MEP June 2025 Report

Mara Elephant Project (MEP) rangers at the 62nd Madaraka Day celebrations on 1st June convened by our partners, the County Government of Narok at Masaantare Comprehensive Primary School.

GENERAL

MEP's drone operations received a vital boost in June, thanks to generous equipment donations. AeroSmart UAV provided one DJI Matrice 4T, and Expert Drones Africa donated one DJI Mavic 3T. In addition, MEP purchased one additional DJI Matrice 4T and three DJI Mavic 3T drones. In total, MEP now has 6 new drones with advanced technology, thermal imaging, HD cameras, and long battery life. These cutting-edge tools are now key assets in conflict mitigation, habitat protection monitoring, and even picking out injuries on wildlife. A heartfelt thank you to all our partners and supporters for helping secure a safer future for elephants and the communities that call the Mara home.

SECURITY, ANTI-POACHING & CONFLICT

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In June, one of MEP's long-serving rangers, Dickson Njapit, was officially awarded the title of Assistant Senior Warden for his outstanding achievements. Njapit will lead all MEP ranger operations, coordinate patrols, and act as a key link between the rangers in the field and management. Congratulations Njapit.

Also, in June, the MEP / SWT Mau De-Snaring Unit, the "Alpha" team, alongside Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and KWS removed over 200 snares in 48 hours and arrested two suspects accused of bushmeat poaching. This joint effort in a new patrol area of the Mau Forest, was near the tea zones where bushmeat poachers can be more prevalent.

Thirty rangers from 16 conservancies across the Mara concluded their phase two of the training of trainers (ToT) course supported by the Basecamp Explorer Foundation – Kenya in June. This advanced stage of the program is aimed at bolstering what the rangers have already learned in previous TOT sessions and for the first time it included participants from the East African Wildlife Society – Mount Elgon Elephant Project (EAWLS -MEEP) and rangers from the Bongo Surveillance Project, both MEP's operational partners that support our expanded wildlife conservation efforts in Kenya.

"The training course was a resounding success, with trainers delivering sessions with confidence, clarity, and dedication. Their strong performance earned high praise, and they are well-positioned to drive meaningful change as they share their knowledge in their respective conservancies."
Jackson Maitai, MEP Lead Trainer

To mark the launch of World Female Ranger Week in June, MEP highlighted the contributions of women across the organization who play vital roles in safeguarding elephants and their habitats. Among those recognized was Purity Masuntu, a ranger who joined MEP in 2020 and began her work on the MEP SWT Mau De-Snaring Unit, known as the "Charlie" team,

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operating in the Mau Forest. She later moved to the "Bravo" team in the Loita Forest. Masuntu has since been promoted to the rank of corporal and is one of 18 MEP rangers to earn a drone pilot's license. Her dedication to conservation has inspired members of her home community, serving as a powerful example of how women are leading and transforming conservation efforts on the ground.

Overall, in June, MEP rangers, alongside government partners, arrested five bushmeat poaching suspects and 14 habitat destruction suspects. They confiscated 65 kg of bushmeat and removed 280 snares. They also confiscated 300 pieces of timber, 1,233 posts, destroyed 15 charcoal kilns, 16 charcoal sacks, and mitigated 76 human-elephant conflict incidents.

In June, MEP rangers covered a distance of 1,259.79 km on foot patrol and 11,830.05 km in their vehicles the GME.

HELICOPTER

In June, the MEP helicopter was in action once again assisting our partners KWS in treating a young bull elephant in the Emkutan area in Kajiado County. The male bull elephant, estimated to be around 25 years was sighted by rangers from the South Rift Association of Land Owners (SORALO) while they were on patrol. KWS vet Dr. Mukami Ruoro assisted in treating the elephant for a large, infected wound on its front ankle. The prognosis for the elephant's recovery is reported to be good.

DRONES FOR CONSERVATION

In June, MEP drone and patrol teams stood out for their swift aerial responses and night-time operations, which played a critical role in mitigating human-elephant conflict (HEC) and identifying injuries on elephants. With 41 HEC incidents mitigated using drone technology and 102.52 flight hours, this demonstrates the power of drone technology in wildlife and habitat conservation.

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While operating in Munyas, Enkobiletai, Taquin Farm, and the Enoonkishu Conservancy, the MEP "Delta" team was on high alert throughout June. They conducted both day and night operations, frequently tracking the movements of collared elephants Ivy and Kevin, repeat offenders in the region's HEC hotspots. The MEP "Golf" team's patrols covered Olkireruki, Olpejoto, Olosheti, and Oloro-Soito. The team monitored several elephant herds, including collared bull Fitz, whose roaming habits brought him near farmlands in Olkireruki and Nkinye.

The "Foxtrot" team was quick to respond to incidents involving collared elephant Matali in Ngosuani, Olkiu, and Lemek. They also stepped in to manage HEC situations in Oltorotua involving collared bull Edwin while the MEP "Kilo" team in Loita also carried out patrols in Enkoberetia, Enkusero, and Naroosura, reinforcing MEP's presence in these high-risk zones.

Also, in June, the MEP "Lima" team deployed drones to mitigate HEC in Enkiu and Oldorko, with additional elephant monitoring activities in Emorutoto and Enkirrgirri areas. Working along the border, the MEP "Mobile" team tackled elephant crop raiding incidents in Oldisare, Telegut, Ilaleta, and Olkoroi. They also monitored collared elephants Polaris and Kiambi near Ol-Kinyei and Naboisho conservancies.

From our headquarters in Lemek, teams responded to HEC in Oldoinyo-Orasha and Oloosokon, including night-time operations that safely pushed elephant Edwin away from settlements. One notable success was a nighttime search and rescue operation in Olkuroto, where a lost individual was found using thermal drone technology.

COMMUNICATIONS & FUNDRAISING

In June, MEP celebrated Kenya's Independence Day and World Environment Day, highlighting MEP's powerful partnerships and efforts in beating plastic pollution. Also, in June, MEP hosted Dr. Jenny Nuccio, Founder and CEO Imani Collective at headquarters. MEP and Imani Collective are running a unique handmade merchandise collection where, from every purchase, buyers get to give back not only to caring for the elephants but also education of the next generation. Shop the Imani+MEP merchandise collection here and help make a difference.

"Together with Mara Elephant Project, we craft with purpose, creating sustainable products that give back to wildlife, communities, and the next generation." *Dr. Jenny Nuccio, Founder Imani Collective.*

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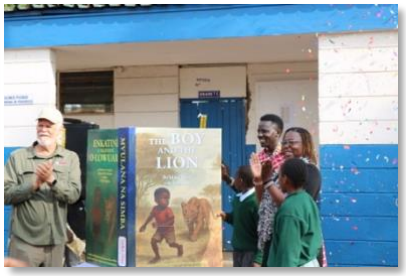
The Fran Duthie African Elephant Conservation Scholarship supports Kenyan students pursuing a career in conservation. MEP is hosting the current recipient, Mary Wangari, at HQ for her internship.
So far, she has been having a hands-on learning experience with the MEP conservation team. She's participated in a tree planting exercise during a recent educational engagement activity, monitored elephants with the research team, and visited the MEP coexistence team to learn more about their community development work. Mary also attended the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) training at the Regional Center of Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) in Nairobi, Kenya, from 16th to 20th June 2025. She learnt how to install and enter data in the tool as well as how the data is analysed and interpreted. She was also awarded a certificate of participation. The official opening of new scholarship applications will be made in July.

Also, in June, MEP hosted Jon Davidson and Jude Brezandale. They were both on a photography assignment from Robinson Helicopters, and the main objective was to feature the MEP R44 Robinson helicopter in action here in the Mara. This is part of a photography book that they are creating for Robinson, showcasing different instances of the Robinson helicopter. MEP found this a great marketing and fundraising opportunity for being featured by the helicopter manufacturer.

MEP has selected a team of four male rangers to participate in the 2025 Tusk Wildlife Ranger Challenge which launches in July. We are excited about participating.

Mara Elephant Project Trust in Kenya received $28,515 in donations in June. Thank you to Jonathan Zhang, Wycombe Abbey School, Kunal Sagar and Rani Santhanam, and Foreningen Forsvara Elefanterna for your support.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH



In June, MEP attended a book launch at the Langata Primary School in Nairobi. *The Boy and the Lion* is the incredible but true story of Mike Saitoti, now a tour guide in the Maasai Mara, when he was lost in the Mara for five days at five years of age. Convened by Story Moja, the launch signified the role of storytelling in shaping narratives and rallying the young people to a cause. MEP shared about its work and strategies for coexistence across the landscape.

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Also, in June, MEP hosted nine guests from All for Nature Travel together with their group leader, Annemiek for a presentation. MEP also hosted 17 members from the Indianapolis Zoo, a generous supporter of MEP's efforts, at the Mara Intrepids camp in the heart of the Maasai Mara.

In June, MEP's community engagement and Outreach Coordinator had the privilege of representing MEP at this year's Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Forum under the theme: Transforming Tourism Models for Sustainable Impact and Resilience.

RESEARCH & CONSERVATION

Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) Team

Identifying and documenting new individual elephants for inclusion in the ElephantBook has been one of the key activities strengthening the team's database and tracking efforts. In June, the team was able to conduct 17 elephant sightings consisting of 30 cows, 15 bulls, 41 sub-adults and 8 calves. Additionally, the team identified six new individuals, 4 being cows and 2 being bulls.

In early June, the team visited Emboo River Camp and Encounter Mara as part of efforts to strengthen partnerships and raise awareness about MEP's work. At both locations, the team engaged staff and guests through informative sessions that highlighted MEP's conservation strategies, including elephant tracking, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, and data-driven decision-making. In addition to the presentations, guests were taken on a field experience where they observed tracking techniques, learned about individual elephant identification, and gained insight into the collaborative efforts between rangers and researchers.

The team also carried out a camping activity in Nyakweri Kimitent Conservancy, an area that was once an elephant maternity and is known as a hotspot for human-elephant conflict. The focus was on tracking elephant movements and assessing potential corridors to determine whether elephants in the area sometimes travel to the Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR). This effort aims to improve understanding of possible connectivity between the two areas and guide future conservation planning.

As part of ongoing capacity-building efforts, the LTM team participated in a practical data analysis session facilitated by Wildlife Dynamics (WD), centered on the use of Ecoscope, a cutting-edge tool for conservation, data visualization and analytics. The training was made possible by a

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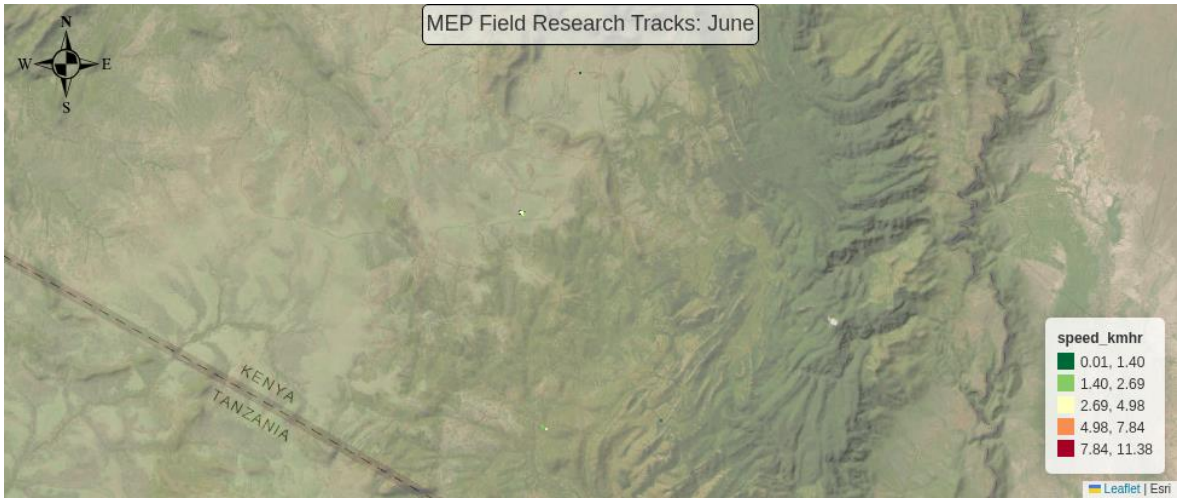
grant from Allen Family Philanthropies and was focused on processing and interpreting complex datasets related to elephant movement, habitat use, and areas of human-elephant conflict. During the session, Dr. Jake Wall guided the team through Ecoscope's advanced features, including layered map views, timeline analysis, and customizable filters for in-depth, targeted insights. Emphasis was also placed on using data-driven storytelling to enhance reporting, strategic planning, and evidence-based conservation decisions.

Data and Reporting Team

From June 16 to 20, the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) hosted a five-day training themed *Innovation in Mapping Using GeoAI*. The training combined technical theory with hands-on sessions, focusing on Earth Observation, GIS workflows, web mapping, Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) training, drone technology, and Google Earth Engine. Led by experts from RCMRD, ESRI, and other institutions, the sessions covered land use analysis, drone flight planning, and community-based mapping techniques.

The program coincided with RCMRD's 50th anniversary, bringing a celebratory atmosphere to the training. Participants engaged in practical exercises, including AI-powered geospatial tools and drone data workflows. The training aligned well with MEP's operational priorities by boosting technical capacity and promoting innovative approaches to data-driven decision-making and continued internal dissemination and integration of these tools into field projects is encouraged to maximize their long-term value.



Movements of MEP's one field assistant in June. 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 1.3 km and recorded 2.47 km of fences and 2 LCC points in June.

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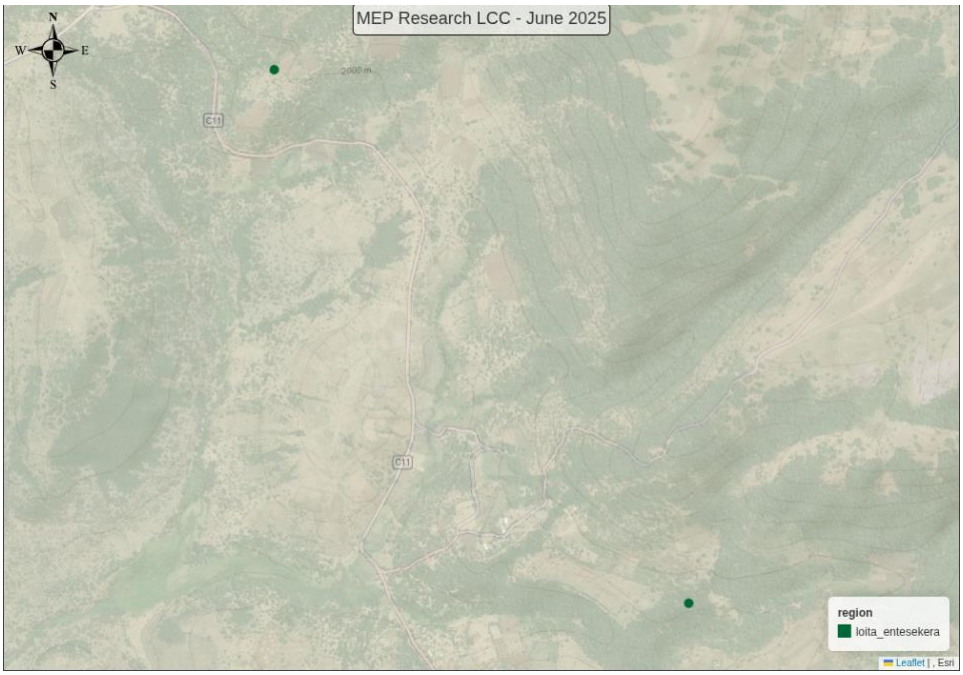

2 LCC points were collected in the month of June.

Geospatial Mapping

This month, zero 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 2.47 km of fences and 2 LCC points.

MEP Coexistence Farm

General Update

The farm team was pleased to host several visitors in the month of June who engaged with our project. Linda Whelihan and Sopia Luka are currently running a conservation education program in the Sekenani area and they were all happy to visit and learn more about MEP and its coexistence efforts. A section of the MEP women staff attended the Women in Conservation forum organized by The Maa Trust, met other women leaders to discuss on collaboration opportunities to leverage on skills of professional women working in conservation across the Mara landscape.

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Out-Growers Program

June experienced significantly low rainfall levels, which delayed the team from proceeding to planting in the other three Outgrowers Group farms as planned. The first module of entrepreneur classes was successfully conducted with all the participating groups. The team acquired foundational entrepreneurial knowledge, and the team is excited to progress through the remaining four modules in the coming months. The two out-grower groups who had previously planted rosemary have commenced the crucial weeding process, ensuring the healthy growth of their crops. The team harvested a total of 25kgs of chili and remodeled and replanted the chili plot increasing the size by utilizing the larger pathways and maximizing the plots.

Education

The team celebrated World Environmental Day at Oloonkolin Primary School, together with Women in the Wild and Enoonkishu conservancy, who are MEP's Conservation Education stakeholders in the area, and 60 students to establish a new kitchen garden and planting of 30 fruits seedlings. This hands-on activity fostered environmental awareness and practical skills.

MEP held a successful book drive at Isokon Primary School where students were engaged in reading and discussing the "Ole Peenko Survives the Drought," a book that powerfully emphasizes the importance and effects of climate change, water conservation, and education. In addition, forty students from Isokon Primary School had the incredible opportunity to participate in a safari experience. This immersive experience included visits to the MEP HQ, Mara North Airstrip, Ol-choro Rhino Sanctuary, Women in the Wild, and the horse stables, providing them with invaluable exposure to local conservation efforts and wildlife.

Climate Report

MEP's Co-Existence Farm Rainfall Recording June 2025

Date	Rain gauge [200m2]
03/06/2025	15
4/06/2025	4
10/06/2025	2.4
24/06/2025	5.7
28/06/2025	8.8
29/06/2025	1.5

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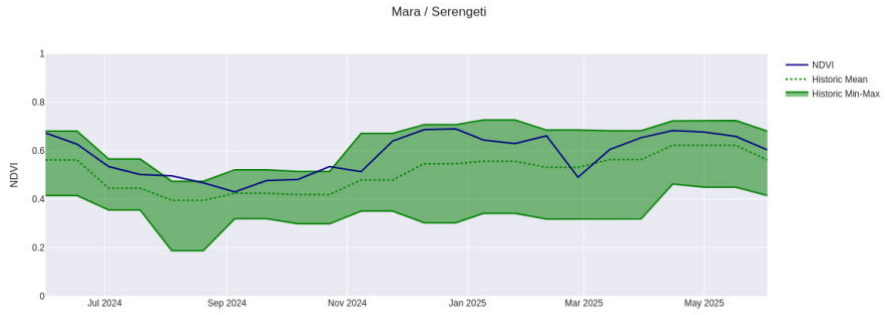
Tracking Manager Report

Collared elephants Fred, Fitz, Ivy, Roho and Lempiris all monitored by MEP rangers in the month June.

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)



Mau

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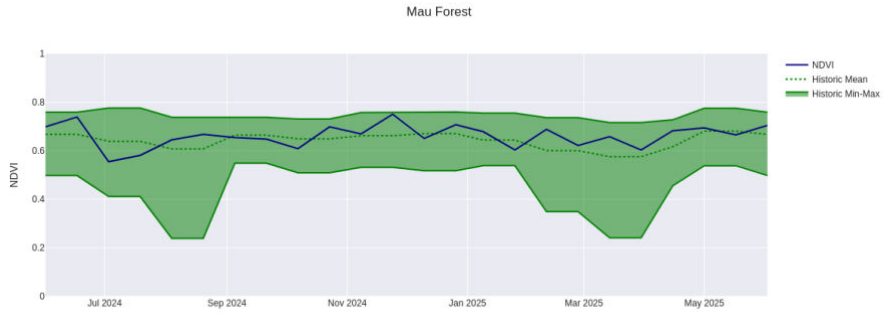
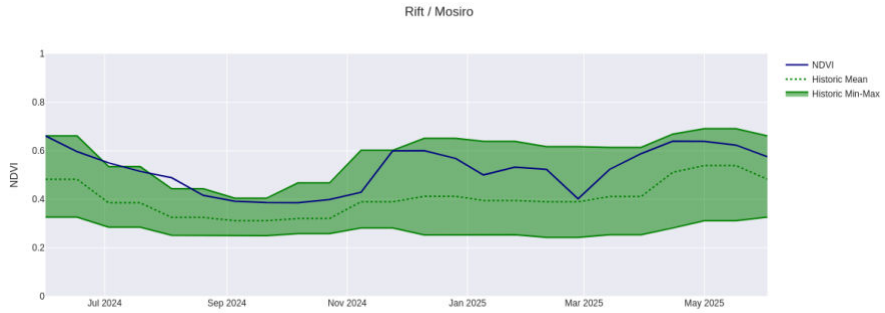
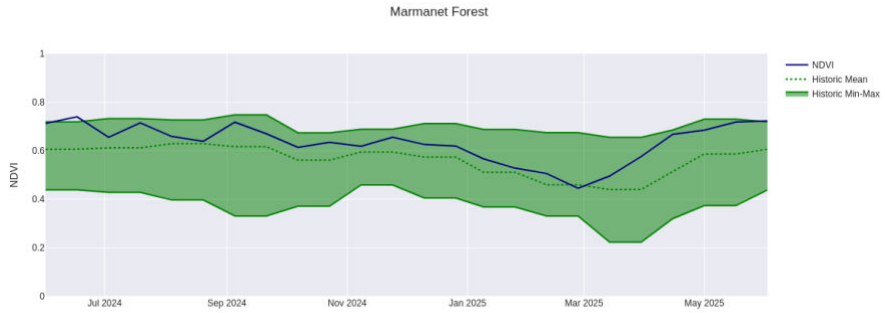


Rift Valley /Mosiro



Marmanet Forest



Nyakweri Forest

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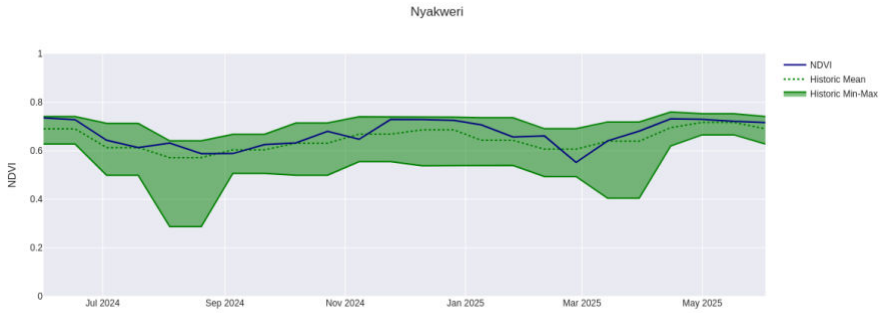
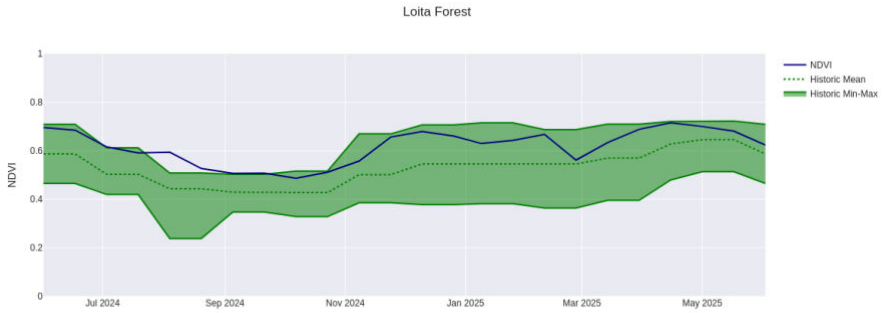
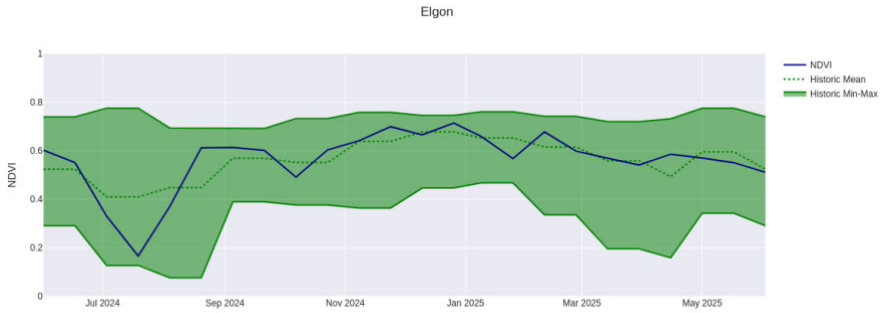


Loita Forest



Elgon



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