OL JOGI
WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY

CONSERVATION & COMMUNITY REPORT 2025 - 2026

EDITORIAL

«We are called to assist the Earth, to heal her wounds, and in the process heal our own»

Wangari Maathai

In 2025, we celebrated the fruits of our dedication to long-term conservation at Ol Jogi. The improved rainfall brought back the lush forage, water, and balance, allowing wildlife to flourish. This recovery demonstrated that conservation benefits build over time, are interconnected, and are achieved through consistent effort. The rhino program, after years of growth challenges, saw its most successful calving season. However, the increased number of rhinos led to territorial disputes, fighting-related deaths, and underscored the habitat's ecological limits. National collaboration through the Kenya Rhino Range Expansion initiative is vital, with Ol Jogi being a key source population and conservation leader.

Beyond rhinos, the year reinforced our commitment to caring for the landscape as a whole. Reticulated giraffe monitoring progressed through corridor mapping and national planning, while ongoing research on predators deepened our understanding of carnivore interactions in areas shared with people. Technology, such as integrated tracking systems, EarthRanger analytics, and camera traps, improved our ability to make informed decisions, enhance anti-poaching efforts, and set up early warning systems. Working together with The Peregrine Fund, we raised awareness about powerline-related deaths, which led to safer infrastructure planning in Laikipia. People were central to this work, with ranger well-being, training, and support prioritized, even with uncertain global funding. Community investment continued through education, healthcare, and open communication, with the Kiota Early Years programme growing as a foundation for future guardians. This report captures a year marked by resilience, teamwork, and shared responsibility for the land and creatures we protect.

Tuko pamoja na asante sana!

Ol Jogi Fact File

Location:	225km north of Nairobi (4 hours), just north of Nanyuki in Laikipia.
Size:	Ol Jogi Ltd. 58,000 acres of which the main Conservancy comprises 46,000 acres and Pyramid Game Reserve 12,000 acres.
Altitude:	1,580-2,234 metres above sea level.
Established:	The Conservancy was established over 60 years ago and Pyramid Game Reserve was made a Rhino Sanctuary in 1980.
Employees:	343 on average throughout the year.
Nursery and Ol Jogi Primary School:	209 children.
Number of rhinos:	92 black rhinos and 53 white rhinos.
Other wildlife:	We host as many as 1,000 elephants, depending on season. We also host 24 species of ungulates, 80 confirmed mammal species, 22 large and diverse small and meso carnivores, 3 species of primates and more than 400 avian species.
Pyramid Wildlife Census 2024 - 2025:	1,631 less from 4,849 the previous year.
Main Conservancy Wildlife Census 2024 - 2025:	840 up from 3,440 the previous year.
Livestock:	2,094 Ol Jogi herd of cattle.

The front and back cover pictures of this edition are courtesy of our guide Johnnie Cross and feature giraffes at the hide at MainHouse in Ol Jogi.

GRATITUDE

Dear Donors

2025 has been a year defined by resilience, adaptability, and deep gratitude. The repercussions of US funding cuts early in the year required significant operational adjustment, yet our conservation commitments never wavered. Through the generosity and steadfast support of our donors and partners, Ol Jogi sustained the integrity of its programs and continued safeguarding the wildlife and habitats entrusted to our care.

Despite the financial uncertainty, our priorities remained clear: ranger welfare, the integration of advanced conservation technologies, and meaningful engagement with surrounding communities. Every contribution, whether equipment, expertise, time, or funding, made a measurable difference. The individuals and institutions below were instrumental in keeping Ol Jogi strong throughout 2025:

Their thoughtful donation of new boots reinforced a simple yet powerful message: details matter. The comfort and readiness of our rangers in the field significantly affects their performance. This gesture had a meaningful impact on daily operations.

SRI remained a foundational pillar of our rhino conservation work. Their 2025 support enabled continued ranger capacity-building and access to critical emergency resources through various zoo partners, the Bently Foundation, and ForRangers. Their loyal partnership continues to protect the species most central to our mission.

For Rangers once again stood firmly behind our teams, especially when funding shortages affected essential needs. Their support for ranger rations this year was both timely and deeply appreciated. Their commitment to ranger welfare remains unparalleled.

Working in solidarity with For Rangers, the Bently Foundation helped ensure our ranger teams remained nourished and focused as financial pressures intensified. Their support closed critical gaps at precisely the right time.

Through the support of the Cayton-Goldrich Family Foundation, we were able to commission the build of student accommodation and enhance our veterinary resources and equipment at the Wildlife Rescue and Education Centre. Their generous support will advance our veterinary, conservation and education goals.

Erlebnis Zoo, Hannover continued its investment in our LoRaWAN network, enabling real-time monitoring of rhino movements, vehicle traffic, and fence integrity. This technology enhances decision-making and keeps our operations ahead of emerging risks.

EarthRanger further deepened its integration into our conservation systems this year. Cross-conservancy knowledge exchanges enhanced team capacity, and the platform continues to support rapid, informed responses to ecological and security events.

Henry Vilas Zoo's contribution to our TUSK Wildlife Ranger Challenge team extended well beyond the event itself. Upgrades to footwear, gym training, and canteen infrastructure all supported holistic ranger welfare, leaving a lasting impression on the ground.

Our long-term partnership with Lion Landscapes continued to support species monitoring, improving our understanding of predator demographics and movements. Their backing also strengthened our ability to address human–carnivore conflict proactively.

ArgusWild AI provided advanced individual identification tools, enriching our scientific understanding of carnivore populations. Their growing platform continues to strengthen long-term monitoring and strategic planning.

Through Traptagger, WildEye enabled our team to process thousands of camera trap images efficiently and accurately. This technology sharpened our understanding of wildlife movement patterns and conservation priorities.

VIEW's equipment donation and ongoing support for our veterinary clinic ensured that urgent treatments and disease surveillance proceeded without delay. Their involvement has elevated wildlife health standards, and our expanding partnership into 2026 will further strengthen veterinary capacity across the wider landscape.

With the donation of new camera traps and ongoing technical support, WPS strengthened our surveillance of key corridors and improved detection of suspicious activity. Their AI-driven software remains indispensable in our security strategy.

Despite the financial challenges of 2025, Ol Jogi continued to progress with those who believe in our mission. In addition to the generous contributions from the organizations mentioned above, Ol Jogi has also received donations from generous individuals in support of community projects, security initiatives, education programs, and human-wildlife conflict mitigation.

To all who supported us, we express our sincere gratitude. Your support fuels our courage, strengthens our capacity, and shapes our conservation outcomes. As we look ahead to 2026, we do so with renewed hope and deep appreciation for your partnership in this crucial work.

Asante Sana!

Understanding Landscape Recovery

Elephants are a defining presence at Ol Jogi, ecological engineers whose movements and feeding behaviours shape the structure and composition of the woodlands they inhabit. Their browsing is a natural and essential driver of savannah ecology, yet in certain areas, sustained pressure can suppress vegetation regeneration for decades. Young trees remain stunted, woody species struggle to establish, and habitat structure becomes simplified over time.

To support long-term woodland recovery in one of our key ecological zones, Ol Jogi has established an Elephant Exclusion Zone, a temporary, fenced area designed to allow young trees and saplings to grow beyond the height and reach of elephants. This controlled rest period allows vegetation to rebuild its natural layers and regain structural complexity.

Vegetation Recovery as the Primary Goal

The exclusion zone was created first and foremost to restore the integrity of the habitat. By reducing browsing pressure, we anticipate:

- Improved survival of young trees and shrubs.
- Restoration of multi-layered vegetation.
- Increased species diversity.
- Development of shade, cover, and nesting sites.
- Strengthened ecological resilience.

These changes benefit a wide range of species, from insects and birds to browsing antelope, ultimately contributing to healthier, more functional ecosystems.

A Unique Opportunity for Scientific Insight

While the exclusion zone's central purpose is ecological recovery, it also provides a rare natural experiment at a meaningful landscape scale.

Because the fenced area lies directly beside open habitat where elephants continue to move freely, it creates a clear, measurable contrast between:

- Vegetation is recovering without elephant pressure.
- Vegetation is exposed to normal browsing levels.

To maximise the scientific value of this contrast, Ol Jogi is working with universities and research partners to document the site's progression over time.

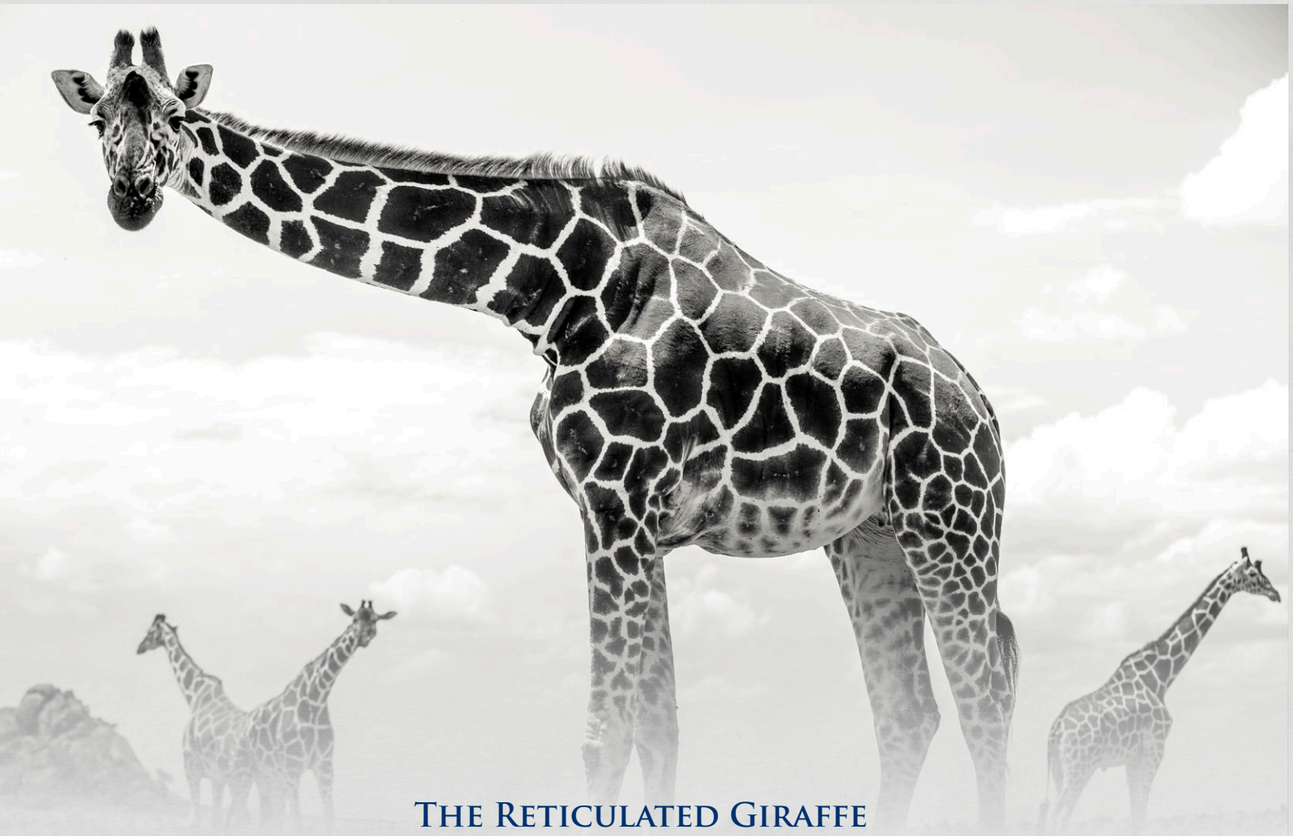
During a recent field visit, scientists from Harvard University collected high-resolution LiDAR imagery, and Ol Jogi teams gathered detailed ecological data across the site. LiDAR, a remote-sensing technology that uses laser pulses to create highly precise 3D maps, provides a baseline of vegetation structure at the start of the exclusion period, capturing canopy height, density, layering, and ground cover in remarkable detail.

As the site recovers, researchers will return periodically to re-survey the area. These comparisons will enable us to quantify:

- Rates of woody vegetation growth and recovery.
- Species-specific responses to reduced browsing pressure.
- Changes in habitat structure and vertical complexity.
- The long-term influence of elephants on woodland ecosystems.

The findings will generate valuable ecological insights that strengthen Ol Jogi's restoration strategy and contribute to broader rangeland management approaches across Laikipia and Kenya.

The Elephant Exclusion Zone reflects Ol Jogi's commitment to evidence-based, long-term conservation. By pairing thoughtful habitat management with rigorous scientific monitoring, we aim to deepen our understanding of how large herbivores shape the landscapes they inhabit and how best to support resilient ecosystems that sustain diverse wildlife well into the future.



The Reticulated Giraffe

The reticulated giraffe (*Giraffa reticulata*) is one of Africa's most distinctive and endangered mammals. Its sharp-edged, polygonal coat pattern, deep orange-brown patches framed by bright white lines, makes it instantly recognisable, and perfectly adapted to the dry savannahs, open woodlands, and scrublands of northern Kenya, southern Ethiopia, and parts of Somalia.

Giraffe at Ol Jogi

At Ol Jogi, the reticulated giraffe is a flagship species and an important focus of conservation. Located within a critical section of the northern Kenya rangelands, Ol Jogi plays a key role in maintaining the landscape connectivity required for the long-term survival of wide-ranging species such as giraffe.

For the past four years, Ol Jogi has carried out long-term monitoring of giraffe movements across the conservancy and through key wildlife corridors linking neighbouring landscapes. This work combines field observations, patrol data, camera traps, and spatial mapping to understand how giraffes respond to seasonal conditions, forage availability, water distribution, and human activity.

These data help identify priority corridors, assess threats to connectivity, and guide habitat management decisions. The information is shared with conservation partners, particularly the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF), contributing to regional and national assessments of giraffe distribution and population trends.

Ol Jogi also hosts GCF's annual giraffe census, during which teams count individuals and collect photographic identification records used in long-term population monitoring. In 2025, Ol Jogi participated in the National Reticulated Giraffe Conservation Action Planning Meeting, convened by KWS and WRTI, contributing field data and practical experience to a coordinated national strategy.

Through integrated local monitoring, applied research, and national collaboration, Ol Jogi supports reticulated giraffe conservation beyond the conservancy boundaries and across the wider landscape.

Distribution and Population

Reticulated giraffes occur predominantly in northern and eastern Kenya, with major strongholds across Laikipia, Samburu, Isiolo, and Garissa. Once numbering over 36,000 individuals, their population has declined by nearly 40 per cent over the last three decades, leaving an estimated 20,000 remaining in the wild. Habitat loss, poaching, and pressure from expanding human settlements have driven much of this decline.

Ecological Role

Standing over five metres tall at full height, reticulated giraffes play a vital ecological role in shaping woodland and savannah structure. As specialised browsers, they:

- Influence woody vegetation composition by feeding on upper canopies
- Help maintain open savannah systems
- Facilitate seed dispersal through their dung, contributing to nutrient cycling
- Provide food resources for birds and insects that feed on parasites or use giraffe fur in nest-building

Their browsing behaviour and movement patterns influence habitat quality for many other species, making them essential ecosystem engineers across northern rangelands.

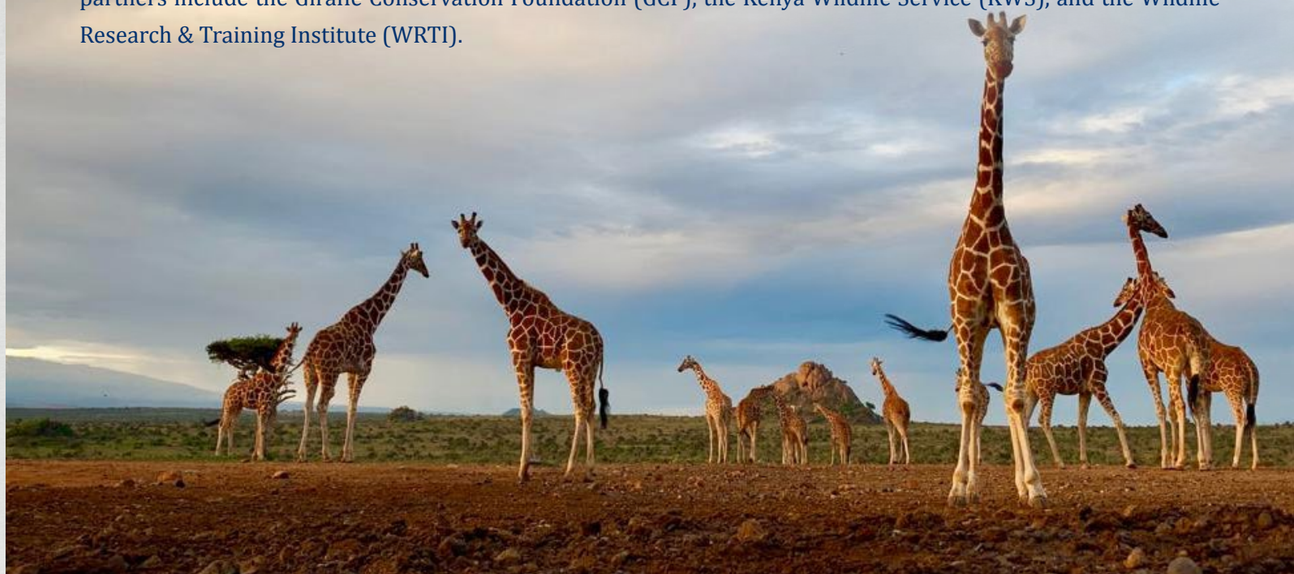
Social Behaviour and Biology

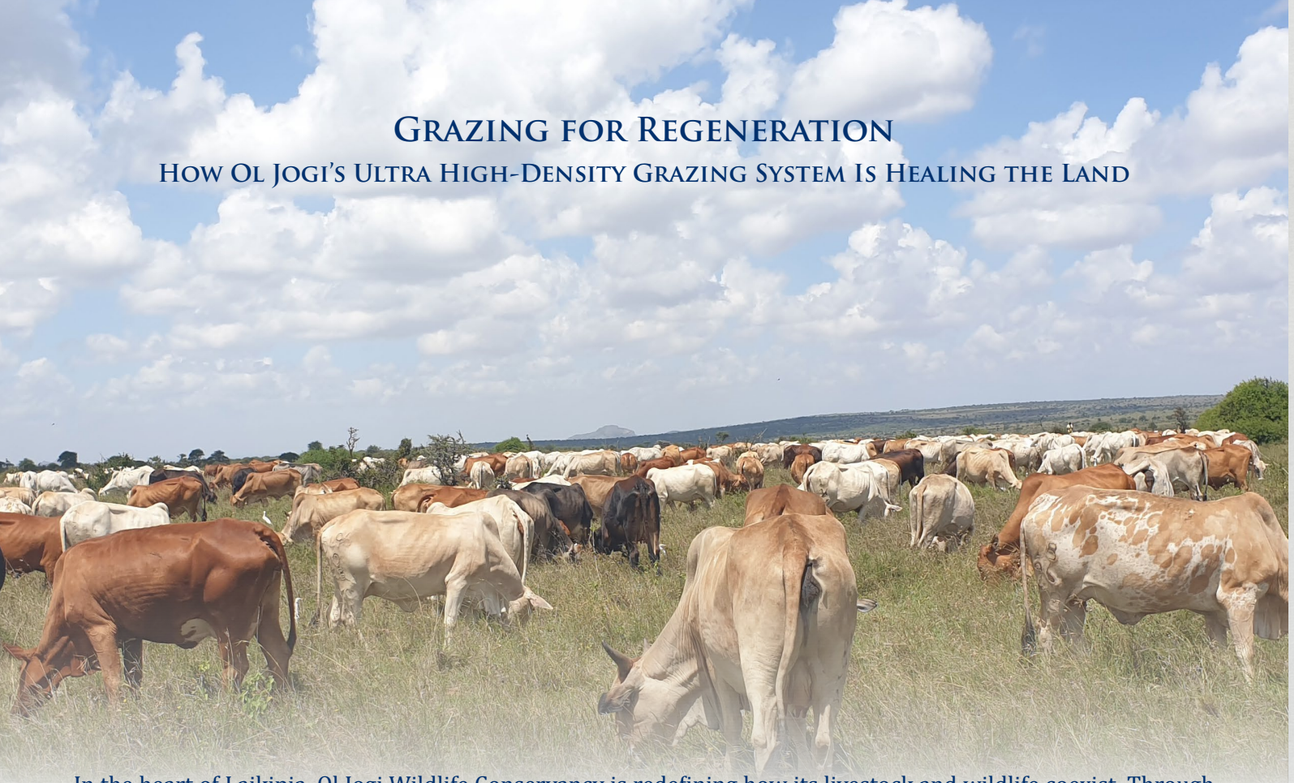
Reticulated giraffes are social animals, typically living in loose, fluid herds made up of females and calves, or bachelor groups of males. They communicate subtly through posture, low-frequency vibrations, and occasional vocalisations. A giraffe's gestation lasts about 15 months, usually resulting in a single calf that can stand and move within an hour of birth. Calf survival is closely linked to habitat quality and predator pressure, chiefly from lions and hyenas.

Each giraffe has a unique coat pattern, much like a human fingerprint, which allows researchers to identify individuals through photographic monitoring. This is supported by machine learning and pattern-recognition software such as GiraffeSpotter by Wildbook.

Conservation Status and Efforts

The reticulated giraffe is currently listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Conservation efforts are increasingly collaborative, involving landscape-level planning, long-term monitoring, and community-led stewardship. Key partners include the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF), the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), and the Wildlife Research & Training Institute (WRTI).





Grazing for Regeneration

How Ol Jogi's Ultra High-Density Grazing System Is Healing the Land

In the heart of Laikipia, Ol Jogi Wildlife Conservancy is redefining how its livestock and wildlife coexist. Through its ultra-high-density grazing (UHDG) system, the conservancy is transforming land management, restoring degraded rangelands, rejuvenating soils, and revitalising wildlife habitats.

Previously, cattle at Ol Jogi moved relatively freely across large grazing areas. While this low-density system appeared natural, it allowed livestock to graze selectively, repeatedly returning to the most palatable plants while avoiding tougher, fibrous grasses. Over time, this selective pressure weakened preferred species, reduced plant diversity, encouraged the spread of less productive vegetation, and left much of the available biomass underutilised.

UHDG represents a fundamental shift.

Under UHDG, livestock are brought together in highly concentrated herds and grazed within clearly demarcated areas for short, controlled periods, followed by long rest intervals that allow full vegetation recovery. Because animals are restricted to a defined space, they consume whatever forage is available rather than repeatedly selecting only the most tender plants. Older, coarse grasses are grazed down alongside young shoots, creating a more even utilisation of plant material across the landscape.

This uniform grazing pattern stimulates vigorous regrowth, increases the density of perennial grasses, and prevents the long-term suppression of preferred species. The result is a rangeland that is more productive, more resilient, and more nutritionally consistent throughout the year.

At the same time, the concentrated movement of animals distributes manure and urine more evenly across grazed areas, introducing a richer and more diverse mix of nutrients and soil microbes. This biological input improves soil structure, boosts microbial activity, enhances water infiltration, and accelerates carbon storage — strengthening the foundation of the entire ecosystem.

Wildlife has visibly responded to the recovery of these rangelands. Zebras, elands, impalas, and buffalos frequent UHDG-managed areas for healthier forage, attracting predators like lions and leopards. The entire ecosystem benefits as vegetation, soil, herbivores, and carnivores reconnect in a balanced, regenerative cycle.

The UHDG programme reflects Ol Jogi's belief that livestock and wildlife can not only coexist, but actively enhance one another's landscapes. By replacing selective, low-density grazing with intentional, high-impact herd movement, the conservancy is advancing a regenerative model that increases biodiversity, strengthens ecosystem function, and supports sustainable productivity.

UHDG builds long-term climate resilience by improving soil carbon, water retention, and vegetative cover, ensuring Ol Jogi's landscapes remain productive, diverse, and life-sustaining for generations.

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UHDG brings livestock together in concentrated herds for short, controlled grazing periods, followed by long rest intervals that allow vegetation to recover fully. This method ensures that older, fibrous grasses are grazed down, making way for fresh, nutrient-rich shoots. Unlike selective grazing systems, where animals continuously feed on the most tender plants, UHDG promotes uniform utilisation, supporting balanced regrowth across the landscape. As a result, grasslands now hold a higher density of perennial species, offering more consistent, nutritious forage throughout the year.

Wildlife has responded visibly to the recovery of these rangelands. Zebras, elands, impalas, and buffalos increasingly frequent UHDG-managed areas, drawn by healthier forage. In turn, predators such as lions and leopards follow the renewed abundance of prey. The entire ecosystem benefits as vegetation, soil, herbivores, and carnivores reconnect in a more balanced, regenerative cycle.

The UHDG programme reflects Ol Jogi's belief that livestock and wildlife can not only coexist, but jointly enhance the health of the land. Through this practice, the conservancy is advancing a regenerative model that strengthens conservation efforts and biodiversity while supporting sustainable productivity.

Beyond ecological restoration, UHDG builds climate resilience, improving soil carbon, water retention, and vegetative cover, ensuring that Ol Jogi's landscapes remain productive, diverse, and life-sustaining for generations to come.

Tracking, Technology, and Wildlife Stewardship

At Ol Jogi Wildlife Conservancy, our mission is simple: to create a landscape where wildlife can thrive alongside people. Achieving this requires a deep understanding not only of the animals we protect but also of the ecological relationships that underpin their survival. By combining advanced technology with decades of field experience, Ol Jogi is contributing to some of the most forward-thinking wildlife research and protection efforts in the region.

Our conservation work, species monitoring, area management, and human–wildlife coexistence are supported by an expanding network of wildlife-tracking devices and data systems that allow us to read the landscape in real time.

Tracking Devices: Data That Keeps Wildlife Safe

Across the conservancy, and in collaboration with numerous partners, GPS and LoRa-enabled tracking devices are deployed on rhinos, lions, African wild dogs, elephants, raptors, and cattle herds. Tracking technology is also embedded in vehicles and ranger patrol systems. All of this information flows into EarthRanger, enabling our teams to:

- Detect threats early
- Respond rapidly to injured or at-risk animals
- Understand long-term ecological change
- Generate robust scientific datasets to guide conservation decisions

This technology is not a replacement for expert field experience; it amplifies it. Rangers, managers, researchers, herders, and community members remain central to conservation; the data allows them to act with greater clarity, speed, and insight.

Raptor Conservation: Protecting the Skies Above Laikipia

Kenya's raptors are in crisis. A staggering 80 per cent decline has been recorded across multiple species in recent decades and the losses continue.

Between October and November last year, Ol Jogi Conservancy joined a collaborative project led by The Peregrine Fund to tag 20 raptors along a new powerline route in Laikipia. Species included Martial Eagles, Tawny Eagles, Augur Buzzards, and Eastern Chanting Goshawks. The objective was to monitor how these birds survive and move in relation to newly erected power infrastructure along a public access road.

Electrocution from powerlines has emerged as one of the most significant threats to Kenya's birds of prey, alongside poisoning, habitat loss, and direct persecution. Species that should live for decades are now dying before reaching maturity, often instantly, and often without being detected.

Using tracking data from this project, movement patterns, survival outcomes, mortality events, and field observations. The Peregrine Fund and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) are working with authorities, utility providers, and national energy planners. Their goal is to improve powerline design, advocate for safer pole configurations, and shape future energy development to prevent catastrophic wildlife losses.

Reducing Human Wildlife Conflict Through Technology

Human–wildlife conflict remains one of the most pressing conservation challenges in Kenya. At Ol Jogi, we approach this issue through respect, pragmatism, and innovation.

Working closely with neighbouring communities, we use data and technology to prevent conflict before it occurs. In partnership with Lion Landscapes, the Kenya Wildlife Service, and Harvard University, several lions in the landscape are fitted with GPS collars that allow real-time tracking. At the same time, each of Ol Jogi's cattle herds carries a tracking collar, creating a two-way early-warning system. When a collared lion approaches a cattle herd, alerts are sent to herders and livestock owners, allowing them to move or secure animals before an incident occurs. This simple, effective system reduces livestock losses and prevents retaliatory killings of predators.

PhD student Lucrecia Aguilar, from Harvard University, is using these data to examine the spatial relationships between livestock and predators across the landscape. By studying how both groups move through shared grazing systems, her research is providing valuable insights that can guide evidence-based decisions on grazing management, livestock protection, carnivore ecology, and long-term coexistence strategies across Laikipia.

The GPS collars fitted on lions also contribute to broader lion research. These data help us to:

- Understand how prides move across Ol Jogi and neighbouring conservancies
- Identify wildlife corridors and critical seasonal habitats.
- Anticipate conflict by alerting communities when lions approach livestock areas.
- Support coordinated landscape-level conservation planning with KWS and regional partners.

Together, these insights connect lion conservation to wider ecological stewardship, from grassland health and prey availability to climate resilience and cross-boundary wildlife movement.

Why This Work Matters

Ol Jogi's technology-driven conservation systems form part of a larger effort to safeguard Kenya's wildlife heritage for generations to come. By protecting raptors in the skies, mammals on the plains, and by supporting coexistence between people and wildlife across shared landscapes, we are investing in the long-term stability of an ecosystem that holds both global ecological value and profound cultural meaning.

Experiential Learning for Conservation and Responsibility

In December 2025, the Conservancy organized the Teens Program 2025 for staff children. It was a fantastic learning experience where teenagers from all three camps explored wildlife conservation, environmental care, safety, and teamwork. The goal was to take learning beyond the classroom by involving participants in real-life conservation work and field experiences.

From the start, the teens engaged in hands-on conservation activities. During a camera-tracking session, they learned about wildlife tracking, animal movement, and data collection. They also visited the operations room to understand daily conservancy operations, the importance of technology, communication, and teamwork in wildlife protection.

The program continued with more hands-on learning at the Wildlife Rescue Centre. There, they learned about animal rescue, rehabilitation, and care. Guided sessions helped them understand animal behavior, the importance of enrichment and proper nutrition, and the responsibility of caring for rescued animals. Interactive games improved teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills.

The most memorable part was predator tracking in the field, led by experts. They tracked a pride of lions, learning to read natural signs and understand animal behavior. This deepened their appreciation for wildlife and conservation work. A guided game drive allowed them to see different species and discuss wildlife protection and rescue. Security awareness was emphasized with live demonstrations by the K-9 unit on conservation security and public safety. A visit to the rhino enclosure, including meeting Bella, highlighted the importance of protecting endangered species. The program also focused on environmental responsibility and community values, with a camp clean-up that demonstrated discipline, teamwork, and environmental respect.

Empowerment and Athletics Camp – Il Polei Secondary School

During the 2025 long school holiday, 70 learners from our neighborhood joined an Empowerment and Athletics Camp, thanks to our collaboration with the Northern Kenya Running Club. Longer school breaks can sometimes lead to boredom, less supervision, and negative peer pressure, which can result in early pregnancies, drug use, school dropouts, and a disconnect between young people and learning.

The camp provided a safe and organized space that really got the learners excited and inspired. Each day, they had athletics training and mentorship sessions that helped them learn discipline, set goals, make smart choices, and take responsibility for themselves. Athletics really caught their attention, helped them work together, and reinforced good habits, while mentorship gave them a chance to think about themselves and learn important life skills.

We helped out by setting up mentorship programs, giving them training gear, and distributing dignity packs. This all-around support made sure the learners felt valued and part of the group. By the end of the camp, they showed more self-assurance, better relationships with their peers, and a stronger commitment to their education. This initiative helped connect young people with mentors and the community, showing them positive role models and a sense of purpose.

Guided Bush Walks

Guided bush walks at Ol Jogi offer one of the most immersive ways to encounter the conservancy. Unlike vehicle-based game drives, which allow guests to travel vast distances and observe wildlife from a comfortable vantage point, walks invite a slower rhythm. They open a more intimate dialogue with the land, where every step sharpens awareness and reveals the subtleties that shape the ecosystem.

Walking on foot allows guests to experience the conservancy as the animals do, attuned to the sounds, scents and textures of the natural world. One of the most absorbing elements is the art of interpreting tracks and signs. With your guide, the landscape becomes a living narrative: a clean set of leopard prints crossing a path, the four-toed impression of a hippo, or the overlapping spoor of plains game. These clues speak of territory, timing and behaviour, revealing whether an animal moved with purpose, paused to listen, or fled moments before. Territorial middens, used by species such as rhinos, offer further insight into communication, hierarchy and the quiet systems and social structures through which animals govern their world.

Vegetation forms another layer of understanding. Up close, guides help guests identify trees and plants, understand their ecological roles, and learn about their traditional medicinal uses. Elephants reshaping woodlands, termites engineering microhabitats, the way bark feels beneath the hand or crushed leaves release their scent, walking allows these details to surface.

Smaller inhabitants also come into focus. Reptiles, insects and birds often feature prominently, with nests, burrows and subtle traces revealing the intricate lives unfolding at ground level. This miniature world adds depth and dimension to the broader wildlife experience.

As the walk progresses, guests may climb one of the granite boulders or rocky outcrops scattered across Ol Jogi. From these elevated vantage points, wide horizons unfold, offering a pause to take in the scale of the landscape and observe wildlife from above, a moment shaped by perspective and stillness. Safety is paramount. Every walk is led by trained guides who understand animal behaviour, wind direction, and the careful etiquette for respectfully moving through wildlife areas. Their decisions, route, pace and positioning ensure guests feel secure, even when encountering elephants or buffalo from a safe distance.

Ultimately, guided bush walks at Ol Jogi offer a deeply sensory, perspective-shifting experience. They reveal the conservancy as a landscape alive with stories, tracks, sounds, movements and interactions that a vehicle might pass unnoticed. To walk here is to witness the intelligence of the land, one detail, one footprint and one quiet moment at a time.

Ol Jogi at the Heart of Laikipia's Rhino Future

In 1970, Kenya was home to an estimated 20,000 Eastern Black Rhinos. By 1985, that number had collapsed to fewer than 400, the result of a devastating poaching crisis that swept across the continent. Confronted with the imminent local extinction of this iconic species, the Government of Kenya (GoK) made a decisive intervention: creating a network of highly secure rhino sanctuaries to protect the last remaining individuals and lay the groundwork for recovery.

Ol Jogi Wildlife Conservancy was among the first of these sanctuaries, established in 1980 with a founder population of just three black rhinos. Today, Ol Jogi is home to 89 individuals and stands as one of Kenya's most significant strongholds. Over the decades, the conservancy has played a critical role in protecting, monitoring, and managing its rhino population, including the genetic supplementation of other sanctuaries through both import and export, contributing 17 individuals to support Kenya's national recovery efforts.

This progress has been made in partnership with national leadership. Since 1990, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) has implemented six successive five-year National Rhino Strategies, adopting a collaborative approach to conservation. Ol Jogi, one of the oldest and most established private conservancies in Kenya's rhino protection network, has remained their committed partner throughout.

By the end of 2024, Kenya's black rhino population had grown to 1,059, an extraordinary recovery by global standards. Yet success has introduced a new challenge: more than 80% of these rhinos now live within fenced sanctuaries where space, competition, and density-dependent pressures are limiting natural population growth. Intra-species aggression and reduced breeding performance are clear indicators that Kenya's black rhinos have reached the limits of available habitat.

In response, a bold national initiative has emerged: the Kenya Rhino Range Expansion (KRRE) Project, led by KWS, aims to secure 6,000 km^2 of additional, connected habitat for black rhinos in Kenya. This ambitious strategy seeks to enable renewed population growth, ecosystem restoration, and socio-economic upliftment. After 17 years as Ol Jogi's Conservation Manager, Jamie Gaymer has taken up the national role of KRRE Lead.

Jamie's long-standing position at Ol Jogi enabled him to play a leading role in shaping national rhino conservation. Since 2015, he has chaired the Association of Private and Community Land Rhino Sanctuaries (APLRS), and since 2018, he has served as a member of the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG). In 2019, leveraging Ol Jogi's platform and partnerships, he co-organised a pivotal Theory of Change workshop with Save the Rhino International and KWS. The workshop affirmed rhino conservation as a unifying national agenda — capable of bringing together public, private, and community actors behind shared biodiversity goals.

With its central location in Laikipia, Ol Jogi is uniquely positioned to anchor this national vision. Decades of rhino protection, habitat stewardship, and conservation leadership have made it an imperative source population, one capable of supplying rhinos for translocation to newly secured landscapes throughout Kenya. This philosophy sits at the heart of KRRE's design. The project extends far beyond rhinos, aiming to:

- Foster healthy, functioning ecosystems where native flora and fauna can thrive;
- Generate conservation-linked economic opportunities for neighbouring communities through employment, tourism, and ecosystem services;
- Align with Kenya's national development priorities while contributing to global biodiversity and climate targets.

As habitat corridors are restored and partnerships strengthen across conservancies, ranches, and state lands, Central Laikipia is poised to become one of Kenya's largest and most ecologically vibrant rhino landscapes, a continuous sanctuary not only for rhinos but for the full web of life that depends on thriving ecosystems.

With Ol Jogi embedded at the heart of this landscape and the KRRE vision gaining momentum, Kenya is entering a defining new chapter in rhino conservation—one that promises enduring benefits to wildlife, communities, and the nation as a whole.

Ol Jogi's Rhino Story – 2025

Over the past few years, Ol Jogi's rhino population has been quietly shaping one of the most compelling conservation stories in northern Kenya: a narrative of endurance through drought, careful management, and now, a remarkable resurgence in 2025.

Between 2020 and 2023, prolonged drought placed immense pressure on wildlife across the region. Forage quality declined, water sources thinned, and many species faced increasingly difficult conditions. For rhinos, this period resulted in what biologists describe as "suppressed population performance": fewer conceptions, longer calving intervals, and slower overall growth, even as protection remained constant and intensive.

Despite these natural challenges, Ol Jogi's rhinos came through the drought years with exceptionally low mortality and importantly, no poaching losses. This resilience reflects the dedication of the ranger teams, monitoring staff, veterinary partners, and the broader conservancy community. However, the data from those years clearly showed that the population was "holding its breath" rather than expanding as strongly as it could in better times.

That pattern shifted dramatically in 2025. This year, Ol Jogi has recorded a record number of rhino births, making it one of the most productive years in the history of the conservancy's programme. With improved range conditions, the population responded rapidly: calving increased across multiple territories, and monitoring teams have been working daily to log newborn calves and update lineage records.

But with growth comes new pressure. Rhinos are territorial, and as densities rise within a defined area, competition intensifies, particularly among mature bulls. In 2025, Ol Jogi recorded two rhino mortalities due to fighting, events strongly linked to density-dependent factors. In simple terms, the population has grown to a point where territorial disputes are more likely and more severe.

From a conservation science perspective, this is both a challenge and a clear indicator of success. It signals that Ol Jogi's rhino population is nearing the ecological limits of the available habitat. Without action, increased social stress and further fighting-related deaths are inevitable. With strategic intervention, however, this population pressure becomes a national opportunity.

This is precisely where the Kenya Rhino Range Expansion (KRRE) initiative becomes critical. Ol Jogi is an active participant in national efforts to establish new secure rhino areas across Kenya, on both private and community lands, in partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Wildlife Research & Training Institute, and other conservation stakeholders.

The goal is simple but transformative: create more rhino-ready landscapes so Kenya can

- Relieve density pressure in established sanctuaries such as Ol Jogi.
- Reduce fighting-related mortalities and social stress.
- Increase overall national growth rates by giving surplus animals new, suitable areas to occupy.
- Spread risk by having more populations in more places, rather than concentrating rhinos in a small number of sites.

In practice, this means that some of the conservation "success" embodied in Ol Jogi's record 2025 birth year can, in future, be shared with other landscapes. Surplus animals from high-performing populations can be carefully and responsibly moved to new sites once those areas meet strict ecological, security and governance standards.

For Ol Jogi's supporters, 2025 represents a significant milestone. Years of investment, vigilance, and unwavering protection during hardship are now yielding one of the strongest periods of growth in the conservancy's history, growth substantial enough to contribute meaningfully to Kenya's national recovery strategy. The recent fighting mortalities are a sombre reminder that conservation success brings new responsibilities, but they also highlight the urgency and value of KRRE's work.

As we look ahead, Ol Jogi will continue to do what it has done for decades: provide a safe stronghold for rhinos, generate high-quality data to guide management decisions, and contribute animals, expertise and lessons learned to Kenya's wider black and white rhino recovery efforts. With the continued support of our partners and friends, the story that began with drought and difficulty can now evolve into one of expansion, resilience and hope – not just for Ol Jogi's rhinos, but for rhinos across Kenya.

Collaborating for Captive Animal Welfare

At Ol Jogi Wildlife Rescue Centre, animal welfare is our way of life. We prioritize the health and happiness of the animals we care for, believing in "Wildlife First."

Years of working closely with animals have taught us true animal welfare involves experience, kindness, and learning. Collaborating with other organizations is crucial for our growth and improvement. We share knowledge and expertise, benefiting from their expertise.

We've built strong relationships with groups like the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, the Kenya Wildlife Service, and the Mount Kenya Wildlife Trust. Through workshops, visits, and training, our animal care teams have learned valuable techniques for animal happiness, care, and captivity.

The San Diego Zoo has been particularly helpful. They've shown us how to make enrichment fun and use international best practices for understanding animal behavior and well-being. These ideas have helped us create spaces that allow animals to thrive and stay healthy.

Talking with KWS and the Mount Kenya Wildlife Orphanage has reminded us that despite our differences, we face common challenges. Collaboration enhances our solutions.

These collaborations have brought together a community of curious, humble, and dedicated caregivers. Together, we're working to create a future where animal welfare is about ensuring every rescued animal lives a happy life in a science-based, kind, and respectful environment.

Enhancing Conservation Education

At the Ol Jogi Wildlife Rescue Centre, we believe conservation begins with everyone, young and old. We connect with wildlife, from plants to animals, and make learning about conservation exciting, interactive, and driven by curiosity.

For years, Ol Jogi has been a safe haven for wildlife and a place to learn about protecting the wild.

Over 17,000 people have visited the centre, and this year, we launched new programs to make a bigger difference. Our first-ever student cultural exchange program brought together high school students from Europe, the United States, and Kenya for a week-long conservation learning experience.

Our education team guided each day with a different theme, covering animal husbandry, veterinary care, field conservation, and environmental awareness. It was wonderful to see young people from different cultures working together, learning from each other, sharing ideas, and having thoughtful conversations about wildlife and the future of our planet.

The students also became junior wildlife carers, helping with feeding, watching animals, keeping enclosures clean, and creating fun activities. These hands-on experiences went beyond learning in class and included working with our animal care staff. The program became a real cultural exchange with shared meals, teamwork, and open discussions about conservation and what we can do to protect it.

Beyond high school programs, we've launched interactive lectures for colleges and universities, bridging classroom theory and practical application. Conservation students interact with our animal care and education teams, explore rescue, rehabilitation, and release, and gain first-hand experience in wildlife management.

We also focus on early childhood learning. Pre-primary students learn through curiosity and play, spotting wildlife species and developing a connection with nature. Many return home excited to share their knowledge and become young conservation champions.

Our goal is to foster a deeper love for the natural world. At Ol Jogi, conservation education is interactive and based on real-life experiences. Every visitor, regardless of age or background, becomes part of a bigger story and learns how to protect wildlife.

The results are positive. Schools send thank-you notes, students engage in citizen science, and even our youngest learners confidently spot wildlife and share their knowledge. Every visit, question, and moment of wonder reminds us that conservation starts with learning and curiosity.

Leopard Dynamics Around the Main House

The leopards that move through the Main House area at Ol Jogi show us how big predators and people can live together in the same place. This part of the conservancy, with its mix of rocky outcrops, thickets, luggas, and open spaces, has become a safe haven where leopards can live without too much trouble. Since these cats use the area so often, it gives us a great chance to see how they adapt to changes and what they need to do well

The AW female is the leopard we see most often in this area. Watching her movements has shown us how she keeps her space even when people are around all the time. By keeping track of her movements for a long time using EarthRanger and AI to spot patterns, we can follow her routines really closely. This helps us see how she changes her behavior, what happens in the seasons, and even tiny changes in what she does. These records not only tell us about her life but also about the whole health of the area that supports her. Every time we spot a leopard, guides take note of where she is and what she's doing, which they then put into the EarthRanger system.

The things we've learned from the AW female's patterns are now a big part of how we understand leopard behavior at Ol Jogi. By watching how she interacts and how she changes her territory when the seasons change or people are around, we've been able to make our conservation plans even better. This extra understanding helps us find a better balance between what wildlife needs and what people do on the conservancy. In the end, every move and note we record helps us get a clearer picture of how these amazing cats live with us, making the Main House area a special example of sharing space and respecting each other.

EarthRanger plays a central role in this monitoring. The real-time software platform is used across many conservancies to collect and integrate wildlife data, helping conservationists understand animal movement, human–wildlife conflict, and poaching risks. For leopards, it enables tracking of how far individuals, particularly males, disperse across the landscape, whether they return, and whether they establish territories elsewhere. These broader movement patterns inform mortality monitoring and enable the rapid identification of any deceased leopard previously registered.

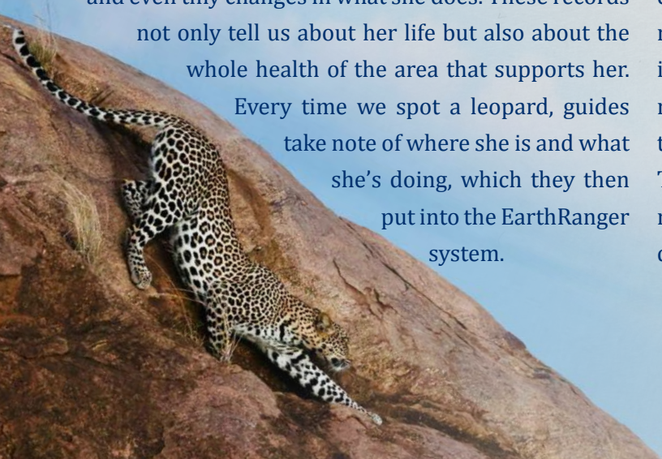
Competition and territorial pressure shape the daily lives of leopards. Young males often pass through, testing boundaries and occasionally displacing resident cats for short periods. Hyenas add further tension, influencing how leopards hunt and where they cache prey. Observing how the AW female adjusts, whether by increasing nocturnal activity or selecting more concealed resting sites, demonstrates the adaptability required for survival in a landscape that becomes increasingly fragmented beyond the conservancy, particularly toward community land.

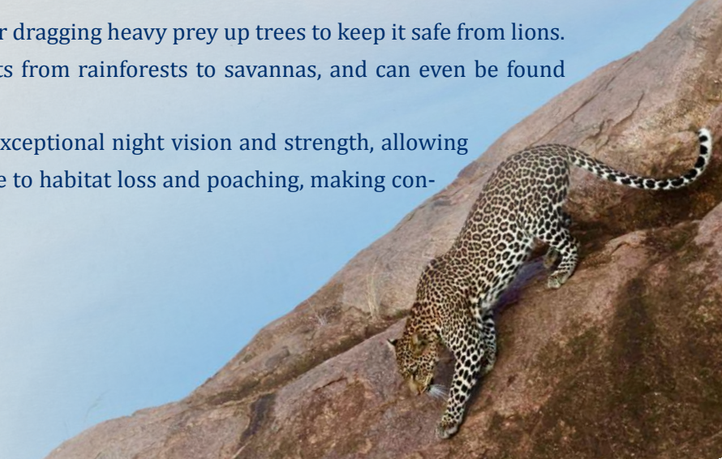
Despite technological advancements, traditional fieldcraft remains essential. Fresh spoor, hyrax alarm calls, and the discreet placement of prey provide immediate, tactile cues of leopard presence. When these observations are paired with digital datasets, they form a long-term record that informs habitat decisions, strengthens anti-poaching work, and deepens understanding of predator dynamics across the conservancy.

For guests, recognising these dynamics adds depth to every sighting. Each glimpse of a leopard becomes part of a broader narrative, one that reveals the delicate balance between wildlife and human presence. Around the Main House, the quiet, consistent movement of leopards stands as a testament to what effective conservation makes possible: predators living naturally, confidently, and undisturbed in a landscape cared for with intention.

Interesting Facts about Leopards in Kenya

- Elusive, solitary masters of stealth, known for dragging heavy prey up trees to keep it safe from lions.
- Highly adaptable, thriving in diverse habitats from rainforests to savannas, and can even be found near Nairobi.
- Famous for their camouflage, they possess exceptional night vision and strength, allowing them to hunt diverse prey, but are vulnerable to habitat loss and poaching, making conservation efforts critical.





Education

Planting Our Seeds for Tomorrow

The opening of the Kiota Early Years' School in February 2023 marked a quietly transformative moment for the Ol Jogi community. Its name, "Kiota," meaning "Nest," captures the essence of what has been created: a protected space where the conservancy's youngest children can learn, explore, and grow with confidence.

Established as part of the Ol Jogi Primary School, with a smaller sister classroom on the Pyramid side of the conservancy, Kiota provides a gentle beginning to a child's educational journey. It is a place where early curiosity is encouraged, where play and learning intertwine, and where the foundations for future growth are laid with intention and care.

For many children, Kiota is their first encounter with structured learning. Its impact resonates far beyond the classroom, shaping not only academic readiness but also the social and emotional skills that will carry them into primary and secondary school. Here, children develop independence, communication, and a sense of belonging, qualities that support their transition into later stages of education.

One of Kiota's defining strengths is its relationship with the landscape around it. Learning often moves outdoors, turning Ol Jogi's natural environment into an extension of the classroom. Through lessons about wildlife, trees, and the land they call home, children develop an early respect for nature, a value deeply aligned with the conservancy's wider ethos.

Kiota also serves the wider community by offering stability for parents and staff. Knowing their children are in a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment allows them to focus on their work with assurance. Over time, the school has become a unifying presence, strengthening relationships through shared milestones, community participation, and collective pride in the children's growth.

Already, the benefits of this foundation are visible. Children who began their schooling at Kiota are entering primary classes with confidence, social awareness, and a familiarity with routines and inquiry-based learning. Their experiences have prepared them to navigate new ideas and engage positively with peers and adults alike.

The long-term legacy of Kiota lies in the children themselves. These early years shape who they become, learners, community members, and future custodians of the land. By providing a warm, structured, and inspiring environment, Kiota is helping raise a generation rooted in both education and a profound connection to the natural world that surrounds them.

Ol Jogi School Chess Journey 2025
From Classrooms to International Arenas

At Ol Jogi School, chess has flourished since Alex, our wonderful volunteer mentor from Luxembourg, introduced the program in 2024. He wanted to help the students learn how to think strategically, be disciplined, and work together as a team. Seeing their potential, Alex passed the torch to Ambrose Lonuko, a dedicated teacher who has nurtured its growth. Ambrose fostered friendly competitions and structured learning, helping the program thrive.

In April 2025, five students—Dorcas, Peter, Raymond, Stephen, and William—shone at the Kenyan National Chess Championships at Mang'u High School. It was their first high-level competition. William (U15) and Raymond (U11) each scored 6 out of 9 points, qualifying for international competition. Their teammates showed resilience, growth, and sportsmanship. This experience taught them the importance of preparation, flexibility, and mindset.

In May, William and Raymond traveled to Mombasa for their first international chess tournament and their first SGR train journey. They enjoyed seeing the Indian Ocean and meeting international students. Both students won their final games, gaining confidence and independence.

In September, Ol Jogi students competed at the Three Rivers Chess Tournament in Nanyuki, showing confidence and maturity. They finished in the top three across different age groups, including Dorcas (U16) taking first place, Stephen (U14), and Zarella (U12), a new player. Lopua and Evans also earned medals.

The school's excitement for the future led to teaching chess to Grade 4 students, with older students mentoring them. This fosters leadership, teamwork, and ensures the chess program's continued success.

In 2025, Ol Jogi's chess students demonstrated strategic thinking, teamwork, and the game's valuable lessons. The program exemplifies how support, guidance, and self-belief can open doors, from local classrooms to global competitions in only one year!

William and Raymond

Together We Succeed!

Cooking with the Wild

Deep in the wild heart of Kenya's Laikipia Plateau, where acacia trees lift their crowns into the sky and wildlife moves unhindered across an ancient landscape, one might not expect to find a chef in boots inspecting tomato vines or discussing compost ratios. Yet at Ol Jogi Conservancy, the Executive Chef's world extends far beyond the kitchen. His domain includes the gardens, orchards, hives, and the landscapes that sustain both cuisine and community, weaving together two departments, Kitchen and Landscaping, into a single, living system where soil, flavour, and creativity evolve side by side.

The Garden as a Pantry, the Kitchen as a Classroom

Chef Kurt's day often begins with mud on his shoes and a notebook in hand. He moves through rows of herbs and vegetables, greeting gardeners, assessing what is thriving, and occasionally sighing at what has been eaten, whether by insects, porcupines, rock hyrax, or the occasional ambitious squirrel with a taste for mint. The Landscaping Department is far more than visual beautification. It is the conservancy's green engine, where vegetables, herbs, and fruits are cultivated organically, supported by bees whose hives strengthen both the gardens and the orchard, and chickens that quietly contribute to soil health and breakfast. As part of his leadership, Kurt trains the Landscaping team in soil care, composting, seed propagation, irrigation timing, biodiversity, and natural pest control. The aim is not simply to grow produce, but to understand the ecological logic behind every decision.

In the Kitchen, he reinforces the same philosophy, teaching culinary precision, creativity, and deep respect for ingredients. His team learns classic techniques and modern plating, but also sustainable practices such as minimising waste, repurposing trimmings, and designing menus around what the garden yields each week. His mantra is simple: "If you can't grow it, you can't respect it." And in time, every young cook becomes a student of nature.

The partnership between garden and kitchen is continuous. Gardeners grow the ingredients that drive the menu; chefs transform the harvest into dishes that honour the land. It is a daily dialogue between soil and plate, shaping Ol Jogi's culinary identity.

Struggles, Soil, and the Sweetness of Success

Managing both kitchens and gardens means balancing two unpredictable worlds, one ruled by weather, the other by time. There are days when basil wilts, irrigation stumbles, or the bees seem more intrigued by the pastry section than the orchards. And there are nights when Kurt must pivot quickly, transforming surplus zucchini into inventive menus or reviving tired herbs with compost and care.

These challenges often come with humour. When a chicken once strutted into a staff meeting, the Chef welcomed it as a "guest speaker on protein sourcing." When storms rolled in, he reminded the team, "Every storm brings better soil." Behind the laughter lies a deeper truth: success at Ol Jogi is measured not only in elegant plates, but in the health of the land and the growth of the people tending it.

A Living Circle of Craft and Conservation

The harmony between garden and kitchen is deliberate. Organic waste returns to the compost heap, nourishing the soil that grows next season's crops. Bees pollinate the orchards; chickens aerate and enrich the soil; the garden gives back to the chefs who nurture it. It is a regenerative loop, a quiet choreography of creation and renewal. For guests, dining at Ol Jogi is more than a meal. It is a distilled expression of place. A tomato salad is not simply fresh; it is the culmination of collaboration between gardeners, chefs, bees, weather, and patience. A drizzle of honey contains the story of blossoms scattered across the conservancy.

Where Passion Grows Wild

There is a quiet poetry to this work, a blend of labour and laughter, compost and creativity. It is not always glamorous, but it is deeply rewarding. Under the Chef's vision, the kitchen becomes a classroom, the garden becomes a pantry, and the team becomes a family bound by curiosity, craftsmanship, and the rhythms of nature. In a place where elephants graze beyond the kitchen window and bees hum through the herb beds, cooking becomes an act of partnership with the wild. At its centre stands a chef in muddy shoes, smiling, tasting, and teaching, proving every day that true flavour begins with the earth beneath our feet.

Ol Jogi
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