MEP April 2025 Report

MEP rangers monitoring collared elephant Kiambi in Ol-Kinyei Conservancy.

GENERAL

Mara Elephant Project responds to requests to support our government partners, the Kenya Wildlife Service. In early April, MEP was asked to assist the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) team in the air with a translocation exercise for four elephants in the Rumuruti–Naibor area. These elephants were frequently in conflict with the community and to increase their protection and decrease rising tensions, they were moved to Meru National Park. Our partnership remains rooted in our shared vision to see wildlife in Kenya thrive.

SECURITY, ANTI-POACHING & CONFLICT

In the month of April, MEP assisted KWS and the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (SWT) with three elephant treatments. The MEP 'mobile' ranger team while on a routine patrol monitored a sub-adult elephant bull that appeared to be injured. Deploying their drone, they confirmed the arrow

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wound and immediately alerted KWS Vet Dr. Njoroge from the SWT Mobile Vet Unit. Joining the team on the ground, the bull's wound was cleared of any arrow pieces and treated. While his prognosis is good, MEP rangers are keeping a close eye on him as he recovers.

Individual 58 was monitored in Mara North Conservancy with four arrow wounds that needed immediate attention. On April 23, together with Mara North Conservancy rangers, the team assisted KWS Vet Dr. Njoroge from the SWT team to treat the elephant. Thanks to the helicopter, the 45-year-old bull was darted from the air, treated, and his prognosis is good. Since his treatment, MEP rangers have been coordinating with our partners to monitor his movements closely in hopes of deploying preventative measures to prevent it from happening again.

During a routine patrol, Pardamat Conservancy in April, MEP rangers monitored an injured sub-adult bull elephant limping. MEP rangers were immediately deployed and determined that he had an arrow wound on his leg causing his limp. The KWS Vet Dr. Njoroge from the SWT Mobile Vet Unit was deployed to the scene and using the MEP helicopter, darted the young bull and successfully treated his wound. MEP and Pardamat Conservancy rangers continue to monitor him as he recovers.

The MEP/SWT Mau De-Snaring Unit has been conducting joint patrols with KWS and Kenya Forest Service (KFS) to focus on combatting bushmeat poaching inside the Mau Forest. In a recent incident in April, bushmeat poachers were arrested with 15 kg (33 lbs.) of bushmeat believed to be a bushbuck stuffed in sacks. Arrests and seizures like this deter others from pursuing bushmeat to increase protection for the wildlife that call this forest home.

Fence density in the Mara has increased over 170% in the last decade and for elephants, they aren't a deterrent, even when electric. The MEP "Foxtrot" ranger team responded to an incident on April 6 to move two bulls that crossed an electric fence into a settlement. During the operation, our rangers noticed the bulls using their tusks to test whether the electric fence was off, clearly a technique they've used before. As the landscape has changed, the wildlife has adapted and so has MEP's approach to increase their protection.

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MEP supports KWS in their efforts to mitigate human-wildlife conflict incidents. Towards the end of April, MEP joined them on a lion translocation operation, moving a female lion from a heavily populated area to the Maasai Mara National Reserve. They also supported KWS and Naboisho Conservancy rangers to move buffalos located inside a fenced in settlement area. Human-wildlife conflict extends beyond elephants, and MEP is dedicated to ensuring the safety of both the community and wildlife that share these spaces.

MEP drone pilots participated in a routine Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) refresher training in April at our headquarters in Lemek Conservancy. The two-day training was convened by MEP partner Expert Drones Africa (EDA) and led by John Ng'etich, EDA's Head of Safety and Quality. The mandatory training ensures all MEP drone pilots remain up to date with professional industry standards. MEP rangers are all equipped and adept to the demands that this job offers and using cutting edge drone technology to solve the current issue which is the increased human-elephant crisis that we are currently facing in the Mara.

Overall, in April, MEP rangers alongside government partners arrested two bushmeat poaching suspects and three habitat destruction suspects. They confiscated 55 kg of bushmeat and removed 59 snares. MEP rangers also assisted with three elephant treatments. MEP rangers seized one power, eight pieces of timber, 38 posts and destroyed six charcoal kilns
and mitigated 32 human-elephant conflict incidents. MEP rangers covered a distance 2,289.54 km on foot patrol and 11,497.86 in their vehicle in the GME.

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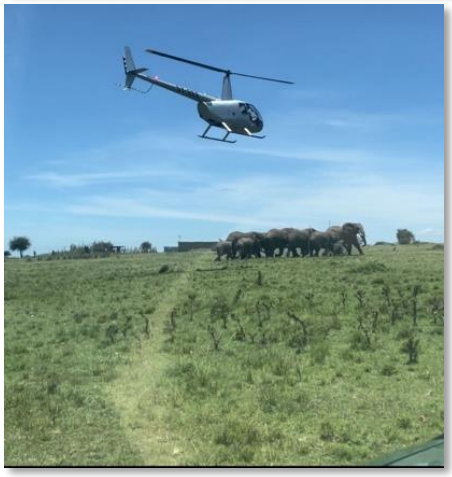
HELICOPTER



Since 2018, MEP has been supporting the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute's (TAWIRI) elephant monitoring efforts in Tanzania with the deployment of satellite tracking collars. This cross-border collaboration protects elephants that oftentimes call both Kenya and Tanzania home. In April, Elephant Conservation Organization (ECO), a MEP incubation project, supported TAWIRI and Tanzania National Parks alongside Six Rivers Africa and deployed new Savannah Tracking collars on four elephants in the Kagera area. Their movements help to inform the deployment of resources to mitigate human-elephant conflict.

The MEP helicopter was deployed in April to move a herd of eight elephants, including three calves, that were moving dangerously close to homes and livestock within a community settlement. At one point, the helicopter stopped them just meters from homes and expertly guided them back to a safe wildlife area. This tool remains priceless to MEP's efforts to protect both wildlife and communities.

DRONES FOR CONSERVATION
Special Projects Manager's Update

April has been a busy month, with the drone pilots responding to escalating human-elephant conflict (HEC) incidents across the Mara landscape.

The 'Foxtrot' ranger team deployed their drone to address four incidents in the fenced in areas of Olemoncho, Oloosokon, and Oloingaborri. They also conducted aerial surveillance operations in Pardamat Conservation Area and Mara North Conservancy around Lemek Hills. During a routine aerial monitoring operation, the team noted an injured bull elephant at Endoinyo Erinka and successfully assisted with his treatment. Also, in April, the mobile ranger team deployed their drone to respond to five HEC incidents in Kishermoruak, Nkoilale, and Siana. They recorded multiple elephant sightings in Ol-Kinyei, Naboisho, and Siana conservancies, and attended to one treatment case in Naboisho Conservancy and used the drone to locate the injured elephant since he was inside thickets.

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The MEP 'Golf' ranger team carried out aerial patrols with their drone monitoring elephants including Fitz in Oloro Soito, Pusanki, and Saparingo. They responded to HEC incidents in the Pusanki and Oloro Soito areas, then joined the 'Foxtrot' team in Mt. Elgon for a ten-day operation. Most of the 'Lima' ranger team's drone patrols last month were focused on elephant monitoring in the Olepolos and Oldepe Mosiro areas.

The MEP 'Delta' ranger team conducted monitoring with their drone in Nonkishu Conservancy and carried out HEC mitigation activities in response to elephants raiding maize farms at night in Munyas, Laila, and Emarti areas.

COMMUNICATIONS & FUNDRAISING

In April, MEP celebrated Easter and marked Earth Day, reiterating its shared commitment to protecting life on earth and our power to protect our planet.

The Fran Duthie Scholarship for African Elephant Conservation continues to empower aspiring Kenyan conservationists. So far in 2025, Leshan advanced his studies through self-directed learning, diving into online resources and peer discussions, Mark took part in a global dialogue on climate resilience, biodiversity, and sustainable agriculture at Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) event at the United Nations in Nairobi, Mary joined the International Women's Day Celebration at International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), forging connections with influential women in

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conservation, and Sumaiyah participated in a wildlife census with the Athi Kapiti Wildlife Conservancies Association and contributed to the draft report of their findings. These milestones reflect the scholars' dedication and the scholarship's impact in shaping future leaders in conservation.

Mara Elephant Project Trust in Kenya received $5,749 in donations in April. Thank you to Kampur Travel Diaries for their continued support of MEP's conservation education program and Expert Drones Africa for supporting us with a Mavic 3T drone. Mara Elephant Project UK received £2,500 from Conservancy Guardians, thank you for your continued support. Mara Elephant Project USA received $599,490.38 in support of MEP's efforts. Thank you to the Band Foundation for their commitment to MEP rangers in the Loita Forest, Mary Anne Rogers, the estate of Claire Wahrhaftig, Michael and Margaret McCormick, Connie Greiser, Sarah Frech and Stan Erck for supporting ECO, Ginni Keith, Catherine Balton, Joan Ballitich, Louise Riggio, Linda Mayer, Sheryl Adams, Terry Denaria, Philip Pugh, Darlene Barger, Betsy Maiale, Pamela Lunny, Karen Rutz, Leon Smiler, Lisa Konieczka, Ken and Kim Cruce, Karen Werner-Petak & Steven M Petak, Sharon Miles, Denise John, Erica Dillow, Sandra Atlas Bass, Vicki Frost, D Miller, Douglas Philip, Marian Weaver, Edward Pikarski, M Procter, M Crawford, Virgina Perez, Peter Merry, Fran Neel, Shandra Belknap, Anthony Gramer, and Richard Litkenhaus for your support.

COMMUNITY & OUTREACH

In April, MEP hosted Caroline Payne, the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) lead at the British High Commission and UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Nairobi. Caroline was on a partner's projects visit in the Mara landscape and MEP was one of her stops. She learned firsthand how MEP is using cutting-edge conservation technologies to save elephants and promote coexistence in a landscape with increased conflict levels between humans and wildlife.

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On April 8, MEP also participated in this year's edition of Twende Porini, an Asilia program that engages children from local communities in conservation. This year, 16 children from four primary schools experienced a 4-day camp, which included game drives and educational opportunities to learn more about the conservation activities taking place in the Mara landscape. MEP is proud to partner with Asilia on this amazing initiative to nurture the next generation of conservation heroes.

RESEARCH & CONSERVATION

Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) Team

During this reporting period, the LTM team successfully conducted 13 elephant sightings across the landscape. These observations documented a total of 19 bulls, 12 cows, 14 sub-adults, and 2 calves. During their monitoring exercise this month, LTM observed Individual 136, in Mara North Conservancy, a cow elephant with her newborn calf. They also tracked the movements of Edwin, a collared bull, who was sighted first in Lemek Conservancy and later near Mara North Cheli Base area. After a two-day search, they located Fred in good health grazing near Tangulia Camp. The team also identified and enrolled four new individuals from the Sand River area into the ElephantBook monitoring system.

In Olderkesi, where HEC incidents have increased, MEP partnered with Nature Kenya, Mara Predator Conservation Project, Olderkesi Conservancy, and Narok County Government officials to engage local communities in shaping sustainable coexistence by sharing the different tools MEP uses to mitigate human elephant conflict situations as they occur in the community.

Data and Reporting Team

During the reporting period, we conducted data analysis on the ElephantBook platform as part of the re-identification (Re-ID) initiative. The objective was to extract meaningful insights from the platform's database, and we successfully generated a structured JSON output summarizing key patterns. However, several data-related errors were encountered during the process, which are currently under investigation. Efforts are ongoing to mitigate these issues and refine the data extraction process to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the insights. This activity remains in progress, with a focus on improving data integrity and system performance.

MEP was granted beta access to the Ecoscope platform, where it undertook structured testing of core workflows, including patrol records, events reports, and subject tracks. The primary goal has been to evaluate the platform's functionality and user experience, with a particular focus on usability and system responsiveness. Feedback and bug reports have been compiled and shared with the EarthRanger development team to support platform improvement. This testing phase has been essential in identifying operational gaps and contributing to the refinement of Ecoscope as a tool for field-based conservation monitoring.

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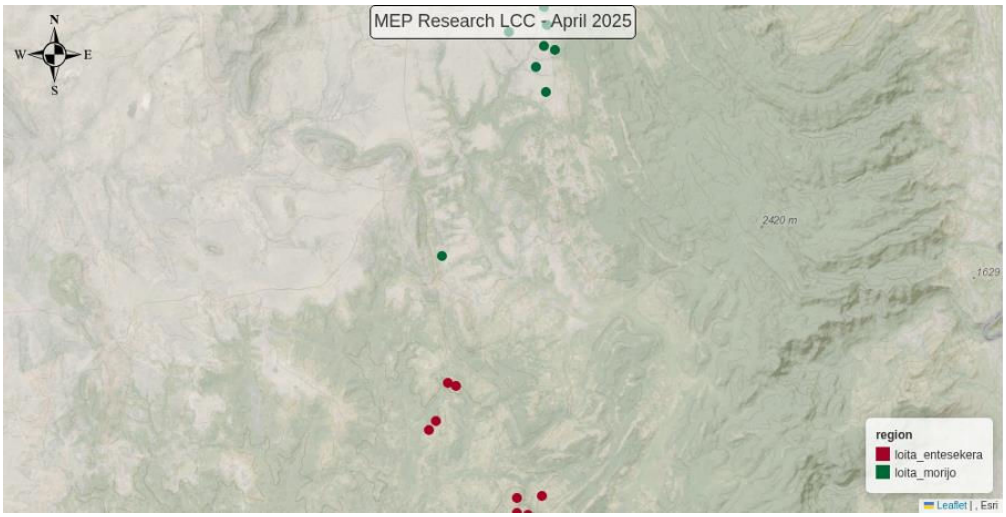
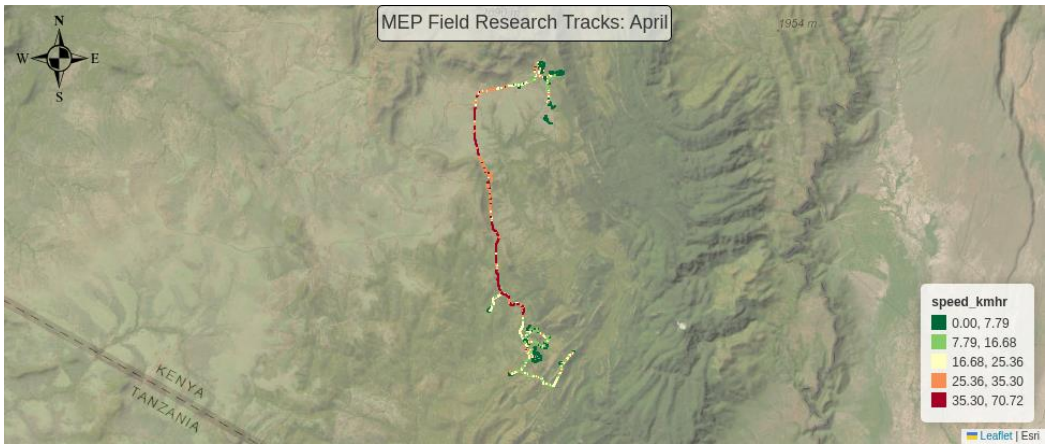


27 LCC points were collected in the month of April.



Movements of MEP's one field assistant in April. MEP field assistant is working on mapping fences, roads, and landcover ground-truthing points using motorbikes and our TerraChart app. He covered a total of 247.51 km and recorded 30.52 km of fences and 27 LCC points in April.

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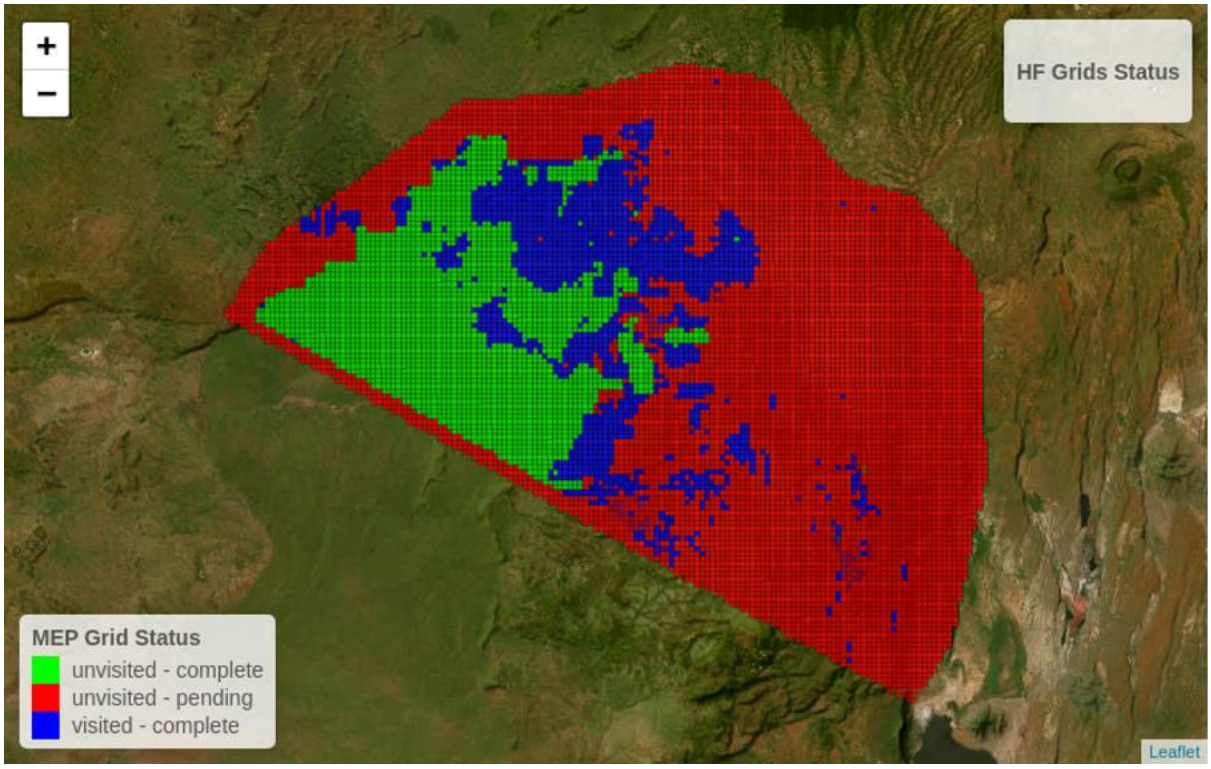
Geospatial Mapping

This month, twelve grids were visited and completed, and Field Assistant Milton Kiok marked a significant number of roads and physical features. He was also able to map 30.52 km of fences and 27 LCC points. The head of LandDX Data Eugene Kuloba, summarised this month's data as depicted in the image below:



Twelve grids were visited and completed in the month of April

MEP Coexistence Farm

General Update

April saw scattered rainfall throughout the month. Weeds grew faster, but the crops were in good shape as most of them were growing after harvesting in March. Due to the long rainfall, the kitchen garden required major renovation. This included an expansion, which increased the supply of fresh vegetables to MEP HQ, and provided more room for the five upcoming women's group trainings on food security and improved livelihoods.

Educational programs and activities were paused during the April school holidays. The MEP out-growers program also conducted a visit to Kutoka Ardhini to check on the state of the seedlings that are ready to be supplied to farmer groups. During the meeting, the team discussed with Kutoka Ardhini the possibility of purchasing their yields.

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Fig:1,2,3&4: Demonstration farm with re-growing of rosemary and citriodora crops, while tea tree and lavender are flowering and growing well respectively.

Climate Report

MEP's Co-Existence Farm Rainfall Recording April 2025

Date	Rain gauge 2 (200m2)
2024_04_07	14
2024_04_11	32
2024_04_12	3
2024_04_14	18
2024_04_19	2
2024_04_21	17
2024_04_22	2.7
2024_04_24	5.1

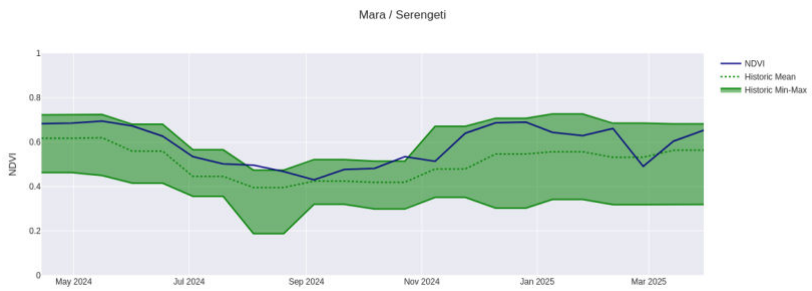
Tracking Manager Report

Collared elephants Kiambi and Fitz monitored by MEP rangers.

ENVIRONMENT: NDVI

The Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) is a measure of plant photosynthetic activity. Higher NDVI indicates the plant is greener. The blue trend line shows the current value, while the green shaded area shows the min-max range of values centered around the green trend line from values measured back to February 2000.

Greater Mara Ecosystem (GME)



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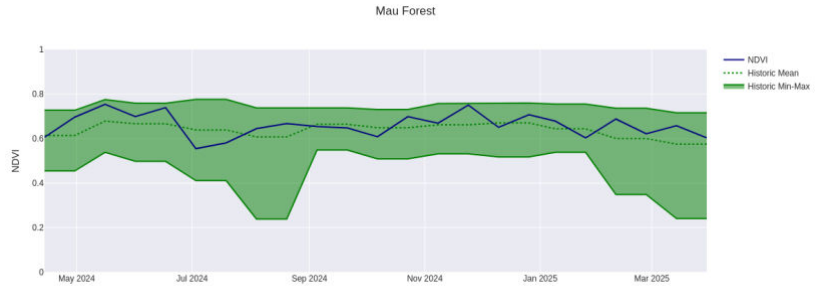
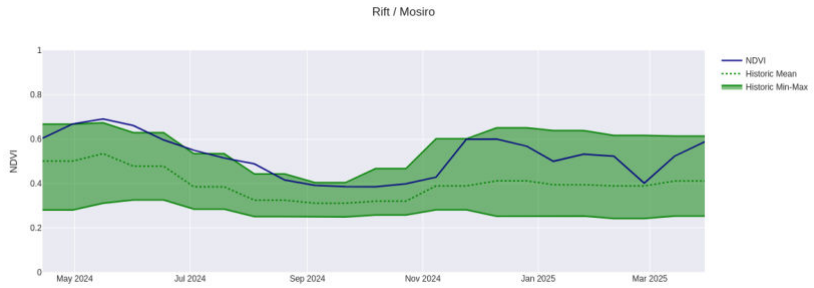
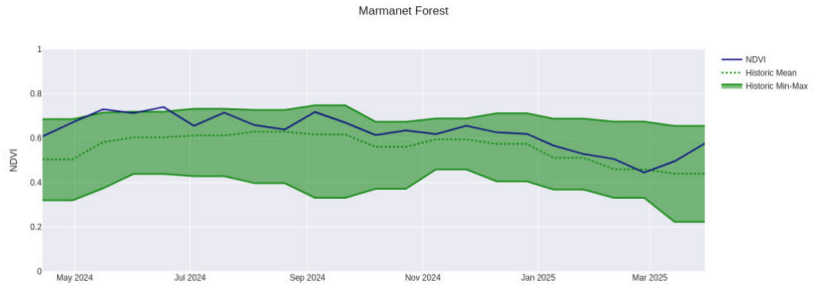
Mau Forest



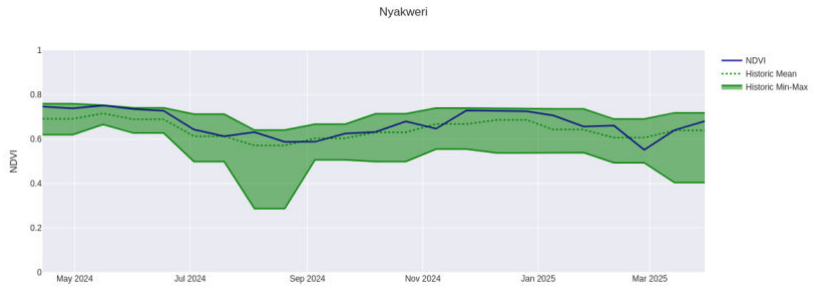
Rift Valley / Mosiro



Marmanet Forest



Nyakweri Forest



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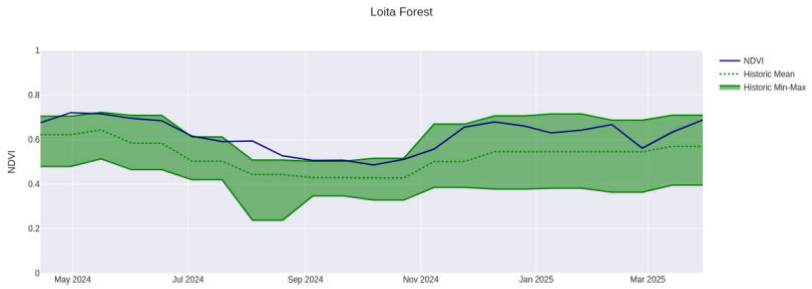
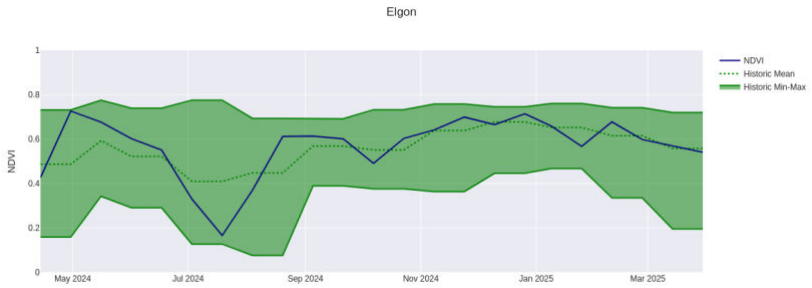
Loita Forest



Elgon



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