MEP August 2025 Report

Registration for the sixth edition of the UltraMARAthon is currently ongoing. Register today and get the chance to push your limits on November 15 in the heart of the Mara.

GENERAL

In August, the Mara Elephant Project (MEP) team trained 236 individuals including rangers and members of the local community on the virtual ranger reporting tool across Enoonkishu, Olkimitare, Ng'osuani, Oloonkolin, and with the MEP 'Kilo' ranger team in the Loita region. Feedback was highly positive, with rangers requesting broader event categories such as illegal logging and expanded human-wildlife conflict reporting, while communities highlighted the need for faster human elephant conflict (HEC) response, offline or low-cost solutions, and dial in options for basic phones. These sessions not only strengthened ranger capacity but also deepened community engagement, reinforcing the importance of integrating local feedback. With continued collaboration, Virtual Ranger has the potential to transform conservation response across the Mara and MEP is proud to be leading on the frontlines of solving the human elephant conflict crisis.

"I'm pleased with the successful rollout of our Virtual Ranger training, now extended to both community members and conservancy rangers. This effort strengthens our collective ability to monitor elephant movements, reduce conflict, and protect both people and elephants." *Eric Mepukori, MEP's Operations Officer*

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SECURITY, ANTI-POACHING & CONFLICT

On the 1st of August, MEP rangers received an urgent report from our partners at Naboisho Conservancy about a bull elephant in visible distress. Responding swiftly, the MEP team called in Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Vet Dr. Njoroge from the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (SWT) Mara Mobile Vet Unit. Upon assessment, the elephant was found to have sustained an arrow wound. Thanks to quick collaboration between our rangers, KWS, and SWT, the bull was treated promptly. The prognosis is positive, and our rangers will continue to closely monitor his condition to ensure a full recovery.

The MEP /SWT Mau De-Snaring Unit, alongside Kenya Forest Service (KFS), removed 70 snares in the month of August. They are currently conducting joint patrols that are targeting areas that intelligence has identified have high levels of bushmeat poaching. In the first half of 2025, this team alongside government partners, was responsible for the removal of 352 snares, contributing to 64% of the total snares removed during that time.

Overall, in August, MEP rangers alongside government partners arrested four habitat destruction suspects and removed 110 snares. They also confiscated 1,268 posts, destroyed 13 charcoal kilns and mitigated 33 human-elephant conflict incidents.

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HELICOPTER

On August 2, a herd of eight elephants was successfully moved away from a maize farm with the assistance of the helicopter. Unfortunately, the herd was unable to cross the nearby road due to the presence of people. The MEP 'Lima' ranger team, together with KWS, remained on-site and continued to monitor the situation, waiting until late evening to move the herd to safety.

DRONES FOR CONSERVATION

In August, MEP drone teams responded to over 60 events across the Greater Mara Ecosystem, totaling to 54 hours of drone deployment. These included more than 40 human-elephant conflict incidents, five cases of injured wildlife located and treated, and even one rescue of a lost child. Each of these interventions shows how drone technology is central to MEP's work in protecting elephants and promoting coexistence.

In the Mau region, the MEP 'Alpha' ranger team made a significant breakthrough when they successfully located 'Alice', a formerly collared elephant whose satellite signal had gone dark. Confirmed to be roaming between Kithima, Kuresoi, and Chepsir, Alice's rediscovery was an important reminder of the value drones bring to long-term elephant monitoring. The team also responded to several cases of crop-raiding elephants, helping to ease tensions between communities and wildlife. Meanwhile, the MEP 'Charlie' ranger team focused their aerial patrols on detecting illegal activities in Nairotia, Muhindi, Kitamoni, Cheroronga, and Chepkulo, ensuring a stronger security presence across this vulnerable forest landscape.

In Mosiro, the MEP 'Lima' ranger team deployed drones to manage human-elephant conflict incidents in Suswa, Oloitip, and Olasiti. The team also carried out elephant monitoring, recording multiple sightings across the broader Mosiro area and building valuable insight into elephant presence in this semi-arid landscape. Loita's 'Kilo' ranger team also relied on drones to respond to conflict, particularly in Elangata-Enterit, where elephants were pushed away from community areas before they could cause harm. Numerous elephant sightings were reported throughout the region, with the team continuing close monitoring of collared individuals to understand their movement patterns through this vital corridor.

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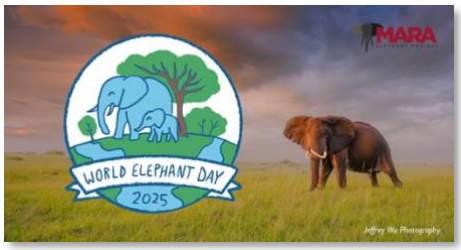
The Mara region, where human-elephant interactions are most frequent, saw the highest level of drone activity in the month of August. The MEP mobile ranger team responded to HEC incidents in Olderkesi, Siana, and Olkinyei conservancies while tracking collared elephants Polaris and Kiambi, and observing multiple herds moving across the landscape. The 'Foxtrot' ranger team monitored collared elephant Matali and played a lifesaving role in Naishi, Mara North Conservancy, where drones were used to locate an injured elephant. This quick intervention enabled veterinary units to provide urgent treatment. Similarly, 'Delta' ranger team deployed drones in Munyas, where they managed conflict incidents by day and night and successfully located a giraffe caught in a snare, leading to its rescue and recovery.

The 'Golf' ranger team concentrated their efforts in Pusangi, the only unfenced forested area in Transmara. With elephants now residing there, daily human-elephant conflict incidents have become common, and drones proved indispensable in both monitoring herds and preventing clashes. Finally, HQ Team provided crucial drone support in Mararianta, while also assisting communities with cattle counts and mapping exercises. Their most remarkable achievement in August was the location and rescue of a lost child in the Olchorro-Losoit Hills, a powerful demonstration of the humanitarian value drones bring beyond conservation.

Throughout August, MEP drone teams responded to dozens of human-elephant conflict cases, supported the treatment of injured wildlife, monitored key collared elephants, and even saved human lives. Their work underscores how drones have become an indispensable asset in protecting both people and wildlife in the Greater Mara Ecosystem. By enhancing safety, improving response times, and extending the reach of ranger teams, drone technology continues to multiply MEP's impact and strengthen coexistence between communities and elephants.

COMMUNICATIONS & FUNDRAISING



Throughout August, MEP celebrated World Elephant Day by spotlighting our most ambitious initiative yet, the preservation of the Loita Forest. Through community-based strategies, ranger support, and the creation of an elephant easement, we invited global supporters to join us and raised $106,000 to secure this critical habitat. Thanks to our generous matching donors, the Matt and Mari Foundation, Mary Anne Rogers, Joseph Davison, Elephanatics and Steven and Adrienne Casey.

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MEP is proud to once again join the Wildlife Ranger Challenge this year, standing alongside ranger teams from across Africa. Our team, the MEP Bulls, is already training hard and preparing for the ultimate test of endurance, skill, and knowledge on 21st September at Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. For MEP, this is more than a competition. It's a chance to raise awareness and vital funds for the frontline work our rangers do every day to protect elephants and the Greater Mara Ecosystem.

MEP hosted officials from the Basecamp Explorer Foundation – Kenya (BCEF-K), to see their support in action at the Training of Trainers (ToT) course at HQ. Led by Director of Programs Stella Njau, the team joined the current cohort of rangers in training exercises and heard from them the impact it's had on rangers across the Mara. Launched in 2024, these courses have already trained over 100 rangers and licensed 24 drone operators, advancing ranger professionalism across the Mara.

MEP is also proud to announce a new partnership with the Chapel & York Canada Foundation, making it easier than ever for our champions in Canada to give tax-effective donations directly in support of MEP. This collaboration allows us to save on operational costs while ensuring your contributions go further in protecting elephants and their habitats. You can find more information about donating here https://maraelephantproject.org/donate/canada/.

In August, the Mara Elephant Project Trust in Kenya received $370,031 in donations to support our mission of protecting elephants and their habitats. We are deeply grateful to our generous partners and supporters whose commitment makes this work possible: Global Wildlife Conservation, Governors' Camp, MEP Chairperson Beatrice Karanja, Angama Limited, Bush and Beyond Limited, LGT Venture Philanthropy, and Basecamp Explorer Foundation–Kenya.

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

In August, MEP participate in the 2025 Kenya Conservancies Investment Forum, hosted by the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) under the theme 'unlocking investments for Sustainable Conservation'. As an exhibitor, MEP highlighted our coexistence, out growers' program, alternative livelihoods, and other innovative solutions designed to reduce human-elephant conflict in the Mara. The forum brought together community conservancy leaders from across Kenya, underscoring the importance of viewing communities not just s beneficiaries' conservation, but as equal investors and partners in protecting wildlife and wild spaces. This belief lies at the heart of MEP's mission to safeguard elephants and their habitats across the Greater Mara Ecosystem while ensuring that local communities thrive alongside them.

RESEARCH & CONSERVATION

Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) Team

During the month of August, the team recorded 16 elephant sightings, documenting a total of 47 individuals made up of 26 bulls, 8 cows, 10 sub-adults, and 3 calves. Of particular significance were the identifications of five new bulls and one tusker female within Ol-Kinyei Conservancy and the Mara Triangle. These new additions strengthen the ElephantBook database and deepen our understanding of elephant movements and social dynamics in the Mara ecosystem, which is critical for long-term monitoring and informed conservation planning.

The team also carried out distance surveys in three priority transects: Mara North Conservancy, Lemek/Olchoro, and the Mara Triangle. These surveys provide insight into population dynamics and habitat use, offering data that is crucial in developing evidence-based strategies for elephant conservation. In addition, the team hosted four unique elephant researcher experiences in August, creating opportunities for collaboration and exchange. Some of the visitors included Muchiri Miano, Willy from Virtual Ranger, Niyam and Elsie Mbugua from the MEP Advisory Team, Daniel Chase from Karen Blixen Camp, and Holly Dublin.

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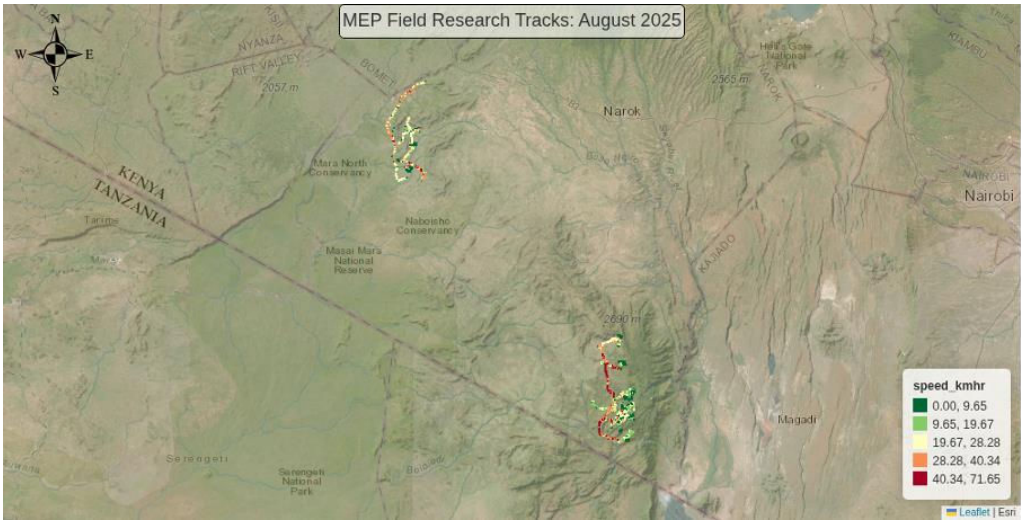
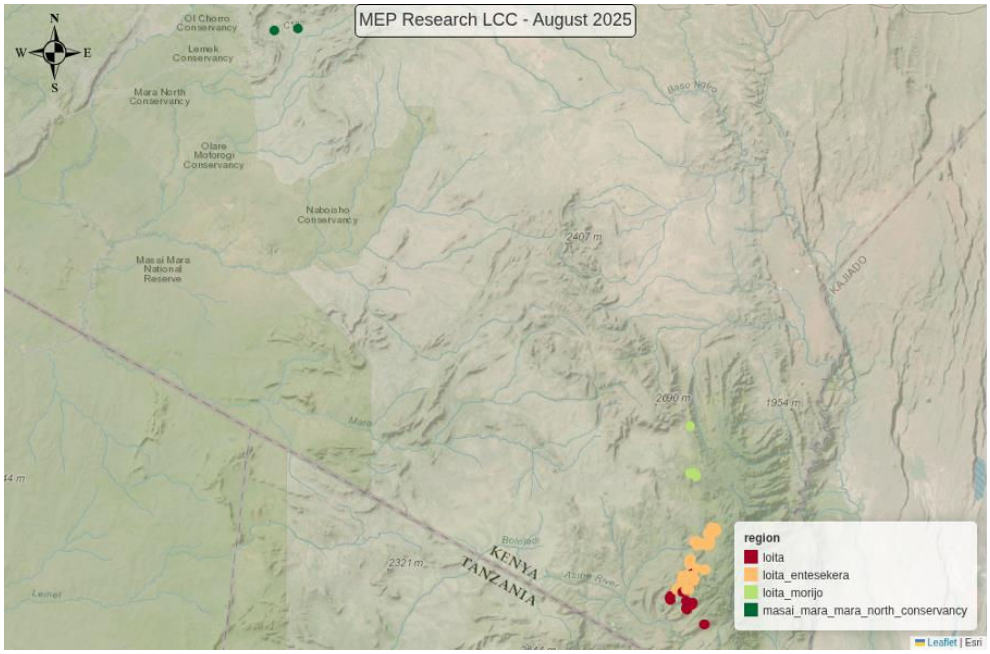
Data and Reporting Team



Movements of MEP's two field assistant in August. All of our field assistants are working on mapping fences, roads, and landcover ground-truthing points using motorbikes and our TerraChart app. They covered a total of 576 km and recorded 9.18 km of fences and 150 LCC points in August.



150 LCC points were collected in the month of August

Geospatial Mapping

This month, a total of 127 grids were visited. (103 - Visited Complete, 18 - Unvisited Complete, 6 - Defenced). They mapped a significant number of roads and physical features, including 9.18 km of fences, 4.15km of roads and were also able to de-fence 20.33km of fences. Lesikar Koiye visited land parcels across Loita region. The Head of LandDX Data, Eugene Kuloba, summarized this month's data as depicted in the image below.

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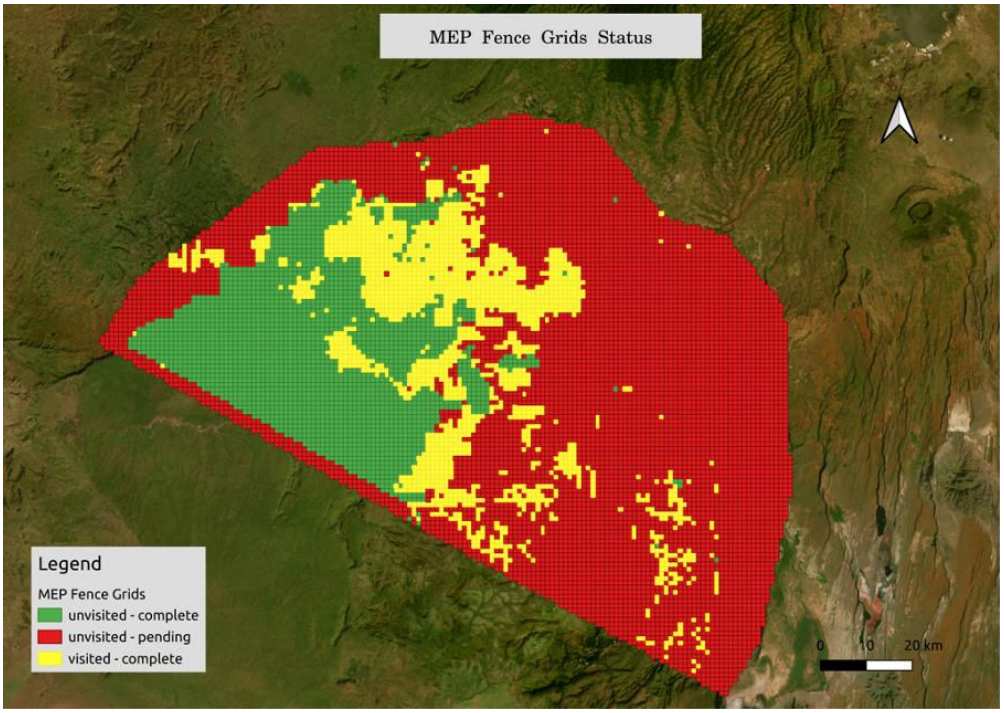

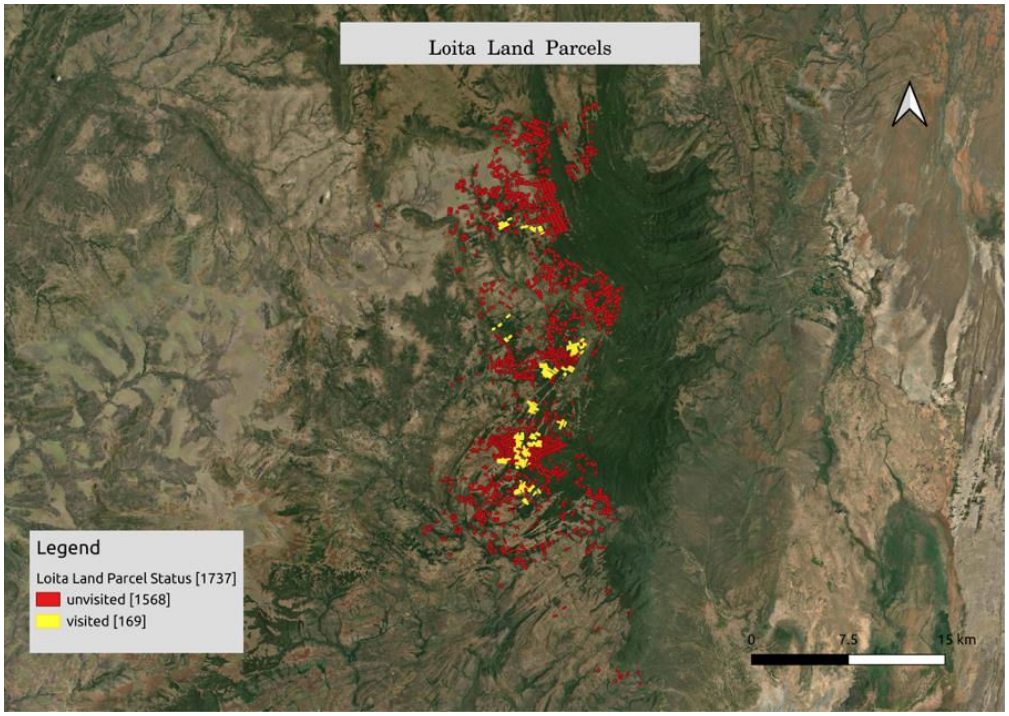

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MEP Coexistence Farm

General Update

This month, the team participated in the Hearts for Climate conference hosted at Maasai Mara University by ACOPHE (Africa Community of Planetary Partners for Health and Environment). During this event, the MEP team presented the findings of our Crop Selection Research highlighting how strategic crop choices can reduce human-wildlife conflict and improve livelihood. MEP in collaboration with ACOPPHE organized a World Elephant Day celebration event on the last day of the conference and the team walked to the Mau Forest and distributed seedballs to contribute to habitat restoration, later engaging students to express their perspectives on elephant conservation by creating drawings and short compositions. These creative reflections highlighted the strong connection between young people, wildlife, and their shared environment.

In August, the team conducted a kitchen garden monitoring activity in the four schools – Oloonkolin Primary School, Ngosuani Primary School, Enkipaai and Emarti Primary School. Overall, the gardens were in good condition for most schools except Enkipaai Primary School, most required gapping and since we expected rainfall for the month of August, the team supplied seedlings for replant and worked a plan with schools to ensure gardens were taken care of during the holiday. Weekly harvests from the experimental farm kitchen garden were supplied to MEP headquarters for consumption. During the month, the following quantities were delivered: 33 kg spinach, 47 kg Sukuma wiki, 7 kg Managu, 5 kg cucumber and 16 kg cassava.

A total of 67 women from three villages were trained in kitchen garden establishment and management. Each participant received vegetable seedlings to support household nutrition and food security. The team also carried out training sessions for the out-grower programs and three groups, covering three modules each. The program focused on strengthening knowledge in sustainable farming and alternative sources of income.

Climate Report

MEP's Co-Existence Farm Rainfall Recording August 2025

Date	Rain gauge 2 (200m2)
2025_08_07	5.3
2025_08_11	7.6
2025_08_12	32
2025_08_13	3
2025_08_14	2
2025_08_16	3
2025_08_19	24

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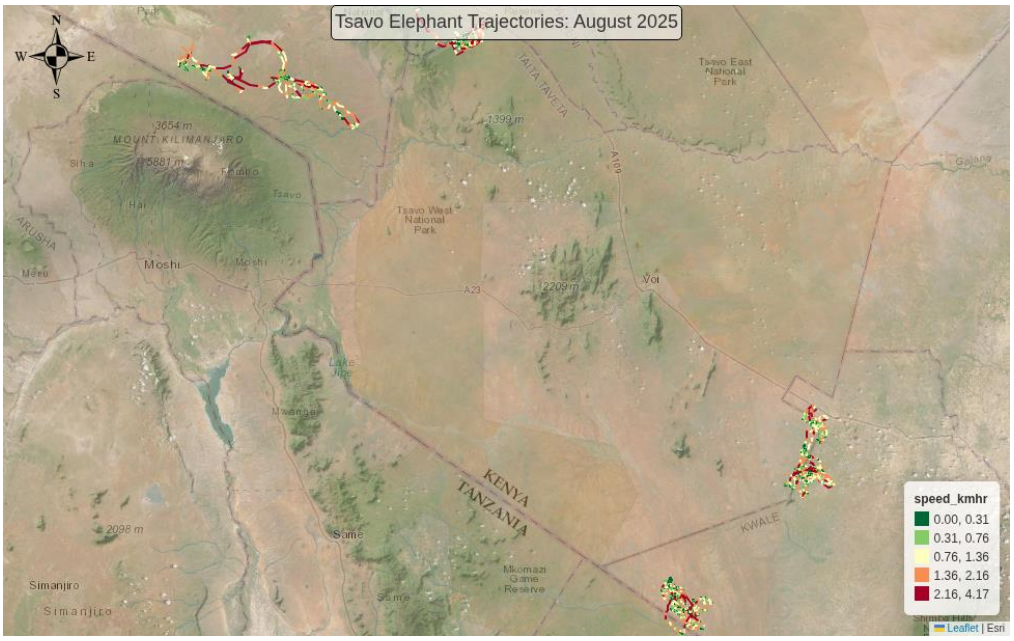

Tracking Manager Report

Collared elephants; Matali, Isiah, Kiambi, Polaris, and Hannibal monitored by MEP rangers using drones in the month of August.

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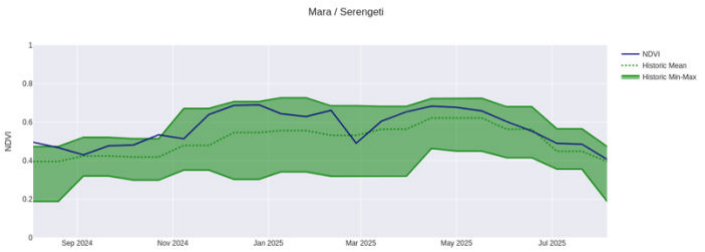
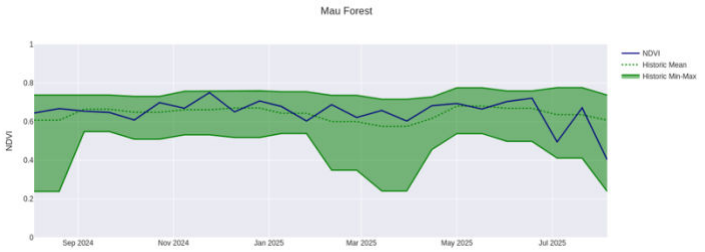
ENVIRONMENT: NDVI

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.

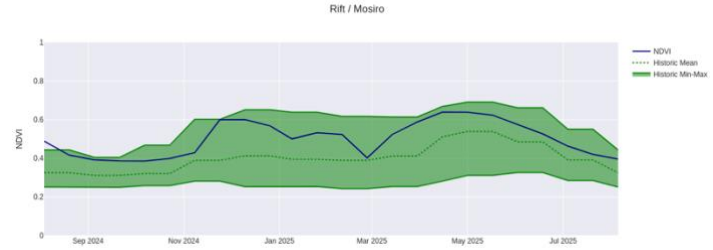
Greater Mara Ecosystem (GME)



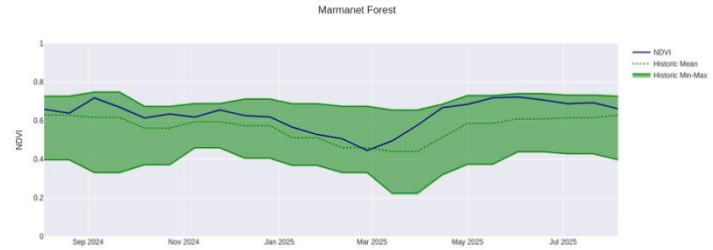
Mau



Rift Valley /Mosiro



Marmanet Forest



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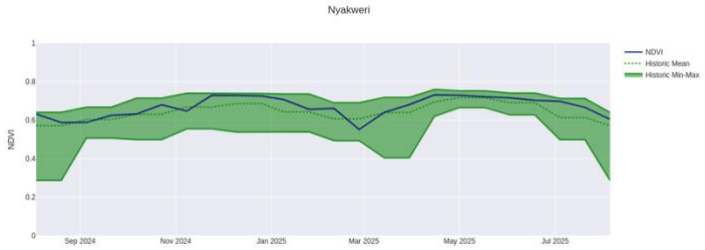
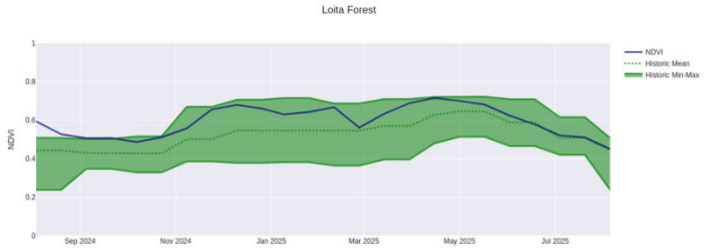
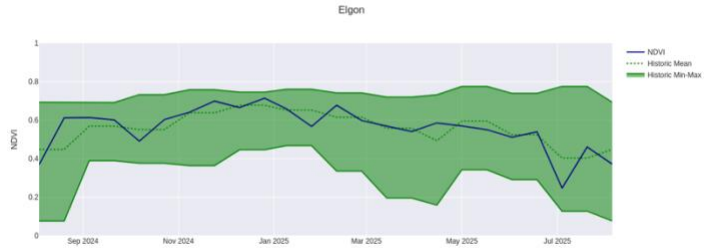
Nyakweri Forest



Loita Forest



Elgon



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