MEP September 2025 Report

The Mara Elephant Project (MEP) 'Bulls' ranger team receiving their trophy after emerging second in this year's Wildlife Ranger Challenge held in Lewa Wildlife Conservancy.

GENERAL

MEP turned 14 on September 13. To honor fourteen years of measurable impact, protecting elephants, supporting communities, and conserving the Mara's wild spaces, we held an anniversary celebration in the Mara. Joined by almost 100 staff members, stakeholders, and donors, we celebrated our accomplishments from the last year, reflected on the past, and toasted to the future.

As CEO, Marc Goss so perfectly said, "I am very proud of MEP's accomplishments over the past 14 years. I am also aware of the work we still have ahead of us. Today, we celebrate. Tomorrow, we get back to work." Now, more than ever, it's important to gather and recognize the influence we all have on the future of the natural world and reaffirm our commitment to securing it. Special thanks to all the partners and donors who make all this possible.

SECURITY, ANTI-POACHING & CONFLICT

On September 1, the MEP 'Foxtrot' ranger team monitored a bull elephant limping through Mara North Conservancy. After some observation, they determined he needed immediate treatment. The next day, they assisted Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Vet Dr. Njoroge with the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (SWT) Mobile Vet Unit during the treatment. The bull was successfully treated for a spear wound, and their monitoring efforts continue as he heals.

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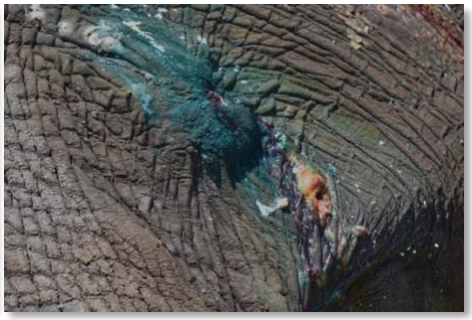
A young boy was lost, and time was of the essence. Partnering with Enonkishu Conservancy rangers and members of the community, MEP rangers jumped into action and deployed their drone equipped with a speaker to call his name. After 30 minutes of searching, they found the 12-year-old boy unharmed. His family rushed to the scene to embrace him as our rangers looked on. He couldn't resist a photo op with his rescuers either. MEP rangers are from the local communities they serve and respond when called.

On September 9, KWS requested MEP's assistance with a different mission, the translocation of a leopard. The male leopard was hunting sheep in a nearby community, putting the people and their livestock at risk. Trapping leopards, an elusive animal, is no easy feat. They used meat to lure him into the cage and then tranquilized him for a more relaxing journey. He was successfully released in the Maasai Mara National Reserve, a much safer area for him and the community.



Our partners at The Maa Trust reported an injured female elephant in Olare Motorogi Conservancy, acting visibly distressed. Identified by the MEP research team as Individual 830, they raced to the scene to meet KWS Vet Dr. Njoroge from the SWT Mobile Vet Unit for the treatment operation. The SWT helicopter helped in the air while MEP teams were on the ground as she was treated for a spear wound. MEP rangers remain on the ground monitoring her recovery. This operation underscores the power of collaboration in conservation; when partners unite, wildlife gets a second chance

One of the more fascinating individual elephants that the MEP research team has identified is Individual 1286. A bull elephant with no tusks. Beyond this anomaly or maybe because of it, this individual is a known crop raider, using Ol Kinyei Conservancy for protection during the day while he raids bordering farms at night. Given this, MEP, alongside the KWS and Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI) recently deployed a satellite collar to track his movements 24/7. The

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MEP research and ranger teams were on the ground to support the operation while the helicopter was in the air with KWS Vet Dr. Njoroge. While asleep for the collaring operation, Individual 1286 was also treated for an arrow wound. Tracking his movements will inform mitigation response and offer insights into how he's navigating the changing landscape.

On 26th September, the MEP Golf Team, together with rangers from the KWS Rhino Station and Oloisukut Conservancy, responded to an injured adult bull elephant within Oloisukut Conservancy. The elephant had sustained three injuries: two arrow wounds on the right limbs and a spear wound on the head. Treatment was successfully administered on site by our partner KWS Vet Dr. Njoroge. A follow-up patrol was conducted in Oloisukut Conservancy to monitor the treated bull and the team confirmed that the elephant is recovering well.

Overall, in September, MEP rangers alongside government partners arrested 10 habitat destruction suspects. They confiscated 8kgs of bushmeat and removed 147 snares. They also recovered 2 power saws, confiscated 113 pieces of timber, 2,320 posts, destroyed 6 charcoal kilns, 23 charcoal sacks, and mitigated 30 conflict incidents.

HELICOPTER

A young mother elephant regularly monitored by the MEP research team was collared in Naboisho Conservancy on September 26. Sighted nine times since 2021, Individual 201 has been cause for concern from the team, given her proximity to settlements and the young calf by her

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side. She and her herd have been observed moving between wildlife designated areas through communities and crop raiding along the way. In fact, during her collaring operation, KWS Vet Dr. Njoroge treated her for a spear wound. Teams on the ground kept her young calf safely with the herd while the helicopter assisted from the air. Tracking her movements will inform mitigation responses and allow KWS, the Wildlife Research and Training Institute, and MEP to better understand the remaining connectivity in this area.

DRONES FOR CONSERVATION

September was a busy month for MEP drone operations, with teams in the Mau, Loita, and Mara regions delivering fast response, critical monitoring, and lifesaving support across communities and elephant habitats. From human-wildlife conflict mitigation to forest surveillance and emergency rescues, drones continued to prove their value as an essential conservation tool in the Greater Mara Ecosystem. The drones were flown a total of 63.7hours; with 25 human elephant conflict mitigation instances, 33 total sightings, 46 monitoring, 5 search and rescue operations, and 3 cattle counts.

In the Mau landscape, Alpha and Charlie Teams were on the frontlines of human-elephant coexistence. Alpha Team intervened in conflict incidents in Kithima, Kapkatunga, and Chepsir while tracking several elephant groups in the same areas to prevent further escalations. Meanwhile, Charlie Team took on HWC callouts in Olmariko and Kiramuok and expanded their efforts by deploying drones to monitor illegal logging and charcoal production helping combat habitat degradation before it spreads.

The Loita region saw exceptional coordination across Lima, Kilo, and Echo Teams. Lima Team recorded multiple elephant herd sightings in Oldorko, Suswa, Oldepe, and Musenke and stepped in to manage conflict in Oldorko. Their continued tracking of collared elephants offered valuable insight into movement patterns across communal lands.

Kilo Team took part in a critical search and rescue mission for a missing child in Olodo-Kulupuoni and Naroosura, an operation where drones greatly increased coverage and speed. They also sighted collared elephant Isaiah in the Loita Forest and responded to multiple HWC events.

Echo Team combined wildlife monitoring and law enforcement support, sighting elephants in Ilkerin and Olmesutie while responding to conflict in surrounding areas. They also patrolled the Loita Forest by drone to identify hotspots of illegal logging and charcoal burning.

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The 'Mobile' ranger team sighted multiple elephant herds in Naboisho and Ol-Kinyei Conservancies and responded to HWC in Siana and Majimoto. They also monitored the movements of collared elephant Lempiris to help predict potential conflict zones. The 'Foxtrot' ranger team played a vital role in both emergency response and elephant care. They addressed HEC in Rekero, Endoinyo-Erinka, Ngosuani, and Lemek and used drones to support veterinary treatments, monitor elephant movements.

In Nyekweri forest, the 'Golf' ranger team responded to conflict in Pusangi, Isoketi, and Isokon while consistently tracking the Fitz elephant group in the forest providing daily updates that inform both strategy and security patrols. 'Delta' ranger team focused on preventing dangerous elephant crossings along the northern Mara River near Enoonkishu and Mbokishi by using drones as a safe deterrent. They also sighted several herds in Enoonkishu and Olchoro Conservancies, reinforcing their role in early detection.

COMMUNICATIONS & FUNDRAISING

The countdown to this year's UltraMARAthon is on with less than 50 days to go. Whether running solo or with a group of friends, the 50km race through the Maasai Mara will be one to remember. Run with purpose to support MEP and community rangers protecting the Mara's wildlife and African mission services providing critical services to Maasai communities. Register now: https://ultramarathon.co.ke/register/.

This year, MEP was invited to participate in the #WildlifeRangerChallenge, an annual event that celebrates and supports Africa's wildlife rangers by enhancing their livelihoods, improving their performance, and advocating for transformative changes in conservation. Over the past three months, rangers Jackson, Erick, Cosmas, and Lenkume, the 'MEP Bulls', have participated in challenges, both physical and mental, competing with more than 100 other ranger teams from 24

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African nations, all leading up to the finale: Race Day on September 20. The MEP Bulls ran the 21 km (12 miles) race with 22 kg (49 lbs.) of kit alongside other participating ranger teams at Lewa Conservancy. They crossed the finish line in a respectable time of 2 hours 30 minutes placing second. But it's not about the time, it's about the camaraderie that a challenge like this creates. It powers the internal drive that these wildlife protectors contain to work in some of the most challenging environments all to defend wildlife and wild spaces.

Mara Elephant Project Trust in Kenya received $48,419 in donations in September. Thank you to the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, Michael Prettejohn, Eden Wildlife Trust, and The Maa Trust for your support.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

In late September, escalating human–elephant conflict in the Mara prompted two key forums bringing together communities, conservancies, KWS and the Mara Elephant Project (MEP). At a public baraza in Mararianta, residents raised alarm over a rogue elephant destroying fences, livestock enclosures and trees, and threatening school children along common paths. Most community members called for the elephant to be translocated, a position supported by KWS. A research team will be deployed to identify a release site. The meeting also condemned a recent lion poisoning in Nkinye, calling for lawful and sustainable conflict management.

Days earlier, MEP joined a security meeting at the KWS headquarters in Ewuaso-Nyiro to address rising cases of elephant spearing. MEP's deputy senior warden, Jackson Maitai, and warden David Nchoe represented the organization in discussions linking these incidents to illegal fencing, blocked corridors, expanding farms and grazing pressure around water sources. Stakeholders agreed that reopening movement corridors, enforcing lease terms and managing land use are essential to reducing conflict. Together, both meetings highlighted urgent community safety concerns and reinforced MEP's role in coordinating responses, supporting humane solutions and promoting long-term coexistence.

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Also, in September, MEP hosted Dr. Eva Gross at the MEP HQ in the Mara for a knowledge exchange on human elephant conflict mitigation. The MEP team learnt and shared on some of the strategies that MEP employs in the Greater Mara Ecosystem to counter conflict while working hand in hand with the local communities. Dr. Eva Gross is a consultant looking to set up projects in the Congo forest. She also had the opportunity to visit MEP's Coexistence farm to learn more about elephant friendly farming and the out-grower's program.

RESEARCH & CONSERVATION

Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) Team

During the month, the team conducted 24 elephant sightings, which recorded 31 cows, 11 bulls, 31 sub-adults, and 11 calves. From these sightings, we successfully identified 5 new individuals, including 3cows, 2 bulls.

Harry, one of the identified bulls in Elephant Book sighted in September.

Data and Reporting Team

September began with the finalization of the MEP distance survey analysis report, which included generating graphs and map visualizations from data collected between 2021 and 2025, both monthly and yearly. Work also kicked off on the Kalepo EarthRanger setup and ElephantBook integration to support monitoring and data collection in Kalepo Conservancy. Tests and system setup were completed successfully, and both Kalepo EarthRanger and ElephantBook are now fully operational.

The ElephantBook analysis continued during the month, using DeepLabCut, YOLO models, and SIFT to segment, annotate, and extract key points from elephant images. This process was migrated to the server to ensure faster and more efficient processing.

From September 21st to 23rd, the Data and Reporting team attended the EarthRanger workshop at Lewa Conservancy in Laikipia County. The workshop focused on new changes and upcoming features in EarthRanger, as well as the first rollout and live demonstration of the Ecoscope platform, which supports conservation decision-making.

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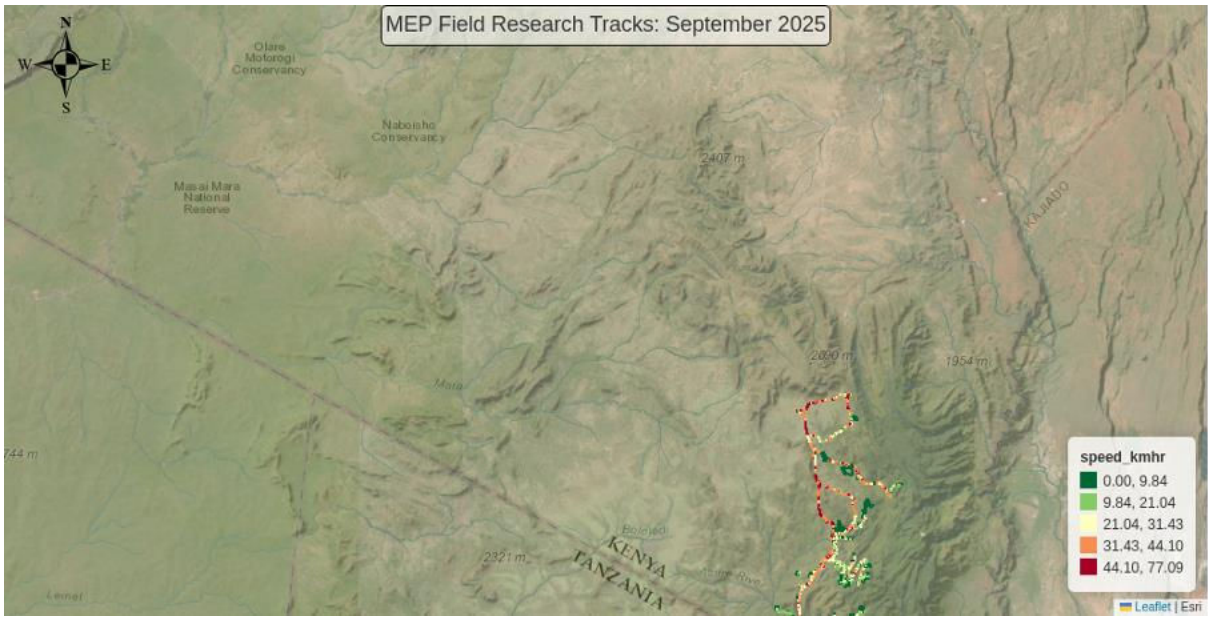
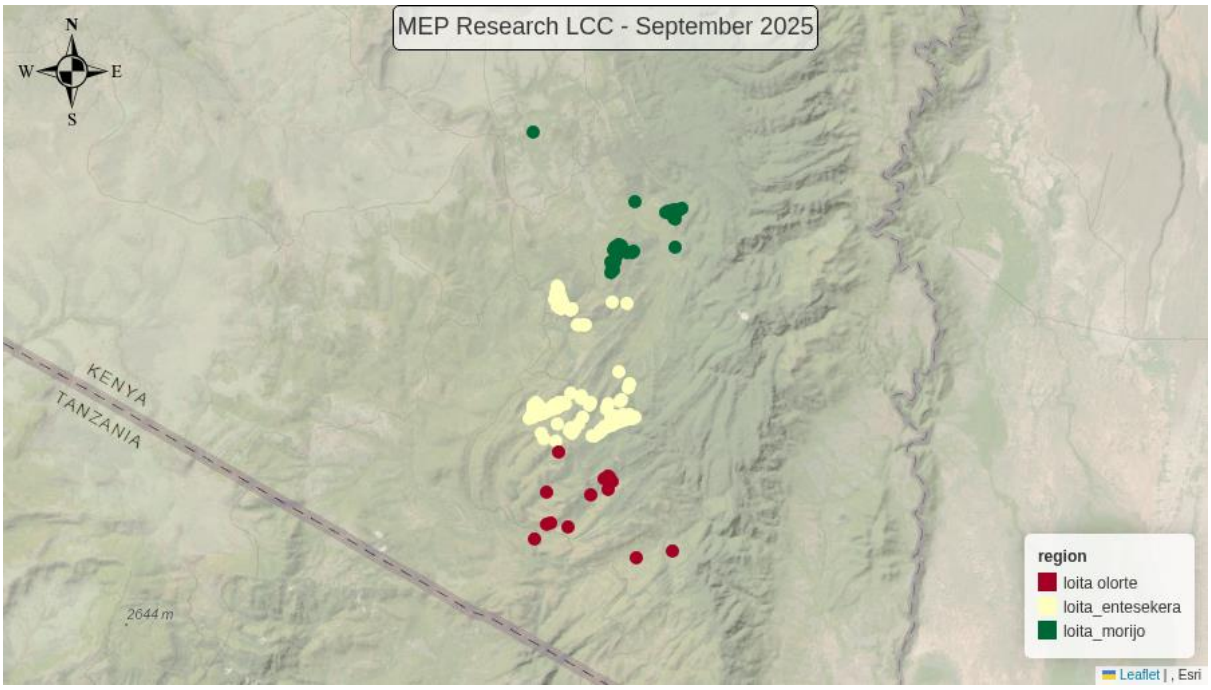


Movements of MEP's two field assistant in September. All of our field assistants are working on mapping fences, roads, and landcover ground-truthing points using motorbikes and our TerraChart app. They covered a total of 437.96 km and recorded 3.58 km of fences and 151 LCC points in September.



151 LCC points were collected in the month of August

Geospatial Mapping

In September, MEP's field assistants visited a total of 76 grids. (55 - Visited Complete, 21 - Unvisited Complete). They mapped a significant number of roads and physical features, including 3.58 km of fences and 0.24km of roads. Also, 250 land parcels across the Loita region were

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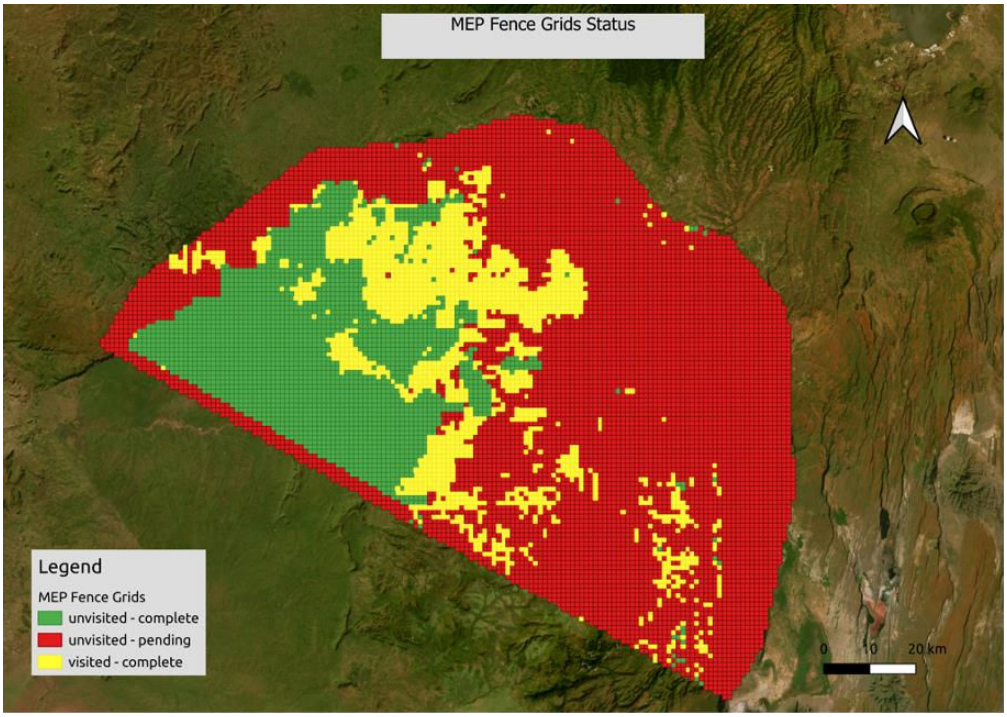
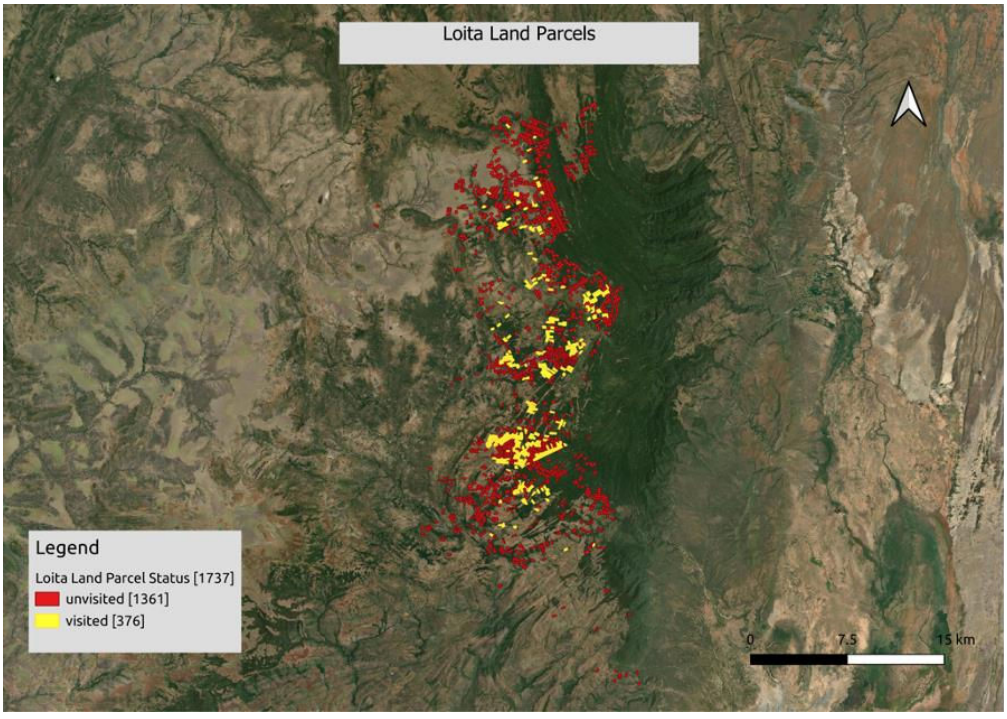
visited. The Head of LandDX Data, Eugene Kuloba, summarized this month's data as depicted in the image below.



September fence grids visited by the MEP Geospatial team



Parcels of land visited in Loita Forest in September

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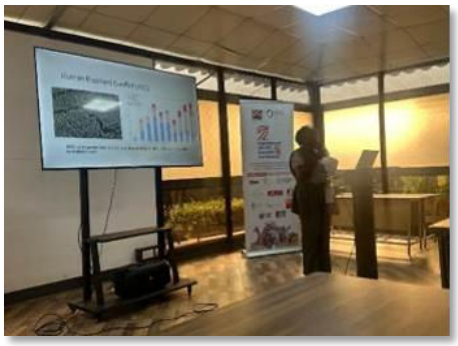
MEP Coexistence Farm

General Update



The MEP team attended the second Wildlife Scientific Conference in Naivasha for three days, organized by Wildlife Research Training Institute (WRTI), which brought together all organization and institutions working in wildlife conservation and research to share present and share their findings Mara Elephant Project Coexistence team was able to share their just completed research based on the experimental farm which attracted a huge audience being one of the long-term alternative crop studies and in situ.

The team brought together 150 women for kitchen garden training. While we empower them on food production, food security and coexistence approaches in food production, their sense of wellbeing promotes coexistence and wildlife protection. Each lady was given four different types of vegetables, including Sukuma wiki, spinach, Managu and cabbages. The team continued with the out-grower program and entrepreneurship classes and we carried one with women in the Naropil Group in their farm during a farm visit which also showed it in good condition.

The success of the conservation career day in 2024, attracted organizations who wanted to collaborate and learn from the experience and the impact of the MEP conservation career day model. In September, MEP was joined by The Maa Trust, Enonkishu Conservancy and Women in the Wild to hold the 2nd edition of the Conservation Career Day at Emarti Secondary School. The main objective was to inspire students to explore conservation and environmental related fields as they prepare to transition to university. The team worked with 240 students from four schools, Emarti, Enkipaai, Namunyak Girls and Olorkoti high school.

Climate Report

MEP's Co-Existence Farm Rainfall Recording September 2025

Date	Rain gauge 2 (200m2)
2025_09_10	53
2025_09_14	20

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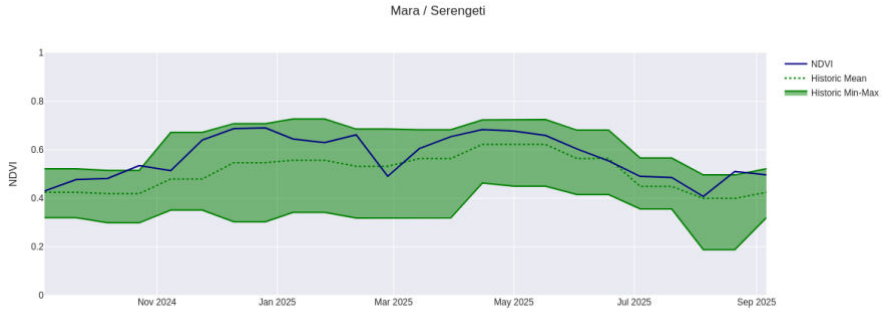
2025_09_15	4
2025_09_17	3
2025_09_18	4
2025_09_30	3

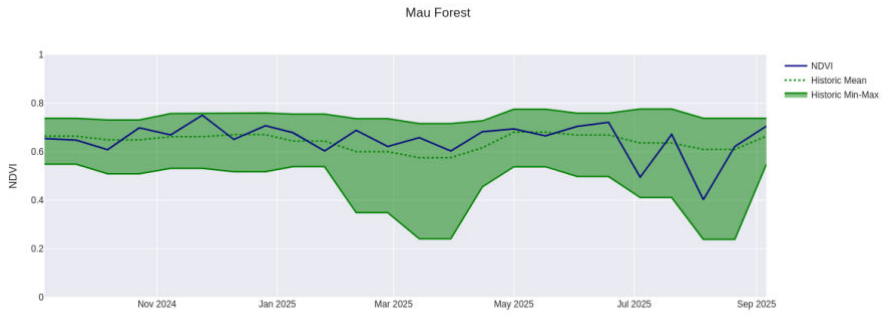
ENVIRONMENT: NDVI

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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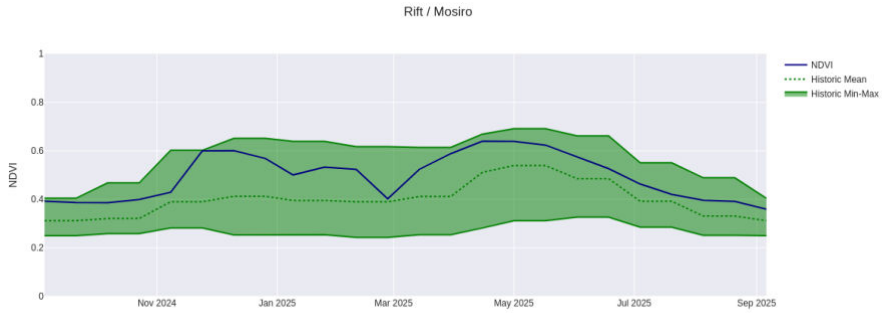
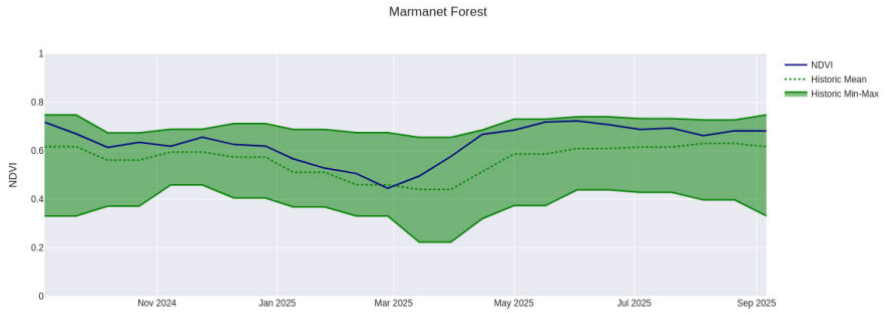
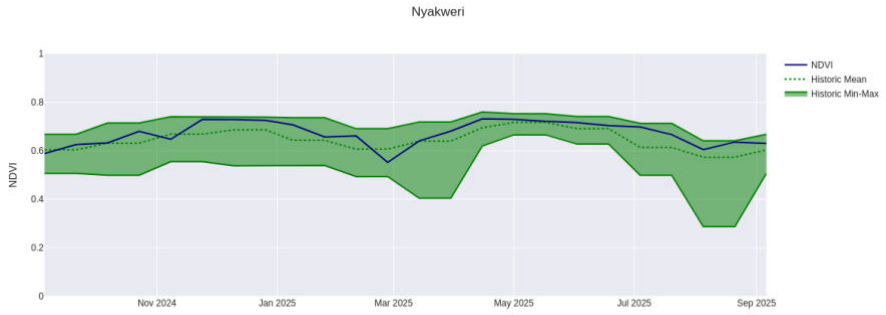
Rift Valley /Mosiro



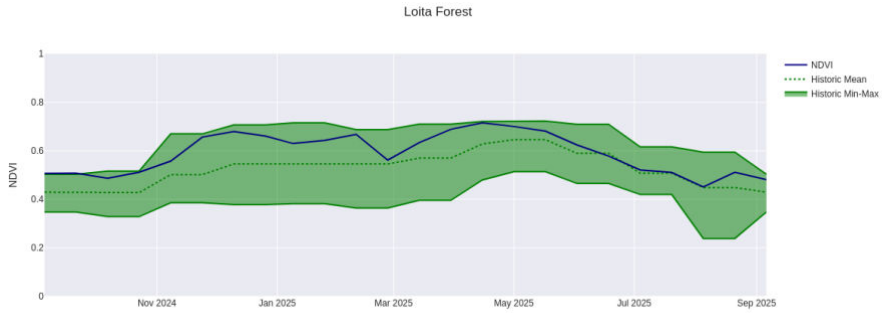
Marmanet Forest



Nyakweri Forest



Loita Forest



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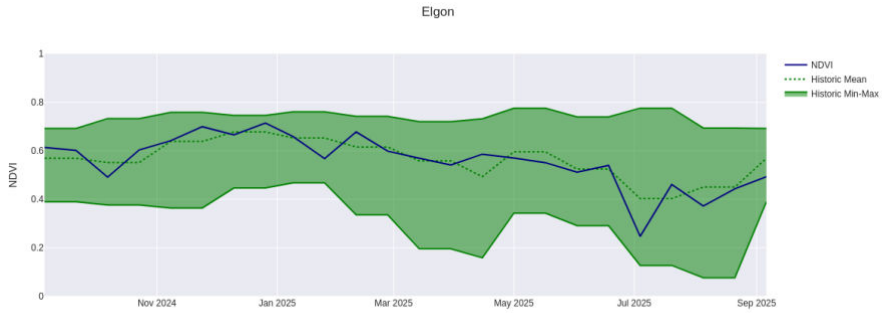

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