

# Urgent appeal for conservation needs in Laikipia, Kenya

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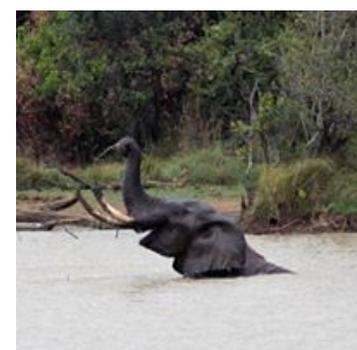
The 400-sq-km Laikipia Nature Conservancy (aka Ol Ari Nyiro) on the edge of the Great Rift Valley in Kenya was **created by conservationist Kuki Gallmann (author of *I Dreamed of Africa, African Nights, and other books*)** following the tragic deaths of her husband and young son. For over 30 years, she and her daughter have worked to preserve this natural memorial to them. It is one of Kenya's largest private reserves and an important sanctuary for wildlife.



Unfortunately, as widely reported in the media, Kuki was shot in April as she was inspecting several ranger stations and a lodge that had been burned by bandits<sup>1</sup>. Thankfully she is recovering well, however **there is an urgent need to restore lost infrastructure to run the conservancy**, as well as to continue the important work of engaging with and employing youths from the local communities. These communities have been instrumental in protecting the conservancy in the past.

## Biodiversity

Located on the Eastern wall of the Rift Valley on the Laikipia Plateau, the Conservancy is the most important water catchment area for two major lakes, Lake Bogoria and Lake Baringo. It is part of the Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot and harbours an invaluable remnant of the diverse flora and fauna that once covered vast areas of the Laikipia Plateau and the eastern Rift valley escarpment.



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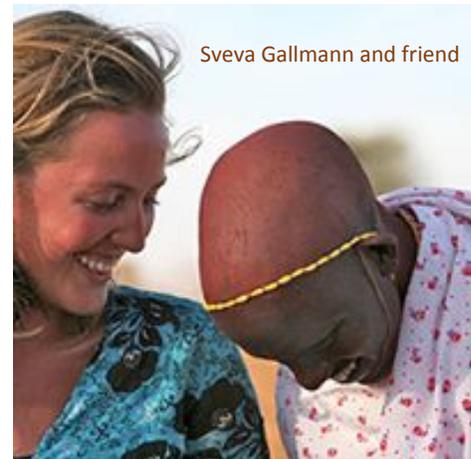
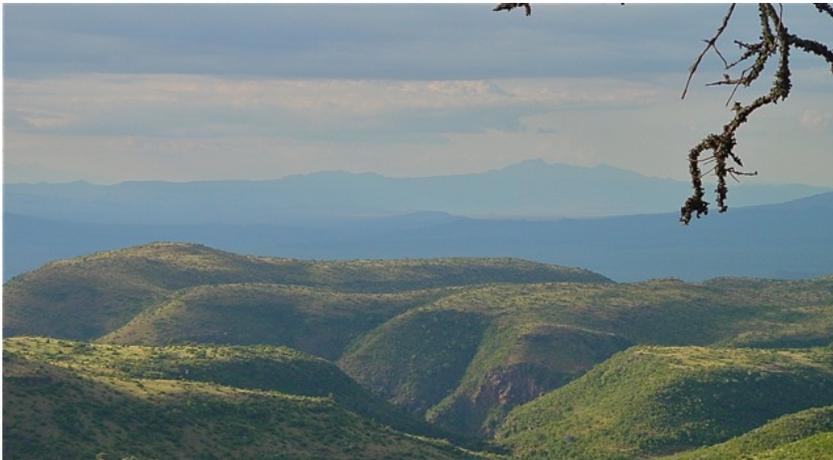
<sup>1</sup> In this pre-election year, several conservancies and communities have suffered from ethnically based politically incited violence which the government administration is now working very hard to curb. We have faith that the situation will soon be under control.

The diverse topography, with elevations ranging from 1260m at the base of the gorge to 2400m in the hills to the southwest, supports vegetation varying from tropical palms and vines in the Mukutan Gorge, cedar and acacia woodland in the Engelesha forests to semi-arid bushland. The diverse species present in the conservancy include the critically endangered wild dog *Lycaon pictus*, cheetah, reticulated giraffe, greater kudu, African elephant, a large population of lions, 14 amphibian species, 55 reptiles, 477 birds, more than 800 vascular plants and 755 macro-invertebrates. Particularly noteworthy are three endemic species: a plant (*Aloe francombei*) and an invertebrate (*Aslauga gallmannae*) and a frog that is new to science (*Tomopterna gallmanni*). There is still a large remote part of the conservancy that has not been studied yet so it is likely that the species list will continue to grow. The Conservancy offers a critical passage and wintering habitat to various species and has been designated both an Important Bird Area and a Key Biodiversity Area.

### Plan

ICFC intends to support a program of Pokot wildlife guardians – youths who in the past might have been tempted to become poachers and cattle raiders. These future rangers will be trained as an [acrobatic troupe](#) to bring the anti-poaching message to their home communities as well as tasked with patrolling the conservancy borders and ensuring safe passage for animals, particularly elephants, to neighboring conservancies. Over time, promising candidates will be trained as fully-fledged rangers.

In the longer term, ICFC hopes to work with the Gallmanns and the Laikipia Wildlife Forum to develop a protected wildlife corridor between Ol Ari Nyiro and its closest neighboring conservancy, Mugie Conservancy.



But due to this year's setback, there is an **urgent need right now** for the following (figures in U.S. dollars):

- Small tractor for hauling water and other goods in the conservancy. The last tractor was burned when bandits set fire to the barn. (\$45,000)
- Second-hand pickup truck (\$30,000)
- Four ranger stations and equipment to replace those burned by bandits in March (\$15,000 each)
- \$1200 supports a Pokot Community Wildlife Guardian for a year

To contribute, please send a cheque or [donate online](#) – [U.S. donors use this link](#) -- on our website, [ICFCanada.org](#).

Questions? Please contact ICFC's Executive Director, Molly Bartlett at [Bartlett@ICFCanada.org](mailto:Bartlett@ICFCanada.org) or 617-888-2744.

THANK YOU!!