

March 2026

2025 Update: Protecting Kijabe forest in the east African rift, Kenya

Field partner: Kijabe Forest Trust (KFT)

We wanted to thank you again for your support for this project and let you know what was accomplished in 2025.

Our work in Kijabe forest is protecting plants and animals by maintaining and restoring degraded habitats, protecting biodiversity, and safeguarding the essential ecosystem services it provides.

Rangers patrols

Forest rangers continue to patrol the forest (24,236 km this year!), removing 294 snares on the way.

Last year I personally (Andre, pictured right, removing an illegal snare) visited the Kijabe forest and can attest to the rangers' skill and capacity. Joining the rangers on a forest patrol opened my eyes to the massive number of snares dotted throughout the forest. These snares are intended to catch small mammals. Being illegal and in dense scrub the snares are commonly abandoned by the poachers who set them but tragically continue to catch prey. One of the many snares we discovered that day had the decaying remains of a small forest duiker.



For the first time, this year KFT rangers arrested an illegal poacher carrying 81 snares in his backpack.

The other common illegal forest activity encountered by rangers is habitat destruction to make charcoal. Four charcoal kilns were destroyed and three suspects who were involved in illegal logging and charcoal production were arrested and handed over to the police.

Collateral damage of charcoal making are the inevitable forest fires that spring up and get out of hand. The rangers were trained on forest fire management. The training was offered by officials from Kenya forest service fire department. The community members were also sensitized on fire handling especially during the fire risk seasons. The fire management system was put to the test this year when rangers used fire stations to battle a forest fire.

Habitat management

KFT planted indigenous tree seedlings in the degraded areas of the forest, restoring close to 120 hectares. During the planting exercises, rangers monitored the forest health and its natural regeneration rate. The rangers were also on the lookout for any alien tree or invasive plant species that might be growing within the forest or on the forest boundary. Alien/invasive trees or plants are removed immediately they are identified.

Sustainable livelihoods

To avert economic marginalization, KFT established an essential oils extraction program for a registered group of women. The women were trained and are now actively producing essential oils from different plant materials. The oils are sold to generate revenue, part of which is shared amongst the group, part is saved in a local bank, and part used to run the program.

The community is benefiting from the project's initiative of protecting and restoring the forest. The *procera* trees that the project has planted in the past are now producing more berries than before. The community harvest some of the berries and sell them to the gin making industries, thereby earning substantial income.

Looking forward

Biome Conservation recently launched a [Ranger Fund](#) to support the needs of our biodiversity guardians on the front lines. Kijabe's rangers stand to benefit as there is an urgent need to replace the outdated GPS and mobile devices and uniforms that are critical for ranger safety and timely coordinated enforcement. Please reach out to learn more.

Thank you for your support for this project! Please let us know if you have questions or would like to discuss this project or receive further information.

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Kijabe Forest rangers recording illegal tree cutting.