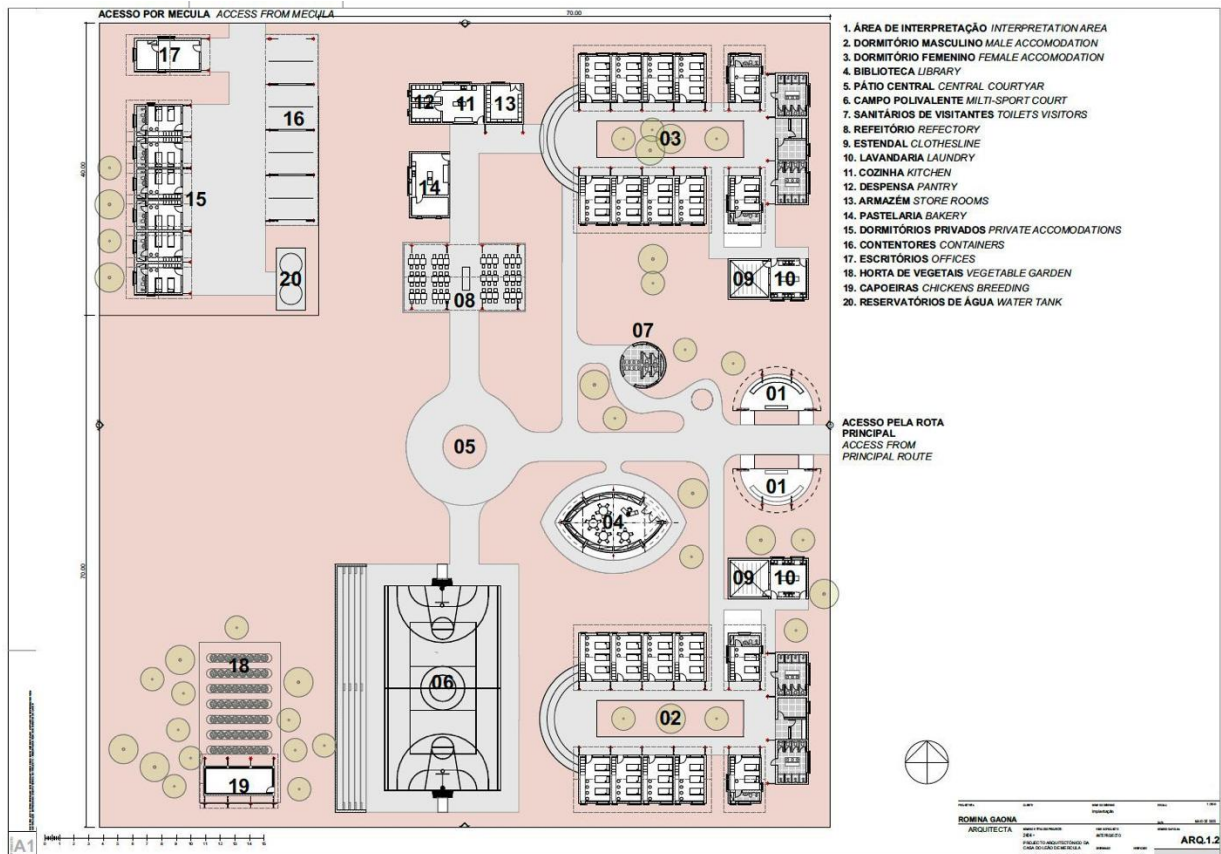
The Lion House

Since 2024, NCP has been developing Casa de Leao in Mecula town, inside NSR. The District Government has provided a 100 m x 100 m plot of land at the base of Mecula Mountain, where we are building a boarding house for students supported through the Lion Scholarship program, as well as a field base for NCP teams working in the Mecula Corridor, approximately 75 km from Mariri Environmental Centre.

Lion House is an important part of NCP's long-term presence in Mecula. It will provide safe accommodation for Lion Scholars, support community engagement and human-wildlife coexistence teams, and create a more accessible learning space for schools, district partners, and community members who cannot easily travel the three hours to Mariri Environmental Centre. It will also include secure storage and container space for essential NCP equipment, forming part of our contingency and evacuation planning should access to Mariri Environmental Centre be disrupted.

Lion House is being built by NCP's own construction team supported by Mecula residents, strengthening local skills and keeping investment within the project and the wider Niassa economy. Construction is being phased as funds allow, with completion expected in 2028. Solar power, internet, water have already been established.





GOAL 2: CONSERVATION MONITORING

To understand how large carnivores and threats to them are changing across NSR over time, and to use this information to guide conservation action and management.

Objective 2: Conservation monitoring of carnivores and their threats

To establish long-term monitoring of the status and threats to large carnivores across the Niassa landscape, enabling early warning of change and adaptive, outcomes-based management.

Relative densities of large carnivores inside NSR

NSR has become increasingly heterogeneous over the past two decades, with marked spatial variation in large carnivore densities across different zones within the protected area. As a result, densities extrapolated across the whole protected area as less useful than zone based densities as they mask substantial local differences in threats, management effort, and ecological condition. We need to know where densities are low and why so that we can put management interventions in place and adapt our approach to support our partners as needed. It is less useful to provide a number.

NCP's survey approach is therefore primarily focused on understanding **relative density patterns of large carnivore density across NSR**. This allows comparison between zones, assessment of the effectiveness of specific interventions, and detection of broad spatial trends across the reserve, rather than reliance on a single reserve-wide average that no longer reflects on-the-ground realities.

This approach provides the NSR management team with information that is more directly relevant to adaptive management, intervention prioritisation, and the evaluation of conservation outcomes at operational scales than an overall lion, leopard or hyaena density.

The results show that there are major differences in the densities of lions, leopards and spotted hyaenas across the Niassa landscape with all species following the same pattern of higher densities in the eastern concessions compared to the western concessions.

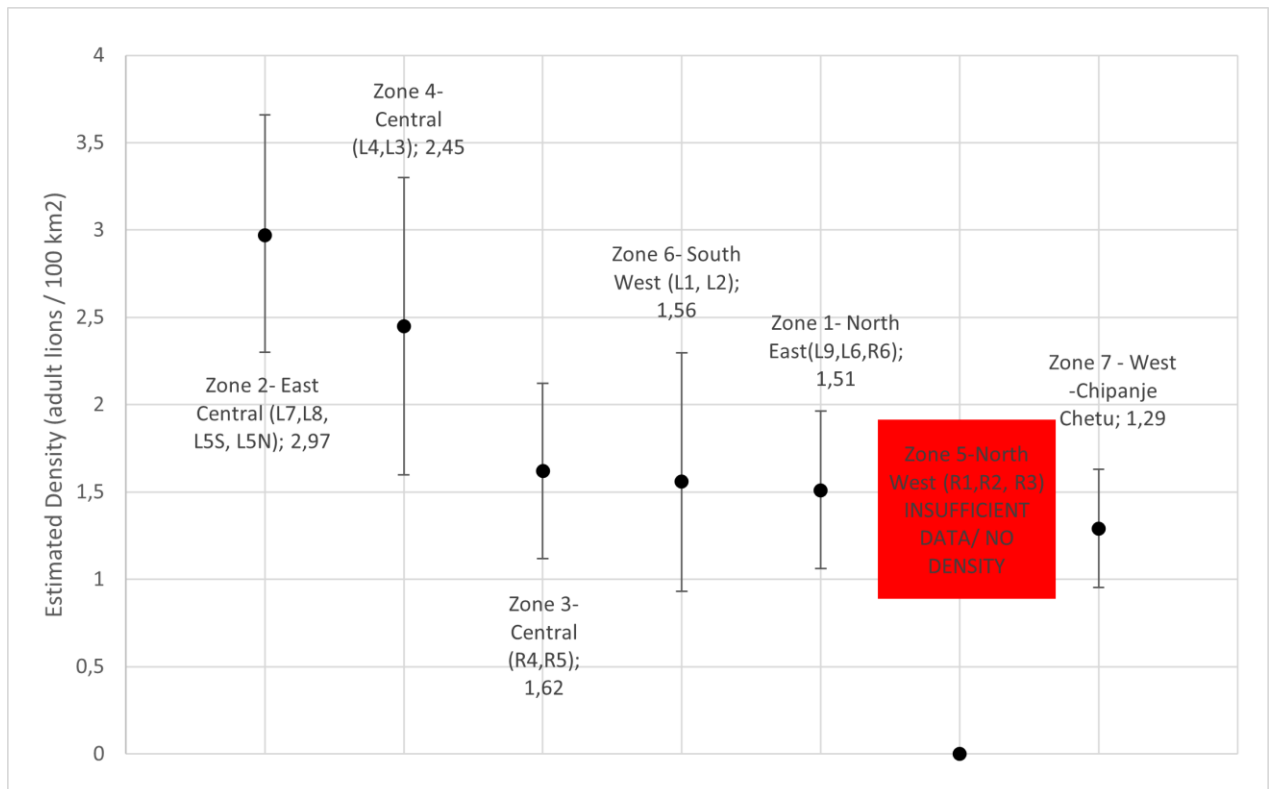


Figure 9: Estimated densities of lions across Niassa Reserve per zone showing the relatively higher densities in the eastern area compared to the West of NSR.

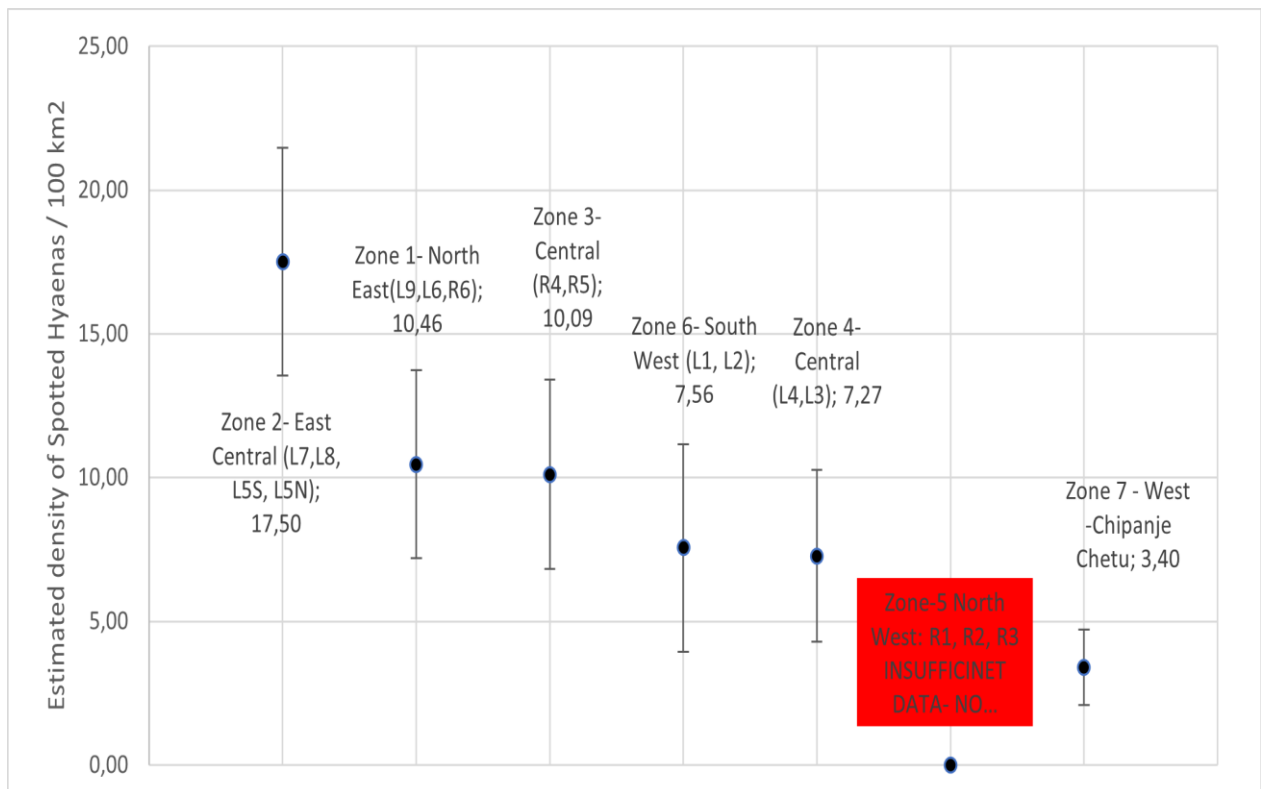


Figure 10: Relative density of spotted Hyaenas (call-up survey) across the Niassa landscape showing the significant differences in densities across zones inside NSR, with the highest densities in the east and the lowest densities in the west.

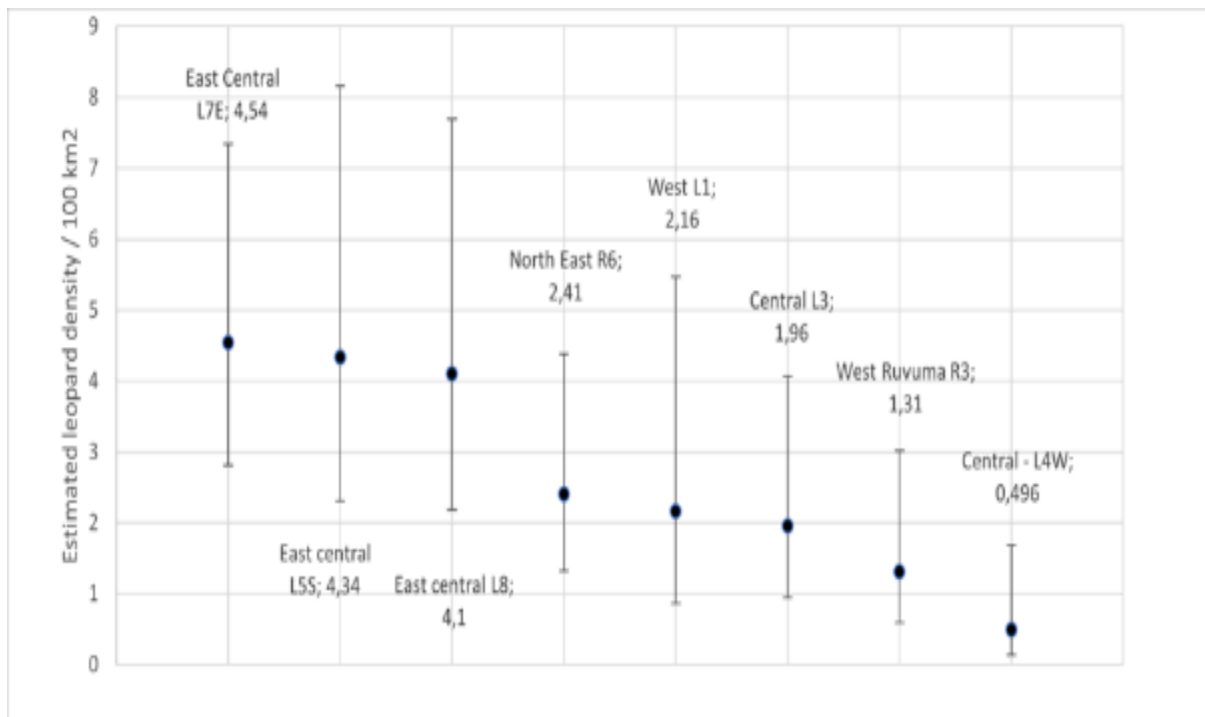


Figure 11: Relative density of leopard (camera trapping) across zones inside NSR with the highest densities in the west and lowest densities in the west and northwest.

Threats to Carnivores inside NSR

In expansive, rapidly changing environments like the NSR, monitoring the consistent, localized drivers of mortality and habitat loss (threat monitoring) is fundamentally more important for conservation management than solely relying on robust but infrequent assessments of population density (monitoring trends). Gold-standard methods, such as precise carnivore density estimates, are often expensive and logistically challenging, resulting in data collected infrequently. Relying on these periodic, precise indicators alone provides a lagging indicator; a documented decline in lion or leopard densities confirmed by a study only verifies that past levels of snaring or targeted poisoning were already unsustainable. In addition, extrapolating results over large areas with widely different local population densities can obscure critical information relevant for conservation management (Rinehart *et al.*, 2014). These types of carnivore densities also provide us with almost no information on what is causing the decline. Furthermore, the estimates themselves are subject to methodological biases; for example, the configuration of sampling tools like trap arrays can significantly influence the resulting density calculations, potentially producing inaccurate population densities that are not tied to specific threats on the ground (Wilton *et al.*, 2014). With limited resources (money, time), we need to decide where to put our conservation efforts to reduce specific threats in specific locations.

Regular population density surveys provide one indicator while threat monitoring provides actionable information through simple, consistent data streams. Even if each indicator is simple on its own, patterns or consistency over the long term can reveal clear patterns that help us identify underlying threats and can help us decide where to put our limited conservation efforts and resources.

For this reason NCP spends a lot of time and effort monitoring the trend in threats over the long term. In 2025, NCP prepared a detailed report on (Internal Report, Jorge et al 2025)

Table 1: Description of parameters used in the threat assessment of large carnivore conservation in NSR

Threat Type	Description	Threat mechanism	Distribution	Impact on carnivore populations
Illegal mining	Thousands of NSR villagers and outsiders mine for gold and rubies in many locations which are also important habitats for large carnivores in NSR. Some of these miners often hunt animals for bushmeat to eat. Also, big mining camps create a market for meat, so other hunters come to hunt animals to sell. This mining scatters people and hunting all over the reserve.	Indirect & direct: it destroys the carnivore habitat. It also brings more hunters who can kill large carnivores directly or snare their prey.	Happens in various locations across the whole NSR	4
Bushmeat Snaring	This is one of the biggest problems for wildlife in Niassa. Hunters set wire snares to catch animals like buffaloes for meat but these snares end up catching other animals that walks by, including lions, leopards, and wild dogs. In some areas, so ungulates are killed that lions have very little left to eat. When females can't find food, their cubs die and the whole pride gets smaller.	Direct & indirect: large carnivores die directly in snares. Also, when their prey is decimated	All over NSR, but worst in the west, north-east, and central parts.	5
Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT)	Poachers want to kill large carnivores, particularly lions, on purpose to get skins, bones, teeth, and claws for selling. They use poison or snares to target these carnivores. Poison is very bad because it also kills many other animals other than the targeted carnivore.	Direct: this is the targeted killing of lions for their body parts.	All over NSR, but worst in the west, north-east, and central hotspots.	5
Insecurity	It makes challenging for ranger to patrol effectively the management units. Populations of large carnivores in areas affected by insecurity are increasingly vulnerable because people use it as an opportunity to do more bushmeat poaching, illegal trade of carnivores and illegal logging	Indirect: it disrupts protection work and allows all other illegal activities increase without control.	Only in the north-east part of NSR, in L8 and L9 MU.	4

Illegal logging	Across NSR people cut down valuable trees illegally, especially in north east of NSR. Illegal logging leads to the fragmentation of the habitat of carnivores. Also, the loggers can facilitate transport of bushmeat harvested in NSR	Indirect: it fragments carnivore habitat and reduces their prey	Strong in the north-east (L8, L9), but happens in other places too.	3
Human-Wildlife Conflict	In villages, especially in the west, sometimes there are very few wild animals left for carnivores to hunt. So, large carnivores temporarily shift to domestic animals such as goats, chickens, etc.	Direct: it leads to people killing carnivores to protect themselves or get revenge.	All over NSR, but more intense the west, and central corridor.	4
Diseases	There are 45 villages inside the reserve with about 60,000 people with several domestic dogs. These dogs move freely between villages, mashambas, and the bush. They can pass dangerous diseases like Rabies and Canine Distemper to lions and wild dogs.	Direct: can kill many large carnivores in a short time	A risk everywhere in NSR, near all villages.	3
Trophy Hunting	Sport hunters pay to shoot a limited number of lions, leopards and hyenas in NSR as part of the quotas approved by ANAC. If it is managed carefully, sport hunting can be part of effective tools to support conservation. But if it is not managed well it can hurt the carnivore populations.	Direct: directly removes carnivores.	Happens in specific hunting blocks across the NSR.	2 (if managed well)

Trade in parts

Mozambique has the 7th largest lion population in Africa but is currently a hotspot for the illegal trade in lion parts. This trade was first identified in 2015/2016, and over the past 13 years, 342 incidents have killed 437 lions in Mozambique. Both Limpopo National Park and NSR are affected by this trade (Almeida *et al.* 2025).¹

In NSR specifically there remain significant threats from inadvertent snaring, targeted killing for illegal wildlife trade, and retaliatory killing in response to conflict. Vastly different levels of management impact (antipoaching, community partnerships, presence) are resulting in widely differing densities of leopards, lions, and hyaenas across NSR.

Between 2017-2025, we have information on at least 129 lions and 65 leopards killed illegally by snares, poison, and firearms inside NSR. Given the difficulty in collecting data on illegal offtake and the relatively low coverage of NSR in antipoaching patrols (NSR SMART reports), this is likely to be underestimated. Data show that less than 30% of NSR is effectively and regularly patrolled, and there is no consistent intelligence gathering. As a result, actual illegal mortality is likely to be much higher than recorded.

Between 2024 and 2025, at least 14 lions and 11 leopards were recorded to be killed illegally. There were two major poisoning incidents in eastern NSR in August and November 2024, targeting lions specifically with teeth and claws removed for the illegal wildlife trade. In 2025 we saw a rise in events of poaching lions using firearms, for commercial purposes in both western and northeastern Niassa Reserve. These poison incidents and emergence of poaching of lions with firearms illustrate the increasing pressure the NSR lion population faces from the illegal activities across the region. Snares continue to be the main tool used to kill large carnivores and many of the ungulates for bushmeat in NSR; however, large-scale poison events are becoming more common.

¹ Almeida, J., Briers-Louw, W.D., Jorge, A., Begg, C., Roodbol, M., Bauer, H., Loveridge, A., Wijers, M., Slotow, R., Lindsey, P. and Everatt, K., 2025. Unsustainable anthropogenic mortality threatens the long-term viability of lion populations in Mozambique. *Plos one*, 20(6), p.e0325745

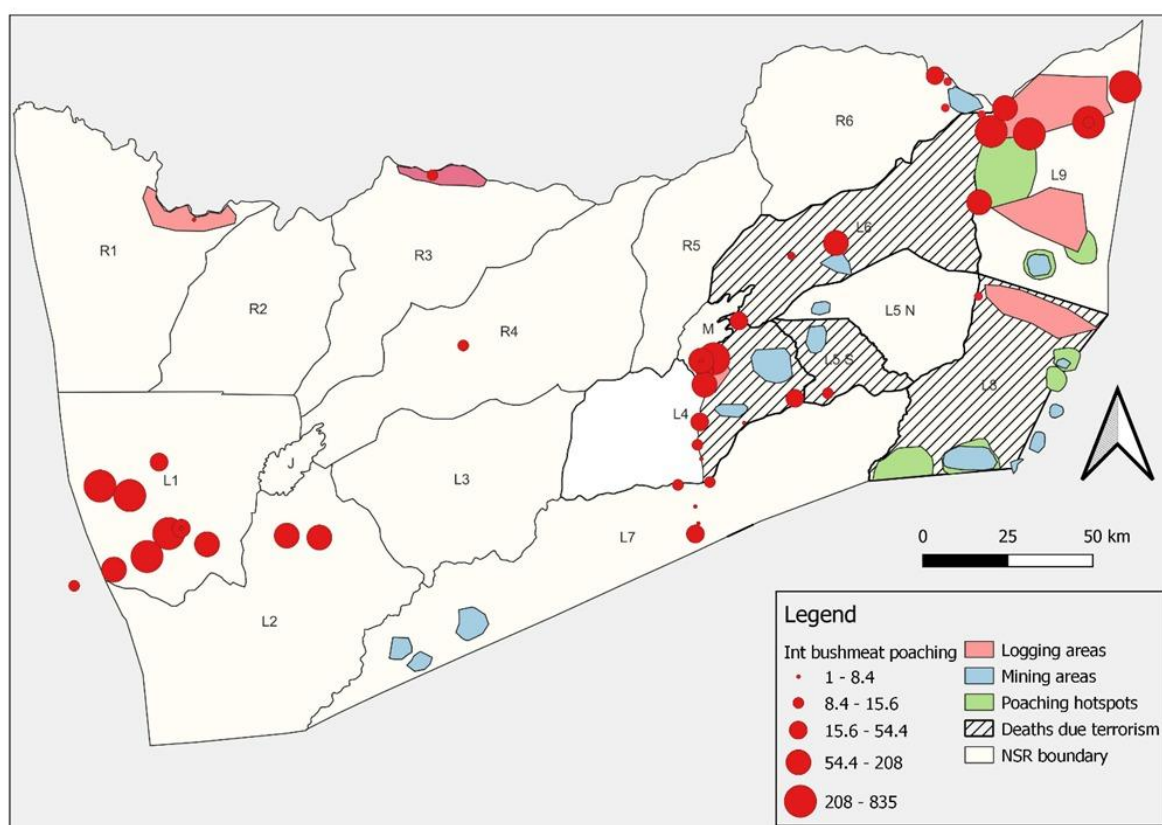


Figure 12: Distribution of threats (illegal logging for timber, illegal gold mining, intensity of subsistence hunting in the village recorded at the village level over 05 years, and insecurity events between 2021 and 2025) in NSR (Jorge et al 2026, internal report)²

Table 2: Summary of carnivore mortality records inside NSR

Year	Hyaena	Leopard	Lion	Wild dog	Total	Observation
2017	06	8	13	1	28	Illegally hunted
2018	05	6	6	0	17	Illegally hunted
2019	23	18	21	16	78	Illegally hunted
2020	07	7	29	5	48	Illegally hunted
2021	13	7	24	0	44	Illegally hunted
2022	01	3	18	5	27	Illegally hunted
2023	0	05	04	0	09	Illegally hunted
2024	02	06	09	0	17	Illegally hunted
2025	03	05	05	01	14	Illegally hunted
Total	60	65	129	28	282	

Bushmeat Poaching

Following the insurgent attacks in April 2025 in NSR, bushmeat poaching escalated dramatically, with new techniques being used, and a noticeable shift toward

² Jorge, A., Begg, C., Begg, K., Chabana, A., Maurapaz, Q, and Murico, H. 2026. Threats Analysis for lions, leopards, spotted hyaenas and African wild dogs in NSR. Internal report by NCP for NSR and ANAC.

commercial poaching. During the vacant period when concessionaires were absent from NSR for security reasons after the insurgent attacks, snaring increased remarkably across central, western, and northeastern NSR, leading to a serious deterioration in wildlife security. Large sections of the wire from an electric fence recently deployed around a large town inside NSR to protect agricultural fields against crop-raiding animals have been stolen to snare wildlife. With a few kilometres of wire currently being stolen from the electric fence, we expect a further increase in the current levels of illegal mortality of ungulates targeted by snares, and carnivores caught accidentally in snares.

A new hunting method called “Pangacha” has emerged in central, western, and northeastern hotspots, where people use pangas and torches at night to hunt animals when patrols are inactive.

Alluvial artisanal gold mining

The local prices of gold increased sharply (almost seven times) in NSR between 2024 and 2025. This led to a massive increase in the number of middlemen, who often pay “large amounts” (more than 7,000 MT per gram), sometimes in advance, to desperate villagers to do illegal gold mining. This results in a large influx of people looking for gold. Gold mining also requires meat and is involved in other illicit activities like the direct poaching of lions and leopards for parts.

Lugenda River survey

The Lugenda River is central to NCP’s conservation work because it is both an ecological corridor and a livelihood system. It provides water and habitat for wildlife, supports hippos, crocodiles, fish, African skimmers, waterbirds and riverine habitats, and is also one of the most important sources of food, cash income and cultural identity for communities living inside and around NSR. For NCP, understanding the Lugenda is therefore not separate from carnivore conservation. The river fishery provides an important legal source of protein and income; if this system declines or is closed without alternatives, households may be pushed towards other protein sources, including bushmeat, increasing pressure on wildlife.

In 2024 WCS commissioned a Lugenda River survey on behalf of NSR and ANAC, with financial support from the European Union and additional funding from the NCP / TRT Conservation Foundation. We undertook the field data collection, data management, analysis, and preparation of the report. The work also incorporated additional NCP data collected over a 20-year period, including the 2006 Lugenda River survey. The river and the fishermen who live on it have run through our lives both figuratively and literally for more than 20 years.

Full report: [The Lugenda River: Social and Ecological dimensions](#)

Video report from fishermen : [Lugenda Voices film](#)

The scale of the 2024 survey illustrates the importance of the Lugenda River to both people and conservation. Fieldwork covered approximately 380 km of the river inside NSR and included standardised surveys of fishing camps, direct ecological

observations and 55 semi-structured interviews conducted in local languages. Long-term monitoring data from the L5 South section between Mbamba and Msangezi were also included, allowing NCP to compare current patterns with data collected since 2004.

The findings show that the Lugenda remains a functioning, productive and resilient river system and has been remarkably stable over the past 20 years.

- Of 97 fishing camp clusters identified in 2024, 57 were directly linked to clusters recorded in 2006, showing the long-term persistence of fishing use along the river.
- Between 2006 and 2024, the number of fishermen increased by 13%, fishing ovens by 11%, and canoes by 9.5%, while the number of recorded camps declined, likely because of flood impacts from Cyclone Freddie in 2023. These figures show that the fishery remains active and important but has not expanded in a way that suggests uncontrolled system-wide collapse.
- The research found no evidence that the Lugenda River fishery is in ecological decline at a system-wide level although some localised declines in specific fish species (Nchali specifically) were identified in the western reaches of the Lugenda. Fish catch sizes have remained stable and in some cases increased due to increased implementation of the law prohibiting small size nets
- Hippo numbers increased from 435 individuals in 2006 to 1,050 in 2024, and African skimmer numbers also increased.
- In 2024, fishermen reported approximately 11 discrete hippo-related incidents and 11 crocodile-related incidents. Serious injury and fatality rates have not increased proportional to the increase in hippo densities.
- Social analysis indicates that fishing continues to be governed primarily through informal institutions and intergenerational norms. Camp leaders regulate access, discourage destructive practices, and mediate disputes and set prices. Internal rules and customary systems remain active and widely respected. Interviews indicate that generational change, market integration, and regulatory uncertainty are placing pressure on these systems, but there is no evidence that they have collapsed.
- Fishermen expressed consistent concerns regarding wet-season fishing restrictions, access to timber for canoe construction, enforcement practices, and rules on catching small fish. The national closed season coincides with peak food insecurity inside the reserve, creating constraints for river-dependent villages. Confusion over size regulations has contributed to uncertainty and fear of penalties.

Overall, the Lugenda River is a productive, and surprisingly resilient river system supported by long-standing social institutions and high ecological integrity. The Lugenda is not a degraded or collapsing fishery. It continues to provide food, income, and security for thousands of people while supporting abundant wildlife and diverse habitats. There is currently no robust evidence to justify exclusionary management measures based on claims of widespread overfishing or system failure. These indicators, together with continued fish production, high water quality, diverse aquatic habitats and wildlife abundance along the river corridor, suggest that the Lugenda remains in remarkable condition despite fishing pressure.

For NCP, the Lugenda River survey reinforces a core principle of our work: conservation and community wellbeing are connected. Protecting lions and other carnivores in Niassa also depends on protecting the systems that allow people to live healthy and productive lives.

Objective 3: MOMS Community Guardian Program

To strengthen the reserve-wide community wildlife guardians (MOMS) program across NSR and beyond, to collect data, provide early warning of threats, and involve people living in the reserve in conflict reduction and conservation outreach as a long-term, sustainable citizen science network.

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

The MOMS Community Guardian Program creates a network across NSR to reduce conflict, monitor threats, and involve communities in conservation management.

The Management-Oriented Monitoring System (MOMS) is a collaboration between the NCP, NSR, and the communities living inside the Reserve. In recent years, this collaboration has expanded to include Chipanje Chetu guardians through Yambone. It is managed and funded by NCP and data is shared through an online database with both NSR management and active concession operators. Conservation partners with community programs are included on the rapid response WhatsApp group.

MOMS started in NSR in 2006 with only 6 guardians in 5 villages. It was designed as a simple, graphical, paper-based monitoring system that could be used by community representatives themselves. The idea was not to create a complicated external research system, but a practical system that allows people living inside the Reserve to collect and report the information that matters to conservation and to their own safety. In 2025, MOMS was in its 20th year and three of the original guardians still part of the program. The program had 54 active wildlife guardians working across NSR villages, including 13 women, representing approximately 24% of the guardian team. These guardians collect data through five specific forms: special species, problem animals, community fishing, wildlife mortality and honey harvesting.

MOMS provides critical information and support for coexistence in the Reserve. It is also an essential part of NCP's carnivore conservation and monitoring strategy. The program has several functions at the same time. It promotes coexistence by sharing safe behaviour and conservation messages through the Guardians and with our environmental education and rapid response team, and guardians assist their communities with building safe shelters and safe corrals. It acts as a bridge between local communities, NSR administration, NCP and block operators. It helps communicate conflict events quickly so that mitigation can happen. And it actively includes local communities in biodiversity conservation, rather than treating them only as beneficiaries or threats, and has created a unique network that links all the villages inside NSR and 7 villages inside Chipanje Chetu.

This is important because Niassa is too large and too complex to monitor only through formal patrols or technical surveys. Communities are present every day in places where conservation teams cannot be. They see animals, they know when elephants are

damaging crops, when hippos are in the river, when lions are close, when fishing is happening, when honey is collected, and when people are afraid. MOMS gives this knowledge a structure.

MOMS is the only community-based conservation network working at scale across NSR. All guardians are also connected through a rapid response WhatsApp group. This is not a replacement for the official MOMS forms and annual datasets, but it is the live communication layer behind the system. It shows how information moves in real time and how communities ask for help when conflict becomes urgent.

Results and activities in 2025

The MOMS program continued throughout 2025 despite the insurgent attacks and the insecurity affecting NSR. All guardians were paid on time for 12 months, data were collected, and the network remained active. This matters. In a difficult year, the community monitoring system did not collapse.

- Three new guardians were recruited in 2025 in Quinto Congresso, Msawise and Nkalapa. The target was to recruit four new guardians in large villages, but this was not fully achieved because of the insurgency situation.
- In 2025, MOMS guardians recorded 22,798 special species sightings across the Reserve. Buffalo were the most frequently reported species, with 10,096 sightings, followed by elephants with 6,609 sightings and hippos with 1,931 sightings.
- Large carnivore records included 1,144 African wild dog sightings, 840 lion sightings, 826 hyaena sightings and 263 leopard sightings. These data are not population estimates. They are influenced by guardian coverage, community reporting, habitat visibility and where people live and move. But they provide a valuable annual indicator of wildlife presence around communities and across different parts of the Reserve.
- In 2025, guardians recorded 3,073 large carnivore sightings, including African wild dogs, lions, hyaenas and leopards. At the same time, they recorded 15 carnivore mortalities: 5 hyaenas, 5 leopards, 3 lions and 2 African wild dogs.
- Human-wildlife conflict remained one of the largest datasets collected by MOMS. Guardians recorded 4,904 incidents in 2025, compared with approximately 5,834 in 2024. Most incidents involved crop damage, with 3,531 machamba damage records.
- Domestic animal losses were the second largest category, with 873 records. Other incidents included 336 cases of tree damage, 100 incidents involving grain stores, 37 people injured and 3 people killed. The three people killed were killed by a crocodile, a hippo and snake. Coexistence has a real daily cost for people living inside NSR.
- Crop damage was the main form of conflict recorded in 2025. Maize was the most affected crop, with 2,176 recorded incidents, representing approximately 64% of all crop damage records. Cassava was recorded in 358 incidents, rice in 235 and beans in 167. The main species involved in crop damage were monkeys, with 1,295 incidents, bushpigs with 819, elephants with 680, buffalo with 344 and hippos with 214. These data show that food security pressures are not

- Large carnivores were involved in 110 human-wildlife conflict incidents in 2025. Hyaenas were involved in 69 incidents, leopards in 39 and lions in 2. These incidents included attacks on goats, dogs and domestic birds.
- MOMS also records natural resource use that is directly linked to livelihoods and food security. In 2025, guardians recorded 41,843 kg of fish captured across rivers and fishing camps, compared with 44,871 kg in 2024.
- They also recorded approximately 284 fishing camps with fishermen from communities inside the Reserve, from outside the Reserve and from neighbouring Tanzania. These data align closely with the Lugenda River report and reinforce the importance of legal fish protein and income in reducing pressure on wildlife and bushmeat.

In 2025, Quiteria, NCP conservation monitoring manager, was trained in the use of KoboToolbox and Power BI to create a dashboard for NCP data. The starting point was the MOMS data that has been entered by hand based on sheets prepared by the MOMS. This will enable quicker more real time assessment of results by NCP and other partners. The NCP dashboard should be available at the end of 2026.

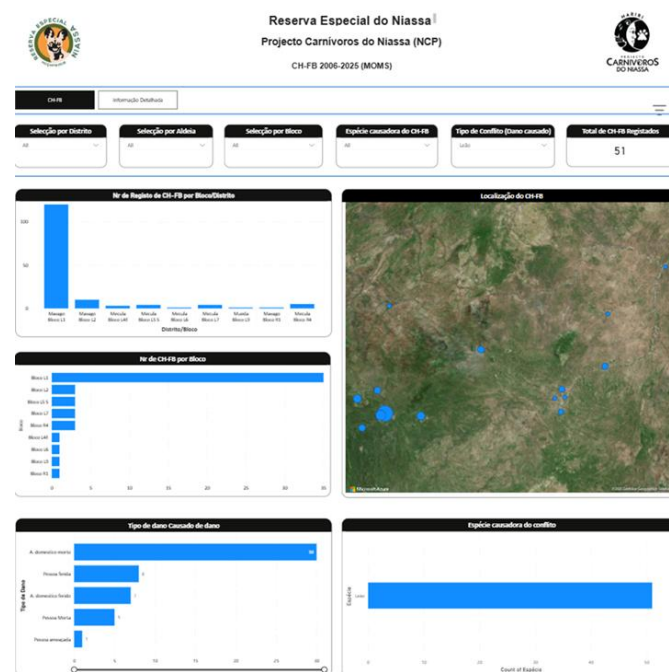


Figure 13 New dashboard being created by Quiteria Muarapaz to allow public access to the data



Figure 14: MOMS guardians helping their communities construct safe shelter



Figure 15: Fox lights (solar powered flashing lights) are distributed to community wildlife guardians as part of a “toolkit” to help their communities reduce conflict.



Figure 16: MOMS Gurdian training workshop at Mariri Environmental centre

MOMS WhatsApp group

The MOMS WhatsApp is the MOMS network. The figures are not the same as official incident totals. One WhatsApp message may summarise several incidents. Another incident may be followed by several messages, photographs and response updates that are all connected. The value of the WhatsApp group is not that it replaces the MOMS database. Its value is that it shows the live communication layer behind the database.

The MOMS WhatsApp group gives another view of the same network. In 2025, the group recorded 4,423 messages and was active on 335 days of the year, with an average of 13.2 messages on days when messages were sent. There were 78 unique senders in the export, showing that this is not a one-person reporting line but a wide network of guardians and support staff. The export also included 1,440 photos or videos.

Using text messages only, 210 messages were classified as damage or incident reports. These included reports of crop damage, livestock losses, dangerous wildlife near villages, attacks on people, dead wildlife, destroyed trees or shelters, and requests for response. These reports were spread across 140 days of the year. This means the WhatsApp group was not only used during occasional emergencies. It functioned as a continuous early warning and communication system.

The seasonal pattern is useful. Damage and incident reports were highest from February to April, with 30 reports recorded in each of these months. This is the period when crops are in the fields and conflict around machambas (agricultural fields) becomes more visible. Reports then decreased from May, but they did not stop. Incidents continued throughout the dry season and into December, including elephants

damaging mangoes, buffalo damaging fields, hyaena problems, snake bites and other urgent messages.

The species mentioned most often in WhatsApp damage or incident messages were elephants, with 99 messages, followed by hippos with 42 messages and buffalo with 34 messages. These three species are strongly linked to crop damage, fear, risk around rivers and direct threats to people. Large carnivores were also regularly reported. Hyenas were mentioned in 20 incident messages, lions in 16, wild dogs in 8 and leopards in 6. Crocodiles and snakes were less frequent in the text count, with 5 and 6 messages respectively, but these incidents are often serious because they can involve injuries or death.

The target of conflict was also clear. Crop fields were the most frequently mentioned impact, appearing in 122 damage or incident messages. Reports included damage to maize, rice, cassava, beans and peas. People were mentioned in 57 incident-related messages, including reports of injury, death, or follow-up on injured people. Domestic animals were mentioned in 35 messages, including goats, chickens, dogs and other livestock. Houses, shelters, food stores, corrals, trees and manguieras were mentioned in 19 messages. Fishing or fish-related incidents appeared in 7 messages.

This communication layer matters. This is the only network of its kind inside NSR that connects all the villages with conservation partners. Guardians see that others are reporting the same kinds of problems. They learn from each other. They share how to describe incidents, name the species involved, give the location, name the affected household and request support. This builds a community of practice. It also gives guardians visibility. They are not isolated in their villages. They are part of a wider conservation and coexistence system.

The WhatsApp network provides three kinds of value. First, it provides early warning and supports rapid communication and response. Second, it creates a living record of community experience, including fear, tolerance, frustration, evidence and local knowledge. Third, it connects guardians and communities across NSR and Chipanje Chetu so they can learn from each other and know they are not alone.

MOMS is not only a data system.

- In 2025, guardians supported community awareness, promoted safe behaviour around wildlife, encouraged the construction of safe corrals, assisted with rabies vaccination and domestic dog registration and supported the use of foxlights to reduce carnivore conflict. Communities including Mucoria, Macalange, Mbamba, Maolela, Msawise, Iringa, Manhur, Ligogo, Luatize and Gomba showed progress in building safer livestock and household infrastructure.
- All guardians received 12 months of subsidies. Two long-serving guardians received 10-year service awards of 8,000 MT each. The program distributed phones, power banks, bicycles, radios and other equipment.
- Two training workshops were completed, but four planned workshops were cancelled because of insecurity. This shows the direct effect of the insurgency on program continuity, training and field support.

Challenges and possible solutions for 2026

1. Limited vehicle availability remained one of the main challenges in 2025. As the number of villages and guardians has grown, it has become difficult to meet the needs of all villages with one shared vehicle. The vehicle was also shared with the Community Camera Trapping Program, which created competing demands. For 2026, funds have been secured to buy a dedicated vehicle for this program. This should improve field visits, guardian support, training, response to problems and data collection.
2. Communication coverage is still a major challenge. Many village sites do not have reliable GSM coverage. This affects the ability to upload data, report urgent problems, check camera and battery issues, and communicate quickly during conflict events. For 2026, we are exploring the use of a Starlink Mini to improve communication from village sites where there is no GSM coverage.
3. Response to non-carnivore conflict remains weak in many areas. At present, NCP responds to all carnivore reports, but other species require response from the NSR team or other conservation partners. Due to the WCS suspension, total evacuation during the insurgent period and then an interim plan response was slow. Slow response to elephant, buffalo, hippo, crocodile or other conflict incidents weakens community trust in guardians. For 2026, we need clearer response pathways with NSR and operators, including named focal points for non-carnivore conflict.
4. Training was affected by insecurity in 2025. Two training workshops were completed, but four planned workshops were cancelled. This affected continuity, especially for newer guardians.
5. Recruitment was also affected by insecurity. The plan was to recruit four new guardians in high-density villages, but only three were recruited in Quinto Congresso, Msawise and Nkalapa. For 2026, the fourth guardian will be recruited if conditions allow.

Community-led monitoring is essential for conservation in Niassa. Through 54 guardians, five core data forms and a WhatsApp network active on 335 days of the year, the program provides annual and real-time information on wildlife presence, carnivore conflict, animal mortality, fishing, honey collection and community mitigation. As with the Lugenda River work, conservation and community wellbeing are connected.



Figure 17: Training workshop of MOMS community guardians at Mariri Environmental centre (two training workshops were held)

GOAL 3: REDUCING THREATS AND UNLOCKING BENEFITS

To directly reduce threats to large carnivores and people, and build tolerance and support for coexistence, by working in partnership with villages, tourism operators, and other stakeholders to provide opportunities for formal education, alternative livelihoods, and conservation performance-linked revenue sharing.

Objective 4: Reducing illegal killing of carnivores

To reduce illegal killing of carnivores, including targeted killing linked to illegal wildlife trade and incidental capture in snares set for bushmeat.

As shown in Objective 2, the illegal killing of lions, leopards, and spotted hyaenas is significant and of concern, particularly the target killing of lions for the parts trade in teeth and claws. Our response to this increasing threat is the Niassa Lion Coalition Project.

THE NIASA LION COALITION PROJECT

The Niassa Lion Coalition project is a collaborative project led and funded by NCP work with tourism partners / operators to create intensive protection zones (IPZ) and with communities to develop a performance payment system in the NSR (NSR), securing source populations and reducing illegal mortality through collaboration.

The primary threats to lions and sources of mortality are inadvertent snaring in snares set for bushmeat and an escalation in direct snaring and poisoning for the illegal wildlife trade in lion trinkets and skins. Conflict between humans and lions is low, and retaliatory killing is not a significant threat.

In 2025 we worked in partnership with



Luwire Conservancy: Derek Littleton, Yasalde Massingue (L7)

Chuilexi Conservancy: Neville Slade (L5N, L6, R6, R5)

Mozambique Conservation Force: Grant Taylor, Arone Sumburero, Ernesto (L2, R4)

Chipanje Chetu / Yambone: Emily During, Alistair During, Vincent Kalande

Safrique: Mathew Muns, Paul Davies, Dan Enslin, Elton Matavata

Mariri Investimentos: Keith Begg, Agostinho Jorge with Mbamba Village (Utendele de Mazengo L5S)

Naulala Village - Comissão Leao

Macalange Village -Comissão Leopardo
Lissongile Village - Comissão Maendeleo
Ncuti Village - Comissão Songa Mbele
Ntimbo 1 Village - Comissão Mabeco
Ntimbo 2 Village – Comissão Aquemla
Lshengwe Village – Comissão Coelho
Nampequesso Village - Comissão Bufalo
Cuchiranga Village - Comissão Umoja
Guebuza Village - Comissão Pala Pala
Mbamba Village - Comissão Kujitolea
Erevuka Village - Comissão Ndogolo

Individual MOUs are signed with all tourism and community partners.

In Collaboration with



Overview: What the program is and why it matters

NSR (co-managed by ANAC and Wildlife Conservation Society) relies on a delegated concession model for protected area management. It has subcontracted protected area management to the operators through management leases of concessions and provides no financial support and limited technical support to tourism/conservation partners. Many tourism operators are not experienced protected area managers, yet the areas they are expected to manage are larger than many National Parks (up to 4000 km²) and many have communities inside them. While this model has been shown to increase stability in NSR under a volatile and changing management landscape many operators also have limited finances.

This delegated model is effective when operators are financially stable and experienced or have additional philanthropic support but is high risk and potentially unsustainable when conservation activities, community programs, and financial sustainability depend on tourism revenues (sport hunting and ecotourism). Insecurity and travel warnings in the region further impact profitability and, therefore, conservation impact. For example, in the past five years, the NSR has experienced COVID-19, cyclone flooding, insurgent attacks, loss of USAID funding, and travel warnings, all of which have affected visitor confidence.

As a result of this model and vastly different levels of management impact (antipoaching, community partnerships, presence) as well as “hotspots” of critical threats across the Niassa landscape, and low governance of NSR at central level due to ongoing issues with the NSR co management model, data show that there are widely differing densities of leopards, lions, and hyaenas across NSR (See Objective 2). Rather than one contiguous landscape, NSR has increasingly become a series of sources and sinks for carnivore populations. It is essential that secured subpopulations of large

carnivores remain across the landscape to offset the sink areas where there are high levels of illegal offtake, low management presence, and low community.

It was this increase in carnivore patchiness, the increase in the illegal killing of lions for parts, the weak central support for operators and the request from operators for help, that led to the start of NCP's "Lion Coalition Project" in 2021 (First phase: 2021-2023; Second phase: 2024-2026). Through this program, NCP collaborates and supports partners (both operators and communities) inside NSR to reduce the illegal killing of lions and provides the support (financial and technical) they need to manage better and protect their areas. It works across NSR and neighbouring areas because lions do not recognise concession or administrative boundaries. The project is built around a simple principle: if we want to protect Niassa's lion (and other carnivore populations) we need coordinated anti-poaching, shared data, active monitoring of prides, rapid response capacity and collaboration between tourism operators, community partners and Reserve management.

By providing focused support through transparent, collective reporting and metrics, with a shared objective, we have shown that we can support coordinated action at a landscape level while each partner still retains their own individual identity and focus.

For concession partners, this means:

- Provision of technical and financial support (conservation grants from NCP) for antipoaching and monitoring and encouraging professionalization of antipoaching efforts to increase the SMART and EarthRanger footprint inside NSR,
- Providing financial support for salaries, equipment, and insurance for scouts to improve their well-being and effectiveness,
- Collaring (satellite & radio) and protection of key lion prides to encourage collaboration, understanding of lion movements, and effective patrolling,
- Through a partnership between MWA and NCP to have an NCP rapid response team on site, which includes a vet, Husky plane, a dedicated vehicle and an experienced local team to respond to conflict and snaring and poisoning events quickly and professionally across NSR,
- Defining and patrolling of intensive protection zones within concession to reduce threats and make more efficient use of limited resources,
- Monitoring and reporting on agreed performance metrics to protect prides, improve coverage and the quality of antipoaching efforts and ensure better coordination of lion-focused conservation efforts.
- Joint reporting at a large landscape scale towards a common objective with increased communication and collaboration.

For community partners, this means:

- Performance payments for community camera trapping images, which encourages "safe passage" for carnivores across the development corridor that has the risk of splitting NSR into western and eastern sections and provides a

“bridge” for communities to be involved in and benefit from conservation while incentivizing conservation of large carnivores and their prey.

- Through a partnership between MWA and NCP to have an NCP rapid response team on site, which includes a vet, a dedicated vehicle, and an experienced local team to respond to conflict and snaring and poisoning events quickly and professionally across NSR.
- MOMS community guardians in all villages inside NSR supported and managed by NCP to provide ongoing monitoring of mortality, conflict and sightings of all the large carnivores and assist people with safe behaviours and safe corrals.

Results and activities in 2025

The Niassa Lion Coalition Footprint in 2025

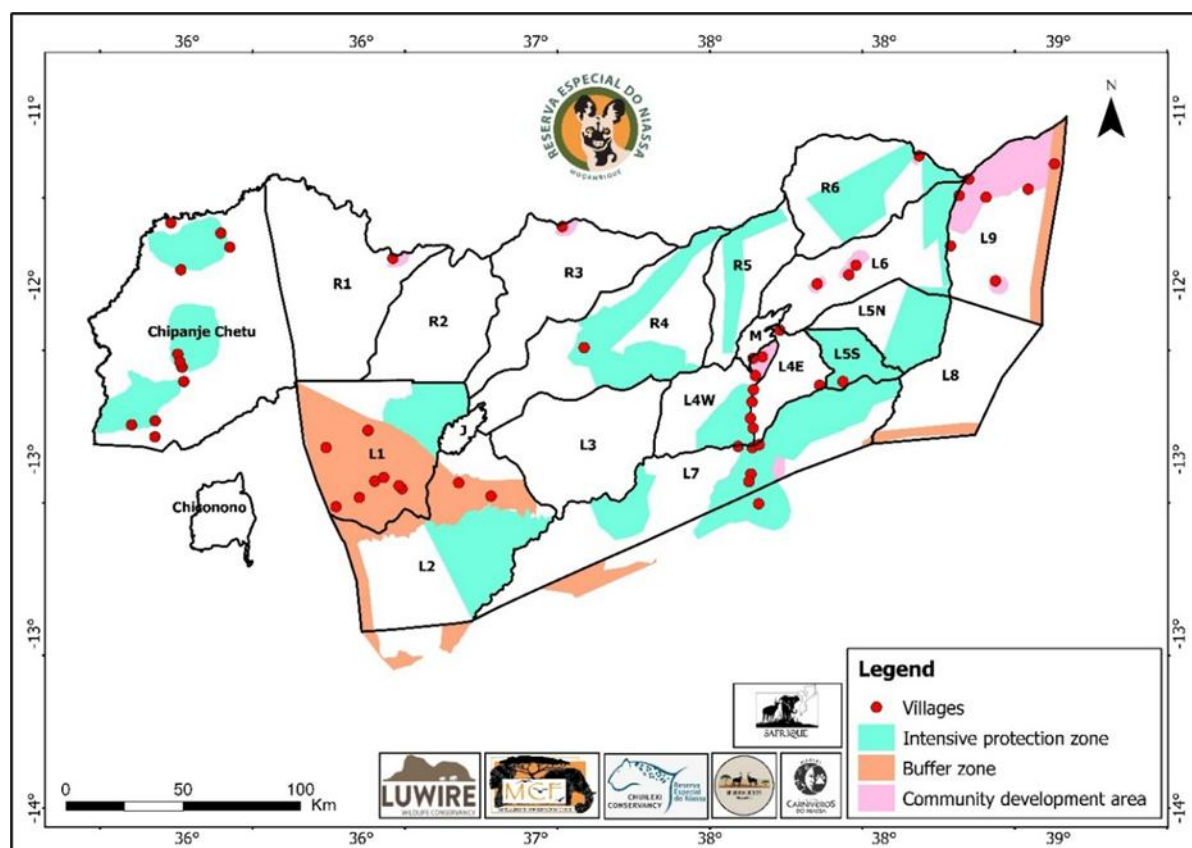


Figure 18: Current footprint of the NCP Niassa Lion Coalition and the IPZ identified by each concession partner in 2025.

Intensive protection zones, collared prides and lion-focused anti-poaching

The Lion Coalition IPZ program currently works with 6 tourism partners across the wider Niassa lion landscape. Together, the tourism partners are contributing to the protection of 10 concessions covering 31,348 km², including 24,848 km² inside NSR and 6,500 km² in the neighbouring Chipanje Chetu community concession. This is treated as one connected lion landscape, with NCP supporting monitoring and protection across the landscape.

In Phase II, NCP formalised a set of minimum standards that partners need to meet to join the coalition and receive funding. These standards are intended to create consistency, strengthen field performance, improve shared metrics and encourage

collaboration across the Niassa landscape. Each partner is expected to set up an operational Ops Room equipped with SMART and EarthRanger, supported by a trained SMART manager and a functioning law enforcement team. Partners also identify an Intensive Protection Zone of approximately 500 km², divided into a 5 x 5 km grid, with a target of at least 70% patrol coverage every six months.

SMART data are collected by each partner to document anti-poaching effort, patrol coverage and field results. These data are shared with NCP and NSR management to create collective management maps and improve transparency. This shared approach allows the coalition to identify gaps in coverage, compare effort between areas and resolve operational issues case by case. It also creates a practical structure for collaboration, rather than relying only on informal communication.

Once an Intensive Protection Zone is secure and operating, NCP collars a lion pride inside that area with a satellite collar. Each partner, together with NCP and Reserve management, then uses EarthRanger to monitor the pride's movements. The objective is to ensure that snares and other threats are removed within at least 80% of the collared pride's home range. This links patrol effort directly to the actual space being used by lions, rather than treating anti-poaching coverage as an abstract map exercise.

By the end of 2025, 17 Intensive Protection Zones had been mapped, identified and patrolled across the Lion Coalition landscape. These zones covered 10,628 km² of targeted lion protection areas. Two new IPZs were established in 2025, in L1 and L4W West, expanding the coalition's footprint and bringing new partners into the shared monitoring and protection system.

The project also supports minimum standards for scouts. NCP recommends that partner scouts receive salaries at least aligned with NSR ANAC salary levels, together with insurance and appropriate field equipment. This is important because lion protection depends on people working safely and consistently on the ground. In 2025, Lion Coalition partners employed 317 scouts, of whom 117 were supported through funding from NCP through the Niassa Lion Coalition. This represents a major contribution to the protection of lions, prey and wider biodiversity across the landscape.

NCP provides the technical and financial support needed to make this system work. This includes SMART and EarthRanger devices, training, joint mapping and reporting templates and six-monthly data reviews. These regular reporting cycles are important because they allow progress to be tracked against agreed metrics, including patrol coverage, IPZ coverage, snares removed, illegal activity detected, lion pride movements and follow-up response.

In 2025, the 6 Lion Coalition tourism partners collectively patrolled 62,095 km. This was lower than the 85,929 km patrolled in 2024. Foot patrol numbers also decreased, from 1,488 patrols in 2024 to 1,206 patrols in 2025. This decline reflects the difficult operating conditions during the year, including insecurity and reduced access in parts of the eastern concessions.

Despite the reduction in patrol effort, the coalition continued to remove large numbers of snares. In 2025, partners removed 469 wire snares, compared with 856 wire snares

in 2024. However, rope and nylon snares increased sharply, with 1,901 removed in 2025 compared with 256 in 2024. This reflects the new partners and areas covered.

A substantial quantity of ammunition was also recovered in 2025, although this was primarily in L5 South after the insurgent attacks. This should be interpreted carefully in the annual report. It is an important security and threat indicator, but it does not necessarily reflect normal poaching patterns across all coalition areas.

No poisoning incidents were recorded in 2025. This is significant because poisoning remains one of the most serious potential threats to lions, hyaenas, vultures and other scavengers. However, the absence of recorded poisoning should not be treated as proof that the risk has disappeared. Coverage of the eastern concessions was affected by insecurity and high military presence, and continued vigilance is needed.

The NCP Rapid Response Team is central to this system. NCP works with an experienced veterinarian from Mozambique Wildlife Alliance, António Wiliamo, who supports lion collaring, monitoring and emergency response and works with four members of the NCP lion monitoring and response team, all born in Niassa Reserve with substantial lion experience. This rapid response capacity allows the project to react to injured carnivores, problem animal incidents, collaring needs and other urgent field situations and builds trust between both tourism partners and communities inside Niassa Reserve.

The coalition also depends on fast communication. NCP maintains active WhatsApp groups for Lion Coalition tourism partners and for community guardian partners across approximately 50 villages in NSR and Chipanje Chetu. These groups allow partners and community guardians to report sightings, share pride movements, raise concerns and request rapid response support for carnivore incidents. This has helped build a growing community of conservation practitioners inside Niassa who actively following lions are, reporting pride sizes and responding when collared lions stop moving or move into higher-risk areas.

One of the most important outcomes of the Lion Coalition Project is not only the number of kilometres patrolled or snares removed, but the change in how partners work together. Ops Rooms are now following collared lions more closely, partners are sharing data more consistently, and information is moving more quickly between concessions, NCP, community guardians and Reserve management. This improves collective knowledge of Niassa's lion population and creates a stronger basis for coordinated protection.

In 2025, the Lion Coalition continued to show why landscape-level conservation is necessary for lions. Seventeen IPZs, 10,628 km² of targeted protection areas, 117 coalition-supported scouts, 62,095 km of patrol effort, 1,206 foot patrols, 469 wire snares removed and 1,901 rope and nylon snares removed together represent a substantial conservation effort across one of the most important lion landscapes in Africa. The year also showed the fragility of this work. Insecurity reduced access and patrol effort, and threat patterns changed. This reinforces the need for practical systems, shared data, rapid response and long-term collaboration across the whole Niassa lion landscape.

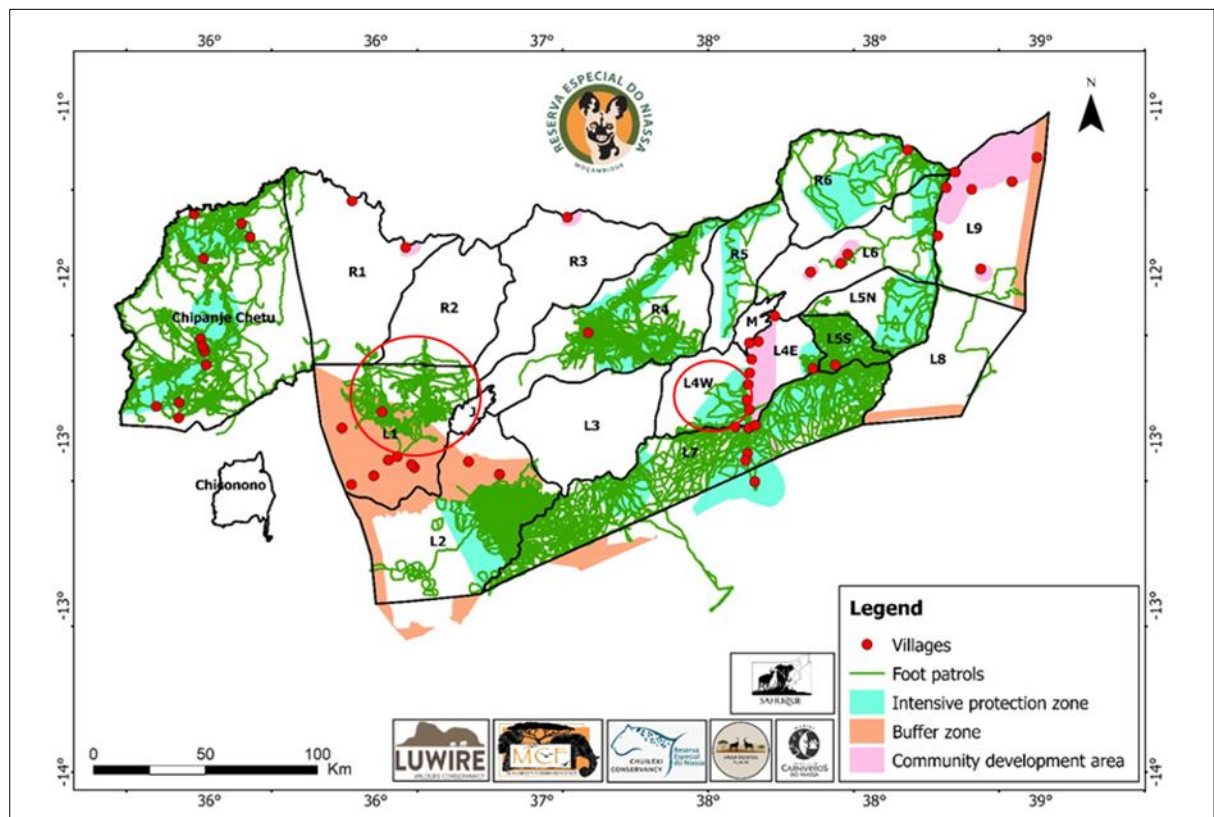


Figure 19: Scout foot patrols conducted by the Lion Coalition partners across the Niassa lion landscape with a focus on protecting the intensive protection zones. The red circles show the new areas that were patrolled in 2025 by partners joining the Lion Coalition.

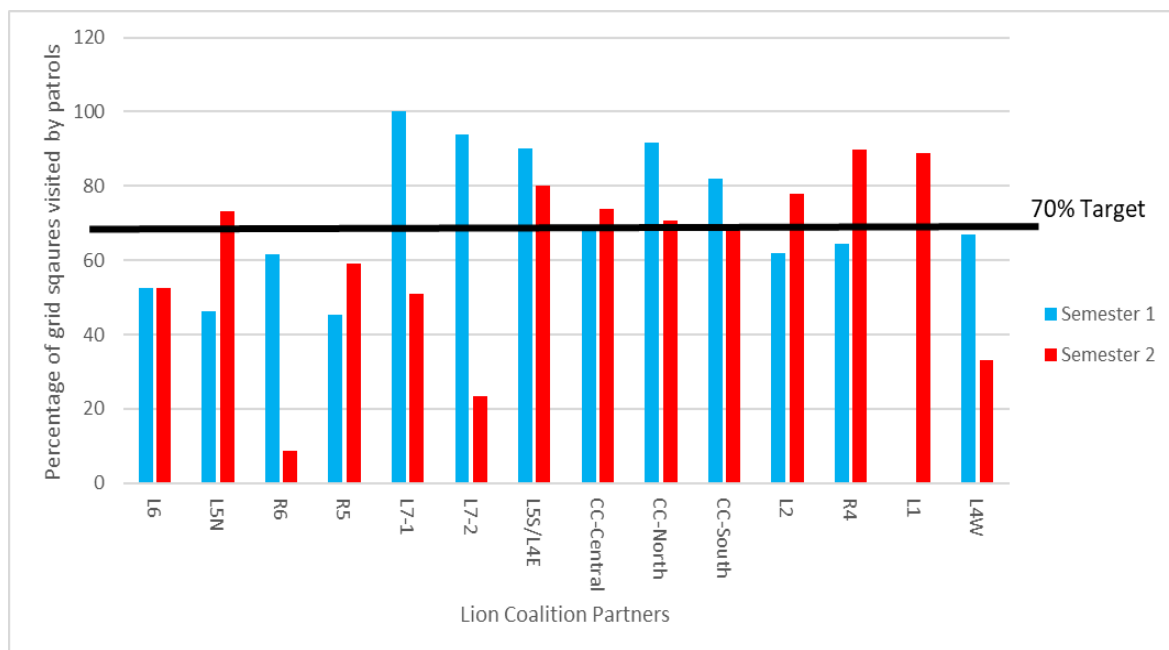


Figure 20: Percentage of 5km-by-5km grid squares visited by antipoaching scouts in each intensive protection zone with a target of 70% of squares visited at least every 6 months. In most concessions in eastern NSR patrol coverage was reduced in the second half of 2025

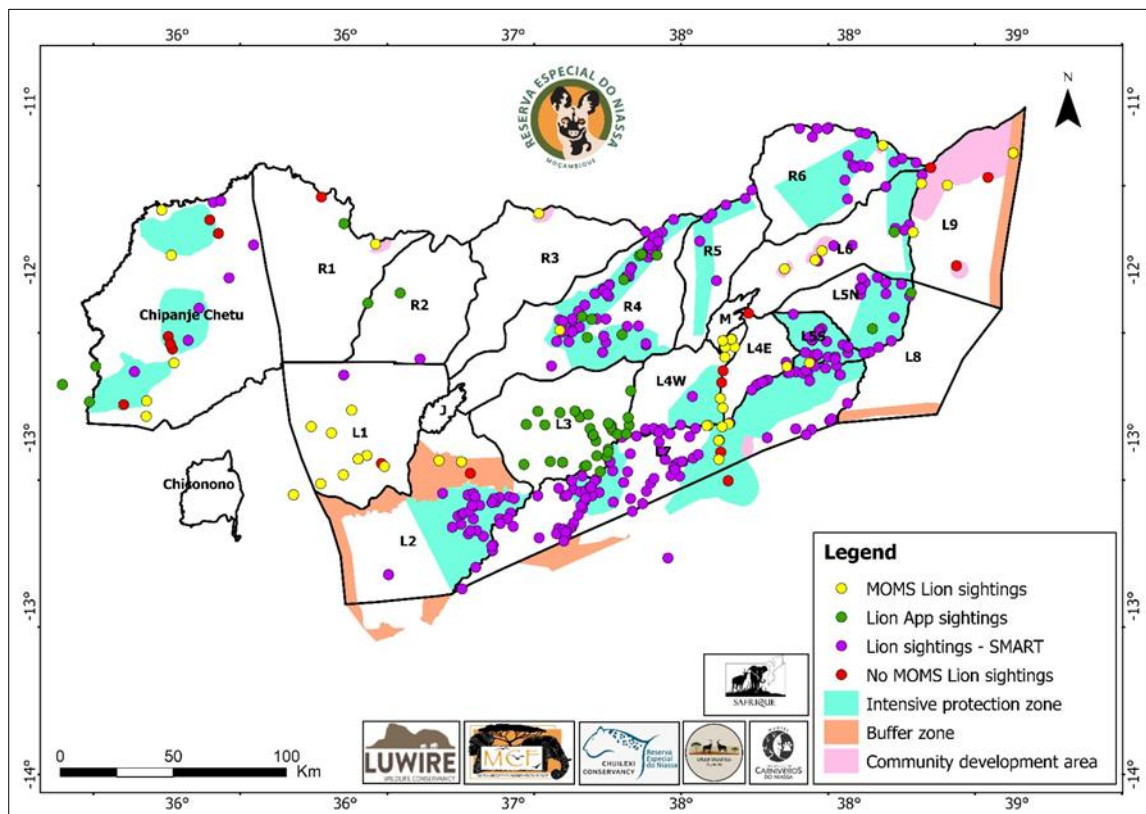


Figure 21: Sightings of lions collected by the Lion Coalition and community partners with some additional points provided through the Niassa Carnivore App showing the lack of information from vast areas inside of NSR that are not patrolled or not patrolled with SMART in place.

Lion Collaring

Lion prides are the foundation of the population and remain stable when there are three to four adult females in each pride. Well-protected prides can then stabilise and serve as a source of young adult males to disperse to other areas. We do not collar for research but to guide antipoaching patrols into areas where the collared pride moves to stabilise source prides.

Operations Rooms can view the locations of collared lion prides on EarthRanger and use this information to guide their anti-poaching patrols, adjusting and improving their IPZs accordingly. By stratifying anti-poaching patrols i.e. by ensuring that patrols move more frequently through IPZ's where collared lions are present, patrol teams remove snares and maintain a strong presence in these areas. This reduces illegal mortality of these prides due to snaring and poisoning allowing them to stabilise and grow.

This is known as the "halo effect" and is highly effective in large areas where full anti-poaching coverage of the protected area is not possible. Over time, the size of the IPZs can be increased, creating progressively larger "safe" areas for lions that are frequently patrolled to remove snares and have regular presence to reduce poisoning.

Lion Collars

In 2025, the IPZ system included 14 currently collared lion prides, directly protecting 84 known lions. These included 30 adult females, 7 adult males, 32 subadults and 13 cubs. The subadults included 5 subadult males, 12 subadult females and 15 subadults whose sex was not yet confirmed. These numbers only represent the lions in collared prides. Additional uncollared prides and other lions are also protected through the same IPZ patrol coverage, snare removal and monitoring effort.

Across the full year, NCP monitored 18 collared prides, also representing 84 known lions. The age structure of these prides is encouraging, with 30 adult females, 7 adult males, 34 subadults and 13 cubs born in 2025. The high number of subadults reflects the survival of many of the 24 cubs recorded in 2024 into the next age class. Three prides had more than 10 individuals, which was previously rare in this landscape and suggests that, where protection is consistent and conflict is reduced, prides can recover and grow.

One of the clearest examples is the pride near Mbamba Village in L5 South, which now has 17 individuals. This has not been recorded in more than 20 years of work in this area. It is particularly significant because L5 South is a small concession of 580 km² with a high human presence, including approximately 2,000 people from Mbamba who use the concession area and partner with NCP in its management. The recovery of this pride shows what is possible when long-term community partnership, targeted anti-poaching, monitoring and rapid response are maintained in the same place over time.

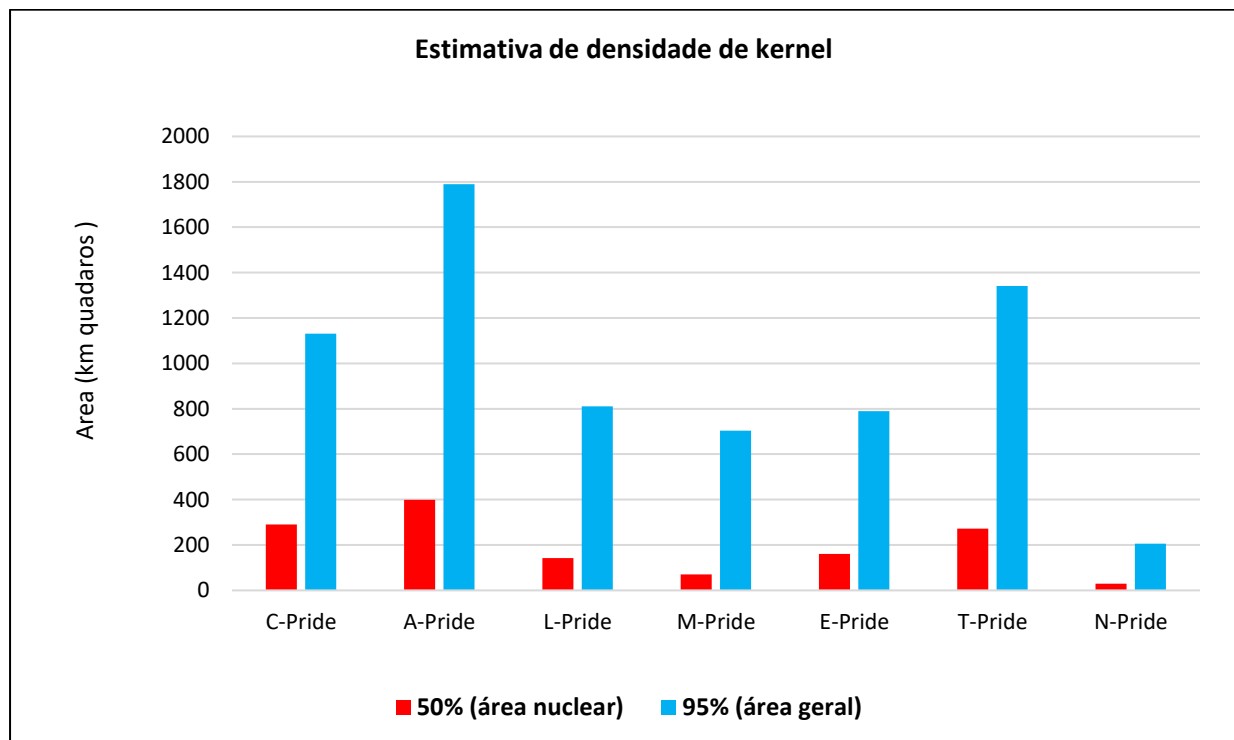


Figure 22: Home ranges of seven male lions inside NSR using kernel analysis to determine the core area (50%) and general area over which they move (95%) showing the home ranges vary widely from 200 km² to 1800km².

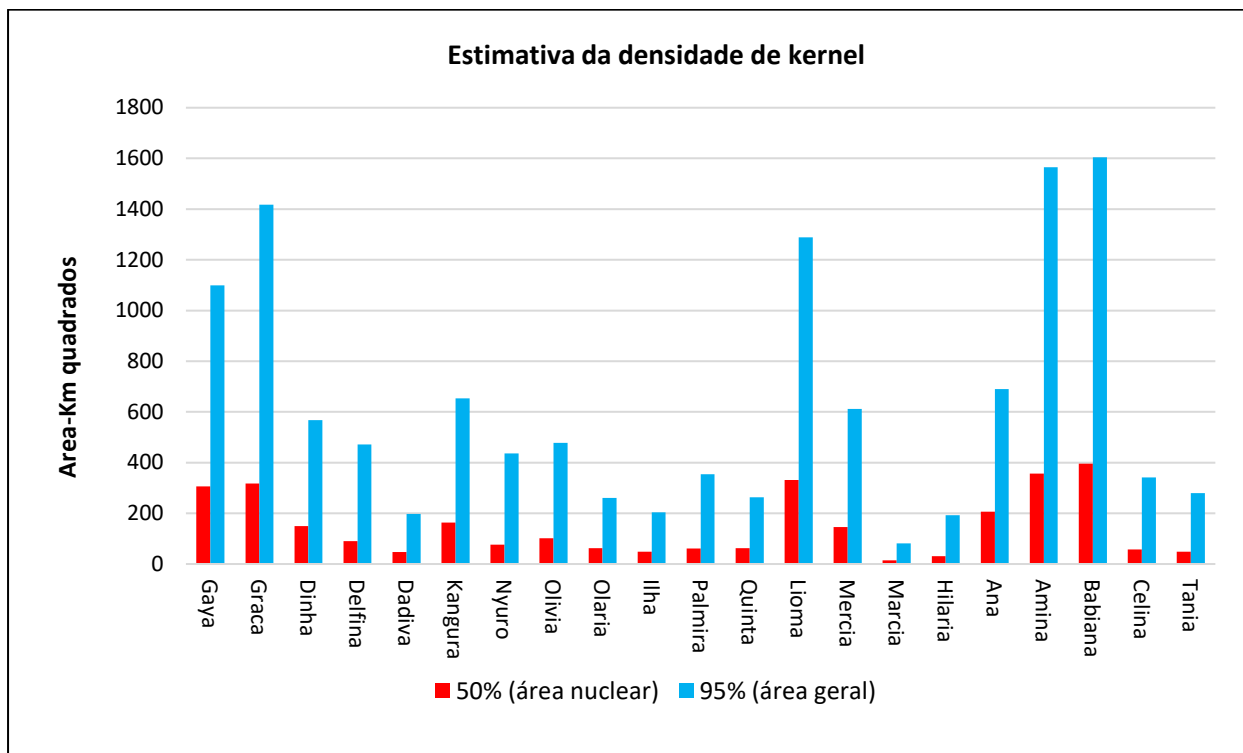


Figure 23: Home ranges of pride females, note that females with the first letter in their name are all adult females in the same pride but are not always seen together. For example, Dinha, Delfin, and Davida are all adult females from the D Pride. Female home ranges are related to prey density and number of animals in the pride.

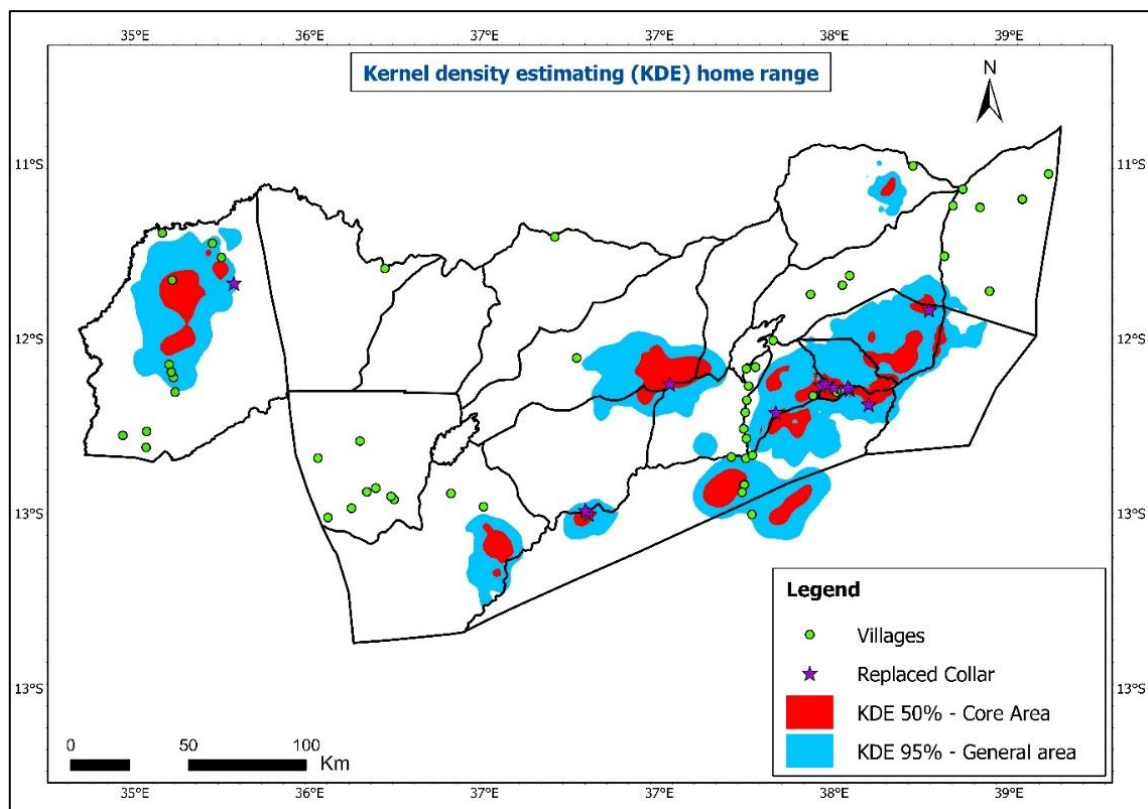


Figure 24: Distribution of collared lion prides across the NSR landscape. Lions are only collared in areas where there is demonstrated patrol coverage.



Figure 25: Gate Guard Baptista assisted with the recollaring of the M-Pride female in 2026

Challenges in 2025 and possible solutions for 2026

For all partners 2025 was a particularly difficult year due to decreased clients, funding, and management presence at central levels and increased insecurity across the region. It was mentioned that:

1. In three concessions a new technique call “Manpangatcha” has emerged with hunting at night with spotlights and pangas to kill animals.
2. Poisoning of rivers is ongoing and provision of water for scouts in the late dry season in large remote areas is a challenge
3. Insecurity directly impacted patrol coverage both due to the presence of the military, the insurgent attacks and fear in the scouts. This was particularly evident in the first 6 months of the year after the attacks in late April/ May.
4. Almost all the operators mentioned that they had too few scouts for the areas that they needed to manage and needed training for their scouts.
5. The loss of funding and income from tourism has made it even more difficult for operators to maintain and support law enforcement teams and community programs.
6. High levels of snaring and deforestation on the international boundary, and north easter section of NSR and general increase in illegal mining due to the increased gold price were evident.

NCP continues to look for additional funding to support our partners though the Lion Coalition Project. Community guardians continued to be embedded in their communities providing critical information on species sightings, conflict and mortality as well as security information. All community camera trapping benefits were paid out on time and continued to be paid out to stabilise the situation. This was a strong example of why this distributed model of conservation with clear roles and responsibilities and support for partners is an effective model.

Objective 5: Livelihoods and Revenue sharing

To implement conservation-compatible livelihoods and revenue-sharing programs that increase household income and food security for Niassa residents creating clear incentives for conservation and tolerance.

In 2025, NCP paid a total of USD 748,928.80 in Niassa-based salaries, demonstrating the project's significant contribution to local employment. In addition, NCP made direct conservation and community economy payments, including USD 18,624 for honey, USD 50,474 to villages through the camera trapping performance-payment program, USD 11,468 to the Mbamba Tchova-Tchova Fund and partnership, and a further USD 10,000 in smaller payments linked to local initiatives such as Kushirika, fish, bamboo, vegetables, and other community-based activities.

Together, these payments represent more than USD 839,000 invested in 2025 directly into Niassa-based salaries, community payments, and local conservation-linked livelihoods in 2025. This shows that NCP is a significant contributor to employment and to the conservation economy of NSR, particularly in Mecula District. This has the effect of creating a trickle-down economy derived from conservation investment.

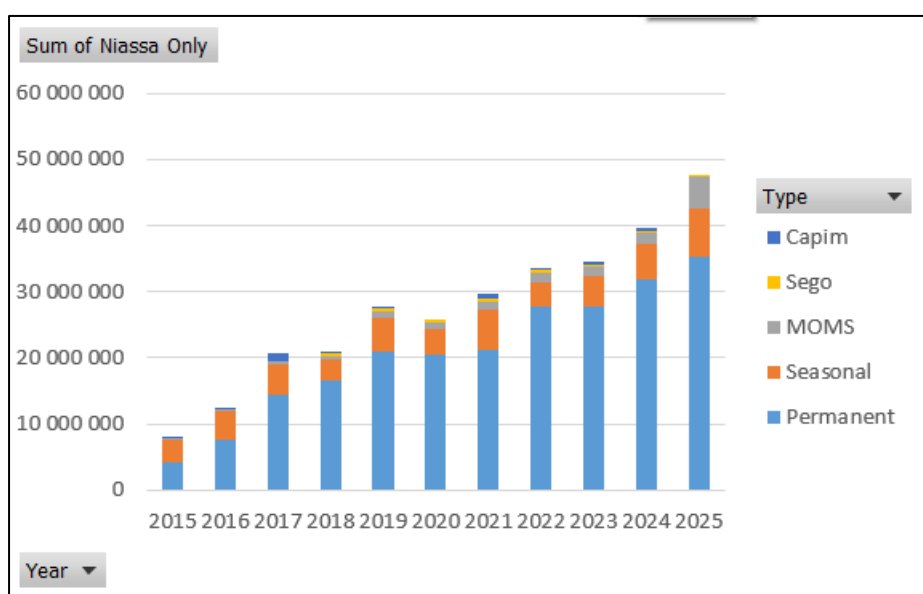


Figure 26: Niassa based salaries over the past ten years showing that even with the insurgent attacks, NCP was able to maintain salary and subsidy payments throughout.

5.1. Community Camera Trapping - Coexistence Payments

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

This is the only initiative in NSR to provide direct coexistence payments to communities. It is not compensation after damage nor is it revenue generated from animals that are killed for trophy hunting. Coexistence payments acknowledge that people are living with wildlife and these payments help to offset costs and create opportunities. Participation is voluntary.

Due to the camera traps being fixed on permanent posts the program is therefore both a benefit-sharing system and a wildlife monitoring system. It links benefits to live animals. It makes the link visible through photographs. It also creates fixed camera trap records close to villages over time. The program has contributed significantly to food security in participating villages. The Community Camera Trapping Program was launched in 2021 with two pilot communities, Macalange and Ncuti. It is now active in 12 villages, with additional villages requesting to join.

At present, the largest participating village has approximately 2,000 people. This may represent the upper limit for distributing benefits effectively across a single village, although in larger settlements the program could potentially operate through different village sections. This is the newest village, and we are still testing whether it will work in a village of this size. Most participating villages are located along a north-south ribbon road through the centre of Niassa Reserve, known as the Mecula Corridor. This corridor has the potential to divide the reserve into eastern and western sections if wildlife movement corridors are not maintained. The program therefore also incentivises the protection of wildlife corridors and key habitats such as waterholes and dambos.

The program was derived and adapted from the Lion Landscapes community camera trapping program in Tanzania, but with significant differences. In Niassa, communities receive money converted into goods selected by the community, rather than receiving pre-selected items. Villages do not compete for first, second and third prizes; instead, each village earns points according to the wildlife photographed near its own fields. The program also builds on NCP's existing MOMS community wildlife guardian program, through which community guardians are already present in all 45 villages inside NSR. These guardians collect information on human-wildlife conflict, special species sightings, fishing, honey harvesting and other key issues, while also helping reduce conflict. It also builds on the conservation performance payment agreement already operating in Mbamba Village.

Program design

- NCP provides 4 camera per participating community. The cameras are placed no more than 1 km from an active field or “machamba”, in transformed or untransformed habitat. Cameras must be at least 1 km apart and not more than 10 km apart, and installation must follow the rules of NSR and Mozambique, including community and block boundaries.
- Each village has four permanent camera posts for the dry season and four for the wet season, allowing the program to take account of seasonal changes in wildlife movement. All cameras are placed in permanent locked posts to ensure that they remain in the same locations over time. This also allows the data to contribute to long-term monitoring of key species presence.
- The program has a maximum of 500,000 points that can be earned in one year. Of these, 470,000 points are available for animals captured by the cameras and 30,000 base points for participation. In Niassa, 1 point equals 1 MZN with a maximum number of points available each year.
- Wildlife presence is verified through photographs, which are presented in public meetings with NCP and the community. Each animal photographed earns a specific number of points, depending on the species. The points are counted in

the meeting, converted into money, and then converted into goods agreed with the community and publicly delivered. The system is transparent and simple: the images are either present or absent, and there is no opportunity to cheat.

- The points system was negotiated with the first participating villages. The highest points are given to species that are dangerous to people or cause significant damage, including lions, leopards, spotted hyaenas and elephants. Points then decrease for smaller ungulates and smaller carnivores. Animals that live in groups receive fewer points per individual but accumulate a large number of points because of group photos. Communities initially asked to include birds and other species, but the system was limited to herbivores and carnivores to keep it manageable.

Steps to establish the program

1. A team of three NCP staff from the existing community program is assigned to manage the project under the Community Program Manager. All team members are from Niassa Province, and two grew up inside NSR.
2. The NCP team meets with the village in a public meeting to present the program and invite participation.
3. Communities are encouraged to discuss the program internally after the meeting. If interested, they can sign up for a two-month trial period. Each village receives an initial allocation of points to begin participation.
4. The village signs a two-month trial agreement and establishes a committee of 12 members, including the traditional leader. A camera trap monitor is appointed and paid a stipend to maintain the cameras, report technical issues and work with the community guardian in each village.
5. The committee selects four dry-season camera locations around the village. Cameras must be within 1 kilometre of agricultural fields and between 1 and 10 kilometres apart. Locations are recorded by GPS by the NCP team.
6. After the two-month trial period, a public meeting is held where photographs are displayed, and points are counted according to the agreed points table.
7. Points are converted directly into money based on photographic evidence.
8. The village holds a meeting to decide what goods should be purchased using the earnings. Communities submit a letter specifying the requested items. NCP assists with transport, purchasing and public distribution of the goods.
9. Once goods have been delivered for the trial period, the community is asked whether it wishes to continue. If yes, the community sends a written request and a two-year agreement is signed, setting out the roles and responsibilities of all partners. Permanent camera posts are then installed so that the cameras can also contribute to wildlife monitoring datasets.
10. Points are verified in public meetings every two months, accumulated quarterly, and payments are made quarterly.
11. A maximum of 490 000 points (initially 330 000) can be earned annually, equivalent to approximately USD 7 600.
12. Additional incentives include bonus points for villages that reach the annual target early, and annual prizes for categories such as best photograph, most lion photographs and most unusual wildlife image.

13. Not all villages reach the maximum annual amount, but sharing results between villages encourages positive competition and improved wildlife protection.
14. The number of points available was based on the budget available at the time and information from other camera surveys, which helped NCP estimate a reasonable annual target that many villages could reach. In other areas, wildlife may be scarcer. In Niassa, there is still a significant amount of wildlife moving around villages.

Wildlife points system

Each wildlife species photographed receives a predetermined number of points.

Table 3: Points system for images of wildlife taken by camera traps for the conservation performance payment program

Category	Species	Points per individual
Herbivores smaller than kudu	Duiker, klipspringer, impala, warthog, bushpig, waterbuck, reedbuck, hartebeest, bushbuck, porcupine, antbear	50
Herbivores kudu-sized and larger	Kudu, eland, elephant, buffalo	100
Carnivores smaller than African wild dog	Honey badger, civet, jackal, genet, mongooses	300
African wild dog	African wild dog	800
Large carnivores	Lion, leopard, spotted hyaena	1,500

Large carnivores receive the highest point values. This creates a direct link between community benefits and the presence of species such as lions, leopards, spotted hyaenas and African wild dogs.

The points system was developed with the first four villages participating in the program. Communities initially wanted to include birds and snakes, but the system was limited to herbivores and carnivores to keep it practical and manageable. The points values were determined largely by the available budget rather than by a specific economic formula.

By linking economic benefits to wildlife presence, the program reduces incentives to kill carnivores and encourages communities to maintain natural habitats near villages.

Results and activities in 2025

- In 2025, in its 5th year, the program reached 12 active communities.
- Two new communities, Erevuka and Mbamba, were integrated into the program during 2025. Mbamba Village joined under a new agreement and is the largest village to participate so far, with approximately 2,000 residents.
- All Camera Trap guardians and MOMS guardians in participating communities received 12 months of subsidies. The program also completed quarterly

counting, validation and public presentation of camera trap photographs in all participating communities.

- The program delivered all prizes from the 2024 year to the winning communities. It also attended to and delivered all requests submitted by communities up to the third quarter of 2025.
- The annual maximum number of points that communities can earn was increased from 360,000 MT to 500,000 MT. This increased the incentive for conservation. Of the total, 470,000 points were available for animals captured by cameras with 30 000 points for the participation bonus.
- A total of USD 50,475 was paid to communities during 2025 for wildlife sightings close to villages. Of this amount, USD 36,200 was earned through sightings of large carnivores, including lions, leopards, African wild dogs and spotted hyaenas.
- Nine villages used their earnings to purchase food, which was distributed to households.

Conservation incentives and behaviour change

The program creates direct incentives for communities to maintain wildlife habitat near villages and prevent the expansion of mashambas into key wildlife areas. Areas close to villages that continue to support wildlife generate more photographs and therefore more income.

Several behavioural changes have already been observed.

- One village organised community scouts to remove snares within four kilometres of the village in order to increase wildlife presence near the cameras.
- Another village saved its earnings and bought its own electric fence to reduce human-wildlife conflict. The community manages this fence itself.
- In another village, a camera trap was stolen and the community used its own funds to replace it.
- One of the most powerful changes has been the shift in attitudes towards hyaenas. Cheering for hyaenas has become common during public meetings because hyaenas earn the same number of points as lions. This is important for hyaena conservation, as hyaenas are often disliked and persecuted.

Community testimonies and stories

The beneficiary communities have shared stories and testimonies that illustrate the positive effects of the program at economic, social and environmental levels. These accounts demonstrate a progressive change in attitudes towards wildlife, with greater understanding of the value of conservation and the role of communities in protecting natural resources.

- Macalange community: The community expressed deep thanks for the implementation of the CT program, recognising its fundamental role in improving local living conditions. According to the members, without the program it would be difficult to deal with conflict between people and wild animals. With the benefits received, the community was able to acquire electric fencing wire to

protect the machambas and, during periods of food shortage, ensure the purchase of food for the whole community.

- Naulala and Ntimbo 1 communities: These communities thanked the program for the support provided, emphasising that the financial benefits obtained have been used to purchase food products for the whole village, especially during the most difficult periods of the year.
- All participating communities: In general, the communities showed great satisfaction with viewing the photographs captured by the Camera Traps. This process allowed them to increase knowledge about the different wildlife species existing in the area, many of which were previously unknown to the communities. The program therefore contributed to strengthening environmental awareness and valuing local biodiversity.
- The Camera Trap Program has supported us a lot in solving our basic needs, mainly access to food products, which are our main priority, thereby contributing to reducing and combating hunger in the communities”.
- We are very happy to participate in the public night cinema sessions, because the children play, have fun and learn by seeing and getting to know various animals that live in our region. Many of us did not know well the characteristics of some animals, such as the lion, leopard, hyaena, wild dog, civet, armadillo, among others. Through the cinema, we came to know them better and made a commitment to continue conserving them so that we can continue to receive benefits.”
- We also appreciate the rules defined by the program, especially the right of everyone to receive benefits equally, without exclusion by gender, age or race.
- We are satisfied to receive the benefits without problems, and we greatly value the transparency of the program, because we clearly understand the processes, the rules and the way the benefits are distributed.
- In Ncuti, hyaenas were previously seen as unwanted and dangerous animals and were often chased away or persecuted. The community now recognises hyaenas as valuable because their presence contributes to camera trap points and benefits. Hyenas are therefore no longer being chased away in the same way.
- In Ntimbo 2, the local committee and community members reported regular patrols around machambas to prevent snares and other illegal activities that could threaten wildlife. The same community also reported cases where members discouraged others from opening new machambas too close to camera sites.
- Erevuka, a new community in the program, expressed satisfaction that the program had reached their village. Community members reported that they had been requesting the program for some time after seeing other villages benefit from conservation activities.

Benefits and Income

The program has expanded significantly since its launch.

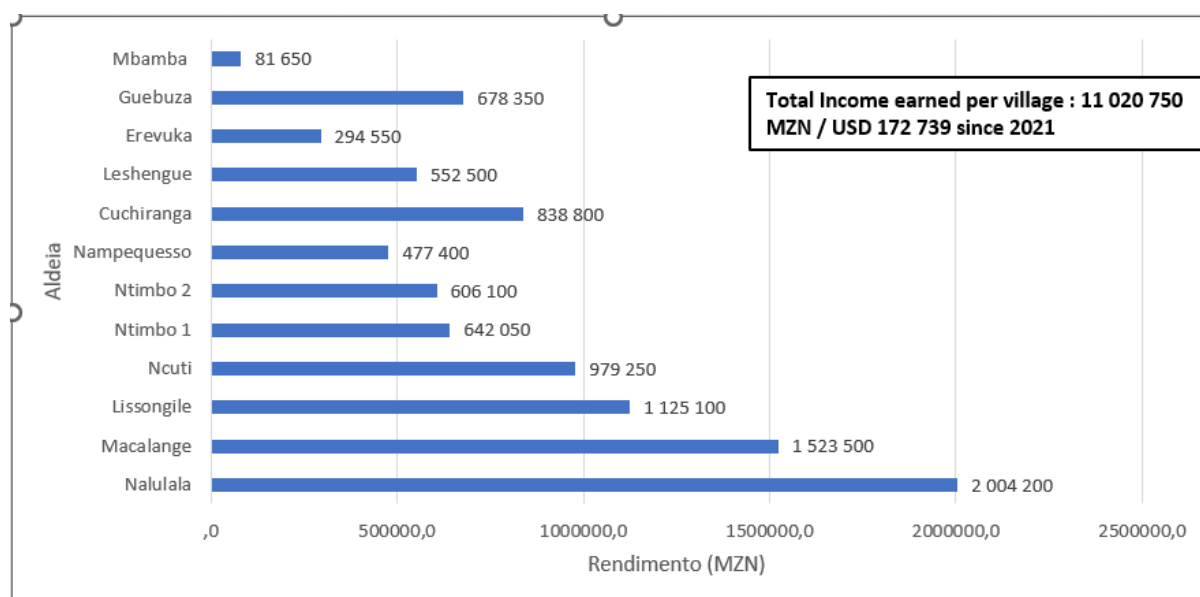


Figure 27: Distribution of money to villages participating in the camera trapping conservation performance payment systems in the Mecula District since 2021

The program has contributed significantly to improving food security in participating villages. Communities began receiving benefits shortly after the program started in 2021, a period that followed the COVID-19 pandemic and coincided with insurgency-related displacement inside NSR. In 2025, it again provided a lifeline for families that evacuated due to insurgent activity.

In all villages, the program has been well received. The direct link between wildlife photographs and community benefits is simple to understand and transparent. As it links to live animals it is easy to link to conservation efforts.

Large numbers of wildlife are being photographed near villages, including lions, leopards, African wild dogs and spotted hyaenas. These records also contribute to NCP wildlife monitoring datasets and demonstrate the high level of coexistence that still exists inside NSR.

The program shows that communities living with wildlife can receive direct and visible benefits from the presence of live animals. It also demonstrates that conservation performance payments can be transparent, locally understood, and linked to both household wellbeing and long-term wildlife monitoring.

Challenges and possible solutions for 2026

- **Transport.** The program had only one vehicle available to support activities in communities while also serving two different programs. This limited the ability to carry out activities efficiently when work was happening at the same time in different places. Funding for a second vehicle has been received. This will allow teams to divide activities and support implementation more efficiently when activities overlap.

- Camera movement. There were attempts to move cameras to other locations when wildlife was not being recorded at the agreed fixed points. This affects the fairness of the points system and the monitoring value of the fixed camera stations. However, this is easily controlled as the backgrounds of the images change and any images in the new position are disregarded.
- Procurement. Some communities wanted products to be purchased in distant locations, even when closer options were available because of lower costs. This created difficulties in the purchasing process and increased transport requirements. A new contractual clause was negotiated stating that products purchased in Mecula Sede will have transport costs covered. However if communities choose to buy products in more distant locations, the transport costs become the responsibility of the community.
- Communication. Some community committees are in areas without reliable communication network coverage. This makes coordination difficult, especially for product acquisition, camera support and follow-up with communities. The solution is to identify and adopt alternative communication methods with community committees to improve coordination and make the product acquisition process easier. Starlink Mini might be an option if use can be controlled.

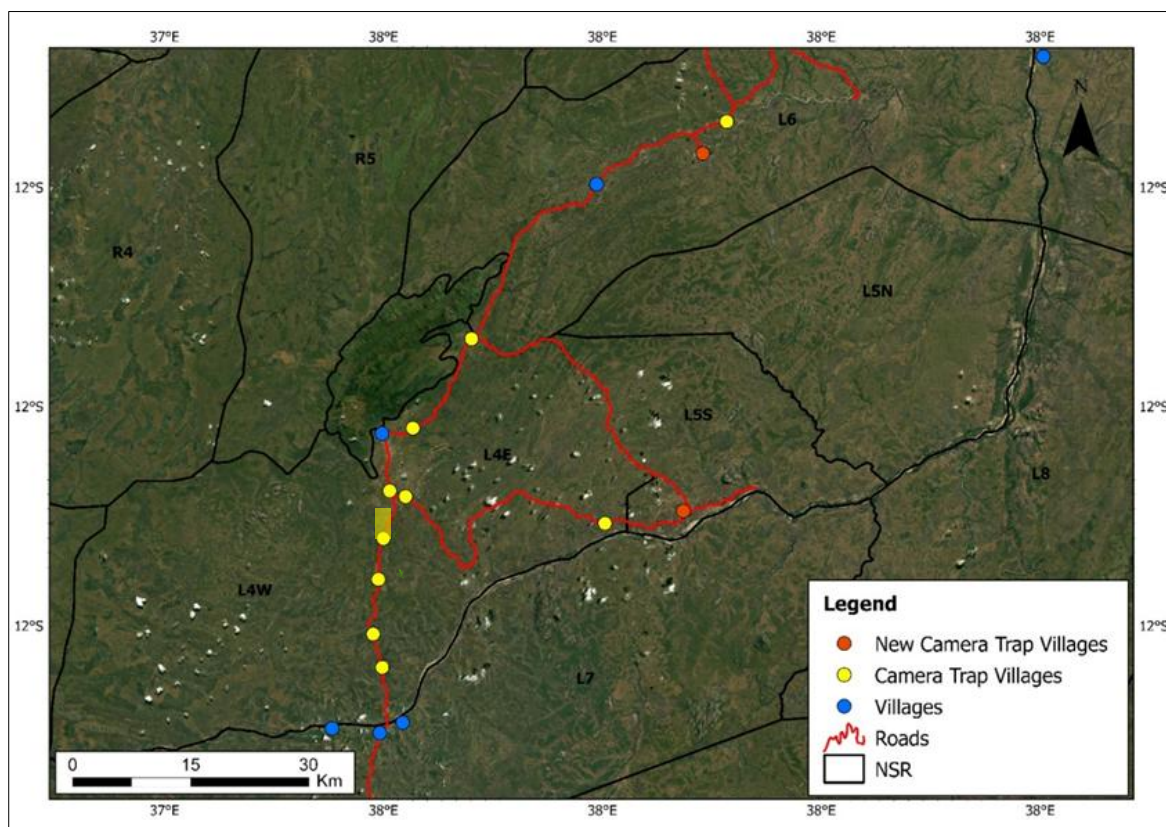


Figure 28 Map of the villages in eastern NSR showing the positioning of the community camera trap villages along the north-south ribbon road that cuts through the middle of Niassa Reserve from Mussoma to Mecula. This road and urban development could reduce the movement of lions and other large carnivores, and land use planning is essential to provide corridors for wildlife movement.



Figure 29: Public presentation of the camera trap images and counting the points which build transparency and understanding of wildlife.



Figure 30: Converting the points to money and public participating in each village on how coexistence funds will be spent.

Many extraordinary images were collected showcasing the biodiversity of NSR and that coexistence is at the heart of NSR.





Best Image: Lissongile

Figure 31: 2025 Best Image of the year - Lissongile Village



Ntimbo II: Most unique image of 2025

Figure 32: Most unique image of the year Ntimbo II Village

5.2. Household level Alternative Livelihoods programs

Across the Kushirika, Beekeeping and Small Livestock Breeding programs, NCP directly supported direct 325 beneficiaries or households in 2025. This includes 25 Kushirika artisan beneficiaries, 185 beekeepers and 115 small livestock breeders. Using a conservative estimate of 5 people per household, these programs supported approximately 1,625. Household level livelihoods program provides significant support to people for emergencies and critical items in households where cash is scarce.

5.2.1. Honey Program

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

The beekeeping program has two main objectives. The first is to provide an alternative sustainable livelihood through the sale of honey from beehives. The second is to incentivise the maintenance of miombo woodland, so that subsistence agriculture does not replace all woodland.

A beekeeper group is initiated in each village with interested members, including men and women. Each beekeeper receives 5 to 10 hives from NCP. The hives are locally made at Mariri and cost approximately USD 30 each. Each honey harvest, the beekeeper repays one hive with 2 jars of honey until all hives have been repaid.

The remaining honey is available for sale by the beekeeper. Honey is harvested into hygienic white buckets labelled with the hive code. It is then processed and bottled in the honey room at Mariri Environmental Centre in 350 ml jars, with a unique label. NCP provides the jars, labels and marketing as a donation to the program.

Each jar is sold for 350 MZN and the full amount goes to the owner of the hive. NCP support the bottling, bulk sales, labels etc. This provides substantially more income per ml of honey than traditional honey gathering. Gathered honey typically sells for approximately 1 MT per ml, while beekeeping honey sells for approximately 10 MT per ml. This increased value is possible because the honey is processed hygienically, bottled properly and labelled for sale and additional costs are supported through philanthropic funds. This addition of value is critical for honey to be a competitive livelihood in NSR for communities given transport costs to sale points.

NCP also supports each group with beekeeping suits, boots, smokers, comb knives, beeswax for baiting and training. The project uses Top Bar hives. These are installed in undisturbed woodland and baited with wax to attract bees. The bees establish colonies and feed on flowers from miombo forest trees and shrubs inside NSR. This creates an incentive for beekeepers to maintain woodland and not clear all woodland for agriculture.

Important factors for successful hive colonisation include regular monitoring, baiting with wax, cleaning of hives, and protection of hive posts with sheets of corrugated iron to reduce honey badger damage.

Results and activities in 2025

- In 2025, the beekeeping program was implemented in 8 communities inside NSR: Ncuti, Mbamba, Macalange, Lichengue, Ntimbo 2, Lissongole, Cuchiranga and Bairro 11.
- The program supported 185 beekeepers and 723 hives across these villages. Mbamba had the largest number, with 82 beekeepers and 297 hives. Lissongole had 37 beekeepers and 163 hives. Macalange had 17 beekeepers and 61 hives. Lichengue had 19 beekeepers and 79 hives. Cuchiranga had 12 beekeepers and 45 hives. Ncuti had 8 beekeepers and 30 hives. Bairro 11 had 10 beekeepers and 48 hives.
- Mbamba and Lissongole have tended to adopt a higher number of hives. The income obtained in Lissongole has motivated other communities.
- In 2025, the program processed 86 buckets of honey, each with 14.15 kg. This is approximately 1,216.9 kg of honey processed.



Figure 33: Honey harvest 2025



Figure 34: Honey is sold both in small jars for resale in shops and tourism concessions and in 10 litre buckets for bulk sale

- In 2025, 29 boxes of honey, equal to 696 jars, and 129 separate jars were sold, making a total of 825 jars sold. These honey sales generated 255,150 MT. In addition, 26 jars were taken to the refectory for consumption, and 126 jars were lost during the emergency while they were in the Mariri shop.
- Beekeepers used income from honey to buy 17 bicycles, 4 motorbikes and 60 roofing sheets. Honey income supported a small business in Lissongole, the purchase of a mobile phone, and support for children's schooling in Marrupa in the case of John Fernando from Macalange.
- The program also tested hive protection against honey badgers. Hives are installed on posts of approximately 2.5 m and protected with a sheet of corrugated iron of about 1 m to stop honey badgers reaching the hive. Six hives were installed for this test, of which three were colonised by bees. The report states that the results showed adequate efficiency, and that villages where the program is operating are increasingly adopting hive protectors.



Figure 35; Honey badgers trying and failing (see time stamps) to break into a hive protected by corrugated iron sheeting around the base showing the success of this simple protection method.

Challenges and possible solutions for 2026

The main challenge in 2025 was insecurity. In April there was movement of beekeepers due to terrorism, affecting the annual honey harvest. The looting of honey stored at Mariri after the insurgent attack also reduced available honey stock for sale and affected the program.

Honey badger damage remains a practical challenge for hive protection. The program tested corrugated iron protection on hive posts. Six hives were installed in the test and three were colonised. This protection measure was successful and will be implemented in areas where honey badger damage is common.

For 2026, the program will continue to focus on regular monitoring of hives, baiting with wax, cleaning hives, protecting hive posts from honey badgers, and supporting beekeepers to maintain miombo woodland as productive bee habitat.

The program should also continue improving the honey value chain: hygienic harvesting, processing at Mariri, bottling in labelled 350 ml jars and 10 litre buckets and sales through Mariri, Lichinga and other available markets.

5.2.2. Small Livestock Breeding

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

The Small Livestock Breeding Program also called Livestock Breeding Groups or LBG, is implemented in villages inside NSR to provide an alternative, legal source of animal protein for consumption and sale. The long-term goal is to increase the production of domestic meat protein so that domestic meat becomes more available and affordable, reducing reliance on bushmeat. There is little evidence in NSR that people prefer bushmeat to domestic meat. It appears to be mainly an economic issue, because domestic livestock is expensive and not always available.

There are no cattle in Mecula District and only one herd in Mavago District due to Tsetse. However larger livestock, such as goats, are often used as a form of savings or a household bank. People are therefore reluctant to kill goats for everyday consumption. For this reason, the program focuses on smaller animals such as rabbits, chickens and ducks.

An assessment of the program in 2018 showed that even small amounts of income are important at household level. Income from small livestock can help pay for emergencies, clothes, salt and oil. It also reduces reliance on bushmeat in participating households. Each member receives a loan of 2 animals and pays this back by starting a new household with animals. This allows the program to expand from one household to another over time.



Figure 36: Group meeting of small livestock breeders to share successes and challenges



Figure 37: Our youngest duck breeder in 2025

Results and activities in 2025

- In 2025, the Small Livestock Breeding Program was operating in 8 villages inside NSR: Mbamba, Ncuti, Macalange, Ntimbo 1, Nampequesso, Bairro 11, Cuchiranga and Lissongole.
- The program had 115 breeders across these villages. Macalange had the highest number of breeders, with 32. Lissongole had 27 breeders. Mbamba had 22 breeders. Nampequesso and Cuchiranga each had 9 breeders. Ntimbo 1 had 8 breeders. Ncuti and Bairro 11 each had 4 breeders with a total of 82 animals from chickens, ducks and rabbits.

Challenges and possible solutions for 2026

The main challenge recorded in 2025 was the loss of 42 breeders in Macalange because families moved due to the insurgency. This affected program continuity in that village. Other challenges are the movement of breeders from one village to another with the young animals, lack of bamboo for breeders.

For 2026, the program will focus on stabilising breeder groups after displacement, supporting basic corral materials such as stakes and bamboo where possible, and improving practical husbandry training, especially corral cleaning and animal management.

5.2.3 Kushirika



Overview: What the program is and why it matters

Kushirika is a handicraft and artisan group based in Mbamba Village, Mecula District, inside NSR. The group was created with support from NCP in 2015.

Kushirika is composed mostly of older men and women who have limited schooling and no formal employment. The aim of the program is to create sustainable livelihood options that do not depend on poaching or wildlife trafficking, while also conserving traditional craft skills and sharing conservation messages through art.

The group produces high-quality crafts for sale. These include conservation quilts, straw baskets, mats, recycled bottles covered with plastic, bracelets, animals made from flip-flops, masks and other handmade products. The materials used include straw, plastic, bottles, thread, cloth and other recycled materials. The work is inspired by NSR, traditional stories, wildlife and conservation.

The program has three main purposes. First, it provides income for people without schooling or formal employment. Second, it helps reaffirm and conserve traditional craft skills, including weaving, embroidery and pottery-related work. Third, it creates work that tells stories of Niassa and celebrates conservation and community.

The group has reduced in size over the years. In 2019, there were 30 members. In 2020, one member passed away. In 2022, three members were removed by the group because they were involved in illegal activities, specifically gold mining, which is against the group rules. One member also left after moving from Mbamba to Mecula. Since 2023, the group has remained at 26 members 15 men and 11 women.

For coordination, the group has a leadership structure. Since 2023, this has included two leaders, Álvaro and Cristina, and two secretaries, Justino and Saide. The leaders guide the work and help ensure that group rules linked to conservation are followed. Not following the rules can lead to suspension.



Results and activities in 2025

In 2025, Kushirika activities were affected by the insurgency situation that affected Mariri and Mbamba. Work was interrupted and only resumed after Mariri reopened. In addition, the Mpopo Trails camp was not opened and will also not be open in 2026 due to the attack on Mariri and travel warnings. This will severely affect the sales of the group.

Despite this disruption, the group continued producing and selling craft material. From July to December 2025, Kushirika produced and sold material to NCP worth 464,650 MT. This amount was paid to the group through eight payments between July and

December 2025. The conservation quilt project remained the main activity of the group and has been the main focus since 2021. NCP provides cloth and thread, and the group embroiders conservation stories. The work was initially done only by women but now involves both men and women. In 2025, the group produced 5 high-quality conservation quilts. Three conservation quilts were sold outside Mozambique during Colleen's trip to the USA. One quilt sold for 300 USD, another for 400 USD and another for 4,000 USD.



- In 2025 the group also produced other craft items, although production was lower than normal because of the difficulties already noted. These items included straw baskets, mats, recycled bottles covered with plastic, bracelets and animals made from flip-flops. NCP made two purchases of this type of material during the year, paying 76,800 MT, excluding the conservation quilts.
- For the 2025 Lion Festival, Kushirika produced 6 animal masks for use during the celebration. These included a lion, African wild dog, elephant, buffalo, leopard and hyaena.

- Two Kushirika members, Justino and Saide, painted wildlife images in the classrooms of Escola Primária 7 de Abril in Mbamba between November and December.
- Kushirika was also represented at FACIM in 2025 through the Niassa Directorate of Culture and Tourism. The FACIM International Tourism Fair took place from 25 to 31 August in Marracuene District, Maputo Province. At the end of the 2025 campaign, Mariri organised the usual end-of-campaign celebration for the group in November. Each member received 2 kg of maize seed to support their machambas during the agricultural season. Mariri also bought 30 T-shirts for the group to use as uniforms in 2026.
- 26 people living in Mbamba were supported through the 464,650 MZN paid for material, which was divided among the group through collective art pieces.

Challenges and possible solutions for 2026

The main challenge in 2025 was insecurity. The insurgency situation affected Mariri and Mbamba, interrupted group activities, and reduced normal visits to Mariri as well as close the Mpopo Trails community tourism camp. Tourists and other visitors are normally the main customers for Kushirika products at Mariri. Because there were few visitors in 2025, there were no significant craft sales at camp, except for the conservation quilts sold outside the country.

For 2026, the program needs to focus on sales access. The group can produce high-quality work, especially conservation quilts, but income depends on markets. Without visitors to Mariri or regular external sales channels, Mariri carries the cost of buying products while resale remains limited.

Objective 6: Lion Scholarship program

To support secondary school education and skills training for Niassa residents, creating pathways into formal employment, including the conservation and tourism sectors, to build benefits from conservation. (Lion Scholars)

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

The lion scholarship is managed and funded by the NCP, with support for scholars from Naulala, Erevuka and Gomba provided by Chuilexi Conservancy. It has been running since 2013, with the first three students, two of whom have been hired by NCP and are project leaders of community programs.

From 2013 to 2025, the Lion Scholars Program has awarded 96 scholarships. Of these, 27 scholars either failed, left or abandoned the program. By the end of 2025, 16 scholars had completed training, and 53 scholars were still active and supported in school or training. Of the 16 who completed training, 6 were employed, with 4 integrated into NCP and 2 working in the health sector and ten are still looking for work.

The Lion Scholars Program provides scholarships and skills training for children, young people and adults from remote areas inside NSR. The purpose is to give access to secondary school, technical and professional training, university, short courses and

internships for students whose families often cannot support education beyond primary school.

The program is intended to help scholarship recipients complete at least Grade 10, gain practical skills, find employment or create small businesses, and increase the local livelihood economy in villages inside NSR.

We see this as an alternative livelihoods program as our vision is to provide local children with the opportunity and means to be able to go to secondary school and receive mentorship from NCP. This will increase their literacy and numeracy and provide them with opportunities outside their own village to broaden their horizons and create opportunities for them to pursue other informal entrepreneurial livelihoods and small businesses as adults. If the children can reach Grade 10 or Grade 12 then they have increased opportunities through the scholarship program to achieve technical training that will increase their potential to gain formal or informal employment. Through being able to earn an income and move off subsistence fishing, mining, or hunting, these local youths will increase food security and decrease poverty in their households and will help to drive the local economy within NSR, which will have a trickle-down effect on their communities and on saving wildlife. They will be role models in their communities, incentivising other children to go to school to complete their education. The employment will also reduce incentives for them to be engaged in high-risk illegal activities such as poaching and gold mining and reduce threats to wildlife. The scholarship on its own provides a significant benefit from conservation.

This program has two objectives:

1. To promote education by providing an opportunity for children in remote villages with only a primary school to go to secondary school so that they have an increased opportunity to get a job (either in formal or informal sector) rather than earning a living through fishing and poaching, and
2. To provide a strong benefit to communities from wildlife conservation. This scholarship comes to children from the wildlife in NSR.

Results and activities in 2025

For 2025 specifically,

- The program supported 53 active scholars, 37 male and 16 female. Their study locations and levels were recorded as 26 scholars in Lichinga, including 10 at university, 10 in technical education and 6 in secondary education; 26 scholars in Mecula District, all in secondary education; 1 scholar in Marrupa in technical education; 1 scholar in Nampula in technical education; and 1 scholar in Chimoio in technical education
- Of these scholars, 17 were funded by Chuilexi for their basic costs (9 men and 8 women from Gomba, Erevuka and Naulala), while the remainder are funded by NCP.
- NCP also covers additional costs of the educational team, mentorship and the rental of the Pensão in Mecula for housing.

- The current scholars come from 11 villages inside the Mecula District: Mbamba, Macalange, Mecula Sede, Nampequesso, Ntimbo 1, Ntimbo 2, Cuchiranga and Lisongole, Gomba, Naulala and Erevuka.
- We are currently supporting 26 scholars in Lichinga (10 University, 10 technical educations, 6 secondary education), 24 scholars in secondary school in Mecula, 1 scholar in Marrupa, 1 in Nampula and 1 in Chimoio.
- In 2025 we renewed the contracts for the four education assistants who support the scholars in Mecula, Lichinga and Nampula.
- Five new scholarships were awarded in 2025. Four were awarded to students from Mbamba and one to a student from Mecula Sede.
- Thirteen scholars wrote admission exams for universities and technical institutes in 2025 and 100% passed.

Notable outcomes are Maelezo Carlos from Gomba completed a health laboratory course. Moniz Heculano completed studies at IAC in Chimoio. Ângela João Madrasse was placed at the Ntimbo 1 health post through the MozNorte Project. Modesta Costa was placed at the Lugenda health post in Mussoma through the MozNorte Project. Juma Issa joined the NCP team in the MOMS sector.

Unfortunately, one student dropped out of the scholarship program as she was pregnant, one joined the military and one abandoned his degree in the final year at UniRuma.

Challenges and possible solutions for 2026

The main challenge recorded in the report is the low employment rate of scholars who have completed training. From 2013 to 2025, 16 scholarship recipients completed training, but only 6 were employed. Of these, 4 were integrated into NCP and 2 into the health sector. We need to strengthen partnerships with tourism operators and public institutions and encourage them to create internship opportunities for newly trained scholars, and invest in youth entrepreneurship programs so that they can create their own work.

Objective 7: Reduce conflict between people and large carnivores

To reduce retaliatory killing of carnivores by reducing attacks on people and livestock, and improving safety, human well-being, and tolerance.

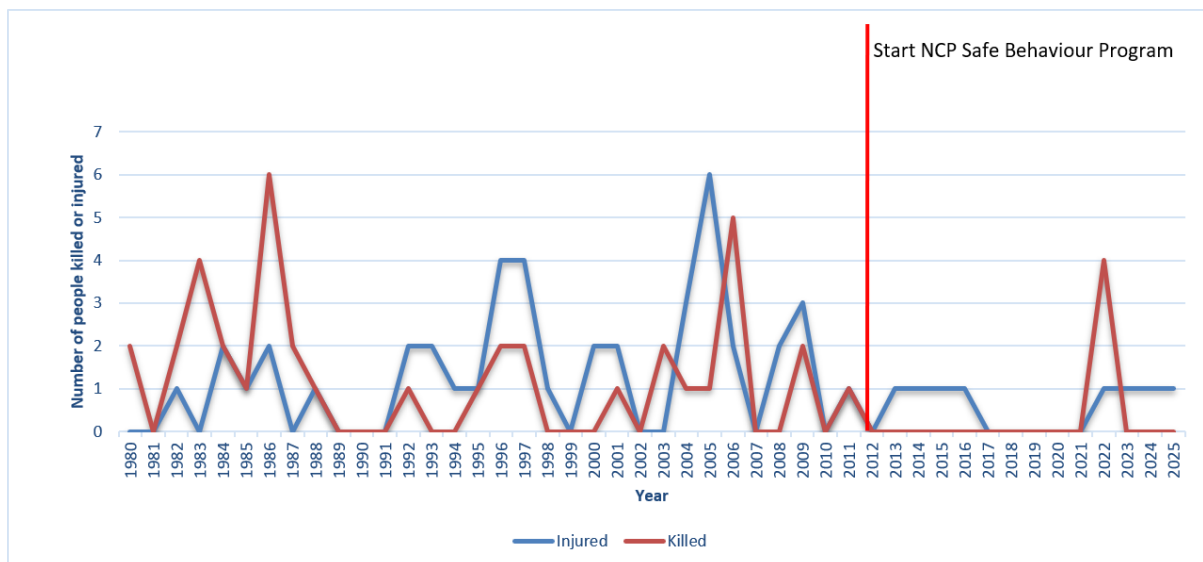


Figure 38: Recorded Lion attacks on people over time inside NSR (surveys, MOMS data, opportunistic reports)

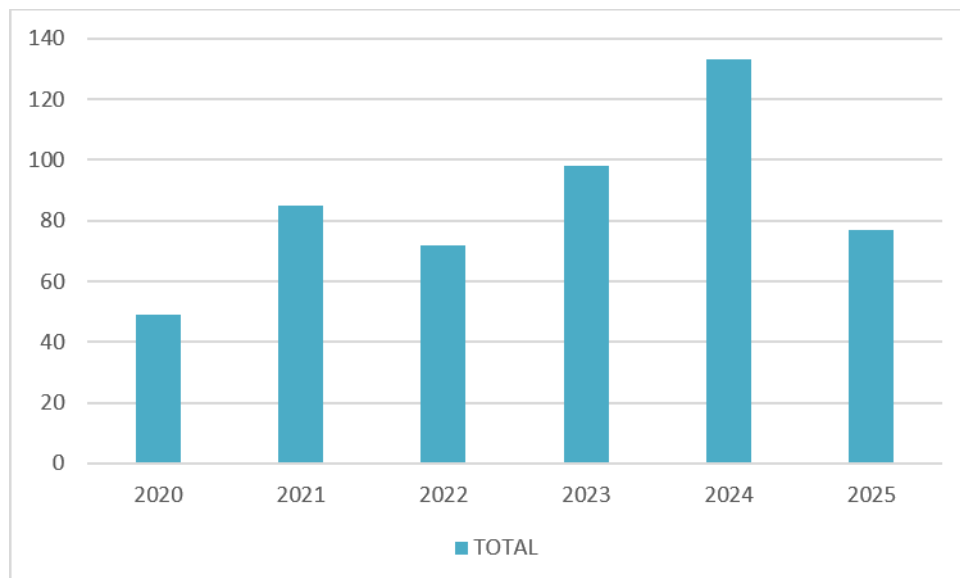


Figure 39: Total number of livestock and poultry killed by large carnivores in the past 6 years including chickens, goats, chickens, ducks and doves.

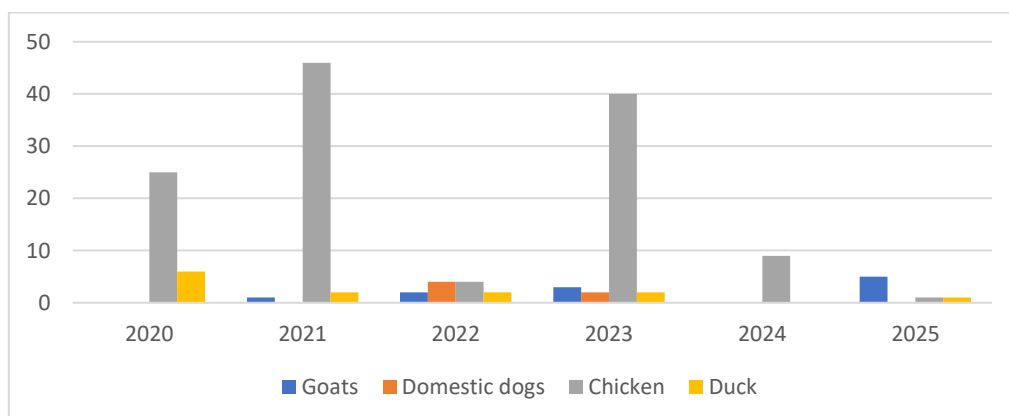


Figure 40: Trend in leopard attacks on livestock over the past six years showing that chickens are the main target and a reduction in attacks recorded over time by the MOMS guardians

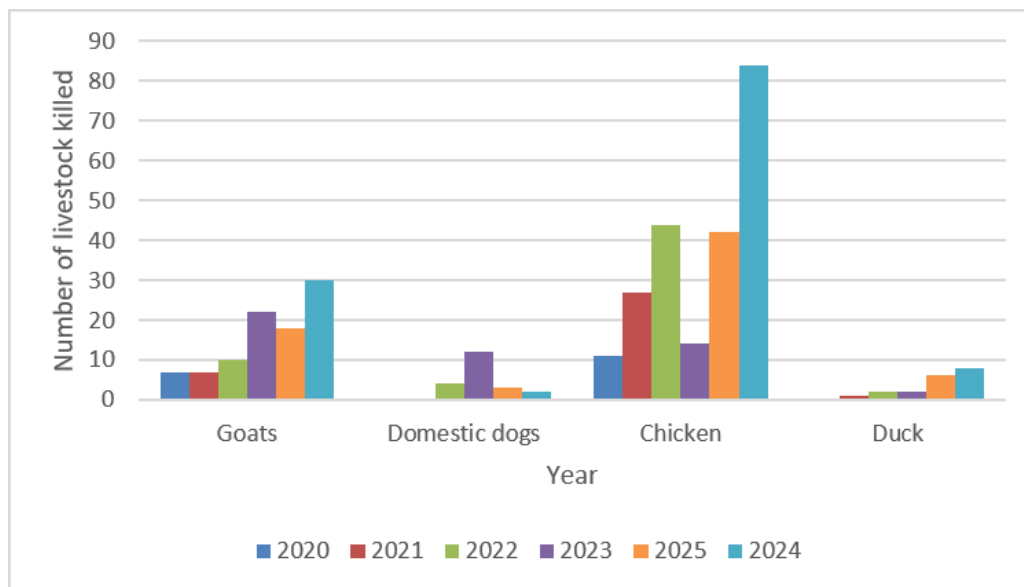


Figure 41: Trend in spotted hyaena attacks on livestock over the past six years showing that chickens are the main target. There has been an increase in the attacks on goats and chicken in the past 6 years as recorded across NSR.

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

NSR is a protected area where people and large carnivores live in the same landscape. It supports more than 45 rural villages, as well as important populations of lions, African wild dogs, leopards and spotted hyaenas. Lion attacks on people are a serious part of this coexistence.

Between 1980 and 2022, NCP recorded 103 lion attacks inside NSR. More than 80% of these attacks happened in fields or villages, not in the bush. Nearly half of the victims were sleeping in temporary shelters in the fields or on verandas. Other attacks happened when people walked in the fields at night to chase crop pests such as bushpigs and elephants. People are also vulnerable when they walk outside at night to go to the latrine.

The safe shelter message comes from both historical records and local knowledge. A historical reference from before 1645 described raised huts on stilts in neighbouring Makua villages as protection from lions. In Niassa, our early work between 2003 and 2005 found elders inside NSR who knew how to build houses on stilts and understood that these raised houses, or “Sanjas”, helped keep people safe from lions and hyaenas.

NCP then collected local data to analyse all lion attacks that had been recorded in NSR and what people were doing just before the attack to understand behaviours that made people vulnerable. This information shaped the “Protect Yourself” safe behaviour campaign. The main 13 messages are based on identified risk factors and local solutions:

- Sleep in a safe shelter, preferably a Sanja on stilts — do not sleep on a veranda or in the open in the fields.
- Avoid walking alone at night.

- Make sure children are with an adult
- Use a torch or light at night.
- Avoid walking to the latrine at night if possible.
- Protect livestock in secure shelters or corrals with a secure door and roof
- Be especially careful in the wet season and harvest season, when people sleep in fields and when crop pests attract both people and lions.

In 2008, in Mbamba, only 7% of farmers had a Sanja or raised house on stilts. Nearly 40% were sleeping in the open under a thatch roof. More than 60% of people interviewed had seen or heard lions in the fields that season. The data show that behaviour changed in Mbamba. In 2021, NCP repeated the machamba survey. At that time, 98% of farmers in Mbamba were sleeping in safe shelters, mostly sanjas on stilts, compared with only 7% using sanjas in the earlier survey.

Our approach is to share the same message repeatedly through different forums and ways — door-to-door outreach, community radio, posters, lessons and games for children, bush visits at the Mariri Environmental Centre, MOMS community guardians, community meetings, wildlife clubs and safe shelter campaigns. We have developed the Safe Behaviours poster and Human-Lion Conflict toolkit that provides simple solutions from across Africa.

Through the MOMS community guardian program, individual livestock owners are helped to build safe corrals for chickens, ducks, doves and goats. Our rapid response unit with Dr Wiliamo, the veterinarian from Mozambique Wildlife Alliance, and our experienced lion team from Niassa responds when there are emergency calls for assistance.

NCP has also developed a well-defined decision tree for serious carnivore incidents. The process starts with understanding the event: what happened, where it happened, which species was involved, whether people or livestock were attacked, and whether there is an ongoing risk to people. The response then follows the level of risk and the options available. If an animal has attacked a person, or if there is a serious ongoing risk to people and all other methods have failed, the decision tree ends with destruction of the animal, but only with permission from the Warden.

The purpose of this program is practical — understand the attacks and what makes people vulnerable, share this information, use local knowledge to find solutions to reduce these behaviours, have a clear decision tree for response and a rapid response unit ready to help. By reducing attacks, we reduce the need for retaliatory killing.

Results and activities in 2025

- There were 107 small livestock killed by large carnivores in NSR in 2025 compared to 134 incidents in 2024.
- Spotted hyaenas killed 69 livestock (goats and chickens), leopard killed 38 livestock with no records of lion killing livestock. Most of the livestock killed were chickens with some goats.
- Unlike many other conservation areas there are no cattle resident in NSR and few herds in surrounding areas due to tsetse. One herd is now being seen in the

buffer zone in Mavago and we will be working with them to create a hyaena-proof cattle corral. However, overall conflict with lions and livestock is low.

- In 2025, one person was injured by a lion and 1 by a leopard with no one injured by hyaenas. No one was killed by a large carnivore in 2025
- Over the past ten years, the attacks by hyaenas on goats have increased and incidents are focused in two villages in the west of NSR but seem to be related to an increase in the goat population, not an increase in hyaenas in this zone.
- We are currently paying special attention to reducing the hyaena conflict (better corrals and fox lights) as this could cause retaliatory poisoning that will also affect lions, hyaenas and vultures in future.

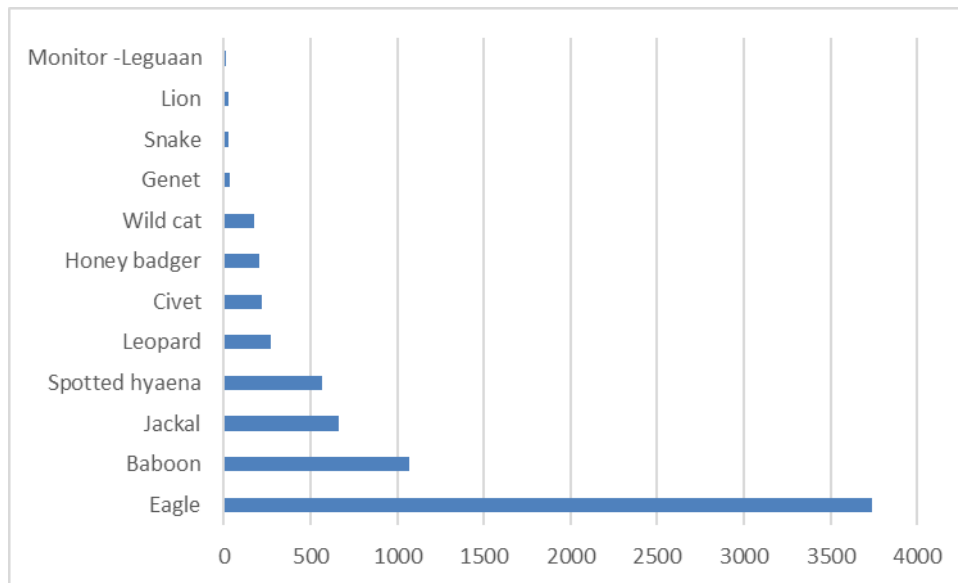


Figure 42: Number of domestic livestock killed by different wildlife species inside NSR in the past 10 years, showing that the main culprits are eagles, baboons and jackals. Attacks by lions are rare compared to other areas as there are no cattle inside NSR.

- 7,022 domestic livestock have been killed by wildlife inside NSR in 10 years (see graph); however, most of these attacks are by eagles on chickens. Goats are killed by large carnivores but mainly by hyaenas.
- In 2025, we reached 7 villages and 1060 family's door to door in Chipanje Chetu with information on how to reduce attacks from large carnivores.
- 180 children were reached through bush visits and village visits from 6 villages in the Mecula District.
- The safe behaviours campaigns are having a significant effect on reducing attacks by large carnivores on people and this is shown by the increase in villages using sanjas in areas where there has been a lot of environmental education from various points.
- Sanjas are traditional techniques that have been used for safety. This is evident in some villages where increasing numbers of sanjas or safe shelters are used in the wet season.
- This will continue in 2026



Figure 43 Door-to-door awareness campaign on how to reduce carnivore attacks using

Objective 8: Sport hunting of large carnivores

To reduce unsustainable levels of sport hunting of lions, leopards, and spotted hyaenas through annual auditing of large carnivore trophies and the provision of evidence-based recommendations to ANAC informed by monitoring and threat data.

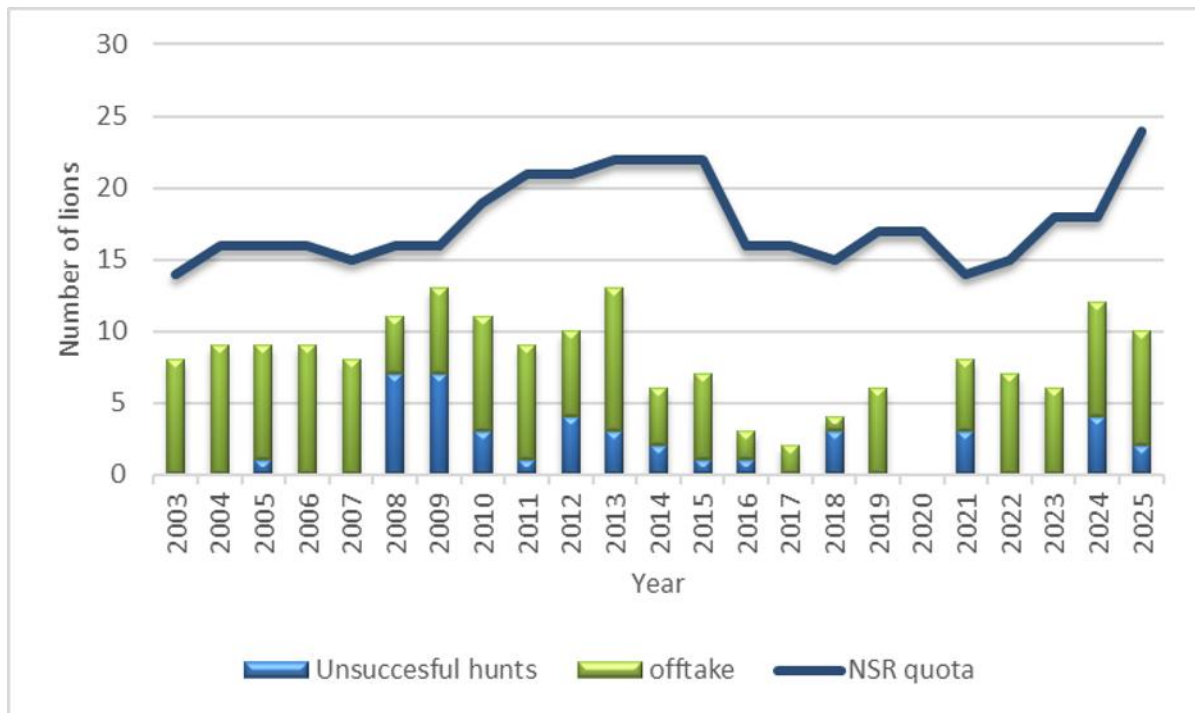


Figure 44: The number of successful and unsuccessful lion hunts per year compared to the actual quota provided to operators by NSR over the past 20 years.

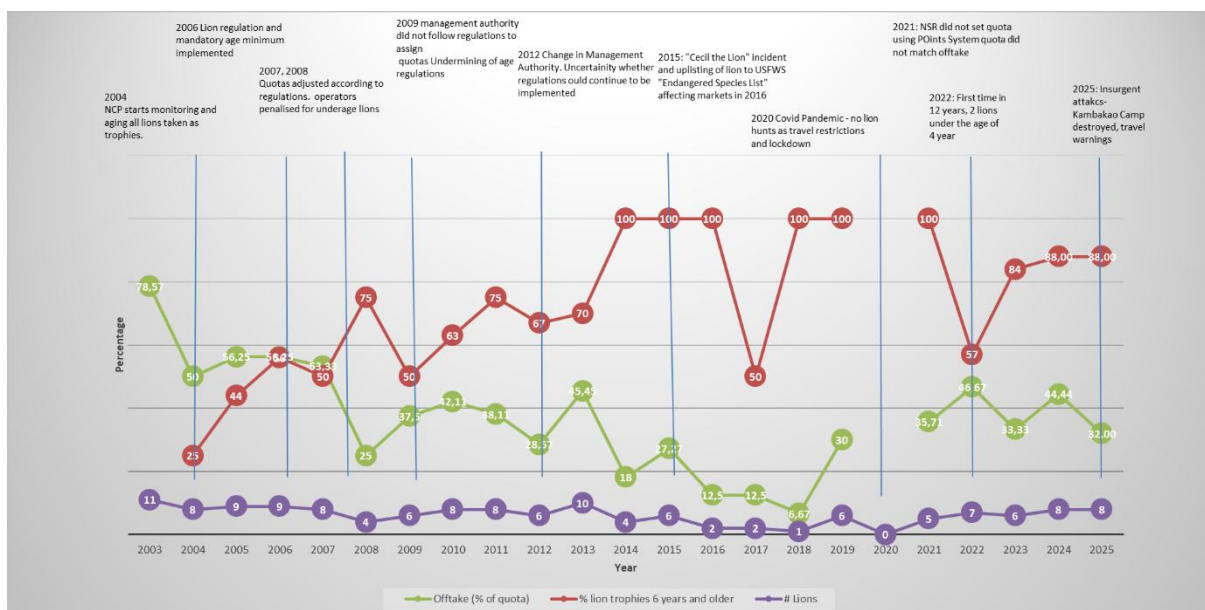


Figure 45: Offtake as a percentage of the quota and the percentage of lions taken as trophies that were at least 6 years of age or older, showing the improvement in the age of lions since the age minimum was put in place in 2004. The number of lions taken as trophies has remained remarkably stable, never exceeding 10 per year, since the age minimum was implemented in 2006, with a mandatory 6-year age limit.

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

Sport hunting is legally permitted inside NSR with authorisation from the Government of Mozambique. Approximately 28,800 km² of NSR is currently designated for sport hunting use, and in 2025, 18,876 km² received hunting clients. Six concessions are currently designated as non-hunting conservation and ecotourism areas, including L5 South, which NCP manages with Mbamba Village.

Sport hunting and consumptive tourism remain the main tourism activity inside NSR. This is controversial for many, particularly for large carnivores such as lions and leopards, which are declining across much of their range and are also affected by illegal killing, snaring, poisoning, retaliatory killing and illegal trade in body parts.

NCP does not promote sport hunting. Our role is to provide independent technical monitoring, external auditing of sport-hunted lion, leopard and spotted hyaena trophies, and science-based information on population status, threats, illegal offtake, and conservation effort. This information is used by NSR, ANAC and CITES processes to assess whether quotas are precautionary and whether offtake is likely to be sustainable.

This is particularly important because lions and leopards require non-detriment findings for CITES quota renewal. These assessments need information on offtake, threats, population estimates, and conservation effort. In a landscape like NSR, legal offtake cannot be assessed separately from illegal mortality. Sport hunting is only one source of non-natural mortality.

NSR is also not a closed system. It supports an estimated 60,000 people living inside the Reserve, and illegal offtake of carnivores and prey remains a major threat. Where protected-area management is effective, including anti-poaching effort and community partnerships, carnivore populations are more stable or increasing. Where management is weak, populations have declined. This means that quota setting must be linked to real management presence, patrol coverage, illegal offtake and community engagement, not only to concession size.

The purpose of this objective is therefore practical: to reduce the risk of unsustainable legal offtake of lions, leopards and spotted hyaenas by strengthening independent monitoring, improving transparency, supporting precautionary quota recommendations, and ensuring that trophy hunting decisions take account of illegal mortality, population trends and management effort.

Results and activities in 2025

The defining feature of 2025 was insecurity inside NSR. Insurgent attacks between April and May affected eastern NSR, destroyed Kambako Safari Camp and led to loss of life. Travel warnings were updated, clients cancelled hunts, and insecurity reduced tourism confidence across the landscape.

In 2025, NCP continued to provide independent trophy monitoring and technical input on lion, leopard and spotted hyaena populations and age.. Trophy monitoring was conducted by a joint NSR and NCP team in November 2025. NCP provided information

on trophy age, offtake, threats, population status, illegal mortality and management effort to support quota recommendations and non-detriment finding requirements. Trophy monitoring between 2022 and 2024 showed improvements in quota assignment, reporting and monitoring.

The lion age-based quota system remains an important tool for reducing unsustainable offtake. Lion trophies in NSR have been monitored for more than 20 years, and the age-based system is designed so that offtake adjusts according to the number of suitably old male lions available. This is why strict, objective implementation and independent ageing of trophies remain essential.

- Lion sport hunting is sustainable at present, with 8-10 lions consistently taken as trophies, with the majority (> 75% over the age of 6 years. Since quotas are linked to an age-based system, where offtake changes depending on the lion population in each area, which takes illegal offtake into account, the offtake adjusts based on available lions of the correct age.
- While leopard sport hunting improved in 2023 and 2024 with a lower proportion of very young leopards taken as trophies, gains were lost in 2025, with more than 60% of the leopards under 4 years of age. This may be due to the increased pressure on leopards and lion hunts to offset the loss of income from cancelled clients due to insecurity. This highlights the system's volatility. The combined legal and illegal offtake of leopards is unlikely to be sustainable in some blocks where antipoaching coverage is poor, and there are high levels of bushmeat poaching.
- Spotted hyaena hunting continues to require careful management and a precautionary approach, as well as educational awareness, given that more than 50% of the hyaenas taken as trophies are females, and they are highly affected by poisoning events. However, the survey suggested that the hyaena population has increased slightly since 2018 and is more widely distributed than that of lions.
- The collaborative Vulture tagging inside NSR with EWT, WCS, NSR, and other operators shows that the vultures are seldom moving into western NSR. This is likely related to food availability, which in turn is linked to carnivore presence and provides an additional indicator of likely lower carnivore population densities in western NSR.

Challenges and possible solutions for 2026

The main challenge is that NSR currently depends heavily on a delegated concession model for protected-area management. Operators are expected to fund anti-poaching, roads, airstrips, infrastructure, scouts and community work largely from tourism revenue. This model is vulnerable when tourism revenue drops.

In 2025, this vulnerability became clear. Insecurity, travel warnings, cancelled clients, the destruction of Kambako Safari Camp, and the suspension of WCS activities all reduced confidence and weakened the management footprint. At the same time, operators carried a large share of security, logistics and field presence during a critical period.

A second challenge is that sport hunting income is strongly linked to high-value species, especially lions and leopards. When operators are under financial pressure, there can be pressure to sell these hunts to recover costs. This increases the

importance of independent monitoring, strict age assessment, transparent reporting and precautionary quotas.

A third challenge is illegal offtake. Lions, leopards and hyaenas are also killed through snares, poisoning, firearms, retaliatory killing and illegal trade in body parts. Legal offtake cannot be considered sustainable if illegal mortality is high and patrol coverage is low and this varies per concession which is shown by the variable densities in different areas of NSR. The report notes that less than 30% of NSR is effectively and regularly patrolled,

The wider solution is that NSR needs a stronger and more stable protected-area management model that is not dependent only on sport-hunting profits. This includes stronger NSR management presence, minimum standards for sport hunting operators to ensure that NSR support operators that are delivering protected area management, better patrol coverage, transparent revenue sharing, community partnerships.

Objective 9: Domestic dog vaccination and disease risk reduction for people and carnivores

To reduce disease risk for people and carnivores, including rabies and canine distemper, through ongoing domestic dog vaccination and monitoring.

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

Domestic dogs are the main reservoir host of rabies, canine distemper and canine parvovirus in Africa. These diseases can spread from domestic dogs to wild carnivores and, in the case of rabies, to people. Rabies is the most serious from a human health perspective because it is almost always fatal once symptoms appear. For conservation, rabies and canine distemper are the diseases of greatest concern for wild carnivores, particularly African wild dogs and lions.

African wild dogs are highly vulnerable to disease outbreaks, and lions can also be affected. Disease spillover is therefore a real conservation risk in NSR because domestic dogs, wild carnivores and people all share the same landscape.

For disease to spill over from domestic dogs to wild carnivores, three conditions must be present. First, the wild species must be susceptible. Second, the disease agent must be present in the domestic dog population. Third, there must be contact between domestic dogs and wild carnivores.

Rabies is transmitted through saliva, usually when an infected animal bites or licks another animal or person. Canine distemper is an airborne virus and is usually contracted by inhalation. Both can spread through domestic dog populations and create risk for wild carnivores.

Vaccination is the main prevention tool. If more than 70% of domestic dogs are vaccinated, this can prevent rabies and canine distemper outbreaks in most cases. However, vaccination coverage can decline quickly where there is high turnover in the domestic dog population. If many dogs are born, die, move or are replaced each year, vaccination needs to happen regularly, even when 70% coverage was reached in the

previous campaign. Domestic dog numbers are also often underestimated, which makes it difficult to know whether the 70% vaccination target has really been achieved.

There is no evidence of a rabies or canine distemper outbreak in wild carnivore populations inside NSR over the past 18 years. However, the risk remains high because wild carnivores and domestic dogs live close to each other, and because there was no regular vaccination program for many years. Rabies outbreaks have affected domestic dogs south of Niassa Reserve and continue to pose a significant public health risk.

In 2020, NCP partnered with the NSR management team, the local district authorities and Mozambique Wildlife Alliance, to implement the first widespread domestic dog vaccination campaign in Mecula and Mavago Districts, where most domestic dogs inside and around NSR are found. This was combined with a rabies awareness campaign. The domestic dog vaccination campaign has now become an annual collaborative program. The purpose is practical: reduce the risk of rabies and canine distemper spreading from domestic dogs to wild carnivores, protect people from rabies, improve domestic animal health, and reduce one of the preventable disease threats to lions, African wild dogs and other carnivores in NSR.

Results and activities in 2025

In 2025, the 6th edition of the rabies awareness and domestic dog vaccination campaign was carried out from 20 October to 4 November in Mecula and Mavago Districts. The campaign objective was to reinforce the importance of animal health as part of community safety, raise awareness among communities and dog owners about the risks of rabies, vaccinate dogs aged 3 months and older against canine rabies and canine distemper, and castrate male dogs as a strategy to reduce dog population growth, reduce zoonotic disease risk and improve dog population control.

The campaign was implemented in partnership with NCP, NSR, Mozambique Wildlife Alliance, Luwire Wildlife Conservancy, the District Services for Economic Activities of Mecula and Mavago, and the MOMS/SMOG wildlife guardians.

With support from MOMS/SMOG guardians, the campaign included a domestic dog census and registration of dog owners, number of dogs, age and sex of the animals. Awareness was carried out at the same time as vaccination.

The campaign reached 14 communities in Mecula District and 10 communities in Mavago District. In Mavago, vaccination messages were also shared through the community radio. The veterinary team from NSR and Mozambique Wildlife Alliance vaccinated dogs eligible for vaccination and treated sick dogs. Each vaccinated dog was registered, and barcoded and each owner received a registration card for the animal.

In total, of the 191 dogs counted in the Mavago District and 130 in Mecula District, 49% were vaccinated in Mavago and 62,3% in Mecula. No villages were visited in Cabo Delgado province inside NSR due to security concerns in 2025. Vaccination is still treated with suspicion and we are not yet reaching the target of 75%.



Figure 46: Joint program to vaccinate domestic dog across Mavago and Mecula Districts.

Table 4: Number of domestic dogs counted and vaccinated in each village in Mavago district and Mecula District in 2025 (Collaborative Vaccination Program 2025).

Distrito	Comunidade	N Proprietarios	N Caes adultos	Vacinados	%	Castrados
M A V A G O	CHITUCHE	0	0	0	0,0	0
	CHILOLO	3	11	7	63,6	0
	NKALAPA	?	15	0	0,0	0
	IRINGA	3	10	4	40,0	0
	MBUYO	0	0	0	0,0	0
	MSAWISE	?	10	1	10,0	0
	LIGOGO	6	25	12	48,0	0
	NAMACAMBALE	2	5	2	40,0	0
	NTACUDJA	8	30	20	66,7	0
	NSACALANGE	4	10	6	60,0	0
	IBO/1 de Maio	15	64	35	54,7	0
	MAOLELA	4	11	7	63,6	0
TOTALIS		45	191	94	49,2	0

Distrito	Comunidade	N Proprietarios	N Caes	Vacinados	%	Castrados
M E C U L A	Mussoma	3	12	11	91,7	0
	Mpamanda	1	1	1	100,0	0
	Mucoria	8	26	7	26,9	0
	Nahavara	1	1	1	100,0	0
	Manhur	1	5	2	40,0	0
	Lisongole	0	0	0	0,0	0
	Junta	2	5	4	80,0	0
	Ntimbo 1	1	1	0	0,0	0
	Ntimbo 2	1	4	2	50,0	0
	Lichengue	12	28	21	75,0	0
	Mecula Sede	16	29	19	65,5	0
	Guebuza	2	5	4	80,0	0
	Gomba	8	0	0	0,0	0
	Eruvuka	1	3	2	66,7	0
	Naulala	0	0	0	0,0	0
	Chamba	6	10	7	70,0	0
	Matondovela	0	0	0	0,0	0
TOTAL		63	130	81	62,3	0

Challenges and possible solutions for 2026

The main challenges recorded in the report were resistance to vaccination in some communities particular in Mavago, difficulty catching dogs, lack of continuous awareness, death of dogs from poisoning or disease creating distrust, and the timing of the campaign overlapping with the agricultural season.

For 2026, the key issue is to increase vaccination coverage towards the 70% target as it is currently below the level needed to reliably reduce the risk of rabies and canine distemper.

GOAL 4: ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

To support coexistence between people and carnivores through environmental education and outreach based on shared learning, practical solutions, and recognition of the cultural, economic, and ecological value of wildlife.

Objective 10: Environmental education and outreach

To implement environmental education and outreach programs for people living inside NSR, to support coexistence with carnivores by increasing knowledge, reinforcing solutions, and highlighting the cultural, economic, and ecological value of wildlife.

Environmental education and outreach programs are centred around the Mariri Environmental and Skills Training Centre, bush visits, wildlife clubs, community outreach, Joy of Life, the school snack program and the Lion Festival. The purpose is to share practical messages on safe behaviour, conservation, health, education, and coexistence with large carnivores, while creating space for children and adults to discuss local problems and solutions.

When Niassa children become part of conservation activities, there is a stronger future for the wildlife, landscapes, rivers and communities of NSR.

10.1 Mariri Environmental and Skills Training Centre and Bush Visits

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

The Mariri Environmental and Skills Training Centre provides a field venue for children and adults from NSR and surrounding districts to visit a conservation area, go on game drives, take part in conservation activities, and hold locally relevant community discussions. It also provides a venue for skills training, workshops and field research, with logistics such as accommodation, internet, local knowledge, assistants, vehicles, workshop space and fuel supported by Mariri.

The main objective of the bush visit program is to host two groups every month from May to October, with a target of at least 180 children per year from schools inside NSR and surrounding villages. During the visits, children receive messages on safe behaviour, care for nature, the importance of conserving natural resources and how to use them sustainably. The visits are designed as a four-night experience, with practical and locally relevant activities.

The children and adults also have the opportunity to see wildlife safely. Game drives led by Castro, our natural history guide, are a highlight for visiting children and adults. Visitors also interact with the conservation team, which is predominantly local.

Results and activities in 2025

While Mariri Environmental Centre was not destroyed during the insurgent attack it was heavily looted including all the materials from the children's rooms and educational materials. In 2025 we had to spend many months restoring Mariri and managing fear. We had to adapt our program to still reach the children. Overnight stays at the

Environmental Centre were not possible as planned, and the program prioritised day visits and sessions held directly in communities.

In August, after the insurgent situation inside the Reserve had stabilised, two groups visited the Environmental Centre. The first group included 17 Lion Scholars from Mbamba. The second group included 30 students from the communities of Mbamba and Ncuti.

In August and September, the program was also carried out in communities. Thirty students participated in Mucoria/Nahavara and 30 students participated in Mpamanda and Ndirima.

A total of 107 students benefited from the Mariri Environmental Centre and bush visit program in 2025. While we didn't reach our target of 200 children this was understandable given the severe trauma of 2025.



Figure 47: Taking environmental education to the children where they were while the Mariri Environmental centre was closed.

Challenges and possible solutions for 2026

The main challenges were the forced change in activity location due to the insurgent attack, the impossibility of overnight stays at the Environmental Centre, and not reaching the annual target number of students.

10.2 Wildlife Clubs

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

Wildlife clubs are created in schools in Mecula District inside NSR to allow children to participate actively in conservation activities while living in their own villages. The clubs are linked to the Mariri Environmental Centre and are supported and mentored by NCP.

The clubs share conservation messages based on the One Health concept, including animal health, human health, community health and environmental health. The aim is for children to become guardians of Niassa's natural heritage and influence other children and young people to become involved in conservation.

Wildlife clubs were started in 2016 with two clubs. By 2021, more clubs had been created, including Clube de Mabeco in Mbamba, Clube de Elefante in Macalange, Clube de Zebra at 16 de Junho, Clube de Búfalo in Lichengue and Clube de Leão in Ntimbo 1. Five clubs are currently active. The club in Mussoma was closed because of lack of participation.

Results and activities in 2025

In 2025, the wildlife clubs carried out the following activities:

- Delivery of support materials to clubs.
- Educational sessions with club members.
- Community cleaning activities.
- Awareness on safe behaviour.
- Establishment of Chanfuta and cashew nurseries for reforestation in abandoned machambas.



Figure 48: Tree growing by one of the wildlife clubs

Challenges and possible solutions for 2026

The main practical focus for 2026 will be to continue supporting the five active clubs, maintain regular mentoring, and keep activities linked to local conservation problems, safe behaviour and One Health messages.

10.3 Community Outreach and Safe Shelter Campaign

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

The outreach program aims to reach people in and around NSR villages that are difficult to reach through other programs. The purpose is to raise awareness and share information that helps people act on specific problems, maintain the health of their communities, and protect forest resources and wildlife.

Outreach messages focus on safe behaviour, health, education, conservation of natural resources, and coexistence with wildlife. The aim is to increase participation in activities that improve the safety of people and their domestic animals, while supporting conservation of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Results and activities in 2025

From 4 to 15 September 2025, a safe shelter campaign was carried out in partnership between NCP, Lipilichi, Chipanje Chetu and the MozNorte Project.

The objectives were to reinforce the safety of people and domestic animals against carnivore attacks, assess the level of protection of domestic animals, collect community experiences about wildlife attacks, promote coexistence between communities and wildlife, and strengthen community commitment to conservation. The campaign was carried out door to door. Safe shelter posters were used and placed in public locations.

Eight communities were reached: Lilumba-Mtwara, Lilumba-Lungula, Maumbica, Nova Madeira-Ngogoma, Nova Madeira 1, Nova Madeira 2, Mowoola and Matchedje Aldeia.

The campaign reached 1,060 families and 366 domestic animal owners. The team identified 233 safe shelters and 133 unsafe shelters. The total population registered through the campaign was 4,883 people.

Challenges and possible solutions for 2026

For 2026, the outreach will continue to focus on practical follow-up with livestock owners, especially in communities where unsafe shelters were recorded. Behaviour change takes many years and for many communities visited this was the first interaction with our team and the safe behaviours program.

10.4 Joy of Life: Basketball for Conservation

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

Joy of Life is implemented in Niassa by NCP in partnership with Still Standing and district education partners. Through basketball, games, dance and song, the program brings children together and shares messages about conservation, health, education and good citizenship.

The program was first introduced in Niassa in 2015, initially in Mbamba Village. In 2017, it reached 11 communities and schools distributed across three centres: Lissongole,

Mecula and Mbamba. In 2018, Joy of Life expanded to Naulala, where Erevuka, Naulala and Gomba gathered in partnership with Chuilexi Conservancy.

The program is aimed at children aged 7 to 14 years and helps build a culture of conservation, leadership, citizenship and health among young people living inside NSR.

Results and activities in 2025

In 2025, for the first time Joy of Life was implemented in Mavago District in partnership with NCP, Still Standing, NSR Administration, SDEJT Mavago and the District Government of Mavago.

The first phase was held in Mavago from 3 to 8 July. It reached 141 students, including 68 girls and 73 boys. The schools included Escola Primária de Ibo, Escola Primária de Namalolo, Escola Primária de Lijombo and Escola Básica Acordos de Lusaka, which hosted the basketball court. The second phase was held in Mecula District from 17 to 21 November. It reached 101 students, including 44 girls and 57 boys. In total, Joy of Life reached 242 students in 2025.

Activities included minibasketball training and games, educational games, and sessions focused on physical, emotional and social development.

Topics covered in educational talks included safe shelters, early marriage, children's rights and responsibilities, protection against child labour, illegal hunting, crocodile attack prevention and safety, and prevention of cholera and diarrhoea.



Figure 49: Joy of Life Niassa – 2025

10.6 Lion Festival

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

The Lion Festival is a community conservation celebration in Mbamba. It uses games, theatre, dance, art and local language communication to share conservation messages, strengthen community spirit and celebrate the relationship between Mbamba, lions and the wider landscape. The festival is not a tourism event. It is a local, grassroots community event that has become owned by Mbamba. It creates a positive space at the end of the dry season and reinforces NCP values of respect, inclusion, learning, communication, teamwork and Tchova-Tchova.

Results and activities in 2025

In 2025, the 15th edition of the Lion Festival was held under the theme “Coração no Espírito de Leão, Força na União”. The event strengthened values of unity, respect, resilience, cooperation and connection with nature. Due to the attacks in 2025, we were considering cancelling the lion festival or holding it in a different village, however the Mbamba community were adamant that this was their festival it could not be held anywhere else and we should go ahead as everyone was looking forward to it. This itself is a strong indication of the ownership Mbamba has on this festival and why it is important.

The 2025 Lion Festival was attended by more than 1,000 people from Mbamba, including children, youth, adults and elders. Activities over the two days included 10 km, 5 km, 1,500 m and 100 m races, spoon-and-mango races, water bucket races, cooperation games, animal puppet races, traditional dances, mask painting and painting of classrooms.



GOAL 5: PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT - COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP MODEL

To demonstrate a community-conservation partnership model for managing a concession inside NSR that delivers conservation outcomes and tangible benefits for people, and that can be adapted and scaled elsewhere.

Objective 11: Tchova-Tchova Partnership agreement – Concession L5 South

To establish and demonstrate an innovative Community Conservation Partnership Agreement (Tchova Tchova Agreement) for the management of L5 South (58,000 hectares) inside NSR that delivers effective conservation of wildlife and habitats while increasing income and well-being for people, and that can be adapted and scaled both within NSR (corridor and small villages) and elsewhere.

Overview: What the program is and why it matters

L5 South is the smallest concession in NSR, covering 580 km² or 58,000 hectares. It is located on the northern bank of the Lugenda River in Mecula District. Mbamba is the only village inside L5 South, with approximately 2,000 residents and about 460 households.

L5 South is managed through the Tchova-Tchova Community Conservation Agreement between Mariri and Mbamba Village (460 households and 2000 people) . The partnership is based on shared responsibilities for protecting wildlife, habitats and community wellbeing inside the L5 South block. Mbamba is represented through the community committee, Utendele Ni Mazengo, and the partnership includes clear roles, responsibilities and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

The aim is to create a practical model of community conservation that works in a concession with people living inside it. The agreement links conservation performance with direct benefits to Mbamba, including seasonal employment, community fund payments, support to public services, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, community tourism, education support, and joint land-use planning.

Despite the insurgent attacks in 2025, the looting of the NCP/Mariri headquarters at Mariri, the need for team recovery, and ongoing insecurity, NCP continued to secure L5 South, maintain anti-poaching coverage where possible, support Mbamba, and continue the Tchova-Tchova partnership. A new agreement with Mbamba was signed in January 2026.

Results and activities in 2025

Tchova-Tchova conservation partnership and community fund

In 2025, the Mbamba community received conservation payments through the Tchova-Tchova partnership of MT 578,495 paid into the Mbamba Tchova-Tchova Agreement community fund. The funds were affected by the closure of Mpopo Trails Camp due to

insecurity. Additional funds were still earned through performance payments and visitors staying at Mariri Environmental Centre.



Figure 50: Mozmed Drs program brings medical doctors and dentists in every month during the dry season to help support the local clinic with chronic cases in Mbamba Village and our team.

The Tchova-Tchova partnership also supported a major water project for Mbamba Village in 2025 and 2026. The project aims to reduce the need for people to collect water from the Lugenda River where it has become increasingly dangerous due to increasing wildlife populations and increase access to drinking and washing water across all bairros. The first phase included purchase and fabrication of materials. The water system will draw water from the Lugenda River using a submersible pump, move it to the village, and distribute it through 10 water points. The recorded project costs were USD 65,200

A 15 m x 15 m area was demarcated near the health post for the water tank base. The system includes a 108,000 litre tank and underground 90 mm water piping stretching 2,2km to the Lugenda River.



Figure 51: Mbamba Water project to increase safety of women that are currently having to walk through a high density wildlife area to get to the river to collect water on a daily basis.

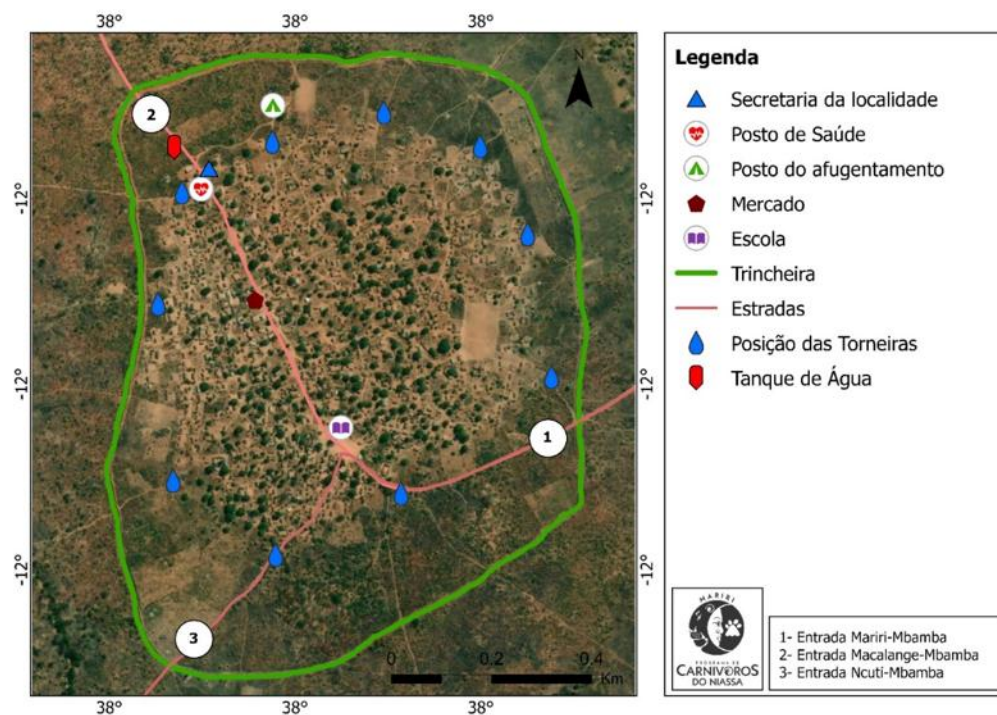


Figure 52; Ten planned water points for Mbamba Village through the Tchova Tchova water distribution.

Community tourism, Mpopo Trails Camp

Mpopo Trails Camp is a community-based ecotourism partnership between Mbamba Village and Mariri. It was completed in 2018. The camp has 4 traditional covered bamboo decks, designed in the form of a Sanja, with tents and one dining area. It has 8 beds and normally operates from June to November.

Mpopo generates a bed-night levy for the Mbamba Community Conservation Fund of MT 4,000 per person per night. It also generates revenue for Mariri to support local employment, the school lunch program, scholarships, and seasonal conservation work. All people working at Mpopo are local to Mbamba. Each year, the camp is refurbished using local grass, timber and bamboo, generating income for more than 40 women from Mbamba and a small team of Mbamba artisans.

Mpopo was not open in 2025 because of the insurgent attacks on Mariri and ongoing insecurity. It will also not open in 2026 unless the security situation stabilises.

Mariri Environmental Centre and Mbamba conservation levy

The Mariri Environmental and Skills Training Centre also contributes to the Mbamba Community Conservation Fund. For visiting researchers and media, a bed-night levy of MT 1,600 is added to accommodation costs. This ensures that visitors using Mariri also contribute to the Mbamba fund and social development, recognising the conservation effort made by the village.

In 2025, tourism was closed after the April attacks. There were no visits to Mpopo or Mantindano Campsite. Mariri Environmental Centre still recorded 85 guests and 246 nights in October to December, including researchers, visitors, bush visit groups, MOMS teams and residents of NSR however very few of these visitors were paying guests.

Seasonal employment and local income

We focus on increasing employment as a strategy to deliver income to households. In 2025, NCP employed 104 permanent staff, of whom 101 were Mozambican of 46 permanent employees from Mbamba Village and 318 seasonal workers from Mbamba, giving 364 workers from Mbamba in total. Across Mariri, there were 416 seasonal workers in 2025. These workers were selected from traditional leader lists, lotteries and vulnerable groups.

Seasonal work is one of the main direct benefits of the Tchova-Tchova agreement. It provides income while also supporting conservation work such as trench maintenance, road work, early burning, conservation services and other practical activities needed to manage L5 South.

School lunch and school support

The school lunch program supports Escola Primária 7 de Abril in Mbamba. The objective is to help keep children in school until the end of the year and increase the number of students sitting Grade 6 exams.

In 2025, the school 234 students, and 192 students completed the school year. The reduction was associated with family displacement due to insecurity. Activities included regular supply of food products for the school lunch program and quarterly monitoring of school attendance. NCPi also provided school materials to Escola Primária 7 de Abril in 2025. These included 500 notebooks, 600 pens, 200 pencils, 3 reams of paper, 4 glue sticks, 10 exercise books, 60 sharpeners and 2 footballs.

Two old school buildings were rehabilitated in 2025. The work included repair and painting of internal and external walls, artistic renewal, a conservation mural, and installation of doors and barred windows. The work was carried out by Kushirika members Saíde and Justino between 27 November and December.

Reducing human-wildlife conflict

Reducing human-wildlife conflict is a core function of the Tchova-Tchova Agreement. Mbamba Village has purchased approximately 50 km of mobile electric fence for the machambas from the community conservation fund. The community also pays fence controllers and pays for maintenance from the fund. Mariri provides technical support and helps order new materials when requested by Mbamba.

NCP has also established a team of 12 community scouts from Mbamba in 2021, with a dedicated HWC office. These scouts provide employment and are tasked with assisting with human-wildlife conflict in the wet season. The team also removes snares and monitors illegal activity around the village.

The HWC team is organised into two parts. One team of 4 members is based at the HWC base and monitors the trench. The second team of 8 members responds to conflict complaints in the fields, patrols, removes snares and controls other illegal activities.

The HWC tools include patrol equipment, GPS, Blackview devices, handheld Motorola radios, spotlights, air horns, chilli guns and C12 shotgun support when needed.

Prevention measures in Mbamba include:

- 1 permanent electric fence of 4,000 m
- 8 mobile electric fences covering 48,000 m around Mbamba agricultural fields
- 1 trenches covering 4,250 m around Mbamba
- 4,100 m of green fence around Mbamba

The Mbamba trench is approximately 4 km around the village and was designed to reduce conflict with large animals that pose danger to people, especially elephants, buffalo and hippos. It also creates seasonal employment through local maintenance work and forms part of the commitment to provide 18,000 worker-days in conservation services each year. The trench has reduced movement of elephants and buffalo into the village centre and reduced the need for C12 ammunition. It has also allowed fruit trees to be planted inside the village surrounds for the first time.

In 2025, the HWC team continued supporting Mbamba residents to protect their machambas after the attacks. Community scouts also received human-wildlife conflict mitigation training from Mozambique Wildlife Alliance.



Figure 53: Training of community scouts in human wildlife conflict mitigation by our partner, Mozambique Wildlife Alliance

Law enforcement and community scouts in L5 South

In 2025, the NCP/Mariri law enforcement sector in L5 South included 47 personnel. This included 27 uniformed patrol scouts, 6 uniformed gate guards, 12 unarmed community scouts, 1 driver and 1 radio operator in the Ops Room. In addition, the team was supported by 2 SMART managers and 1 SMART technician or assistant.

The current L5 South law enforcement model is based on foot patrol teams, control posts, SMART and EarthRanger monitoring, and community scout patrols around Mbamba. The scout density in 2025 was 1 scout per 21.4 km². Patrol coverage was consistent with previous years, but the distance and frequency of patrols were reduced because routine patrols stopped between April and July after the attacks, and scout training also reduced patrol effort.



Figure 54: Conservation Director Agostinho Jorge discussing security with the Provincial Commander, Coronel Adelino in the Mariri Ops Room following the attacks

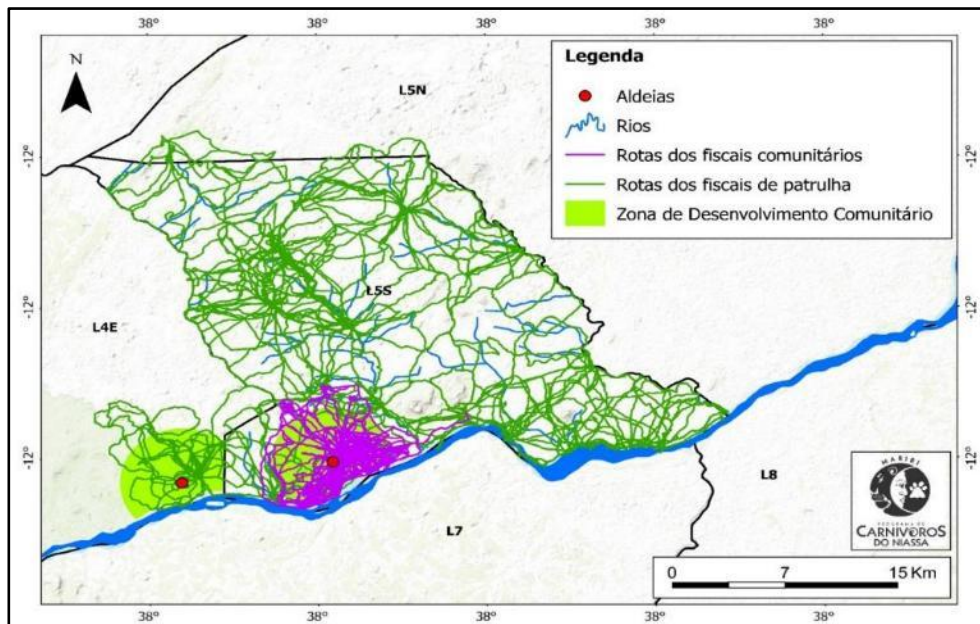


Figure 55: Foot patrol tracks (green) mapped across the L5-South concession in the past year.

While patrol coverage was consistent with previous years the frequency and distances covered by patrols was reduced. All routine patrols stopped between April and July and the 3 months of scout training has also significantly affected patrol effort across the concession. The purple lines indicate community scout patrols around Mbamba village.

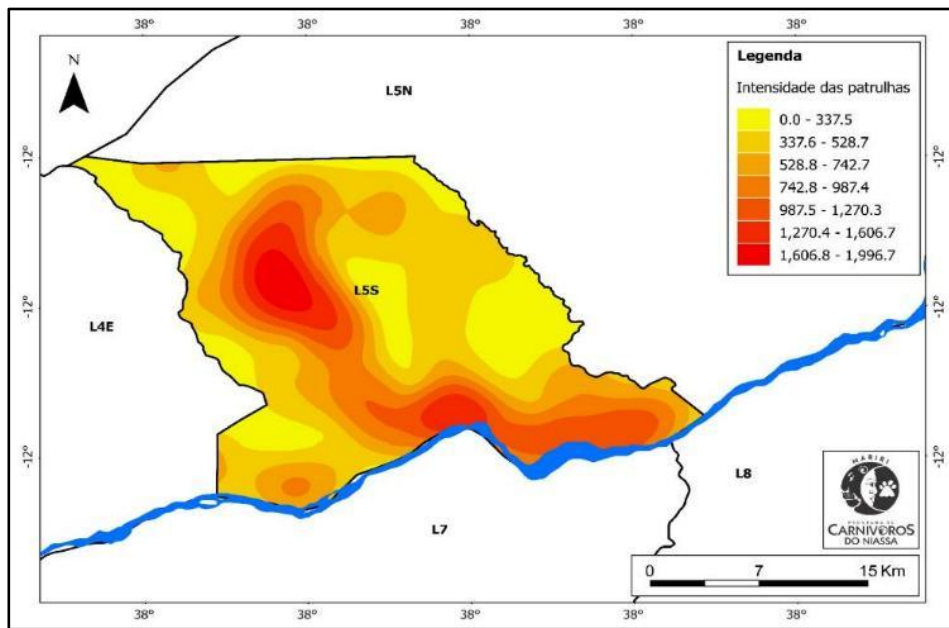


Figure 56: Foot patrol intensity, predominantly in gold mining areas and along the Lugenda river. Manning of observation posts has increased in 2025 due to the increasing security risks.

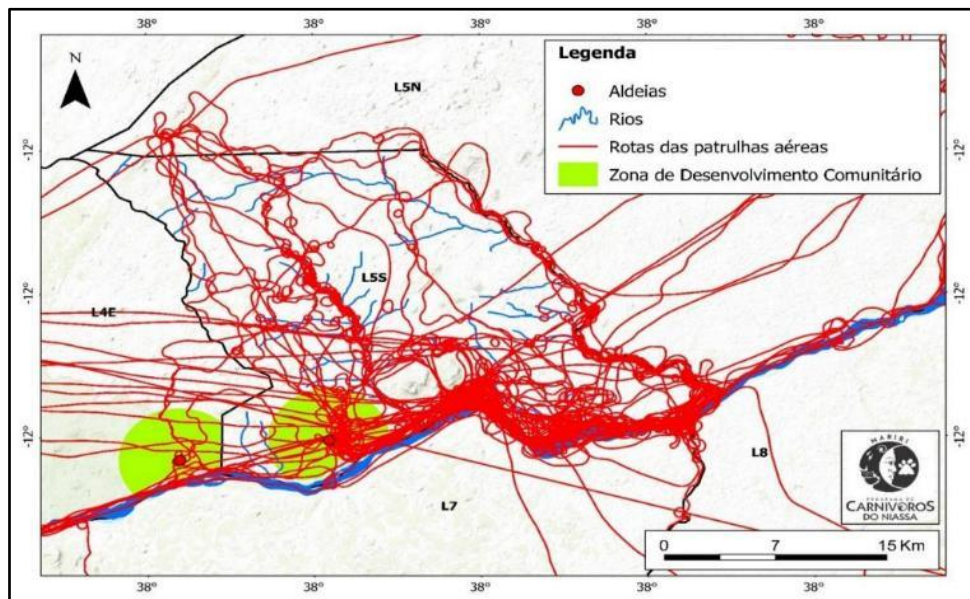


Figure 57: Aerial patrols over the concession, with a total of 131,5 hours flown in 2025. The successful overhaul of the Husky propellor in 2025 has now provided an opportunity for minor 100-hour services to take place in Nampula rather than having to fly to Nelspruit.

Table 5: Below are basic metrics of Mariri scout teams' performance over the past decade. To date no elephants were recorded killed by illegal activity in L5 South for 7,5 years (since May 2018). Complete data is available since scouts were first hired in August 2012.

Category	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
No. of Scouts	32	54	44	44	42	40	50	50	46	42
No. of Outposts	4	7	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Area per scout km ²	18	11	13	13	14	14	12	12	16	21
No. of patrols	199	224	189	290	305	162	188	306	258	245
Patrol distance (km)	11579	18562	25275	27764	22337	25189	18124	19600	16617	6452
Scout training	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	3	3	3

Scout training days	60	30	60	30	0	0	0	36	64	108
Elephants poached	4	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ivory recovered	12	38	7	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Poachers arrested	0	32	13	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Wire snares removed	100	20	57	23	40	47	46	26	21	37
Rope snares removed	59	56	18	3	6	21	15	2	5	10
Gold miners arrested	2277	39	27	8	4	13	2	2	10	21
Mining confiscations	1961	234	65	44	12	59	13	11	41	122

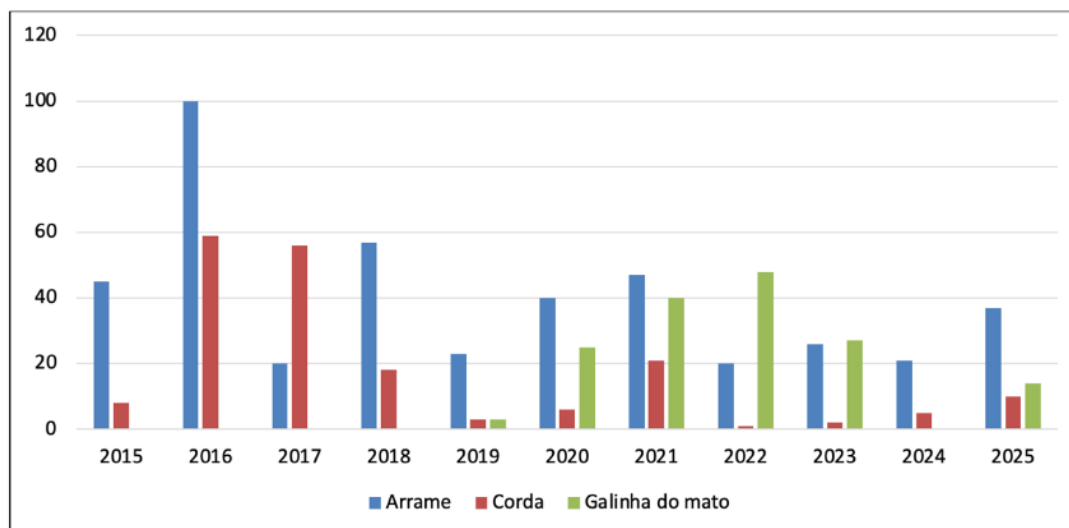


Figure 58: Variation in types of snare traps confiscated during the past decade, mostly around Mbamba village (Arrame = wire; Corda = nylon rope; Galinha do mato = Guinea fowl noose).

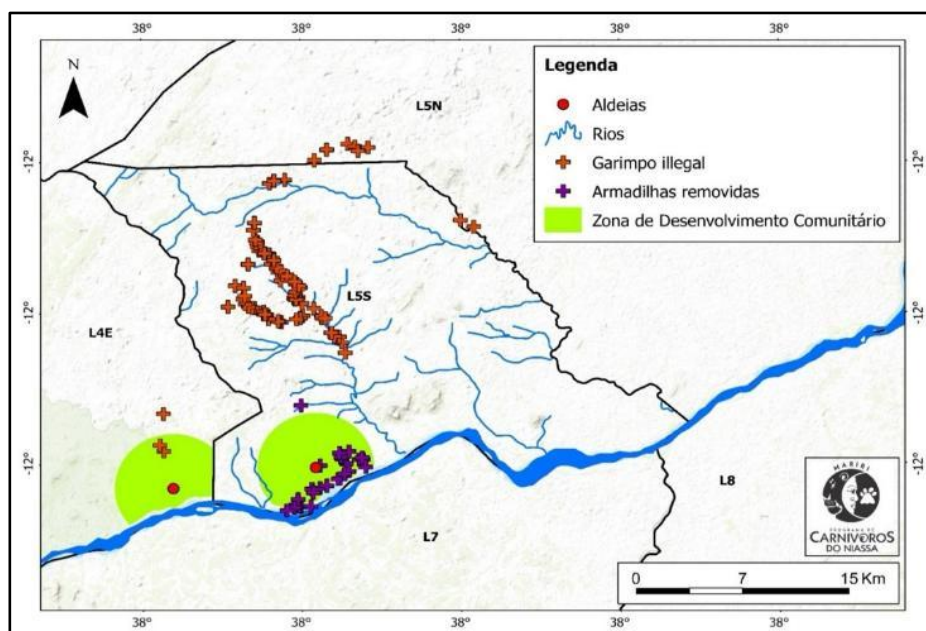


Figure 59: Map of illegal activity across the concession. Purple crosses represent snares removed around the Mbamba village (green agricultural zone) and red crosses represent gold mining activity along major rivers.

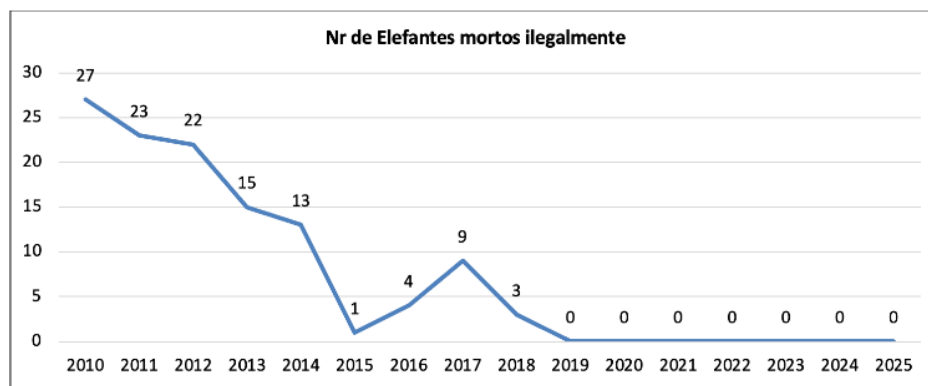


Figure 60: Elephant poaching trend in L5 concession over the past 15 years. Note that the first group of 40 UIR policemen were deployed in the NSR in May 2018.

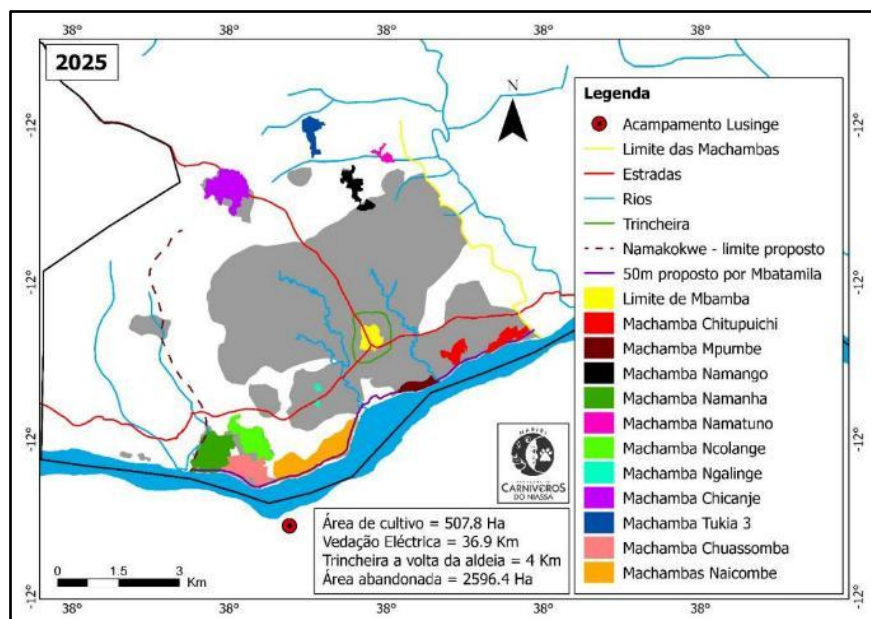


Figure 61: Landuse planning around Mbamba Village with fields, limit and village surrounds

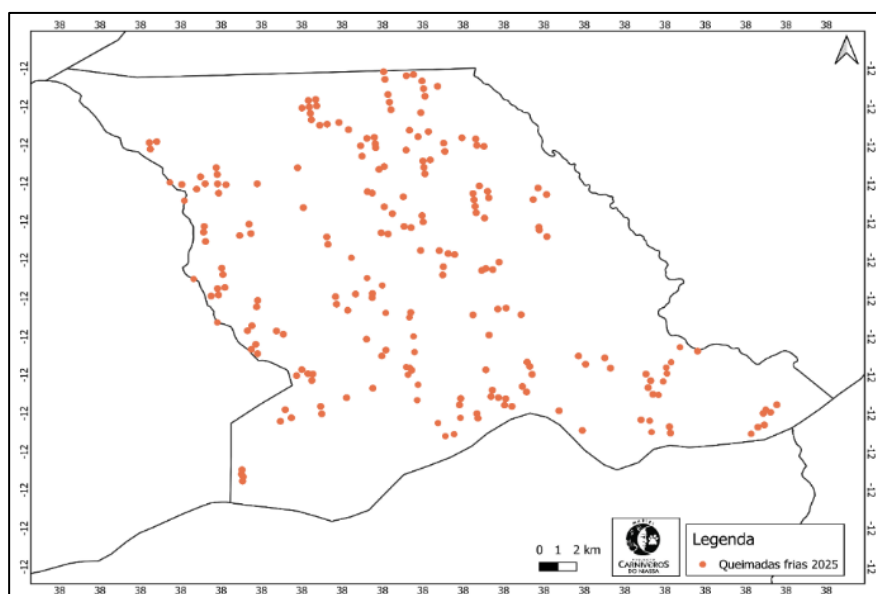


Figure 62: Early burning fire management performed by patrol scouts and community teams.

Land-use planning

Land-use planning in L5 South is being developed with Mbamba Village to help plan the expansion of the community development zone in western L5 South and reduce future conflict between people, agriculture and wildlife.

In the 2024/2025 wet season, Mariri and Mbamba mapped machamba zones around Mbamba Village using their local names. The mapping helped document the current agricultural area, abandoned fields, trench, electric fence and village limits. The 2025/2026 map was still being completed.

Land-use planning is important because shifting agriculture in L5 South is influenced not only by soil fertility, but also by security and family connections. The report notes that conservation agriculture has been tested in L5 South for six years, with good results but limited uptake at scale.

The HWC mapping also includes agricultural fields, the village area, snares, collared elephant data and collared lion movements around Mbamba. This is used to understand how animals move around people and how conflict can be avoided as machambas expand. The D-pride lion data show lions spending time around the village and agricultural fields but avoiding the village itself. No lion conflict with people has been recorded in Mbamba Village or L5 South for the last five years, and most people sleep in safe shelters or Sanjas in the fields during the wet season.

Early burning and habitat management

In 2025, early burning was carried out by patrol scouts and community teams as part of L5 South management. This is linked to both fire management and seasonal employment through conservation services.

Challenges and possible solutions for 2026

The main challenge in 2025 was insecurity. The insurgent attack at Mariri, loss of colleagues, injuries, looting of the base, and ongoing insecurity affected the team, tourism, patrols, community work and the ability to operate normally.

Tourism was closed in 2025 and will remain closed in 2026 unless the security situation stabilises. This directly affected the Mpopo Trails Camp and reduced income to the Mbamba Community Conservation Fund.

Law enforcement patrol effort was reduced. Routine patrols stopped between April and July, and scout training reduced patrol distance and frequency. Despite this, L5 South remained protected, no elephants were poached, and snaring remained limited around Mbamba.

Human-wildlife conflict remains an ongoing issue around Mbamba because people, machambas, elephants, buffalo, hippos and lions all share the same landscape. The

2025 results show that fences, the trench, community scouts, safe shelters and land-use planning are all needed together.

The land-use planning process is important but still needs clarity from NSR and ANAC on special regulations for NSR, historical settlement patterns, shifting agriculture and how decisions are made on when and where new fields can be opened. This affects the ability of Mariri and Mbamba to plan the community development zone clearly.

For 2026, the priorities are to complete the Mbamba water project, continue the new Tchova-Tchova agreement, maintain the trench and electric fences, support community scouts, rebuild confidence after the attacks, continue land-use mapping for the 2025/2026 season, and keep L5 South secure while tourism remains closed.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

By 2030, success means that large carnivore populations in NSR are stable or increasing, including lions, leopards, spotted hyaenas and African wild dogs, while coexistence with people is strengthened and community development is supported.

For lions, this means the population has stopped declining overall and is increasing in some areas, enough to offset losses in others. We would expect to see this through repeated surveys, more frequent lion sightings, broader distribution, and larger or more stable prides in Intensive Protection Zones and participating areas. We would also expect fewer records of illegal killing. For all carnivores we need to see subpopulations stable and increasing in the Lion Coalition partner IPZ.

Success cannot come at a cost to people. It means that carnivore recovery is accompanied by no increase in attacks on people, reduced livestock losses, and reduced retaliatory killing. It also means that communities living with large carnivores see practical benefits from conservation, including stronger local livelihoods, improved livestock protection, education opportunities, employment, and greater support for locally led development.

Many of the threats are bigger than us. Illegal wildlife trade is driven by demand outside Niassa. Security has deteriorated substantially, with increased illegal mining and poaching, particularly in northeastern Niassa and along the northern border. The governance footprint has also been weakened by the suspension and continued negotiation of the co-management agreement between WCS and ANAC.

We believe we can still have an impact at scale by working in collaboration with ANAC, tourism partners, villages and conservation partners, including Mozambique Wildlife Alliance and Still Standing, who share our values and vision.

NSR is vast. It is difficult to protect at scale, but a landscape-level approach is essential. Our focus is practical. We use our expertise in carnivores, our long-term presence, our trust and influence, and our community relationships to reduce specific threats in specific places: key villages, Intensive Protection Zones, partner concessions and corridors.

We will work to ensure that conservation-linked livelihoods reach more than 1,000 households directly, and that we continue to deliver for the community camera trapping villages in the Mecula corridor.

For environmental education, success means children, youth and adults from Niassa receive information that is local, useful and relevant to their lives. Each year, 300 to 500 children and adults should receive curriculum-based learning through Mariri Environmental and Skills Training Centre, when security allows. At least 5,000 people should be reached across NSR each year through bush visits, outreach, wildlife clubs, Joy of Life, safe shelter campaigns, rabies awareness, Lion Festival, radio messages, community meetings and other local channels. Children from Niassa should see wildlife safely. They should know the value of the rivers, forests, animals and landscapes around them. They should see themselves as part of the future of Niassa.

For L5 South, success means Mbamba moves towards stewardship of L5 South. Wildlife populations remain stable or increase. Elephant poaching remains at zero. Illegal activities decline. Human-wildlife conflict decreases through the trench, electric fences, community scouts, safe shelters, land-use planning and rapid response. Food security improves. Benefits are visible through permanent employment, seasonal work, community tourism when security allows, the Mbamba Community Conservation Fund, school support, water infrastructure, scholarships and local livelihoods.

The Lion House becomes a stronger focus for our work in the Mecula corridor. It provides a safe and inspiring place for the Lion Scholars, and an example of what is possible in Mecula District to provide fast response. Success also means that the conditions needed to do this work are in place. Our team remains safe and well, with realistic security measures, communication systems and support structures. The program has stabilised again after the attacks. Our team has access to the trauma counselling and recovery support they need.

We need to keep good people. Salaries need to increase with inflation and remain as market related as possible within the limits of our funding, so that experienced staff are not lost simply because the cost of living keeps rising. Succession plans must be in place. Mozambican leadership must continue to grow. Our donor base needs to be stable or increasing, so that we can work across NSR while meeting the rising costs of basic goods, security, transport and logistics. More donors should be able to give directly to Fundação Leão, our foundation in Mozambique. Donors need to trust our team and our organisation and not only one individual.

We will continue to scale through collaboration with organisations that share our values. We also need our data and work to be more visible and better understood at district, provincial and national levels.

We consider success to be how we do conservation not only outcomes, the quality of our relationships and integrity. Do we do what we say we will do, do we stay and help as trusted partners in this landscape? At the centre of this is coexistence. People and wildlife as the future of NSR.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Conservation is not an individual endeavour; it is teamwork. It is also never-ending and does not have an end date. There are so many who have been on this journey with us for more than 20 years. We are so appreciative of your support, past and present. In 2025 in particular so many people stepped up to help in many ways and we would not still be operating without you.

Our expenses soared in 2025, as we had to manage our normal programs as well as more than \$200 000 in medical costs, replacement of equipment looted at Mariri Environmental centre, emergency support for our team and communities, and logistical challenges. Yet somehow, we kept going. Thank you.

Thank you specifically to the long-term, multi-year donors of our work: Wildlife Conservation Network, Wildcat Foundation, WCN's Lion Recovery Fund, The Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation (LCAOF), The Woodtiger Fund, The Plum Foundation, Donald Slavik Family Foundation, Woodman Foundation, Houston Zoo, Hogle Zoo, Oregon Zoo, Blue Foundation, Dry Creek Foundation, and Mary Boardman Conservation Fund.

We are deeply grateful to everyone for your generosity in 2025. In particular, we thank: Anje van der Naald and Bonnie McDonald, Ann Bujas, Barron S Wall, Beagle Charitable Foundation, Becci Crowe, Brodsky Charitable Foundation, David Berger, Dry Creek Foundation, Ellie Phipps Price and Chris Towt, Ewaso Lions, Gay Goodman, Lurya and Stephen Lurya, Glenda and Henry Corning, Heidi Charleson, Hogle Zoo, Houston Zoo, Jacksonville Zoo, Jeffrey and Shay Morris, Jo Cangelosi, John and Nuri Pierce, Karie Thomson, Kristan and Peter Norvig, LanMar Foundation, LCAOF, Lion Recovery Fund LRF, Lynn Kilbourne, Madeleine Delman Cohen and Jerry Cohen, Mary Boardman Trust, Minas Moatize, Natural Encounters Conservation, Nova Trust, Oregon Zoo, Paul

Sidenblad, Pride Lion Conservation Alliance, Private, Private, Rebecca Patton and Thomas Goodrich, Richard Goss, Sallyann Garner, SeaDream Foundation, Steven Goldby and Anita Weissberg, Tapeats Fund, The Band Foundation, The Blue Foundation, The Donald Slavik Family Foundation, The K. Richard and Elizabeth Flynt Foundation, The Plum Foundation, The Weiss Family Foundation, The Wildcat Foundation, The Woodtiger Fund, Tom and Wende Hutton, Walli Finch, Wayne Hollomon Price, Woodman Foundation, Jeff and Connie Woodman.

For 2025, we are especially grateful to everyone who kept us going in a very difficult year, and most especially to those who helped us during the time of the attacks. In particular we thank Adm. Terencio Tamele who lead us all through this period of insecurity, with FADM , GOE and UIR who helped us rescue our team and secure our camp. Thank you to our neighbours Derek Littleton, Jumbo Moore and Neville Slade, who were part of the eastern group of partners on the ground navigating the extreme events and insecurity. We especially appreciate Mozambique Wildlife Alliance and Zambezi Delta Safaris, who scrambled to get a helicopter here when we needed it most for the rescue of Mario and to recover our team. Game Rangers Association of Africa, with Louise and Andrew, were a critical part of the emergency evacuation. Saranga, Maico, Ashleigh and Lurdes were the critical support team that helped navigate the medical support for Mario in Mozambique and then South Africa over many months.

More generally we offer special thanks to the Government of Mozambique and the Ministry of Rural Development, Agriculture and Tourism, as well as ANAC, for granting us permission to work in the NSR since 2003. We thank the NSR Co-Management Authority, ANAC and Wildlife Conservation Society, with Administrator, Terêncio Tamele. Special thanks to our Mozambican partners, Mozambique Wildlife Alliance with Joao Almeida, and particularly Antonio Wiliamo, who works in partnership with us as part of our rapid reaction team and provides veterinary assistance for carnivores. Thank you to Saranga from Still Standing, and to the amazing team who have partnered with us to bring Joy of Life, Niassa to NSR since 2015.

We recognise the specialised skills of our NCP team, who bring this all together into a coherent whole through their individual and collective work and showed such courage in May. To Andrew, Lurdes, Quiteria, Benvindo, Chabana, Ludencia and Horacio your leadership in 2025 was critical. Thank you to Bento, Samuel and Naulala, who led our law enforcement team during a very difficult period. Every single person, from mechanic and cook to each of the directors, is needed to create the impact we need to see and to keep everyone safe and well in a logistically difficult and challenging environment.

We thank all the Lion Coalition Partners and their teams: Luwire Conservancy: Derek, Yasalde, Timoteo (L7); Chuilexi Conservancy: Neville and Castigo (L5N, L6, R6, R5); Mozambique Conservation Force: Grant, Arone, Ernesto (L2, R4); Chipanje Chetu / Lipilichi: Emily, Alistair, Vincent (Years 2 and 3); Safrique: Matt, Paul, Dan and Elton; Mariri Investimentos: Keith, Agostinho with Mbamba Village (Utendele de Mazengo).

We also thank our community partners: Ncuti, Lissongile, Macalange, Naulala, Ntimbo 1, Ntimbo 2, Lichengue, Nampequesso, Cuchiranga and Guebuza, as well as the two new villages, Erevuka and Mbamba. We also have an additional partnership agreement with Mbamba Village, The Tchova Tchova Agreement, to manage concession L5 South /

Mariri and we thank the Mbamba traditional leaders, Comite / Association and community, who are our partners in managing L5 South.

Our utmost thanks to Ken Harmen, who came to NCP as a volunteer and very soon became part of the team, helping us in so many ways on Special projects and especially training the mechanics, electricians and others. Thank you to Lisette Gelber from Nomad Consulting, who comes each year to mentor our team and help with the development of our financial systems.

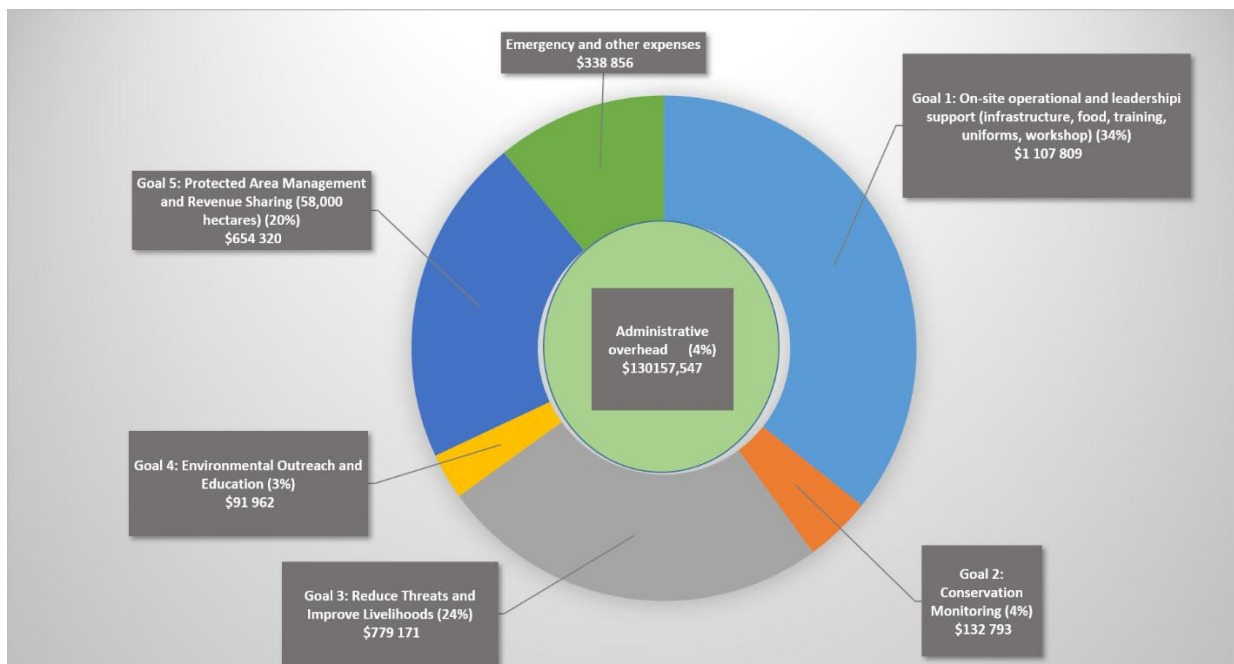
Nothing is accomplished in big landscapes like Niassa without collaboration and trust.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The NCP operates across two entities TRT Conservation Foundation (NPC) and Mariri Investimentos in Mozambique (in which it is the majority quota holder).

Annual financial statements are developed by accountants for both TRT CF and Mariri according to the laws in South Africa and Mozambique. We also provide a consolidated financial report and statement for NCP here to reflect total expenditure of NCP funds for the NCP for the year 2025.

Our expenditure in 2025 was USD 3 235 069 across all our NCP programs which included emergency response and medical costs that will continue into 2026



Statement of Financial Position (in US Dollars)	2025 USD	2024 USD
<u>Assets</u>		
Cash and Bank	1 062 096	572 775
Other current assets	77 272	17 777
Total assets	1 139 367	590 552
<u>Liabilities</u>		
Accounts Payable	3 551	922
Deferred Revenue	175 000	410 000
Total Liabilities	178 551	410 922
<u>Net Assets</u>		
Emergency Health Fund	50 000	30 000
Operating Reserve	-	-
Unrestricted Net Assets	910 816	149 629
Total Net Assets	960 816	179 629
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	1 139 367	590 552
<u>Statement of Operating Results</u>		
Revenue (Donations, Grants, Mpopo Revenue, Interest	4 050 961	2 487 412
Expenditures	-3 235 069	-2 621 321
Net Surplus	815 892	-133 909

Total at year start of 2025: USD 572 575

Total at year end of 2025: USD 1 062 096

EXPENDITURE REPORT

Summary Expenditure Report	
	USD
Shared costs	
Administration Costs	125 057
Fundraising and Awareness	5 100
Training	49 660
Permanent Management Salaries	426 664
Vehicles and Workshop	235 096
Meetings and Travel Costs	28 893
Multi-Partner Coordination	33 763
Operations Consumables	333 732
Total Shared	1 237 967
Program Specific	
Carnivore Conservation Monitoring	30 674
MOMS Community Guardians	102 118
Reduce illegal killing of carnivores- Lion Coalition Project	516 762
Conservation Economy - Alternative Livelihoods & Community Camera trapping	135 593
Conservation Economy - Lion Scholarships	116 615
Reduce Carnivore attacks	7 883
Reduce Disease risk for people and carnivores	2 318
Environmental Outreach and Education	91 962
Tchova Tchova Agreement- revenue sharing, performance payments,	266 343
Protected Area Management L5 S - Antipoaching Operations and Equipment	387 977
Emergency Health	334 996
Total Programs	1 993 242
Total Operating Expenses	3 231 209
Foreign Exchange (Gain) Loss	3 860
Total Expenditure	3 235 069



Lion lying under 4000 year old Btawa paintings – lions and people have always lived together in this landscape. We work to keep it that way.

Website and Annual report
www.niassalion.org