

# Impact, Inspiration, & Achievement

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2023 Impact Report





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## The Grumeti Fund is a wildlife conservation & community development non-profit operating in the western corridor of the Serengeti.

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We strive to protect and preserve the Serengeti ecosystem long into the future, and to do so, we implement a portfolio of projects focused on anti-poaching, community outreach, conservation management, relationship building, applied research, innovation, and monitoring.



# Vision. Resilience. Accomplishment.

## Celebrating 20 Years of the Grumeti Fund

In 2023, Grumeti Fund looks back on our 20 years as a conservation and community development organisation.

Without question, the past 20 years have forced us to confront hardship, challenge, and sacrifice. Even more certain, however, we look back and see the unwavering dedication of this team, an unfaltering vision for a future where the Serengeti thrives in harmony with its human and animal communities, and successes in scales that none of us could have predicted when our work began in 2003.

When we look out over the 350,000-acre Grumeti concessions today, we see a different place than existed here 20 years ago. After 20 years, we can say with confidence that the eastern black rhino has been reconnected with its home range; that hundreds of students have been given opportunities to turn their academic dreams into realities; that former poachers are now some of our most courageous wildlife protectors; that thousands

of girls have learned about their rights and uncovered their potential; that innovative research here has changed the way that we understand this ecosystem; and that wildlife that had once abandoned this area now roams free and abundantly in this iconic wilderness.

These 20 years have forced us to be patient. They have tested our resilience, and they have redefined our own understandings of impact, inspiration, and achievement. After two decades, much has changed in the Grumeti concessions, but one thing remains undeniably true:

***We are the Grumeti Fund.  
We work towards a future where  
people and wildlife live together  
sustainably, forever –  
we always have, and we always  
will.***



## Messages from Our Leaders

Our leaders, Matt Perry and Noel Mbise, take a moment to reflect on 20 years of the Grumeti Fund, what they have meant, & where we are headed.

A hornbill sits in a tree. | Tara Shupe

### Success Owed to Collective Partnership

It is with great pride and gratitude that we share our 2023 Impact Report. This year, our dedicated team, in collaboration with our key partners and diverse stakeholders, uncovered novel ways to commit to our mission. We worked together to ensure that conservation efforts in the Serengeti create value – protecting biodiversity, preserving ecosystems, generating opportunities, and unlocking positive impacts with local communities. Throughout this report, you will discover the transformative power of our joint initiatives and uncover hope for the future of conservation in the Serengeti.

The conservation of the Serengeti relies on collaborative relationships, and the Grumeti Fund deeply appreciates our invaluable partnerships with the Tanzanian government

and local communities, including the Tanzanian Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA) and the Ikona Wildlife Management Area. Their active engagement and cooperation are vital to our shared goal of safeguarding the biodiversity, habitats, and cultural heritage of this iconic landscape. Together, we have worked tirelessly for 20 years to ensure that the Serengeti is preserved sustainably for the benefit and enjoyment of Tanzania and her global community.

Our collective accomplishments would be impossible without the unwavering support of our donors and supporters. We extend our most sincere gratitude to each one of you – thank you for joining us on this conservation journey. We hope that the stories shared here will inspire you and reaffirm the importance of protecting the Serengeti for generations yet to come.



Matt looks over the protected area. | Tara Shupe

**MATT PERRY**  
GENERAL MANAGER |  
Anti-Poaching & Conservation Management



Embracing Evolution & Adaptability

20 years ago, Grumeti Fund was founded based on a vision – one in which the iconic and irreplaceable Serengeti ecosystem could thrive in partnership with its people. Today, we strive toward that same vision, and celebrate the milestones made in bringing it to life.

In Grumeti Fund’s first few years, our efforts focused on establishing a team, identifying our priorities, and mobilizing resources to address urgent issues – namely rampant poaching, land encroachment, and a lack of basic infrastructure in community areas. While daunting, we were hopeful that Grumeti’s highly degraded plains could one day recover to once again provide habitat to wildlife as well as ecosystem services, jobs, and opportunity to surrounding communities.

Ten years later, we began to see this ecosystem improve, poaching decline, and relationships with local communities strengthen. We had started collecting ecological data, helping us understand the changes we were contributing to and the challenges we would have to confront – a process that sparked us to revolutionise our strategies, alter our structure, and expand our capacities.

Since then, another decade has passed, and today, we reflect on how much the Grumeti Fund and these lands have changed since we first stepped foot on these plains 20 years ago.

The successes – both in our neighbouring communities and in the protected areas – fill us with great joy and a sense of pride.

Students have benefited from scholarships, environmental education, and better teaching environments; girls have been empowered; entrepreneurs have been mentored toward their business dreams; this part of the Serengeti Ecosystem, once devoid of wildlife, now thrives in abundance.

While our 20 years are decorated with achievements, they simultaneously remind us of the sacrifices some have made and the challenges yet to come. We will always feel deeply indebted to the generosity, foresight, ingenuity, and perseverance of all those who came before us. The goodwill and support from the Tanzanian government, our neighbouring communities, strategic partners, and generous donors have provided impetus for the success attained so far.

While we have much to celebrate, we are also keenly attuned to the hurdles that lay before us – some old – like the ever-present threat of poaching – and some new – like the mounting dangers of human-wildlife conflict and socioecological impacts borne by a changing climate. These will require us to learn adaptively, develop new skills, embrace innovation, and strengthen strategic partnerships that contribute to our greatest mission for Tanzania and for the world – *ensuring that the Serengeti shall never die!*

NOEL MBISE  
GENERAL MANAGER |  
Research, Monitoring, & Community Outreach



Noel preparing for the aerial game count. | Tara Shupe



# Anti-Poaching Unit

African wildlife is becoming increasingly scarce as habitats continue to disappear, demand for bushmeat intensifies, and international trades of rhino horn and elephant ivory continue. As a result, we are relying on our resilient Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) now more than ever before. Every day, our brave scouts take on the daunting and dangerous mandate to protect this diverse ecosystem, ensuring that it exists for generations to come. By combining strategic technologies, intense field training, intelligence gathering, and community outreach, our APU has deployed a multi-pronged approach that sustainably reduces the poaching threatening this ecosystem.

2023 Statistics



1,548

Kgs of bushmeat confiscated from poachers



58

Poached animals recovered



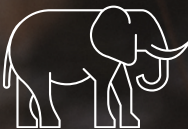
115

Total arrests



420

Total snares removed



0

Elephants poached



0

Rhinos poached



The Mobile Patrol Unit cruises in the field. | Tara Shupe





An anti-poaching scout. | Tara Shupe

# Wildlife Protectors

In 2023, the Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) reinforced their commitment to wildlife protection by increasing patrol coverage of the concession, leading to increases in bushmeat recoveries, poaching identifications, arrests, seizures, and data collection that helps us better anticipate poaching risk and patterns in the future.

## Mobile Patrol Unit

Grumeti Fund’s Mobile Patrol Unit (MPU) is trained to operate from even the most inaccessible areas of the concession on foot and from mobile patrol trailers that are strategically deployed in hotspot zones for days at a time.

The MPU provides critical support to every team of the APU; they confront poachers covertly, sharing vital intelligence between teams and intervening in emergency situations, including during human-wildlife conflict. This year, the elite team patrolled Grumeti’s most remote areas, deterred poachers from entering the protected area, and leveraged their skills and knowledge to make **38 arrests**.

# Capacity Building

The APU is constantly training to confront the changing dynamics of poaching in the Grumeti concessions. In 2023, the Unit developed their team through:



A 3-week human detection & tracking course



First aid trainings



Technology training for the EarthRanger software



Emergency veterinary training



Intensified physical training schedule at CrossFit Faru

## Solidarity Through Training | 2023 Wildlife Ranger Challenge

On 16th September, our APU celebrated the commitments and achievements of anti-poaching teams around the world during the 2023 Wildlife Ranger Challenge. 16 scouts marched 21-kilometres, each carrying a 22-kilogram pack, to demonstrate their solidarity with rangers across the continent that take on the perils of anti-poaching work daily. One of our Grumeti Fund teams was recognised as the 8th fastest in all of Africa.



A scout does a pull-up during physical training. | Tara Shupe



# Canine Unit

We take incredible pride in our anti-poaching scouts – both those with two legs and those with four. In 2023, our talented Canine Unit continued to protect the Serengeti’s wildlife using their incredible sense of smell to track poachers’ movements and to detect illegal materials in the concession, including poaching camps, snares, weapons, ammunition, and bushmeat.

While their capabilities are impressive, the bond between the dogs and their human handlers is even more remarkable. The Canine Unit’s four dogs – Oke, Radar, DJ, and Tony – and their six devoted handlers train tirelessly according to detailed 60-day training regiments, making them effective in any terrain, condition, or scenario.

This year, the Canine Unit was deployed 19 times for tracking or detection; 32% of deployments lead the APU directly to poachers, who were arrested onsite. In one particularly significant instance, the canine scouts lead their handlers and the SOG for more than six kilometres directly to a poacher's home, where they found and confiscated 250 kilograms of bushmeat.

- 750+ Kgs of bushmeat identified by the Canine Unit
- 16 Hour-old scent tracked by canine scout DJ
- 10 Scouts in the Canine Unit – 6 handlers and 4 dogs



Two members of the Canine Unit after training. | Roshni Lodhia

## Special Operations Group

Deployed at all hours of the day, the Special Operations Group (SOG) confronted poaching in 2023 with surprise, stealth, and efficiency. This 12-man team of exceptional scouts serves as Grumeti Fund’s rapid response team. Highly effective on the ground, the SOG utilises GPS technology, radio communications, and state-of-the-art anti-poaching tactics to support the MPU and Canine Unit during field operations. In 2023, the SOG was responsible for 48 arrests, proving vital in our mandate to preserve and protect the Serengeti for generations to come.

## Intelligence Operations

Intelligence continues to be central in Grumeti Fund’s anti-poaching strategy, facilitating the dismantling of poaching syndicates using credible information alongside the Task Coordination Group (TCG), a Tanzanian police intelligence unit that targets wildlife crime.

This year, intelligence operations lead to 25 valuable arrests. Pairing high-quality intelligence with strong boots-on-the ground, the Grumeti Fund and TCG’s joint intel teams are eliminating the poaching organisations that threaten this vibrant ecosystem.



Glen (left) and Peter (right) laugh during training. | Roshni Lodhia

1 New Anti-Poaching Manager

“Wildlife is the heartbeat of the Serengeti. We need to protect it.”

Glen Steyn  
Anti-Poaching Manager



# Conservation Management

Restoring and maintaining the ecological integrity of the Grumeti concessions, our Conservation Management (CM) team has had significant impacts on the Serengeti Ecosystem. They stay busy reducing the prevalence of threatening invasive alien plants (IAPs) from the ecosystem, responding to cases of human-induced wildlife injuries, managing prescribed burns and arson fires, and maintaining critical road infrastructure in the concessions.

2023 Statistics



18,187

Acres cleared of invasive alien plants



52

Arson fires responded to



27

Firebreaks conducted to protect infrastructure



22

Animals rescued & released from snares



5

VHF trackers deployed on eastern black rhino



A managed fire burns in the protected area. | *Skyler Nuelle*





A CM section manager checks for a snare on an elephant. | Tara Shupe

# Our Field-Based Team

Stationed at three different camps strategically positioned throughout the protected area, the Conservation Management (CM) team is more likely to be found in a remote part of the bush than in any office building.

## Wildlife Wellbeing

Animals in this ecosystem are most often injured by humans using snares, handmade

wire nooses set by poachers for bushmeat species. Snares can cause serious wounds to animals that walk through their paths, creating deep, painful cuts as the wire tightens.

Intervening in cases of human-induced wildlife injury, the CM team coordinates with the Tanzanian Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA) to identify snared animals and to provide them with emergency veterinary treatment. Once identified, an injured animal will be darted and sedated by a government veterinarian, who will quickly remove the snare and disinfect the wound before waking and releasing the animal.

This year, the CM team worked with government vets to remove snares from **22 animals** – seven zebra, six elephants, three giraffe, three buffalo, two wildebeest, and a lion.

## Managed & Arson Burns

Managing and responding to fires can be dangerous and sensitive – many things can go wrong with just a small change in wind patterns. Ready for anything, the CM team is prepared to respond to fires 24 hours a day, keeping our people, wildlife, and infrastructure safe.

This year, the CM team conducted **100% of planned firebreaks** to protect infrastructure. In addition, they responded to **52 arson and accidental burns**, which are set intentionally by poachers or accidentally from charcoal disposal or other origins.

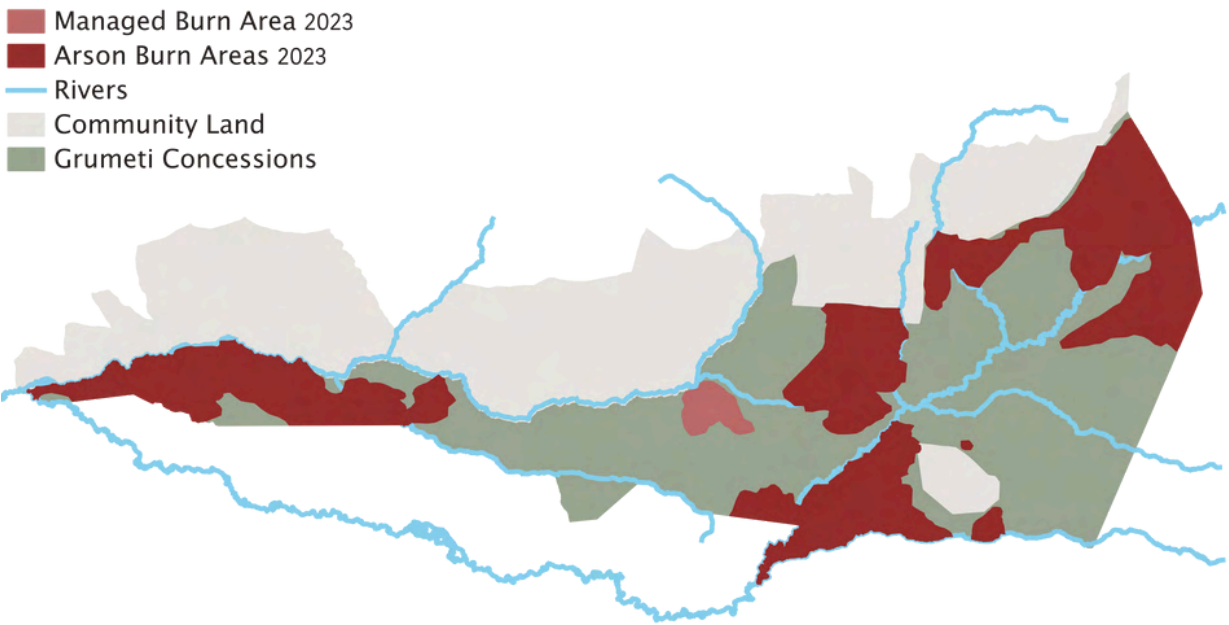
 **79** | Total fires in 2023

 **52** | Fire team members and responders



The fire team walks the boundary of a burn. | Skyler Nuelle

## Fires in the Grumeti Concessions | Burned Areas 2023







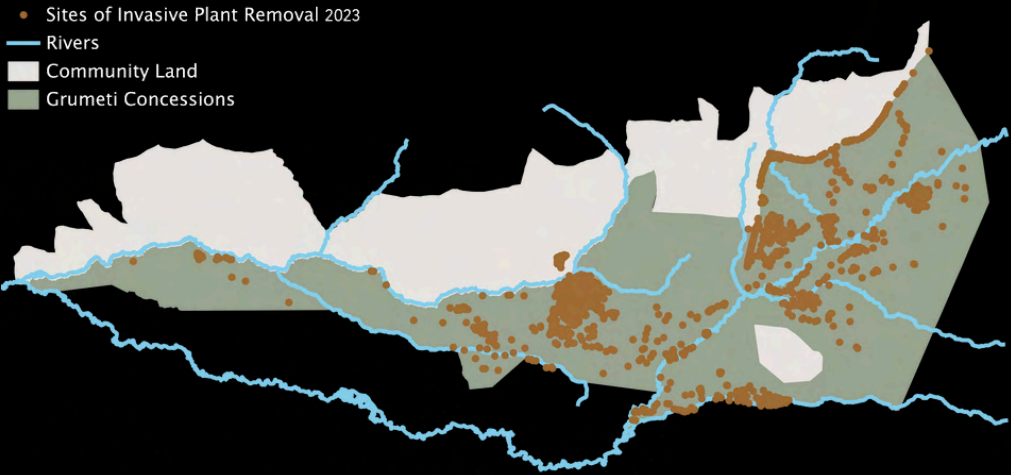
Removing an invasive alien plant. | Tara Shupe

# Invasive Alien Plants | Combatting an Elusive Threat

This year, the CM team removed seven different types of invasive alien plants (IAPs) from an impressive 95% of planned areas, totalling nearly 7,400 hectares. While they may blend into the Serengeti’s lush, grassy landscape to the untrained eye, IAPs are amongst the most pressing threats facing the Grumeti concessions as well as the greater Serengeti Ecosystem. These plants can be introduced by cattle, waterways, vehicles, or people; once introduced, they quickly take over the landscape by outcompeting the native plant life that wildlife rely on as a food source.

IAPs destroy the ecological integrity of ecosystems around the world. Here, they pose an especially pertinent threat to the annual wildebeest migration, during which millions of animals rely on this ecosystem for forage material. Recognising the severity of this threat, Grumeti Fund’s CM team identifies these plants and removes them permanently from the ecosystem. By doing so, they stop the plants from reproducing, halting their invasion of the Serengeti Ecosystem and its surrounding communities.

## Removing IAPs | Sites of Removal 2023







1

## Conservation Manager Advancing Their Education

In 2023, Makuru Rugatiri was accepted to a diploma program from the College of African Wildlife Management - Mweka (CAWM).

Makuru took over as Grumeti Fund's acting Conservation Manager in 2023; he is from Motukeri, a village just across Grumeti's western boundary. Makuru started working with Grumeti Fund in 2005 on our fire management team. In 2007, he joined the Anti-Poaching Unit in their efforts to protect the concessions' invaluable wildlife. Under a new management structure, he was selected as a CM section manager, and in 2023, he was promoted as the team's acting leader.

Makuru has always been happiest in the bush, at one point spending much of his time on pat-

-rol and now managing a vital team located permanently in the field. From his 19 years of experience working in the bush to protect and preserve this landscape, he knows this ecosystem, land, and community better than nearly anyone else.

In September of 2024, Makuru is taking on a new challenge – one that will take him out of the bush and into the classroom to pursue his diploma in wildlife management at CAWM - Mweka. Eventually, he will return to the bush with new skills and ideas to preserve this ecosystem long into the future.



Makuru (center) stands with his team. | Roshni Lodhia



During his program, Makuru is especially excited to learn about combatting invasive plants, like Opuntia (above). | Roshni Lodhia





Zaituni gets curious about a camera. | *Tara Shupe*

# Zaituni | A Black Rhino Story

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In 2019, Grumeti Fund received a call that a 4.5-month-old eastern black rhino calf had been found without its mother in the Serengeti National Park. After monitoring the orphan for 24 hours to make sure the mother was gone, the Grumeti Fund was asked to take her into our rhino re-establishment facility.

Knowing that each individual eastern black rhino plays a vital role in preventing the species’ extinction, we eagerly said yes, and immediately got to work recruiting rhino orphan specialists to advise on the orphan’s care. They helped us assemble a joint Grumeti Fund-TAWA rhino monitoring and care team as well as a detailed care schedule planned to every 15 minutes. Her care was intense, stressful, and at times touch-and-go for the first few weeks, as the risk of losing such a young calf without their mother is extremely high.

Tiny when she first arrived on site, the little rhino quickly earned the name “Zaituni,” meaning “Olive” in Swahili. Five years later, Zaituni is adored by many, and while her name has not changed, it no longer describes the healthy, estimated 800-kilogram, adult rhino she has developed into.

Zaituni’s journey has not been easy; it has required immense coordination and collaboration between the Grumeti Fund, TANAPA, TAWA, and numerous NGOs that have offered their expertise throughout her care. To this day, we continue to be deeply grateful for the expertise, support, and collaboration of our partners.

In the near future, we are hoping that Zaituni will roam freely in her native Serengeti plains once again, and one day, we hope to see her with a calf of her own.



# Research & Innovation (RISE)

Grumeti Fund’s *Research & Innovation for the Serengeti Ecosystem* (RISE) was founded in 2019 as a state-of-the-art facility to enhance our applied research and innovation programs. Through RISE, we ensure that our research has practical applications to conservation, bettering conservation practices for both people and wildlife near and far. In 2023, RISE celebrated their fifth year contributing high quality scientific research to the Serengeti Ecosystem, supporting graduate students through mentorship and scholarships, and hosting programs that uplift researchers and women within the conservation sector.

2023 Statistics



8 | **Trainings & workshops** hosted



16 | **Collaborations** with academic & non-academic partners



14 | **New camera traps** deployed



5 | **Scholars** presented research at a national conference



3 | **New scientific publications**



5 | **Graduate students** advancing their graduate studies



The state-of-the-art RISE facility. | Osse Sinare





Vainess, a WIF alumna, returned to RISE as a Grumeti Fund sponsored graduate student and a workshop instructor. | Tara Shupe

# Applied Research & Mentorship

RISE’s mission is to contribute to the development of tools, solutions, knowledge, and capacity to combat the most pressing conservation issues of our time, to support sustainable decision-making that benefits the people and wildlife of the Serengeti Ecosystem and beyond, while working in collaboration with partners in Tanzania and abroad.

## Elephant Collaring

Collaring elephants with GPS trackers allows us to see, analyse, and understand elephants’ movements in and around the Serengeti Ecosystem. In 2018, the RISE and Research & Monitoring teams collared **30 elephants** as part of a long-term research study, which continued throughout 2023. Already, data has helped us to intervene when elephants move into community lands and to better understand the dynamics of human-elephant conflict in this ecosystem.

15	Elephants tracked
242	HWC geofence alerts responded to
200,784	Elephant GPS points collected

## 2 | New RISE Team Members

**Teddy John** | Teddy joined RISE as the camp chef in 2023. Teddy is a Singita Culinary Cooking School alumna, and she worked with RISE previously as a freelance chef. She does an excellent job keeping staff, students, and visitors well fed and incredibly happy.

We are thrilled that she has officially joined Grumeti Fund’s RISE team.



Teddy in her kitchen. | Kathie Tiffany



George (left) and his research assistant (right) collect samples for their research on giraffe genetics. | James Madell

**George Lohay, PhD** | George joined the RISE team as a Research Scientist. His expertise is in molecular techniques and conservation genetics, especially with elephants and the Masai giraffe. This year, George has been critical in initiating a long-term research study on the bushmeat trade – a topic that Grumeti Fund has long been interested in, as it is a key driver of poaching in the Serengeti.

*“Working at Grumeti Fund through RISE is like a dream come true. I can mentor young, Tanzanian scientists through RISE programs while carrying on applied research to find solutions to the most pressing conservation challenges in the Serengeti Ecosystem.”*

George Lohay, PhD  
RISE Research Scientist



# Workshops & Trainings | Sharing Information & Expertise

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In 2023, RISE engaged with current and aspiring conservation professionals and numerous stakeholders of the Serengeti Ecosystem through eight workshops. They covered topics ranging from conservation technology, science communication, storytelling videography, climate resilient agriculture, and ecosystem restoration.

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## Workshop Highlights | Promoting Women in Conservation

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**Women in Conservation Tech (WiCT)** | Core to RISE’s mission is promoting inclusivity, diversity, and equity of women in conservation careers. This year, RISE collaborated with Flora & Fauna International, WildLabs, and ConTech Africa to host a new program – Women in Conservation Tech. 10 Tanzanian women participated in two sessions of WiCT, honing their skills in designing and implementing research that utilises conservation technology. Participants pitched their ideas to funders and uncovered new ways to use innovation in addressing conservation challenges throughout Tanzania. Through WildLabs, WiCT participants each received small seed grants for the conservation technology applications they pitched during the workshop.

**Women in the Field (WIF)** | Through RISE’s central program, Women in the Field, Tanzanian women interested in research and conservation arrive at RISE for a 3-week intensive training program in ethical social and ecological research, data collection, data analysis, and professional development. The participants leave RISE equipped with the skills they need to make reverberating impacts in their future careers and with a community of women they can call friends, mentors, and future collaborators. So far, RISE has trained 34 women through WIF, and in 2023, RISE saw the WIF alumnae take on new challenges and tap into their WIF networks:

- 2

Alumnae found internships through WIF
- 1

Alumna returned to RISE as a WiCT instructor
- 2

Alumnae presented research at a national conference
- 2

Alumnae received grant funding through their RISE network



Women in the Field participants attending a training session at RISE. | Kathie Tiffany



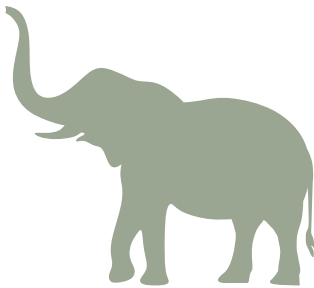
3 |

## New Scientific Papers Published

This year, the RISE team brought together researchers from eight different countries and published three new scientific papers, creating impacts through conservation spaces in Tanzania and beyond.

RISE’s Dr. Kristen Denninger Snyder worked with a team of GF, TAWIRI, and external researchers to understand how elephants behave prior to raiding crops in nearby farms (called ‘staging’). Their paper highlights that GPS tracking data can be used to identify elephant staging behaviour – an important step in predicting human-elephant conflict before it occurs

### Elephant Staging Behaviour

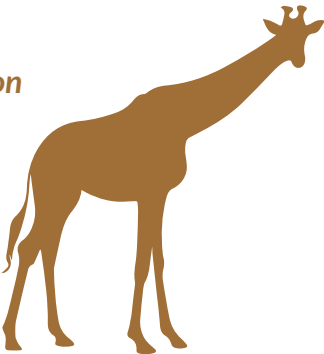


### Drivers of Human-Wildlife Conflict

In 2023, Dr. Denninger Snyder published another paper that aids our ability to predict and reduce human-wildlife conflict (HWC) throughout the western Serengeti. It demonstrates that land-use planning is critical to reducing HWC, and it emphasises the unique nature of HWC perpetrated by different species, showcasing the need for species-specific HWC mitigation strategies.

Dr. George Lohay published his work on giraffe genetics in June. His research shows that the Masai giraffe is comprised of two separate subpopulations that are divided by Tanzania’s Gregory Rift Valley. Identifying the genetic division of this species proves that the subpopulations will require separate, but coordinated, conservation efforts, especially those focused on maintaining connectivity between the two subpopulations.

### Giraffe Population Genetics







# Community Outreach


The Community Outreach Program (COP) has evolved since 2003, but one thing has remained the same – the COP team is crucial to the upliftment of communities adjacent to the Grumeti concessions. Over the last 20 years, the COP team has developed a diverse portfolio of projects, benefiting generations today and those long into the future. Today, COP’s projects focus on developing enterprises and entrepreneurial skills, empowering women and girls, improving access to quality education, building economic and social resilience to climate change, and providing environmental education that will inspire the next generation of conservationists in the Serengeti.


2023 Statistics

 **83** | Scholarships awarded for 7 levels of education

 **15** | Schools sent students to the EEC

 **3,476** | Girls & boys attended girls empowerment sessions

 **83%** | Of all regional **primary schools** received teaching fellows

 **109** | Graduates from entrepreneurship trainings

 **117.5%** | Average **business turnover** for Guiding mentees



Lauriens, the principle of the EEC, teaches students about soil. | Tara Shupe





Students at a local secondary school. | Tara Shupe

# Building Partnership Through Trust

In 2023, COP celebrates another year of accelerating community members toward their personal and professional goals, unlocking opportunities and skill sets in entrepreneurs, inspiring Tanzanian conservationists, and fostering the next generation of impactful leaders and educators.

## Education Support

This year, COP awarded **83 new scholarships** to students from our neighbouring communities. Recipients used their scholarships to pursue education at all levels – from ordinary levels to culinary school, vocational studies, and even university degrees. 80 former scholarship recipients graduated from their respective programs and started the next phase of their academic or professional journeys. In total, **227 students** received new or ongoing scholarships from the Grumeti Fund in 2023.

- 42 | Scholarship recipients placed in internships
- 115 | Scholars attended life-skills training
- 100% | Culinary school scholars were employed




# Environmental Education Centre

In 2023, 480 secondary school students and 30 teachers attended the Environmental Education Centre's (EEC) 5-day course.

Students learned about environmental science, conservation, sustainable practices, and the dangers of poaching. This year, 100% of students showed positive changes in their attitudes towards conservation after the program, and many departed the EEC ready to advocate for changes in their schools and communities.

**3,553 students participated in post-EEC activities in 2023.**

Students restored land, reduced schools' environmental impacts, and educated others about sustainability through:

-  Planting 6,000+ trees
-  Maintaining 2 beekeeping projects
-  Organising sustainability clubs and debate teams at 15 secondary schools



EEC students during a lesson. | Tara Shupe





**3,456** | Girls & boys attended girls empowerment sessions in 2023

Women and girls around the world continue to face gender-specific challenges, hindering their ability to access education, gain independence, and overcome systemic inequalities. In response, COP, in collaboration with government and community partners, works with girls and boys to create a better, safer, and more empowered future for girls.

### Girls Empowerment Program

In rural Tanzania, many girls face disproportionate and often gender-based barriers. Many lack adequate menstrual supplies, and some continue to face early marriage or female genital mutilation, forcing them to miss weeks of school or dropout all together.

In response, COP hosts girls empowerment sessions, where girls learn about their rights, reproductive health, and access to emergency resources. Girls engage with peers and role models about the issues affecting them and how to overcoming them. Every girl receives reusable menstrual pads, ensuring they can reliably attend school with confidence.

**1,761**

Girls attended empowerment sessions

**1,761**

Girls received reusable menstrual pads

**8**

Secondary schools participated in girls empowerment

### Girls Empowerment Through Boys

Recognising the need to include boys in girls empowerment, COP established the *Girls Empowerment Through Boys* program in 2021. The program raises awareness amongst boys about issues facing girls. Boys learn about the consequences of gender-based discrimination, early pregnancy, forced marriage, gender-based violence, and female genital mutilation on their female peers.

The sessions provide boys an opportunity to become advocates for their female peers. At the same time, they create a space to discuss related issues facing boys – including peer pressure, drug and alcohol abuse, technology, and mob mentalities.

**1,715**

Boys attended empowerment sessions

**7**

Secondary schools participated in *Girls Empowerment Through Boys*



Teaching Support Program

Through the Teaching Support Program (TSP), 50 teaching fellows and one coach were placed into 25 surrounding primary schools struggling with teacher shortages. The fellows reduced student-teacher ratios and taught courses on English, Math, Science, and Tech.

Combined, the 2023 TSP fellows worked with 19,420 students in classrooms as teachers and outside as coaches and mentors in extracurricular activities. Fellows also worked with resident teachers to build their confidence and capacities to teach technology and computer skills as school subjects.

This year, the TSP program reduced average student-teacher ratios by more than 19%, from 94:1 to 76:1.



TSP fellows bringing energy to the classroom through a dance. | Kathie Tiffany

Rural Enterprise Development (RED)

Bolstering local economic resilience through livelihood diversification, COP supports the ideas and aspirations of local entrepreneurs through the Rural Enterprise Development (RED) programs – Village Learning and Village Guiding.

In 2023, 109 community members from eight villages completed business planning, financial management, and entrepreneurship training through the Village Learning program. 14 aspiring entrepreneurs completed the Village Guiding program, which is a year-long entrepreneurship development and one-on-one mentorship program. Also in 2023, 14 new Guiding mentees were selected for 2024.

In 2023, all Guiding participants opened bank accounts and began keeping business records; some received loans to scale their businesses or venture into new services and products. As a cohort, Guiding mentees created 23 temporary and permanent jobs for other members of their communities.

41 | RED entrepreneurs secured loans

22 | RED entrepreneurs employed new staff

64% | of 2023 Village Learning graduates were women

100% | of 2023 Guiding mentees graduated



A RED entrepreneur sets up her shop | Roshni Lodhia





Training entrepreneurs brainstorm during a Village Learning session. | Tara Shupe

## Rural Enterprise Development | Joyce's Story

Joyce Mazera always dreamed of becoming a business owner, but for years, she felt like she had no choice but to work on farms to support her five children. Joyce faced health challenges that prevented her from working, leaving her family with only one income. Joyce's family struggled – they were unable to pay school fees and afford basic needs. Despite her health troubles, Joyce took a job creating gravel, a physically gruelling job crushing large stones with a hammer, and still, she earned less than one US dollar a day.

Unwilling to abandon her dreams of a self-determined future in business, Joyce applied for Grumeti Fund's Rural Enterprise Development Guiding program. She was accepted and quickly enrolled. Since that decision, Joyce has been able to open and scale a retail business in her community.

The program equipped her with the skills she needed to become the businesswoman she dreamed of. Quickly, she learned to inform her purchasing decisions based on market trends, which has helped her identify affordable suppliers, offer lower prices to customers, and attract new ones.

Her success is undeniable. Since starting with the program, Joyce's average monthly **turnover increased 239%**. Today, she sends all of her children to school; she can afford medical care for herself and for her family; and she saves money each month to invest in growing her business. According to Joyce, she is excited about what her future holds for the first time in a long time.

Her story is one of personal and professional resilience – a reminder of what is possible when someone's unwavering commitment to their dreams combines with the right training, resources, and mentorship.



Joyce stands in her shop. | Kulwa Kalulu

***"The RED program helped me think bigger - to see what is possible."***

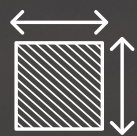
Joyce Mazera  
Village Guiding Mentee



# Research & Monitoring

The Research and Monitoring (RM) team helps us understand and record the changing ecological dynamics of the Grumeti concessions. As a team, they collect and analyse data on climate and weather, herbaceous biomass, fire, and wildlife – including critically important elephant movements, game counts, rhino monitoring, and human-wildlife conflicts. In 2023, the RM team also looked to share their insights with partners near and far through collaborations with government agencies and academic institutions, attending scientific conferences, hosting training workshops, and developing new management plans alongside the diverse stakeholders of this ecosystem.

2023 Statistics



6

Herbaceous **biomass** surveys at 100 plots



1

Vegetation composition **assessment**



1

Elephant collar replaced



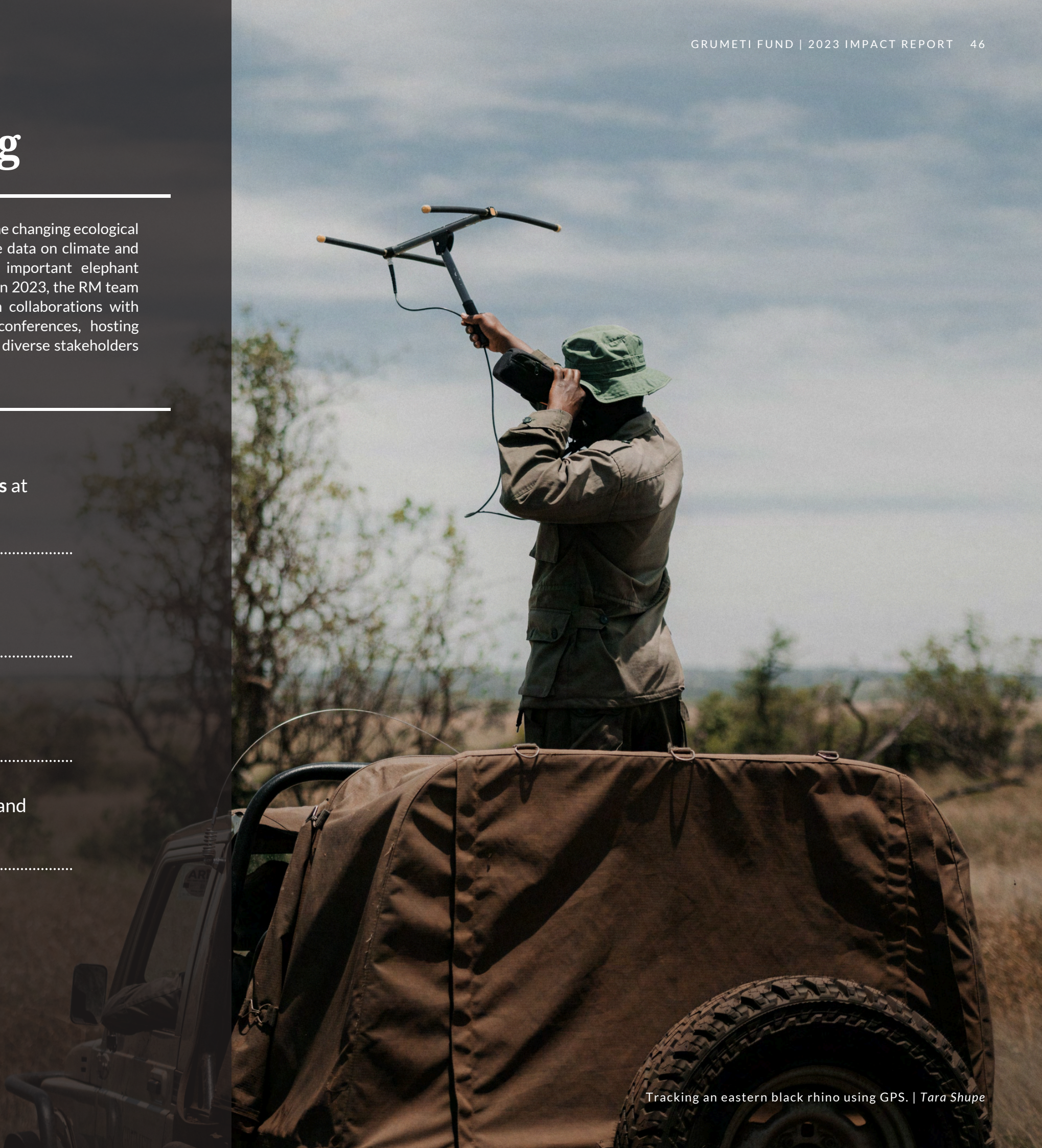
1

Workshop on river and rangeland restoration hosted



2

New **team** members



Tracking an eastern black rhino using GPS. | Tara Shupe





Collaring an elephant. | Tara Shupe

# Research for Decision-Making

The RM team gathers insights that help to make informed decisions about the protected area and its management.

## Herbaceous Biomass Survey

Six times a year, RM assesses herbaceous vegetation growth, gaining valuable insights about the volume of grasses available for herbivore grazing.

To conduct the survey, field technicians drive through the bush to GPS coordinates – in the process, pivoting around termite mounds, dodging herds of wildlife and sometimes cattle, and flipping into four-wheel drive to traverse over large rocks – to reach **100 survey plots**. The plots are dispersed inside the concession area and in community grazing lands. At each point, they take **60 measurements** of biomass that they use to estimate the total volume of grasses available within and around the Grumeti concessions.

The survey provides clarity about the protected area’s capacity to host the annual wildebeest migration as well as about the condition of community grazing areas that support thousands of cattle.

**3.9** | Tonnes of herbaceous biomass available in 2023



The RM team takes measurements during a survey. | Tara Shupe



# Rhino Monitoring

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The RM team works closely with our government partner, TAWA, to ensure that our joint black rhino re-establishment project advances toward a future in which eastern black rhino roam throughout the Serengeti in abundance. Only 30 years ago, black rhinos were on a road toward global extinction. Today, the species is still considered critically endangered, and in the Grumeti concessions, the species was considered locally extinct just a few decades ago.

Since our founding in 2003, the Grumeti Fund has worked closely with the Ministry of Natural Resources & Tourism, TAWA, and other key partners to reconnect this once lost species with its native home range in the western Serengeti. Each individual animal is significant to the global eastern black rhino population and to our vision of seeing rhinos inhabiting the many corners of this diverse ecosystem as they once did.

Our RM team takes this vision seriously, heading to the field daily to monitor the movements, behaviours, and conditions of the eastern black rhino population.

.....

**The Grumeti Fund and our key partners continue to celebrate the rhino re-establishment project’s success so far, including the births of new calves.**

.....

An eastern black rhino calf. | Tara Shupe



## 2 | New Research & Monitoring Team Members

**Stanslaus Mwampeta** | Stan joined the RM team as Head Ecologist in October. Prior to joining Grumeti, he spent time studying caracal, serval, and lions in the Serengeti Ecosystem. He uncovered valuable insights about population estimates and unique lion behaviours coinciding with moon phases.

*“I am honoured to lead such a skilled team toward science-based conservation. Research and conservation go hand in hand, and researching the roles of both living and non-living components of this ecosystem is essential for its conservation.”*

Stanslaus Mwampeta, PhD  
Head Ecologist



Stanslaus in the field. | Skyler Nuelle



Davis in the field. | Kulwa Kalulu

**Davis Merinyo** | Davis joined the RM team as a field technician after working alongside the Relationship department as an Human-Wildlife Conflict Unit intern. As a field technician, Davis spends most of his time in the field, leveraging his experience with Human-Wildlife Conflict to better understand the species and issues facing this ecosystem.



## 1 | RM Team Member’s PhD Actualised in the Field

**Exavery Kigosi** | This year, Exavery, RM’s GIS Data Analyst, began collecting data on invasive alien plants for his PhD with Leiden University. He hopes his work on IAP spatial ecology will bring new understandings about the species threatening the western Serengeti and inform future prevention strategies.



Exavery on GIS. | Tara Shupe



# Relationships

All of our work relies on strong collaboration with the diverse stakeholders of the Serengeti Ecosystem. The Relationships department manages the connections and facilitates collaboration between the Grumeti Fund and our Tanzanian government, NGO, and local community partners, each of which are central to our mandate. As a team, the Relationships department builds, maintains, and fosters teamwork between the Grumeti Fund and these diverse stakeholders. They ensure that the Grumeti Fund’s work continues to impact this ecosystem responsibly and sustainably, that stakeholders share vital information with one another, and that we address issues as they arise.

2023 Statistics



5

Exhibitions attended in Tanzania



96.6%

Success rate acquiring permits from eight governing bodies



120

Awareness sessions hosted in 29 villages



4,055

Students engaged in conservation-tourism sessions



21

Schools presented to about conservation issues



1

24/7 human-wildlife conflict hotline



Making a chili fence to deter elephants from raiding crops. | Roshni Lodhia





Community dance hosted by the Relationships team. | Roshni Lodhia

# Uniting Stakeholders

In 2023, the Relationships department united public and private interests through administering human-wildlife conflict mitigation and conservation awareness programs, participating in government meetings and permitting processes, supporting local legal prosecutions, and attending community building events including exhibitions, seminars, marathons, and more.

## Education & Awareness

Our Relationships team builds partnership in nearby communities through education about conserving environments, reducing human-wildlife conflict, combatting IAPs, and navigating diverse land uses. Hosting traditional dance events, showing educational movies, attending meetings, conferences, workshops, Swahili newsletters, and seminars, the Relationships team looked to connect with as many stakeholders of the Serengeti Ecosystem as possible.

In 2023, they engaged in **120 awareness sessions** in **29 villages**. They hosted eight movie night showings, eight cultural dances, and education sessions on combating IAPs. They brought together more than **20,382 community members** and **village council leaders** on key issues related to the Serengeti Ecosystem.

## Information Sharing

The Relationships team collaborates with local judiciaries in the prosecution and conviction of poachers found in the protected area. In 2023, they worked with regional law enforcement units on **92 poaching court cases**, 93% of which resulted in convictions and imprisonments. To ensure the cases were as smooth as possible, the Relationships team engaged in **150 meetings** with prosecutors to ensure common awareness on all matters related to poaching and wildlife crime.

*“Grumeti Fund’s Relationships team believes in conservation for the people by the people, meaning that if we want to achieve our conservation objectives, we must not exclude communities around the protected areas. The communities must experience the benefits of conservation.”*

David Mwakipisile  
Head of Relationships



David speaks during a community awareness session. | Roshni Lodhia



## Human-Wildlife Conflict | Mitigating Threats to People & Wildlife

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is of paramount importance in the Grumeti concessions and the greater Serengeti. As conservation efforts are increasingly successful in establishing resident wildlife populations, there have been increased interactions between people and wildlife — especially elephants — jeopardising both human and wildlife interests.

In response, the Relationships department established the Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Unit (HWCMU) in 2017, which intervenes in instances of HWC. During HWC, the Unit responds by leading animals that wander into community lands back into the protected area. The HWCMU is based within the communities to ensure they are easily accessible and able to respond quickly to HWC events. The unit has a 24/7 hotline that community members can call for help, and the team is instantly alerted and deployed when a GPS-collared elephant crosses established geofences. This work is highly dangerous with even higher stakes, though it is undeniably necessary. Every day, the HWCMU takes on these challenges to protect people, livelihoods, and wildlife in order to work towards a future where all three can thrive in harmony.

In 2023, Grumeti Fund received 100 calls to the hotline about HWC, 90% of which were responded to by the HWCMU, Grumeti Fund's Anti-Poaching Unit, and/or our government partners. The HWCMU responded to and followed up on 100% of the additional 206 calls that were made directly to them. In combination with the rapid response HWCMU, Grumeti Fund is engaged in long-term research about wildlife movements into communities, which could help us design strategies to mitigate and prevent future instances of HWC.

**306** | Total calls about HWC in 2023

**100%** | Response rate to calls made directly to the HWCMU in 2023



# Looking Forward

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Every year, natural spaces continue to shrink; ecosystems are degraded; species approach extinction; and people around the world are facing the unprecedented effects of climate change. Never has it been so critical that we recognise the close interconnectivity between our natural and human worlds.

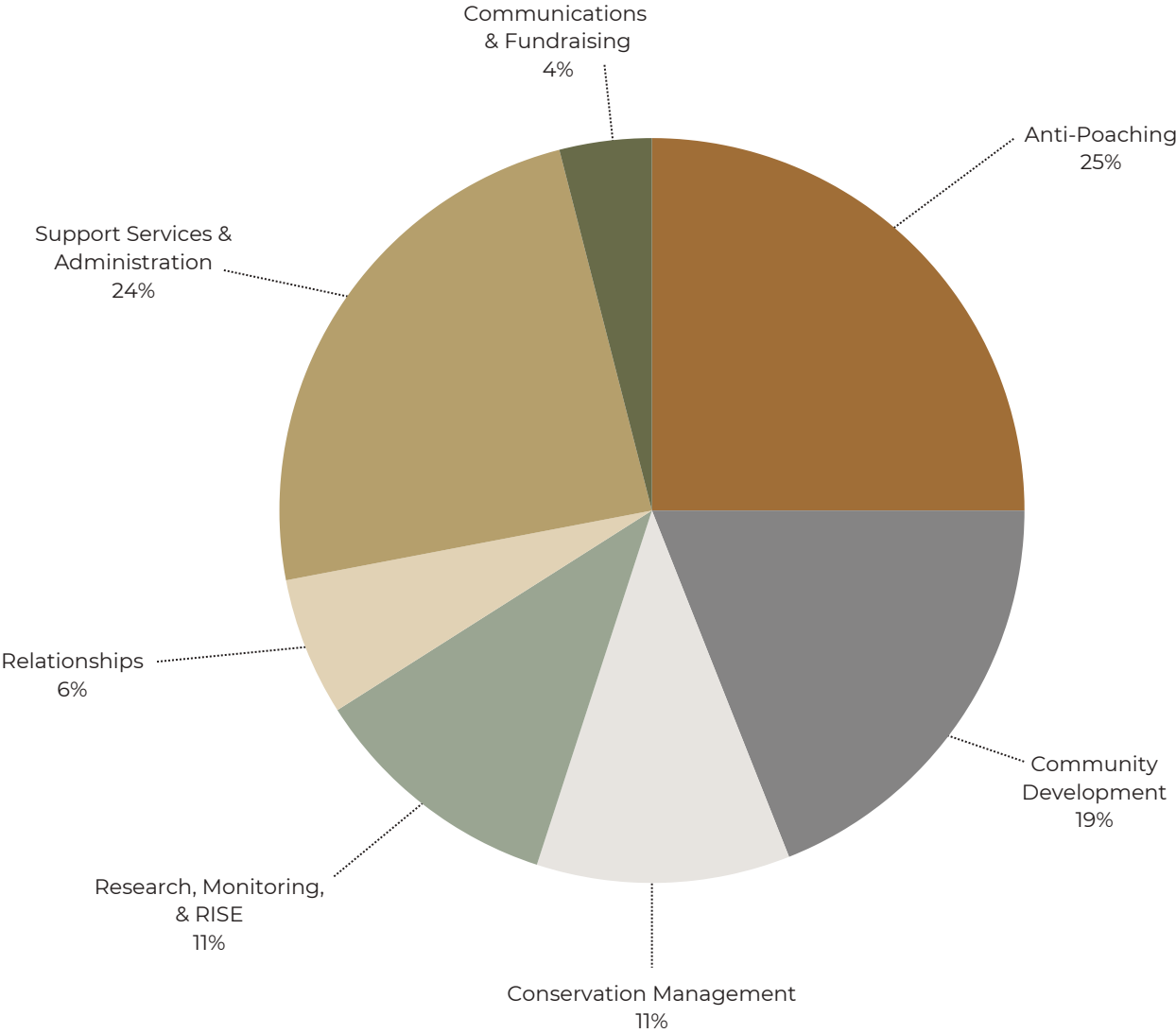
Organisations like the Grumeti Fund demonstrate that one cannot thrive without the other. By collaborating with governments, institutions, NGOS, and individuals, we look to ensure that nature thrives in harmony, partnership, and mutual benefit with people around the globe.

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# Financials

Anti-Poaching .....	25%
Community Development .....	19%
Conservation Management .....	11%
Research, Monitoring, & RISE .....	11%
Relationships .....	6%
Support Services & Administration .....	24%
Communications & Fundraising .....	4%



Zebras in the grasslands. | Tara Shupe

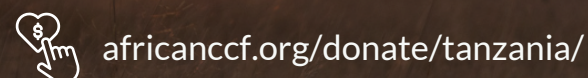
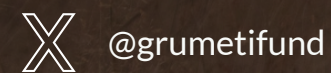
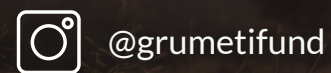
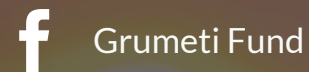


## To Our Sponsors

Thank you for your collaboration, commitment, and trust. You are part of the team that has built the Grumeti Fund, and undeniably, your generosity unlocked the immense impact we celebrate today. Together in 2023, we impacted tens of thousands of people, hundreds of thousands of acres of land, and even more animals than we can count.

The Grumeti Fund is a fiscally sponsored project of the African Community & Conservation Foundation, a US based 501(c)(3).

To get involved or support our work, see:



## Our Partners

None of our achievements would be possible without the strong support of our government partners — the Tanzanian Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA) and the Ministry of Natural Resources & Tourism (MNRT) — and our fundraising partner the African Community & Conservation Foundation (ACCF).



Tony, canine anti-poaching scout, enjoys a belly rub from his handler. | Roshni Lodhia



