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SOUTHERN  
RANGELANDS  
COALITION (SRC)

# FENCING, CONNECTIVITY, AND CORRIDORS: SAFEGUARDING WILDLIFE MOVEMENT AND OPEN RANGELAND RESILIENCE IN KENYA



## WORKSHOP REPORT

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Across Kenya's rangelands, the integrity of wildlife movement corridors and traditional pastoral mobility is under unprecedented threat. Rapid land subdivision, unregulated fencing, agricultural expansion, and private land investments are fragmenting landscapes that historically supported elephant migrations, giraffe ranging, large carnivore movements, and livestock transhumance. As fencing proliferates, communities are increasingly isolated from critical grazing reserves; wildlife access to dispersal areas is blocked, and human–wildlife conflict intensifies.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Fencing Workshop**

The workshop focused on the role of fencing in shaping landscape connectivity, examining how different fencing designs and management choices influence wildlife movement, rangeland health, and pastoral livelihoods. Participants examined the various threatened wildlife corridors and migratory pathways, explored context-appropriate fencing options, and considered options on how fencing can be integrated into county spatial planning and national conservation strategies. In the end, participants co-developed a set of guiding principles and decision-support tools for national and county agencies, NGOs, research organisations and community conservancies.

## 2.0 KEYNOTE ADDRESS FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND WILDLIFE

The Principal Secretary was represented by Dr. John Chumo. She expressed gratitude to the convening partners: the African Conservation Centre (ACC), Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI), RAMAT Conservancy, and the Southern Rangelands Coalition, for convening the workshop at a critical time. She highlighted the urgent challenge facing Kenya's rangelands: the rapid spread of fencing, which is accelerating habitat fragmentation, blocking wildlife migration corridors, disrupting pastoral livestock movement, and intensifying human–wildlife conflict. These trends, driven by land subdivision, unregulated fencing, agricultural expansion, and speculative investments, threaten biodiversity, tourism, pastoral livelihoods, cultural heritage, and overall ecosystem health.

Additionally, the PS emphasised that connected landscapes are essential for sustainable wildlife conservation, functional ecological processes, and long-term rangeland integrity. Fragmentation particularly affects species such as elephants and giraffes, predator–prey relationships, and livestock transhumance.



*Dr. John Chumo (State Department for Wildlife) representing PS, SDW*

### 2.1 Key challenges highlighted

- Rapid fragmentation is driven by land subdivision, unregulated fencing, agricultural expansion, and speculative private investments.



- Negative impacts on biodiversity, such as disrupted migratory routes for elephant, giraffe, and wildebeest, and pastoral livelihoods through restricted transhumance.
- Threat to Kenya's tourism economy, cultural heritage, and long-term ecosystem integrity.

## **2.2 Government position and commitments**

The State Department for Wildlife (SDW) has identified fencing and connectivity as national priorities, which are anchored on the following:

- The Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (2013).
- County spatial plans.
- Kenya's restoration commitments.
- The forthcoming National Wildlife Corridor and Connectivity Strategy.

### **2.1 Key commitments**

- Rationalising fencing standards and practices.
- Integrating connectivity into county land-use planning.
- Empowering community-led conservancies to safeguard corridors.
- Operationalising dormant reserves.
- Enhancing evidence-based decisions through the Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI) and other partners.
- Leveraging the ongoing National Report on Fencing as an important evidence base for regulatory reforms, especially in HWC hotspots.

The Principal Secretary emphasised that connectivity transcends environmental concerns. It is an economic priority that supports tourism, a cultural necessity that preserves pastoral heritage, and is a pillar of national development. All stakeholders, especially counties, communities, and non-governmental organisations, were called to co-create balanced solutions that respect land rights, economic needs, and ecological integrity. The State Department for Wildlife reaffirmed its commitment to adopt workshop outcomes and translate them into concrete policy and on-the-ground implementation.

## **4.0 IMPACT OF FENCES ON LARGE UNGULATES IN KAJIADO**

The Central Kajiado landscape is a critical wildlife dispersal and migratory corridor between Amboseli, Lake Magadi, the southern rangelands of Tanzania, and Athi Kapiti. RAMAT Wildlife Society with the support of Save Giraffes Now and Kenya Wildlife Service conducted an assessment of 42 fenced properties and found that fencing is severely restricting wildlife movement, access to water and grazing, and contributing to injuries, deaths, and increased poaching, particularly affecting giraffes and other large ungulates.



*John Kismir (RAMAT Wildlife Society) presenting on fencing status in Kajiado*

#### **4.1 Key highlights of the impacts of fencing in Central Kajiado**

##### *Scale of impact*

- Approximately 54 giraffes and hundreds of other animals are trapped within fenced properties.
- 26 giraffes were killed by fences between 2022 and 2025.

##### *Landscape fragmentation*

- Fences range from 4 to 12 feet high, creating major barriers to wildlife movement.
- New fencing is still being constructed, worsening fragmentation in the landscape.

##### *Threats to wildlife and livestock*

- Electric fences pose risks to both wildlife and livestock, with communities often unaware they are electrified.
- Wildlife access to water and grazing is severely restricted, especially during dry seasons.

##### *Blocking of migration corridors*

- Elephants are forced to move through and damage the fences while attempting to follow traditional migratory routes.

### *Governance and compliance issues*

- Some property workers denied access to assessment teams, raising concerns about illegal activities.
- The majority of the fenced properties belong to influential individuals, some of whom are judges, CEOs, and politicians in Kenya. However, some of them admitted ignorance and are open to conservation-friendly practices.

### *Poaching concerns*

- A ‘thriving’ bushmeat market was noted in Namanga, Bisil, and Tanzania. This is largely linked to restricted wildlife movement.

## **4.2 Policy implications of fencing in Kajiado County**

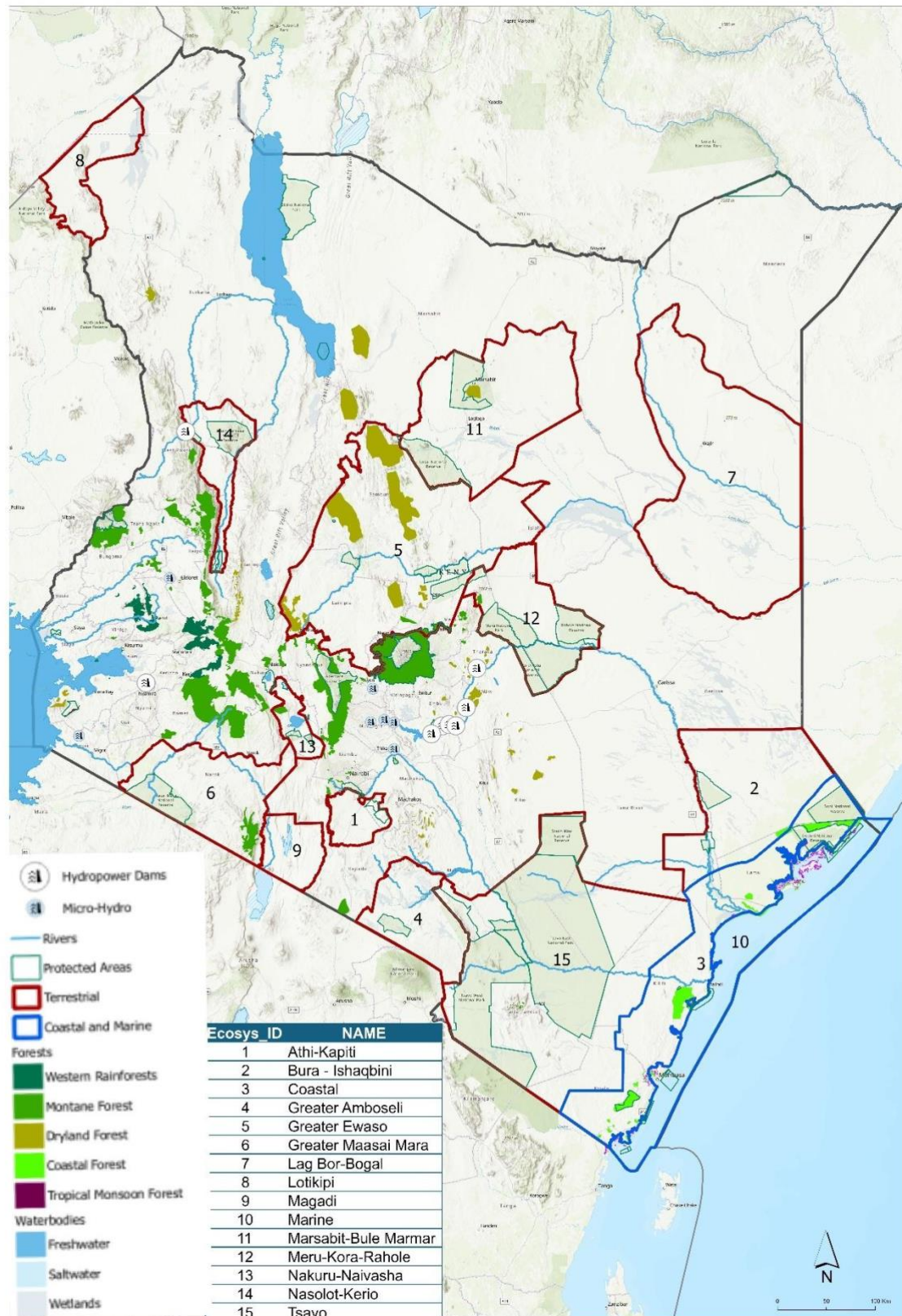
The situation presented above presents various policy consequences. If current fencing trends continue, Central Kajiado rangelands risk losing their ecological connectivity. This may further result in the following:

- Increase in wildlife mortality and local extinctions.
- Intensification of human-wildlife conflict.
- Reduction of ecosystem services that support pastoral livelihoods in the area.
- Weakening of the gains already made through Kenya’s national and international conservation commitments.

Therefore, the County governments with the Southern Kenya Landscape, civil society, and landowners must collaborate effectively to address the fencing challenge and restore landscape integrity.

## **6.0 CONNECTIVITY, CORRIDORS, & GUIDELINES**

This section provides an overview of the priority corridors, hotspots identified, and key ecosystems. It also explores key fencing guidelines and decision-support tools as proposed by the stakeholders. Figure 1 illustrates key ecosystems that had been mapped before the workshop. These ecosystems were used as a guide to identify fencing hotspots and appropriate actions.



**Figure 1:** Kenya's critical ecosystems (Mohammed et al., 2025)



## 6.1 Mapping priority corridors, hotspots, and key ecosystems



- ***Fencing is unevenly distributed in Kenya's rangelands and is expanding in critical wildlife areas within these ecosystems.*** In terms of priority ecosystems, Athi-Kapiti, Greater Amboseli–Namanga, Nakuru–Naivasha, Masai Mara, and Tsavo were identified as fencing hotspots. These are already experiencing extensive fencing, while others, such as Marsabit, Lotikipi, Lag Bor-Bogal, Nasolot-Kerio, and Bura Ishaqbini, have little or no fencing, but face emerging development pressure.
- Other than fencing as a threat to ecological connectivity, ***mega infrastructure development projects are major barriers to wildlife movement in Kenya; thus, a need for a shift towards wildlife-compatible infrastructure systems.*** These barriers are in the form of Roads and rail (SGR and major highways), power lines and energy infrastructure, mining, as well as unplanned urban and agricultural expansion.

## 6.2 Exploring fencing guidelines and decision-support tools

- More than ever, wildlife corridors urgently need *formal protection* through, first, the ***gazettement of wildlife corridors***, and second, the ***integration of corridor protection into county spatial plans***, existing physical plans, and national wildlife policy frameworks.
- Explore ***defencing and alternative approaches, particularly in fencing hotspot areas.*** Some of the key actions may include: defencing of critical hotspots that is currently

practiced in the Mara, and promotion of alternatives such as deterrent lights, zonation, land swaps, and wildlife overpasses. These may work well, especially for sensitive species like giraffes.

- Develop clear fencing standards and guidelines. This can be done by ***prioritising national and county fencing guidelines*** that also clearly describe limits on fenced land, for example, by restricting only a portion of land to be fenced. Additionally, it is important to match fence design to target species and ensure that fencing decisions are informed by ecological and planning expertise.
- ***Ensure an inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement.*** Effective action on fencing will depend on: first, the extent of collaboration among national and county governments, NEMA, the private sector, communities, and conservation actors; second, the adoption of grassroots community dialogues that will promote ownership and legitimacy; and third, the availability of a structured engagement framework that clearly clarifies roles and responsibilities.
- ***Promote monitoring, data for decision-making, and compliance mechanisms.*** For example, monitoring tools such as EarthRanger, drones, and the management effectiveness tracking tool (METT) are a priority. Similarly, it is important to ensure stronger compliance and enforcement capacity, and ensure data sharing, reporting systems, and grievance redress mechanisms are provided.



*Participants were involved in co-creating suitable guidelines on fencing*

## 7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER DIRECTIONS

This section provides a summary of policy recommendations and immediate actions.

### 7.1 Policy Recommendations

- *Enforce County Spatial Plans and fencing regulations:* Ensure compliance with existing land-use plans and introduce penalties for non-compliant fencing.
- *Legislate wildlife-compatible fencing Standards:* This is a major gap that has been identified. One way is to develop and enact county-level legislation that specifies appropriate fence types, heights suitable for both livestock and wildlife categories, and fencing designs that do not punish wildlife but allow their passage.
- *Develop capacity to increase support for wildlife rescue and response operations:* This can be done by allocating or sharing resources to rescue trapped wildlife and respond rapidly to fence-related injuries.
- *Strengthen community engagement and awareness:* At the core of addressing the fencing challenge is the community that frequently interacts with wildlife. They need support through targeted education campaigns on wildlife-friendly fencing, risks of electric fences, and co-existence benefits.
- *Establish monitoring and compliance mechanisms:* Create a multi-agency monitoring system to track fencing trends, assess impacts, and enforce compliance.
- *Actively engage private landowners and investors:* Provide technical guidance and incentives for adopting wildlife-compatible fencing, particularly among influential landowners. It is also important to map and understand their motivations.

### 7.2 Immediate Priority Actions

Some of the urgent next steps are highlighted as follows:

- As a low-hanging fruit, implementation of the *Cabinet decision* on securing the Nairobi–Athi-Kapiti wildlife corridor is urgent.
- The State Department for Wildlife is to convene a high-level multi-stakeholder *briefing meeting* that draws together relevant ministries (Interior, Land, Agriculture and Livestock, Water, Roads and Transport, Energy, and Treasury) and civil society.
- The State Department for Wildlife is to initiate the process of developing and operationalising national fencing guidelines
- Secure cost-sharing and funding mechanisms to address fencing as a threat to ecological connectivity.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

Addressing the fencing crisis in Kenya's Rangelands is essential to safeguarding wildlife, sustaining pastoral livelihoods, and maintaining critical wildlife corridors. Thus, a well-coordinated policy action, community engagement, and enforcement are key in reversing current fragmentation trends and promoting ecological connectivity.

## **ANNEX**

### **1. List of institutions represented**

- African Conservation Centre (ACC)
- African Wildlife Foundation (AWF)
- Big Life Foundation (BLF)
- Conservation International (CI)
- Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing (DRSRS)
- Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature – African Elephant Specialist Group (IUCN-AFESG)
- International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)
- Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA)
- Ministry of Health (MOH)
- RAMAT Wildlife Society (RAMAT)
- Save Giraffes Now (SGN)
- State Department for Wildlife (SDW)
- Sustainable Finance for African Wildlife (SUSFAW)
- Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI)
- Zoological Society of London (ZSL)