

JANUARY 2024



2023 Annual Report:

OUR JOURNEY. **OUR SUCCESSES.**



For the African golden cat. For local communities.



THREATENED BY HUMAN ACTIVITY

OUR MISSION:

To conserve the African golden cat by improving the lives of local people.





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Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the AGCCA partners, whose dedication and hard work form the backbone of our success.

We also want to express appreciation to our local communities and the national wildlife authorities for their enthusiasm for conservation work.

We are grateful to our financial partners for their unwavering support, and for always being there for us.

Our heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Jim Sanderson (and the Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation) for his decades of mentorship to us and for his patronage for the AGCCA.

Together, we have built a family that is integral to the AGCCA's journey.



African golden cats in peril due to hunting and habitat destruction



Foreword

Mwez "Badru" Mugerwa
CHAIR, AGCCA

Esteemed AGCCA Partners, financial partners, and local communities, as we reflect on 2023, it is with great pleasure and gratitude that I present to you our Annual Report for 2023.

In the pages that follow, you will discover the remarkable achievements and milestones the AGCCA has reached in 2023.

These accomplishments stand as a testament to the collective effort and commitment of everyone involved with the AGCCA.

We are delighted to share our inspiring journey, dedicated to inspiring local community support for the conservation of African goldenies. We have remarkably achieved this through the active engagement of local families

in alternative livelihood-improving initiatives that dissuade hunting while improving the local way of life.

The ever-growing AGCCA family, now with 36 partners in 19 of the 22 countries of the species putative range, is a testimony of our united continental effort.

The need to extend anti-hunting initiatives to

more local families remains pertinent, as bushmeat hunting remains a serious threat across the African golden cat range.

Your trust and confidence inspire us to reach new corners of the African golden cat range, and we are excited to share our accomplishments and aspirations with you.

Thank you for being an integral part of our story.



African goldies

...are restricted to the tropical rainforests of equatorial Africa, where hunting (legal or illegal (hunting)) of wildlife for bushmeat consumption and trade is ubiquitous.

Spanning 30 countries, the tropical rainforest of Africa covers 3.6 million Km² – being the only contiguous stretch of forest wilderness after the Amazon.

The area is a stronghold for conserving the African golden cat. The predicted growth

in Africa's human population, coupled with poverty and the need for animal protein, is likely to increase bushmeat hunting for sustenance and income. The most commonly used hunting tools, such as snares, pitfalls, or nets, are non-selective, killing or injuring non-target species, including the lesser-known African goldies.

For example, in 2019, an estimated 80 African golden cats perished in snares at three protected areas in Uganda.

The root causes of hunting are poverty, lack of employment, and access to animal protein. Incentivizing and engaging local communities strengthens interventions against hunting.

Quick Facts

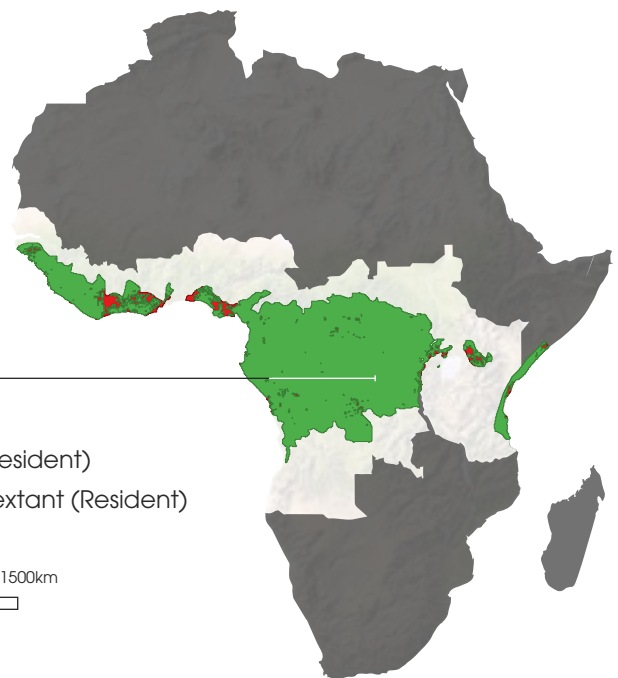
80

African golden cats perished in snares at three protected areas in Uganda in one year

African golden cats are restricted to the **tropical rainforests** of equatorial Africa

■ Extant (Resident)
■ Possibly extant (Resident)

0 750 1500km



Who we are

The African Golden Cat Conservation Alliance (AGCCA) - a network of dedicated African nationals (est. 2019) with a long-term vision to implement conservation activities against human threats to the African golden cat in all countries of the species range.

AGCCA implements its conservation initiatives via a two-pronged approach: 1) local community mobilisation and 2) local community livelihood improvement. Through these initiatives, we have established strong rapport and partnerships with the local communities, national wildlife authorities, and our financial partners.

Our conservation actions are led and implemented by dedicated African conservationists alongside their local communities.

The AGCCA currently has 36 partners in 19 of the 22 range countries.

These countries include Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and South Sudan, where AGCCA partners have discovered the African goldies there for the first time.

The AGCCA partners coordinate and implement conservation initiatives for the African goldies, together with their local communities.

Our mission is clear: to spearhead the conservation of the African golden cat across the species range, together with our local communities, through community-based conservation practices.

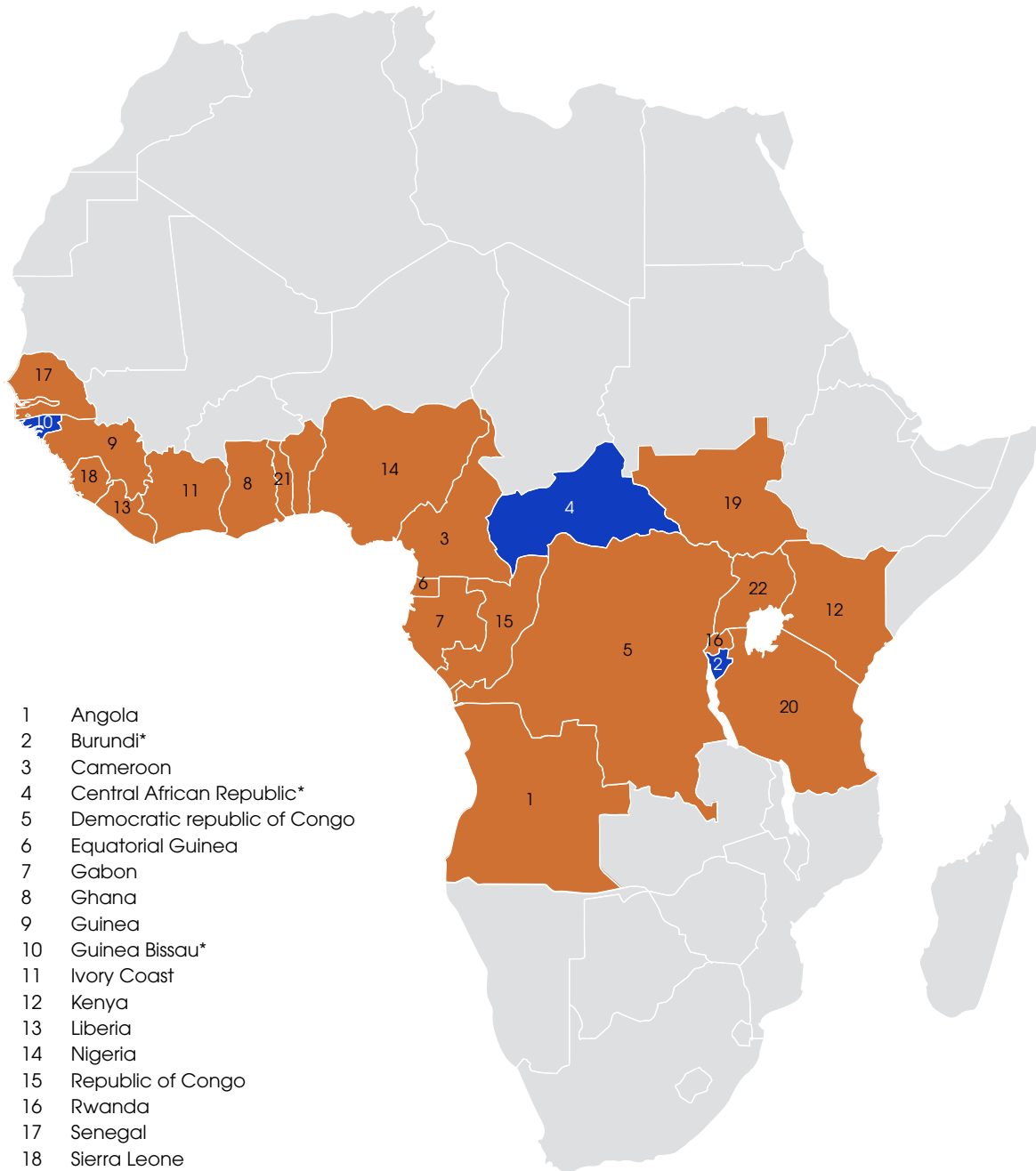
Quick Facts

36

partners in
19 of the
22 range
countries.



A continental conservation effort



*Countries without AGCCA partners



Embaka hosts the AGCCA

AGCCA, conservation efforts for the African goldies are hosted by Embaka - a local Community-Based Conservation Organization (CBO) registered in three districts neighbouring Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

While Embaka was recently (2021) formally registered as a CBO, it counts 12 years of successful community-based conservation and ecological research on the

African goldies in and around Uganda's protected areas.

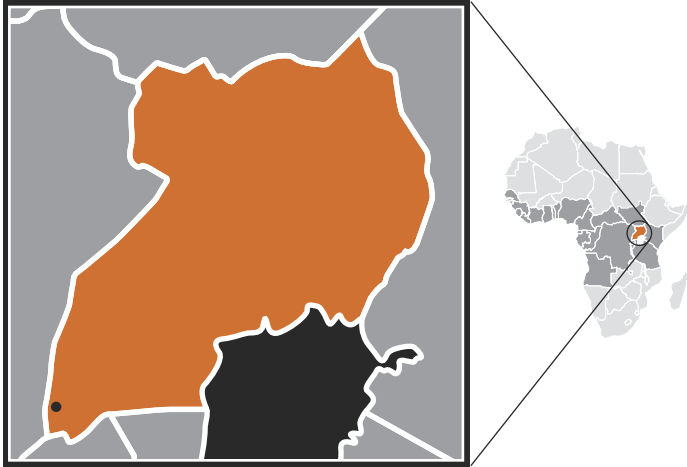
Embaka is the local Kikiga name for the African golden cat, and it reflects our aim of engaging local communities to mitigate human threats and their impacts on the species and its habitat through local community engagement and the provision of incentives (e.g., alternative sources of income and animal protein).

Embaka is currently working in and around protected areas in Uganda: Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Echuya Forest Reserve, Bugoma Forest Reserve, Kasyoha-Kitom Forest Reserve, Kibale National Park and Mgahinga National Park.

Registration of the AGCCA as an international NGO is in progress.

Embaka counts 12 years of successful community-based conservation and ecological research on the African goldies in and around Uganda's protected areas.





Uganda | Bwindi

MWEZI "BADRU" MUGERWA

The project at **Bwindi Impenetrable National Park** started in 2013 by Mwezi "Badru" Mugerwa to address the two key drivers of unauthorised hunting: the need for meat and money. We have extended our Hunters to Protectors (P2P) program by mobilising 599 households, bringing the total Embaka membership to 1,980 households.

We increased the number of voluntary community-based anti-hunting watch groups from 37 to 57.

Our Pigs for Bushmeat (P4B) program established five new "pig seed banks", increasing the number to 55 with 104 animals, benefiting 64 families. We increased the number of our Conservation Pesa (CPesa) SACCO groups from 10 to 12 with 452 members.

Our Smile for Conservation (\$4C) program increased the number of local people who have received free oral health care, treatment, and education from 539 to 777.

Quick Facts

1,980

Households mobilised for the Embaka membership

104

animals benefited 64 families with our new "pig seed banks".

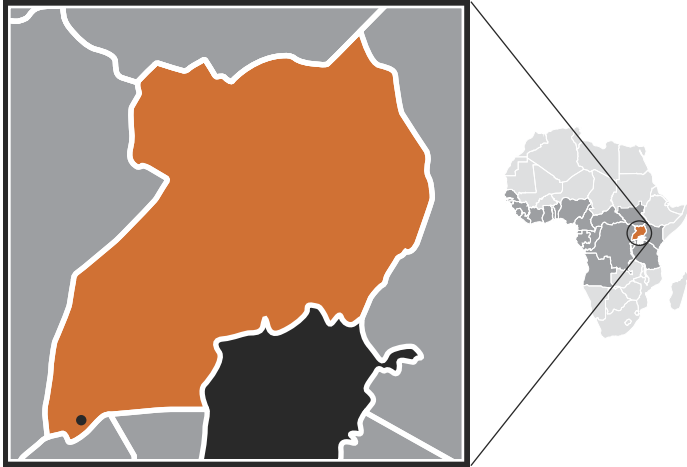
452

members from 12 Conservation Pesa SACCO groups

777

Local people who received free oral health care, treatment and education





Uganda | Echuya

EMMANUEL AKAMPURIRA

Emmanuel Akampurira started the Echuya project in 2022 to spearhead community-based conservation of the African goldies through livelihood-improving initiatives at **Echuya Forest Reserve**.

We have thus far mobilised 425 people to join the conservation efforts of the African goldies.

We distributed 77 livestock (goats and sheep) as an alternative source of animal protein and household income from bushmeat

consumption and trade. We have also established four SACCO groups with 120 members. Additionally, we have introduced soccer as a platform to leverage the youth's support for conserving the African goldies at Echuya and across southwest Uganda.

Over the next year, we plan to address the perceived human-African golden cat conflict, where African goldies have been killed in retaliation for the depredation of livestock and poultry at Echuya.



Quick Facts

425

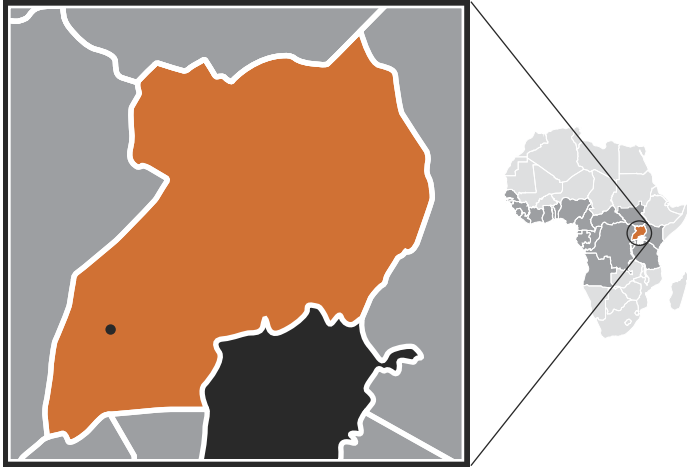
People mobilised to join the conservation efforts of the African goldies

77

Livestock (goats and sheep) distributed

120

Members in our 4 SACCO groups



Uganda | Kasyoha-Kitomi

ISSAC TWINOMUHANGI

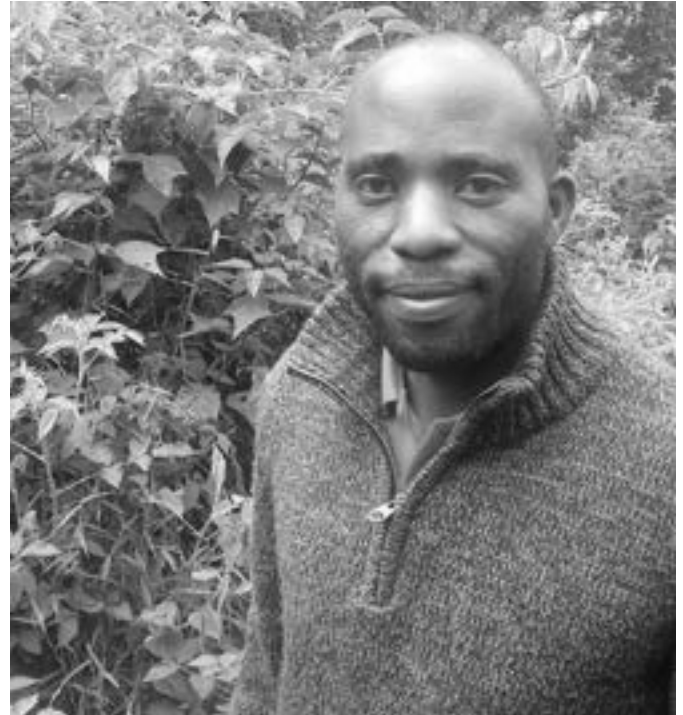
At **Kasyoha-Kitomi Forest Reserve** Issac Twinomuhangi, under the auspices of Embaka CBO, has been spearheading the conservation of the African goldies since 2021. Our efforts there have continued to this day.

In 2023, we persuaded 100 more households and their members to support the conservation of the African goldies. We established three anti-hunting surveillance teams as custodians of the African goldies in the three communities.

We provided 30 goats to 30 families as an alternative source of animal protein and household income. During field surveys, we learned that the African goldies at Kasyoha-Kitomi are more threatened than previously imagined. Many households in the local communities adjacent to Echuya still participate in unauthorised hunting.

As a result, we are motivated to double our community conservation efforts and local engagement around Kasyoha-Kitomi in 2024.

We will expand our livestock seed banks (goats) from 30 to 60 led by reformed hunter families. We will also establish 3 SACCO groups.



Quick Facts

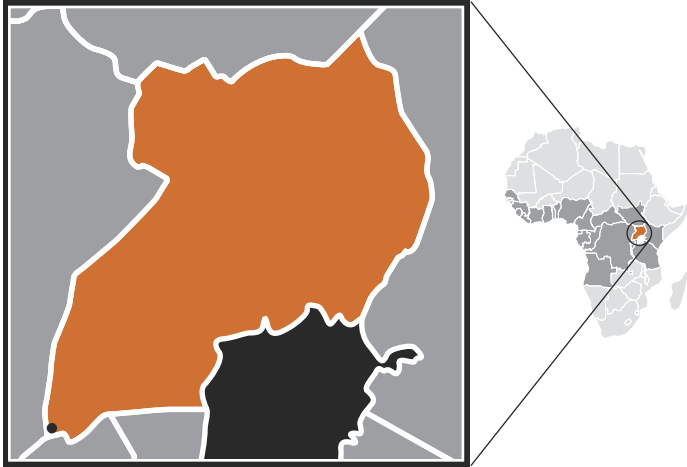
30

Goats to 30 families

100

households and their members to support the conservation of the African goldies





Uganda | Mgahinga

IRENE NATUKUNDA

The Mgahinga Gorilla project starting in 2024. Led by Irene Natukunda, the project will engage local families neighbouring **Mgahinga Gorilla National Park** in the conservation of African goldies.

The project will establish a community-based conservation program that addresses the need for meat and money as key drivers of unauthorised bushmeat hunting.

The main objectives of the project are:

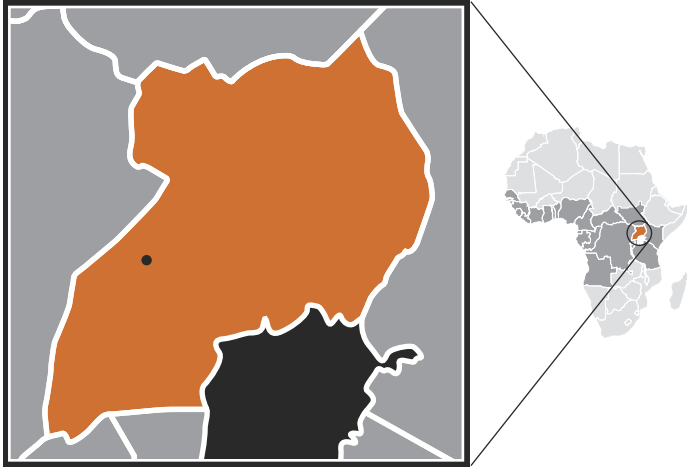
- 1) To create voluntary community-based anti-hunting surveillance teams populated by local families living closest to the national park.
- 2) To introduce an alternative locally acceptable source of animal protein to bushmeat.



- 3) To provide an alternative source of income to bushmeat trade through Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCO) groups.

The overarching aim is to create conservation awareness for the African goldies following in the footsteps of other AGCCA community-based conservation initiatives.





Uganda | Bugoma

JULIUS "CAESAR" MUTALE

Julius "Caesar" Mutale spearheads the conservation of the African goldies at **Bugoma Central Forest Reserve**, where the species was only recently (2021) confirmed.

Unauthorised hunting for bushmeat consumption and trade is widespread posing a serious threat to wildlife.

We have engaged 300 local community members and persuaded over 50 active hunters to surrender their hunting tools.

As an alternative source of meat and income, we have so far distributed over 40 livestock to 40 families living closest to the forest.

We have also engaged local village leaders and hunters' wives as conservation guardians for the African goldies, as our conservation initiatives are here to improve the welfare of the family and community as a whole.



Quick Facts

300

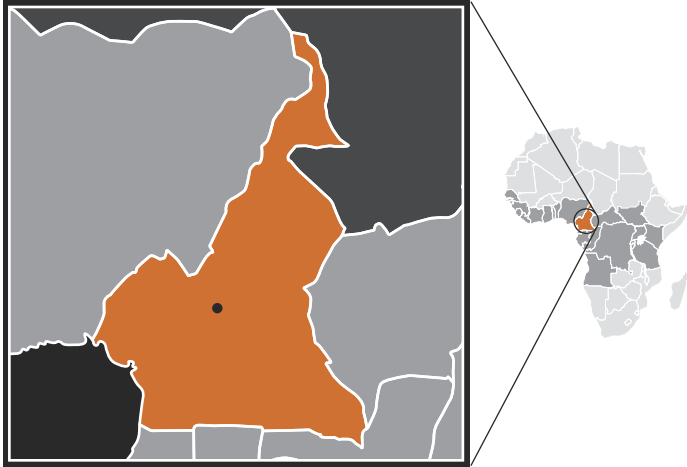
Local community members mobilized for the conservation of the African goldies

50

Active hunters persuaded to surrender their hunting tools

40

Livestock distributed to 40 families closest to the forest



Cameroon | Mpem et Djim



FRANKLIN **SIMO**

Franklin Simo together with the Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Initiative, a local wildlife conservation non-profit, lead on the conservation efforts for the African goldies at **Mpem et Djim National Park** in Cameroon.

Our conservation initiative aims to reduce dependence on bushmeat by improving local livelihoods. We have mobilised 271 local community members against hunting and hunting. We have also established 10 Saving and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) to diversify income



sources, provided 14 pigs, 6 sheeps and 2 goats to 20 families as alternatives to bushmeat, and operated a mobile dental clinic and conservation outreach to 127 local people.

Over 200 families across ten villages adjacent to the national park have benefited from our conservation work on the African goldies.



The project's direct benefits to wildlife and local people have inspired local community support for African golden cat conservation.

271

Local community members mobilised against hunting and hunting

22

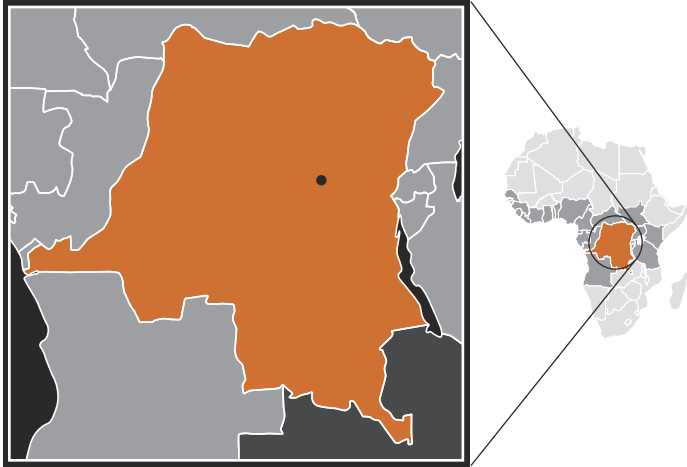
livestock were donated to 20 families as alternatives to bushmeat

127

local people have benefited from free mobile dental clinics and conservation outreach

10

SACCOs established to diversify income sources



DRC | Lomami

RODRIGUE **BATUMIKE**

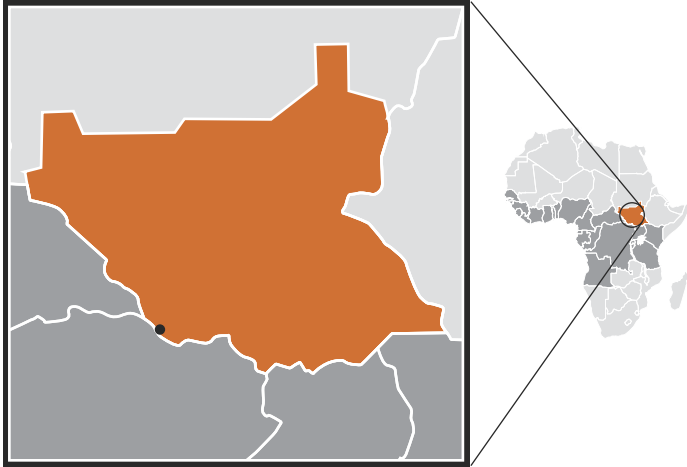
In September 2021, Rodrigue Batumike started a community based conservation initiative to reduce the threat hunting poses on the African goldies in **Lomami National Park** in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Due to poverty, local communities living adjacent to Lomami hunt wildlife for subsistence (consumption and trade).

This project is supporting four villages (Lukunda, Deo, Fumbeka and Thsenge) to establish smallholder pig and rabbit farms as alternative sources of meat and income.

The project is also raising awareness among school children in five schools about the importance of conserving the African goldies.





South Sudan | Bire Kpatuos

IMRAN EJOTRE AND JOHNSON MANGIE



Imran Ejotre and Johnson Mangie lead the conservation efforts of the African goldies at **Bire Kpatuos Game Reserve** in South Sudan, where the species was first recorded in 2015 using camera traps.

Hunting for bushmeat consumption and trade was identified as a serious threat.

We directly address this threat through a community-based livestock restocking program called "Livestock Seedbank" to provide alternative animal protein sources and household income.

We have thus far established five seed banks comprising of 60 goats benefitting over 200 households.

Our major challenge delivering on our conservation work is the gross lack of livestock in the local

markets, forcing us to traverse long distances to procure from the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, further increasing the costs for the initiative.

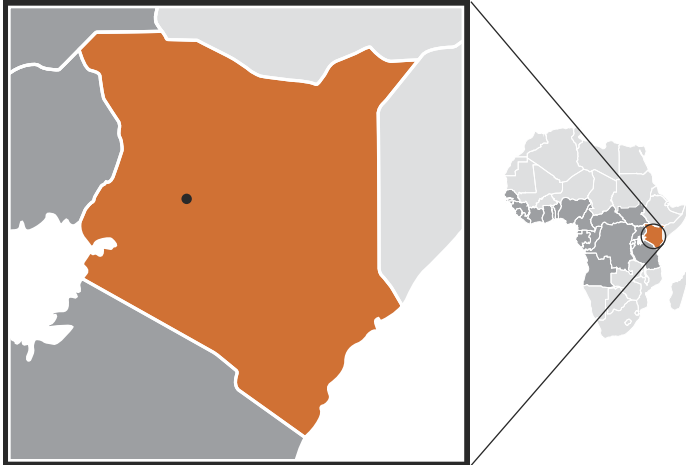
As a solution for this, we established the first local community managed animal breeding centre to minimise the sourcing of livestock from neighbouring countries while sustaining the Livestock Seedbank program.

Quick Facts

200

households have benefitted from the five seed banks comprising of 60 goats that we established





Kenya | Gatamaiyu

SARAH OMUSULA

Sarah Omusula has been implementing community based conservation initiatives for the African goldies with local communities adjacent to the **Gatamaiyu forest reserve** where we recorded the African golden cat on camera traps for the first time in 2022.

In 2023, eight meetings, totalling 200 people around the Gatamaiyu forest reserve, were held to discuss the threats to the species and its habitats.

We organised a snare removal activity with 27 community teams, who also sensitised the communities on the impacts of snaring and bushmeat hunting on human health and the ecosystem.

We recovered 12 snares that would have accidentally captured or killed the African goldies.

We have also introduced smallholder livestock and poultry business as alternatives to bushmeat and household income.

We have supported 15 former hunting families with 15 merino sheep, and another 21 families received four chickens and a cock.

We have initiated a chicken breeding centre to provide a reliable poultry supply.

Quick Facts

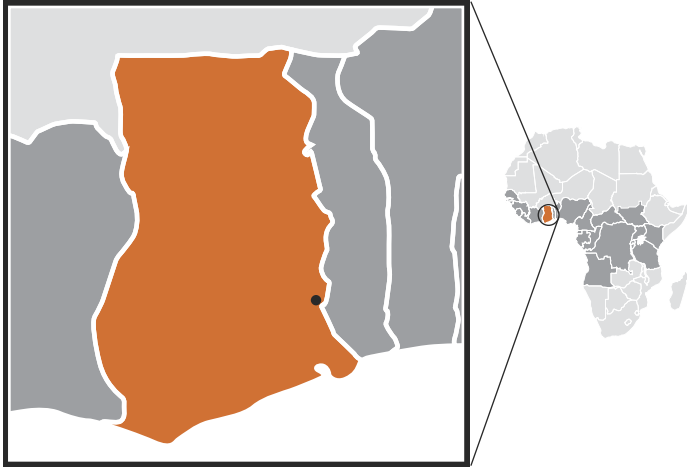
200

people mobilized
snare removal teams

15

Former hunting families
supported with merino
sheep, and another **21**
families received poultry.





Ghana | Afadjato-Agumatsa

MAC ELIKEM NUTSUAKOR

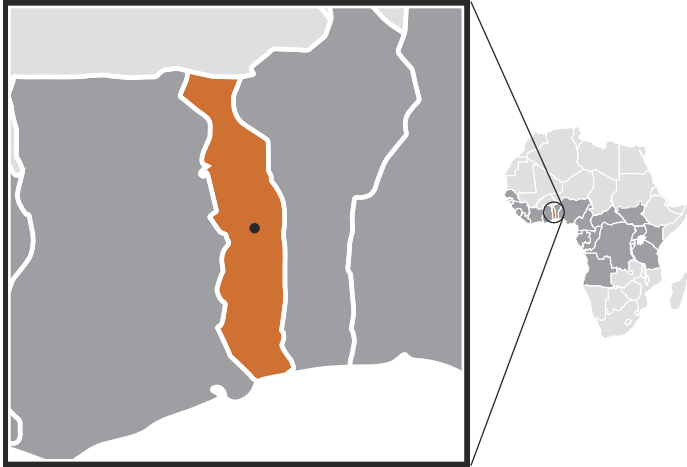
Mac Elikem Nutsuakor is leading the conservation efforts of the African goldies in Ghana, specifically in the **Afadjato-Agumatsa Community Conservation Area**.

The aim of the project is to mitigate the hunting of wildlife and the threat it poses to the African goldies.

We have learned from local communities that the populations of the African goldies have declined and occur in small numbers.

Our immediate next step is to put in place initiatives to mitigate hunting to safeguard the remaining African goldies and their habitat.





Togo | Fazao-Malfakassa

DELAGNON **ASSOU** AND ABRE **SONHAYE-OUYE**

Delagnon Assou and Abre Sonhaye-Ouye lead AGCCA conservation efforts of the African goldies in Togo, specifically at **Fazao-Malfakassa National Park**. Bushmeat hunting is a primary income source for local communities around Fazao.

Hunters have moved from local to more advanced techniques of hunting.

This shift in hunting behaviour has expedited declines in wildlife abundance, including the African goldies.

Our community-based anti-hunting awareness campaign has engaged 1,100 local people in anti-hunting initiatives, including 12 communities and 100 active hunters whose livelihoods depend on hunting for sustenance and income.

We established a community-based livestock program to provide an alternative source of animal protein to bushmeat hunting, consumption, and trade.



Quick Facts

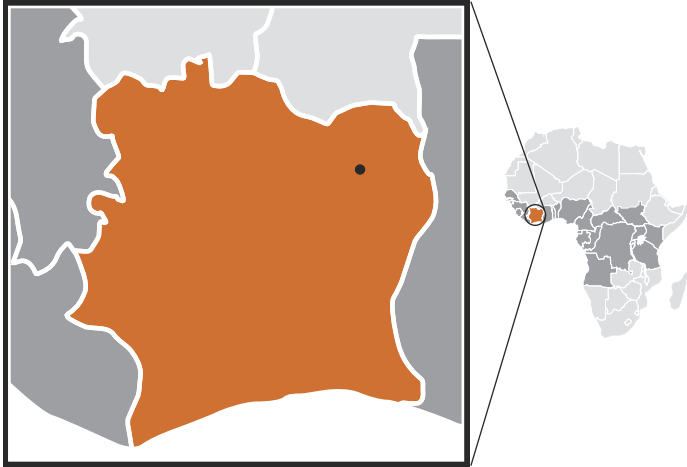
1,100

people engaged in anti-hunting initiatives in 12 communities

28

Goats provided to 22 families in six villages

We have provided 28 goats and sheep to 22 families in six villages.



Ivory Coast | Comoe

KOUADIO **JUSLIN**

In the Ivory Coast, Kouadio Juslin and Mimea Internationale, partners of AGCCA, are implementing conservation activities for the African goldies at **Comoe National Park**.

We address the need for food and income as key drivers of hunting in communities living close to Comoe.

We supplied food crop seeds to communities in three villages. Moreover, we provided livestock—goats, sheep, and chickens—to 46 families, aiming to improve

their livelihoods and reduce their dependence on hunting as a source of animal protein.

Witnessing the commitment towards conservation of these beneficiary families was immensely gratifying.

This initial phase not only improved their way of life but also fostered stronger relationships between local communities, the Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves (the park authority), and the African goldies.

Our collective goal is to develop a community-led conservation plan for the preservation of the African golden cat.



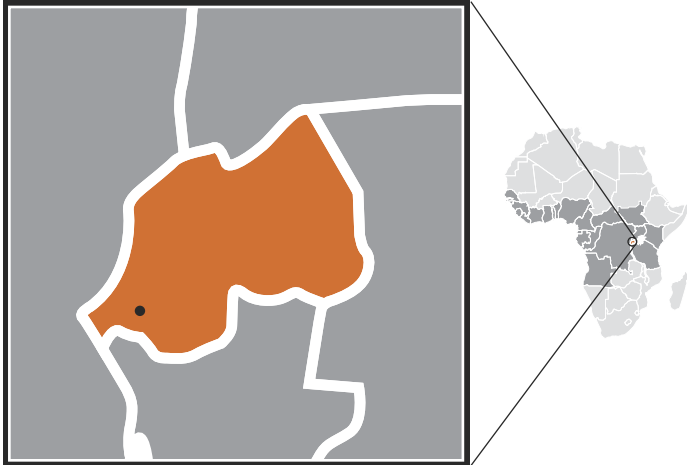
Quick Facts

46

Families provided with livestock — goats, sheep, and chickens

28

Goats provided to 22 families in six villages



Rwanda | Nyungwe

JEAN-CLAUDE DUSABIMANA

At Nyungwe National Park in Rwanda, Jean-Claude Dusabimana and his team have been implementing community based conservation activities for the African goldies since 2021. The key threat being addressed is bushmeat hunting. We have expanded our small-holder pig farming programme from 30 to 60 ex-hunter families.

Local families sell piglets for income, and raise the rest for meat, directly addressing the key drivers of unauthorised hunting of wildlife.

"The pig farming project rescued me from routine hunting driven by desperation for income. With no alternative, I knew it was against conservation, but now, this conservation initiative brought about by

the African golden cat has transformed my livelihood. I'll never consider hunting or encroaching on the forest again.

I urge more interventions like this to support others in our community," Venuste MUTARAMBIRWA 50 years old, Nkomane Sector.

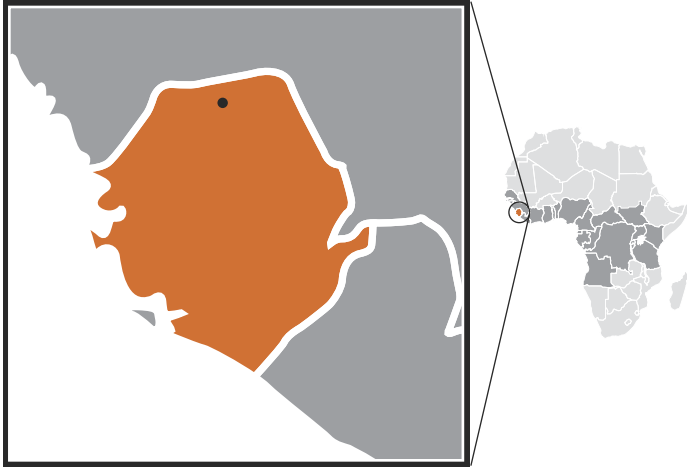


Quick Facts

60

Families are now engaged in pig farming program, an increased from 30 ex-hunter families





Sierra Leone | Outamba Kilimi

PETTOY **KAMARA** AND ABDULAI **BARRIE**

Petty Kamara and Abdulai Barrie are implementing threat reduction activities for the African goldies at **Outamba Kilimi National Park** in Sierra Leone.

This initiative was preceded by a socio economic survey which ascertained the presence of the African golden cat and the threats it faces at Outamba Kilimi.

From the 120 questionnaires we administered, 90% of the respondents acknowledged the presence of the African goldies.

On the other hand, 90% of the respondents acknowledged the threat to the long term survival of the species is forest destruction, driven by logging as a key source of household income.

We introduced community based smallholder livestock farming as an alternative source of household income.

We established livestock "seedbanks" comprising of 30 goats in five villages around Outamba kilimi.

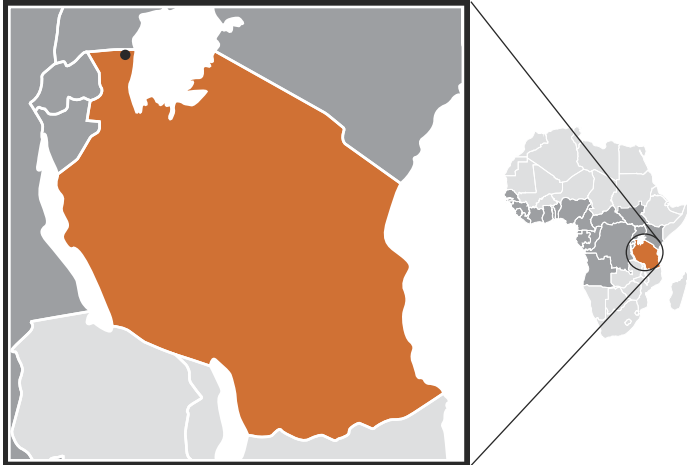
This initiative has inspired local community support for African golden cat conservation at Outamba kilimi.



Quick Facts

90%

of the respondents acknowledged the threat to the long term survival of the species is forest destruction



Tanzania | Minziro

EMMANUEL MARTIN

Emmanuel Martin has been implementing community conservation initiatives for the African goldies at **Minziro Forest Reserve** in Tanzania since 2021.

The density of the African goldies at Minziro has been estimated at 4 individuals /100 km², being significantly smaller compared to similar habitats in Gabon and Uganda.

The African goldies at Minziro are threatened by bushmeat hunting, wildfires, logging, firewood collection, charcoal burning and cattle incursion.

These threats are driven by poverty, lack of grazing

areas, and high demand for charcoal and firewood in nearby townships. We have addressed the key drivers behind these threats by providing alternatives for wood based energy and bushmeat.

We have established tree nurseries, with 2,800 seedlings belonging to two indigenous species, as alternative sources of firewood.

We have visited 10 schools to create awareness about the African goldies among 1,300 school kids. We have also started 24 livestock seed banks to provide an alternative source of animal protein to 24 local families.

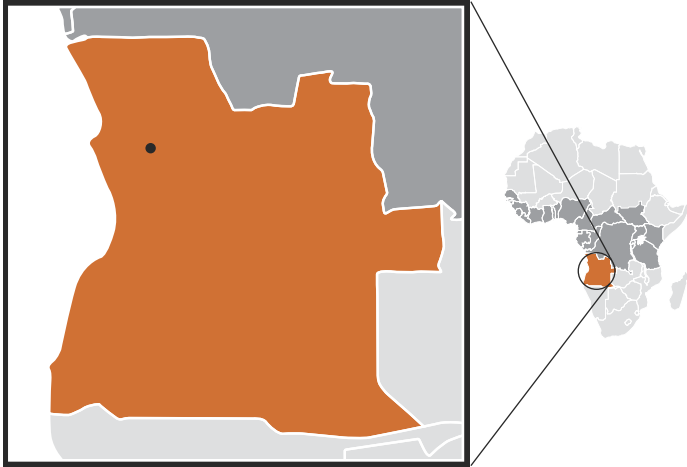
2,800

Tree seedlings donated to local families as alternative sources of firewood.

1,300

school kids in 10 schools visited to create awareness about the African goldies"





Angola | Maiombe

EDUARDO LUTONDO

The conservation of the African goldies in Angola is spearheaded by Eduardo Lutondo. Eduardo and his team conducted the maiden surveys of the African goldies in **Maiombe National Park**

After 6,600 camera trap nights, the African goldies have not been recorded in Angola, despite frequent records of several emblematic species, such as the first records of gorillas and chimpanzees. We intend to continue camera trapping in the northern part of Maiombe.

Our priority is to confirm the presence of the species in Angola, and subsequently establish a community led conservation program to mitigate bushmeat hunting and its threat to the African goldies.

Bushmeat hunting and trade remains a key threat to the species as evidenced by



recent reports of African golden cat specimens in bushmeat markets in Angola.

Our priority is to subsequently establish a community led conservation program to

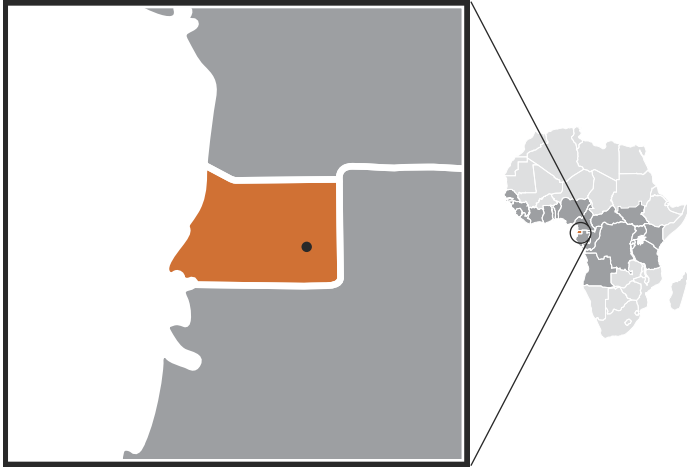
mitigate bushmeat hunting and its threat to the African goldies.

Quick Facts

6.6k

Camera traps nights





Equatorial Guinea | Piedra Nzaz

ANASTASIA AMOR **NENGO**

In Equatorial Guinea, Anastasia Amor Nengono leads the conservation efforts of the African goldies at the **Piedra Nzaz**. There, the key threat to the African goldies is bushmeat hunting.

We have developed a restricted access to the protected area for local hunters, combined with leveraging the commitment of those hunters to establishing community based conservation initiatives.

We have engaged with authorities and educational centres to create awareness for African golden cat conservation.



We have persuaded 110 families to support anti-hunting initiatives, and established 20 community groups as custodians of the African goldies.

To dissuade bushmeat hunting, we have provided 20 pigs (as an alternative source of meat and income) to 20 families in four frontline villages.



Quick Facts

20

Families provided with 20 pigs as an alternative source of income

110

families to support anti-hunting campaign

20

community groups as custodians of the African goldies

Celebrating Conservation

In November 2023, we hosted our second summit- the AGCCA bi-annual summit. The summit is a celebration of our conservation efforts. We share lessons learned. Both success and failures. An African storytelling experience.

We also get the unique opportunity to see African goldies, thanks to our partner and friend, Thomas Price at the CTC conservation centre in Uganda.

We also visit and learn from ongoing threat-reduction initiatives. We visited Ema's conservation program for the African goldies at Minziro in Tanzania.

We witnessed his primary school environmental education program. We visited the tree nursery and livestock seed bank.

We interacted with local communities and heard first-hand how the aforementioned conservation initiatives have dissuaded them from hunting and destroying the African golden cat habitat.



Opportunities

AGCCA has grown remarkably from 13 partners in 2021 to 36 today. This is testimony of our unified ambition to conserve the African goldies across their range.

This growth has unavoidably come with increased funding needs. The detrimental outcome has been a scaled-down implementation of conservation activities.

Our partners notably **SWCCF**, **MBZSCF**, **re:wild**, **Panthera** and the **IUCN Cat Specialist Group** have been there for us with their financial support.

In 2023, we received a total of \$137,912 in donations: \$50,000 (re:wild), \$56,337 (MBZSCF and SWCCF), \$20,000 (Panthera) and \$11,575 (IUCN Cat Specialist Group).

Panthera donated a further 200 camera traps for use in a standardised species range-wide camera trap assessment and monitoring grid.

The accruing data is:

- 1) To better understand the species distribution and population trends while contributing to future IUCN RedList Assessments, and;
- 2) To evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of our conservation actions in mitigating the threats and the resultant positive impact on the African goldies.

For 2024, we need a total of \$200,000. We start 2024 with \$24,000 (from MBZSCF) and \$25,000 (from Re:Wild). A shortfall of \$151,000 is needed to continue our conservation work.

Quick Facts

USD 50K

Received from **re:wild** as support for our conservation efforts

Over USD 56K

Received from **MBZSCF** and **SWCCF** as support for our conservation efforts

USD 20K

Received from **Panthera** as support for the AGCCA summit

USD 11K

Received for the AGCCA summit from **IUCN Cat Specialist Group** as support for the AGCCA summit

200

Camera traps donated by **Panthera**



To our partners, THANK YOU



