MOUNT KENYA WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

NEWS



Keeping up with the
Mountain Bongo

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

ANIMAL ORPHANAGE UPDATE

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WELCOME

Despite the challenges we have all been forced to face this year, there have been many moments of great joy at the Mount Kenya Game Ranch. We wanted to take a moment to tell you about the ways in which the coronavirus pandemic has changed how we go about our work. But more importantly, tell you about all the highlights of this year.

While the pandemic has restricted the number of tourists coming into Kenya, limiting foreign visitors coming to our conservancy, we are grateful to all our domestic tourists that have supported us. We are excited to see you more of you in 2021.

I am proud of the team on the ground as they continue to work tirelessly to protect the conservancy and its legacy for future generations. For the team, and for me personally, one of the most rewarding initiatives of the conservancy remains the first-hand experience we continue to offer future generations through our education programme. It remains vital in explaining the important role they will play in taking care of the environment in the years to come.

Of course, none of our conservancy work would be possible without you. Whether it is protecting endangered animals for future generations or training these generations on the responsibility they hold. It would not be possible without your generous donations. Thank you.

I could not be more excited about what lies ahead, for example, Key project 2021: The Mawingu Mountain Bongo Sanctuary fencing and operationalization. The long-term goal of this sanctuary is to re-wild the bongo species and we cannot wait to bring you along on this journey with us!

Again, thank you for your support at this difficult time. Any information on how you can continue to give your support can be found on page eight (8) and thirteen (13).

As we say goodbye to 2020, I look forward to what the next year has to offer. From all of us at the Conservancy, a heartfelt Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you, your families and loved ones.

Nyawira Kariuki

Chairperson



Update on the Animal Orphanage

For over 50 years, countless rescued animals have found a caring home at Mount Kenya Animal Orphanage. Here, injured, orphaned, and abandoned animals are treated and rehabilitated with the aim of returning them back to the wild. It is important and fulfilling work that we are proud to be a part of.

However, the outbreak of coronavirus meant we had to make some incredibly tough decisions. Our priority was, and always will be, the welfare of our animals and staff. So, we made the incredibly difficult choice to close the Animal Orphanage. Thankfully, this year has still been filled with lots of exciting stories about what our favourite guests at the orphanage have been up to. We will also be able to introduce you to some of our newest additions!



Three Paws, the Leopard

Hi, my name is Three Paws! I came to the orphanage because of an injury that was caused by people trying to poach me. I was brought into the orphanage, where they gave me the name of 'Three Paws' because of my one missing paw.

I enjoy living at the conservancy because of all the space I have to play!

My favourite way to spend my days is on top of the acacia tree, basking in the sun and observing my surroundings. It is so much fun here, I even get catch live rabbits for my dinner.

If you would like to support me, it costs around Ksh 400 per day to feed me. To support please see details on page eight (8) and thirteen (13).



Shujaa, the Thomson's Gazelle

Eric, Shujaa's keeper, tells the story of the Thomson's Gazelle coming to the Orphanage:

When we first found Shujaa the Gazelle he was very calm but seemed exhausted. He was in pain from the injuries to his hooves. We knew we had to do our best to help him!

Shujaa was in a very sensitive and vulnerable state when we took him to the Orphanage, so we gave him 24 hours of special attention from the team. That calmed him down and put him on the road to recovery!

He was then given first aid by the National Kenyan Vet Service, who cleaned and bandaged his hooves. To help with his recovery, we made sure to give him antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, and multivitamin injections. Everything a Thomson's Gazelle needs to get back on its hooves and multivitamin injections. Everything a Thomson's Gazelle needs to get back on its hooves! It was much trickier than expected to source goats' milk for Shujaa – most local farmers only keep dairy cows.

Update on the Animal Orphanage

The team never gave up and we were eventually able to source the milk. Since drinking it, Shujaa has been growing stronger each day. He now eats calf pellets and soft lucerne, while basking in the hot sun during the day, getting some much-needed R&R.

If you would like to support me, it costs around Ksh 400 per day to feed me. To support Shujaa, please see details on page eight (8) and thirteen (13).



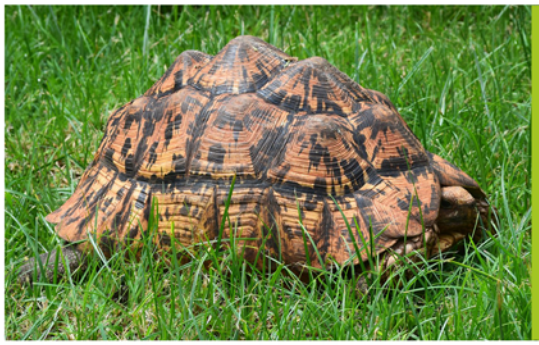
Antonella, the Kudu and its Bongo friends!

Christine, the keeper of the kudu and bongo tells us about this unlikely friendship:

The orphanage gives animals the chance to spend time with each other and it is great to see animals build such a strong bond. Who would have known a kudu and bongo could be best friends?

They have lots of space to run around and play in the compound while the other animals keep them company, keeping away any feelings of loneliness. The kudu and bongo like to do everything together, including eating!

It would only cost you Ksh. 400 or US$4 to feed them both for a day. To support Antonella, To support please see details on page eight (8) and thirteen (13).



Tank, the Leopard Print Tortoise

The aptly named 'Tank' is a female leopard print tortoise and for many years she was a local family's pet. However, after the owners decided to relocate to Nairobi, Tank was brought to our animal orphanage. She joined Mr. Speedy Gonzalez, our old and single Aldabra tortoise. Love is in the air!

White-Tailed Mongoose

The Conservancy added another furry friend to the orphanage: a white-tailed mongoose. He was rescued by a Good Samaritan who found him in a trap, being stoned by children in a local village. Mongooses are often hunted down by farmers for killing domestic chickens. But in the wild they play an important role in controlling rodents and insect pests. He is doing the same role at the Orphanage!



Update on the Animal Orphanage



Stumpy, the Sykes' Monkey

Stumpy, the Sykes' monkey, was rescued from a neighbouring community after he was caught stealing bananas. Stumpy sneaks out of his enclosure to bask in the sun and catch insects, but he gets back to his enclosure during feeding time. Cheeky monkey...

Animals that we've sadly lost

While we have had a great year of bringing new animals to the orphanage and giving them another chance at life, it is important that we acknowledge the animals we have sadly lost.

This year, we have lost many bongos due to an abnormal long rainy season from Oct 2019 to June 2020 which resulted in a drastic increase in intestinal parasites. We also lost three patas monkeys and two ostriches to a range of factors including disease, intra-species aggression and natural causes.

The loss of these animals is truly tragic, but each loss provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the ways we can improve our care of these species in future.

Interview



Interview with Esther

A big round of applause for Esther, our Gardener, who has clocked 25 years since she started working at Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy. We interviewed her and below is what she had to say:

1. How have you managed to work for the same organization for 25 years?

It is because of the respect and the loyalty I have for my work.

2. Which is your most memorable moment at work?

When a weak animal is brought to the orphanage and within a few days it is strong enough and running around following our visitors.

3. What is the most fulfilling part of your job?

When I have enough food for animals all year round.

4. What is unique about caring for animals as compared to other kind of work?

This is a motherly job. Ensuring that they are well-fed deepens my connection with them and makes me love my job even more.

5. What is the biggest challenge in your job?

The biggest one is when we have no rains.

6. What advice would you give young people who are starting their careers?

I advise all to give their best. That will result in success for your organization and in your life as well.

Keeping up with the Mountain Bongo

It can be difficult to keep up to date with such a secretive and elusive animal as the Mountain Bongo. However, the conservation of the Mountain Bongo population is something we pride ourselves on here at Mount Kenya Game Ranch.

The general health of the bongo herd has improved this year and the exciting addition of a resident vet from 1st January 2021 will improve our nutritional programme even more. From camera traps to the new bongo sanctuary, 2021 is going to be a year of growth!



New-born Mountain Bongos

This year, 13 Mountain Bongos have been born! There was a bongo boom in September, which saw the birth of not one, not two, but three bongos.

When bongos give birth, they are very protective of their young and often go and hide, making it incredibly difficult to find them.



Camera Traps

New technology is essential to continuing to conserve the Mountain Bongo. This is spying with a purpose! While mothers hide their new-born bongos, the camera traps allow us to monitor their behaviour and track their progress.

The camera traps are set up at waterholes and feeding troughs, allowing us to observe them in a truly natural environment. We have been able to see how frequently they feed, what their mating behaviours are, and that they are mostly nocturnal species. We download and analyse the footage daily, helping us to keep up to date.

Home is where the sanctuary lies

It is an exciting time at the sanctuary! We have received all the licences from the Government for fencing the Mawingu Mountain Bongo Sanctuary. These are special-use licences for the forest issued by Kenya Forest Service, meaning we have passed the environmental, social, and community participation assessments.



Keeping up with the Mountain Bongo

We chose the area based on several ecological studies of the Mountain Bongo habitat. We are currently clearing the fence line and had our launch ceremony officiated by Cabinet Secretary Hon. Najib Balala on 14th December 2020.

Our team is working hard with the aim of completing the fencing by June 2021 and the first Mountain Bongo being released to the Mawingu Sanctuary by September 2021. The long-term aim is to release the current Mountain Bongo offspring into the wild after time in the new sanctuary. This is a monumental step towards re-wilding the Mountain Bongo population.

We invite you to get involved by donating towards the fencing project. Every 5 meters of fence costs US$190 in total. As recognition, we will provide special hand printed tile/plaque in your honor. The tile will be permanently mounted on the 'wall of fame' at the sanctuary entrance. Your name will also appear on our website.

The Bongo and Science



Bongo Browse

This year we've managed to document, identify, collect and mount an incredible 81 different bongo browse species (the number of plant species a Mountain Bongo eats).

This has been used to create the first ever bongo browse herbarium, which you can see in these photos.

Egg worm count

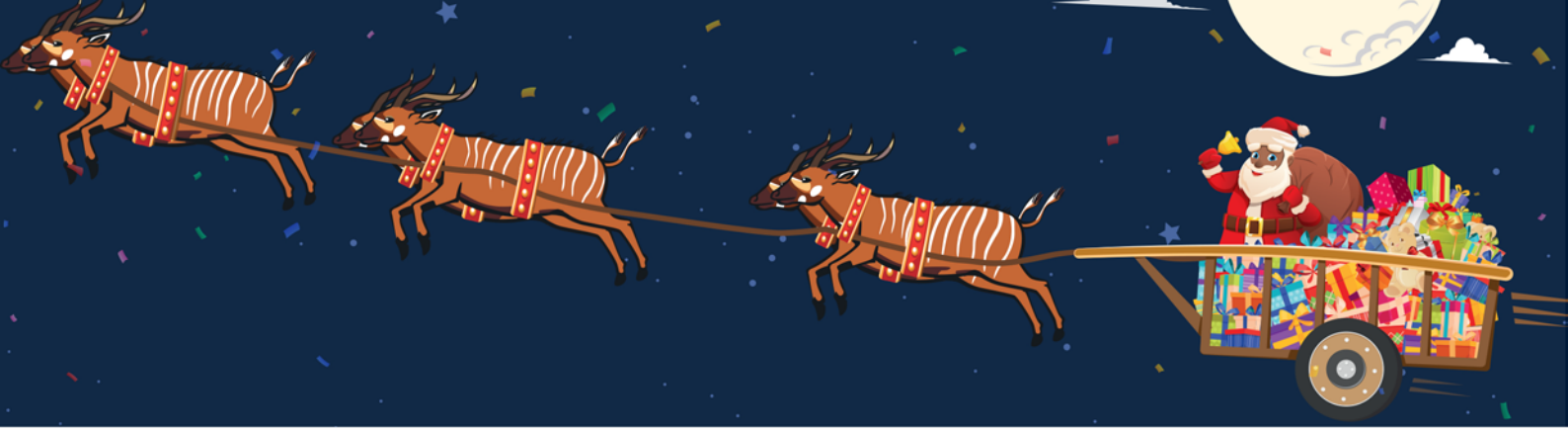
Working in conservancy is not always glamorous. We do not simply take pictures of all our incredible animals in this majestic setting.

The role of worm egg count plays an important part in our mission to protect our bongos.



This process involves collecting faecal samples from the field as soon as mountain bongos defecate.This might not be a nicest thing, but it is important to gather and store these samples in a cool box to be transported to the lab where they can then be analysed.

After placing the samples under a microscope, we can record the number of parasites per bongo. This un-glamourous job plays an important part in understanding the effectiveness of the deworming drugs, and to know the types of worms Mountain Bongos have.



Special thanks to our donors

Hats off to TEGNA group for their generous donation towards the Mountain Bongo Breeding Program at the Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy. They donated US$7,000 in efforts to raise funds towards this worthy cause, which aims to prevent the extinction of a critically endangered species.

We also thank our donors. By supporting us, you became part of the Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy family - a family that works towards preventing the extinction of wildlife species. We celebrate your support of our vision.

Your donation went a long way to the funding and continuation of our Mountain Bongo Breeding Program and the Animal Orphanage. The fruits of your support will be evident in the soon-to-be-reached highlight – the release of the mountain Bongo into their ancestral habitat.

As COVID-19 continues to spread, the future has never felt so unpredictable. Now, more than ever, our animals need us. And we need you. Your support is crucial to keeping our animals alive.

Make A Tax-Deductible Donation and Help Us Keep Up Our Current Momentum

Item	Daily cost (Ksh)	Daily cost (USD)	Monthly cost (Ksh)	Monthly cost (USD)
A day's worth of milk for Shujaa, the Thomson's Gazelle	150	1.34	4,500	40.2
A day's worth of food for Three-Paws, the Leopard	400	3.59	12,000	107.7
A day's worth of food for 1 Sykes Monkey	100	0.09	3,000	26.5
Fencing Costs				
Contribution for a 5m Bongo Sanctuary fencing	21,200	190		

Conservation Education

Learning at the Conservancy

At the heart of the conservancy is our educational outreach programme. Here are snippets from interviews with four interns with us at the conservancy.



1. Erick Kibet Ngeno, Chuka University
Course: Wildlife Management and Conservation

What have you learned?
"I have learnt much about monitoring and getting to know the Mountain Bongo browse. I've also learnt about operating and installing camera traps, and the importance of collecting faecal samples for the egg-counting process, which isn't the nicest job, but it's very rewarding."

2. Martin Muiruri, Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute
Course: Diploma in Wildlife Management

What are the funniest moments?
"We encountered buffaloes very early in the morning on our way to top forest to conduct bongo monitoring and we were forced to run into the grassland to avoid attack!

"On other occasions we were searching tirelessly for the bongos in the forest for hours!! Only then did we realise they were resting into the bush right next to us."

3. Kelvin Otwori, Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute
Course: Diploma in Wildlife Management

Why did you join the conservancy?
"I love wildlife and my passion fuelled me towards conservation. This drew my attention towards Mountain Bongo conservation. The best place to gain that experience was none other than Mountain Kenya Wildlife Conservancy."

4. Duncan B. Mbigo, Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute
Course: Diploma in Wildlife Management

What have you enjoyed most?
"During my stay, I have enjoyed the fact that I am in the field and able to interact with my fellow young conservationists as well as with the field experts, whom I see as role models important to my career growth and development."



A campsite in the pipeline

Have you been thinking of camping on the slopes of Mountain Kenya? We have got you covered with the newly constructed camping facility nestled within the conservancy. It can accommodate 60 and promises spectacular views of Mount Kenya, a combination of rare wildlife, a beautiful setting, Benji the Brave Bongo and an overall roaring good time.

While here, you will go on a game drive, have up-close moments with our animals at Animal Orphanage, have conservation talks and watch conservation-related videos. Need some help planning your visit? Get in touch with us and let the planning begin!

Meet Benji, the Brave Bongo

Work at the conservation would not be possible without Benji, our wonderful Mountain Bongo mascot. He tells us important facts about his wider bongo family.

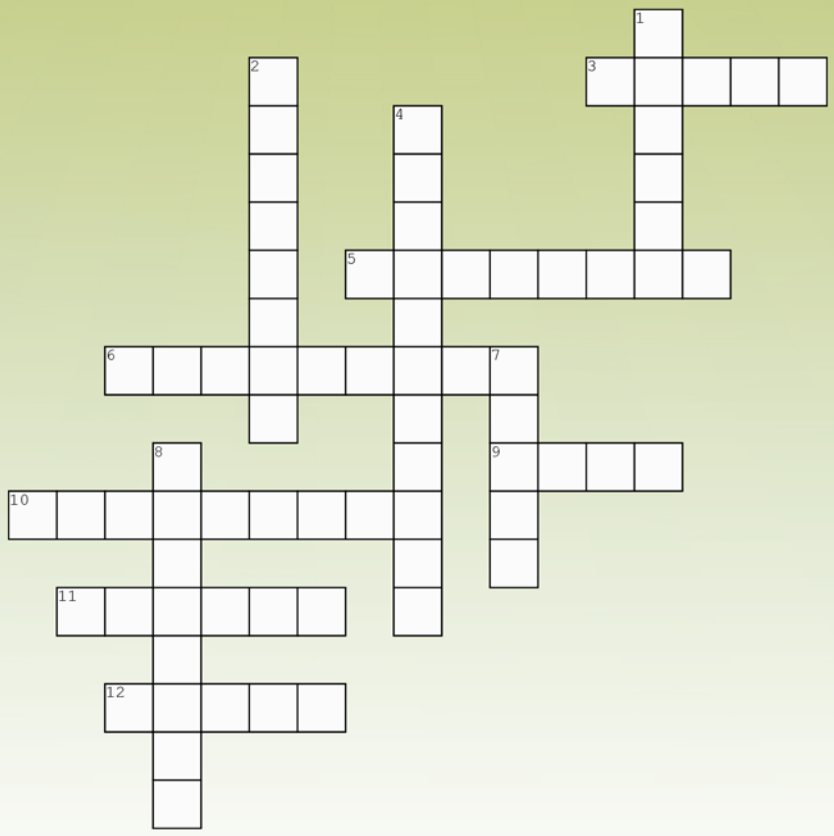


The Key Facts of the Kenyan Mountain Bongo

1. We are critically endangered.
2. My family has less than 100 individuals in the wild in world.
3. We all live in different separate forests, Aberdares, Mau Mau, Eburu and Mount Kenya.
4. We are the largest antelope and we hide in very dense forest cover.
5. Currently, 50 of us live at the Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy in Nanyuki.

Christmas crossword

Help Benji complete the Crossword Puzzle below



Across

3. The name of the Bongo Mascot?
5. The month Christmas is in?
6. I am the leopard that joined the orpahange this year?
9. What animal is best friends with the Bongo?
10. What is the name of our Lesser Kudu in the Animal Orphanage?
11. I have been at Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy for 25 Years?
12. How many people can stay at the new campsite?

Down

1. What gender is Tank, the Leopard Print Tortoise?
2. The number of bongos born this year?
4. This technology helps us keep an eye on bongos?
7. I am one of the main types of animals at the Animals Orphanage?
8. What is Shujaa's recommended drink?

*Answers on the last page



The Season of Gifting

We have gifts inspired by our flagship program – the Mountain Bongo Program; here you can spoil the people you care about most while helping us care for wildlife at the same time.

Item	Size	Price (Ksh)	Prize (USD)
Benji the Brave Bongo Plush toys with a hook for attaching to a bag/backpack	15cm	1,200	10.75
	30cm	1,800	16.13
Mountain Bongo Plush Toys	15cm	1,200	10.75
	30cm	1,900	17.02
Xmas cards – designed with local schools	Set of 6 cards A5 once folded with envelops	900	8.06
Xmas tags – designed with local schools	Set of 24	700	6.27
Colouring Book: The Young Big Six	Per piece	500	4.48
Compliment cards – the young big six	Set of 6 cards A6 once folded with envelops	500	4.48
Leather Key rings embossed	Per piece	500	4.48

2021 Projects

- Sanctuary-fencing funds - ~ Ksh 59Mio for 14km of fencing, infrastructure and first year running expenses including security.

How to donate to the Conservancy

To donate, you can do a direct transfer to our bank account – details below. We will then send you an official tax-exempt receipt. It is our commitment and responsibility to see that every penny you so kindly donate is spent towards the intended purpose.

Our account is:

Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy

Barclays Bank	: Nanyuki Branch
Swift code	: BARCKENX
Bank code	: 03
Branch code	: 190
Account No	: 0227651199

We thank you very much in advance for your generous donation. We are and will forever remain grateful.

On behalf of all the animals that have found shelter with us, we send our warm wishes on Christmas to you and your family. May you be blessed with a wonderful year ahead full of new accomplishments.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

1. Female
2. Thirteen
3. Benji
4. CameraTraps
5. December
6. ThreePaws
7. Sykes
8. GoatMilk
9. Kudu
10. Antonella
11. Esther
12. Sixty

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