MEP November 2025 Report

The Mara Elephant Project (MEP) male ranger team crowned champions in this year's UltraMARAthon in the 12.5km ranger relay category.

GENERAL

In November, several members of the MEP staff were invited to participate in the Professional Women in Conservation Association symposium, a flagship initiative of The Maa Trust. Dedicated to empowering women across the Mara landscape, the 3-day event brought together professionals from across sectors to collaborate. Topics ranging from mental health and wellbeing to skill building exercises led to thought-provoking discussions that explored what meaningful inclusion looks like in practice. As MEP Research Assistant Sharon Morompi says, "when women come together to reflect, heal, lead and re-strategize, they don't just strengthen conservation they strengthen the future."

SECURITY, ANTI-POACHING & CONFLICT

The MEP's operations team plays a crucial role in the "Evaluate" phase of the MEP Method. After field data on elephant movements and landscape conditions are collected, the team analyzes this information using platforms like EarthRanger and Ecoscope. They create real-time maps, visualizations, and graphs to identify movement patterns, potential conflict zones, and priority areas for patrols or community support. This data-driven evaluation ensures that all responses to human-elephant conflict are strategic, timely, and effective.

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On November 8, MEP rangers and researchers responded to assist the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Vet Dr. Njoroge from the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (SWT) Mobile Vet Unit with three elephant treatments in one day. What started as an operation to treat one bull with an arrow wound quickly escalated as the team monitored two additional bulls in the same bachelor herd also with arrow wounds. The wounds, assumed to be sustained while the herd was crop raiding in farms nearby, were quickly treated by the team. The Kenya Choppers helicopter provided essential aerial support and thanks to the coordination between all partners, each elephant received the veterinary care they urgently needed. All three bulls have a positive prognosis, and ranger teams will continue to monitor them closely to ensure a full recovery.

Overall, in November, MEP rangers and government partners arrested three bushmeat poaching suspects and eight habitat destruction suspects. They confiscated 25 kg of bushmeat, removed 144 snares, and seized 72 pieces of timber, one power saw, and 306 posts. Teams also destroyed 37 charcoal sacks and 10 charcoal kilns, and responded to 43 human–wildlife conflict incidents across the Greater Mara Ecosystem.

HELICOPTER

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The MEP helicopter continues to be a vital tool in our operations. In November, MEP CEO Marc Goss and MEP's R44 helicopter got featured in a shoot organized by the Robinson helicopter to show versatility and the different use cases MEP puts to use the helicopter in different situations like this case of HEC mitigation. The final piece will be released early next year. Special thanks to Robinson for their support. In the whole month of November, the MEP helicopter was in the air for a total of 17.58 hours assisting our Government partners in anti-poaching, aerial patrols, and sky vet services.

Drones for conservation

In November, MEP drones were flown a total of 47.3 hours; Drones were deployed to mitigate 70% of the human-elephant conflict incidents, record 47 total sightings, conduct 49 monitoring exercises, 2 search and rescue operations, and 4 cattle counts.

In November, MEP received a call about a herd of elephants moving toward the Pardamat settlement. A ranger team was immediately deployed and used their drone to guide the herd back toward safer habitat before disturbances occurred and nearby communities were put at risk. This video captures part of that operation as the rangers used drones to steer the herd away from homes and farms. While this kind of response may look straightforward, the methods used and the ones we avoid, make all the difference. We've tried various approaches over the years, and learned which strategies escalate risks and which ones truly support long-term coexistence. This operation is an example of how early action, modern tools, and safe-distance guidance can keep both elephants and people out of harm's way. Each successful intervention strengthens the pathways for coexistence and reinforces the importance of investing in strategies that benefit communities and elephants long into the future.

Also, in November, the MEP 'Golf' ranger team responded to a human-elephant conflict situation involving a herd of 25 elephants that had moved into a sugarcane farm. This farm sits on a privately-owned parcel of land within the Nyakweri Forest, home to collared elephant Fitz. While Fitz wasn't the culprit this time, the rangers were still familiar with this herd's crop raiding tendencies. Deploying their thermal drone, they safely guided the herd out of the farm to minimize the damage.

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COMMUNICATIONS & FUNDRAISING

The sixth edition of the UltraMARAthon took place in November and included 280 runners taking part and supporting vital conservation and healthcare initiatives across the Mara. The MEP male team, which included rangers Stanley Momposhi, Philip Lenkume, Jackson Musukut, and Cosmas Bett, proved that they are still the fastest rangers in the Mara, winning the relay in an impressive 3 hours and 3 minutes. This year also introduced the kids' fun run, where 20 young runners participated in a 3 km race. A heartfelt thank you to every participant, sponsor, and volunteer who made this year's marathon an incredible success.

MEP is grateful to all the photographers who submitted their entries in The Greatest Wildlife Photographer – Kenya competition to support our efforts in 2025. Thanks to them and the organizers, MEP, alongside other conservation and community organizations, is receiving support from the over $21,000 of funds raised through this amazing initiative. This year's competition brought together an incredible 1,140 entries from 31 countries, showcasing the power of photography in telling the story of our wild places.

First place winning entry by photographer Pie Aerts in support of MEP.

Congratulations to photographer Pie Aerts for winning the 2025 competition. We can't wait to see what these talented artists will showcase in 2026.

Launched in November, our Giving Season Campaign has already generated significant momentum toward our year-end goals. MEP aims to raise $500,000 and we are thrilled to report that the initial response has been outstanding, demonstrating strong support for elephant protection, landscape connectivity, and coexistence. Thanks to several generous members of our herd, your donation is doubled up to $50,000 through Giving Tuesday, December 2. Support MEP and your impact is doubled through Giving Tuesday, December 2 🔗 www.maraelephantproject.org/donate

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Mara Elephant Project Trust in Kenya received $298,506 in donations in November. Thank you to Britam Insurance, AirKenya, and all the sponsors and generous donors who gave in support of the 2025 UltraMARAthon.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

MEP was honored to participate in the third Save the Elephants Conservation Careers Symposium at Kenyatta University in November. MEP staff shared real-world experiences from the field, offering students an honest look at what collaborative conservation work looks like on the ground. At the Expo session, students had the opportunity to engage with the team one-on-one and witness a live drone demonstration which sparked excitement about how technology can strengthen conservation. Special thanks to Save the Elephants for this incredible initiative and for bringing together partners and the next generation of conservation and environmental leaders.

"Inspiring the next generation is not a side activity, but critical conservation work. It is one of the most meaningful investments we can make for the future of conservation. When young people see how science, technology, and community action come together to protect wildlife, they realise this is a practical, purposeful career they can grow into, and that their skills can keep wildlife and people thriving." – MEP Deputy CEO, Meshack Gaga.

The Mara Conservancies Ranger Heads Meeting held in November at the Wildlife Training College (WTC) strengthened unity across the landscape by enhancing joint planning, coordinated patrols, and shared intelligence to improve security and conservation outcomes. Leaders addressed key ranger challenges, operational, welfare, logistical, and technological, while committing to expanded joint trainings such as ToT, drone operations, and ranger competitions to standardize skills. The team prioritized faster, coordinated responses to human–wildlife conflict, mapped poaching and charcoal-burning hotspots for joint action, and emphasized the protection of wildlife corridors through collaboration with landowners. Strengthening relationships with communities, government agencies, KWS, security forces, and conservation partners remained central to maintaining a cohesive, peaceful Mara ecosystem.

Also, in November, the team hosted various guests at the MEP headquarters for a presentation and a tour around property. Thanks to all the visitors for their interest in and for supporting MEP's conservation efforts.

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RESEARCH & CONSERVATION

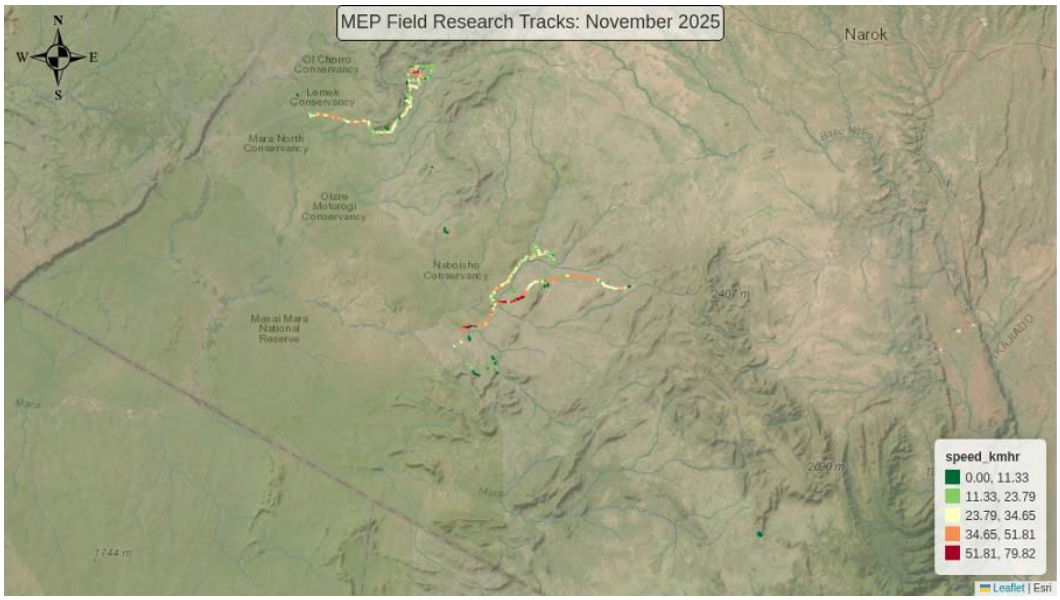
Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) Team

The month of November was marked by active and insightful elephant monitoring efforts by the Long-Term Monitoring (LTM) team. The team conducted 12 elephant sightings, documenting 11 cows, 28 bulls, 16 sub-adults, and 8 calves. From these findings, 7 new elephants were successfully identified. These additions enhance our long-term identification records and strengthen ongoing conservation efforts. Continuous monitoring allows the team to understand herd composition, seasonal movement patterns, and habitat-use trends.

The team completed transect distance surveys across the Mara Triangle, Mara North, and Lemek-Olchoro to assess elephant distribution and habitat use. Findings confirmed that the Mara Triangle continues to maintain the highest number of elephants due to its low livestock pressure and intact habitats, making it a preferred range for many herds. However, Mara North and Lemek-Olchoro recorded significantly fewer elephant sightings while showing the highest presence of cattle respectively. These patterns reinforce earlier findings that elephant movements are strongly influenced by livestock distribution and grazing intensity.

Data and Reporting Team

The data and reporting team summarised the tracks covered by two field assistants as shown in the map below:



Movements of MEP's two field assistant in November. 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 188 km and recorded 0 km of fences and 0 LCC points in November.

Geospatial Mapping

The LandDX team consolidated November's data to update maps of fencing, roads, and land-use change across priority grids, as summarized in the geospatial visualization below.

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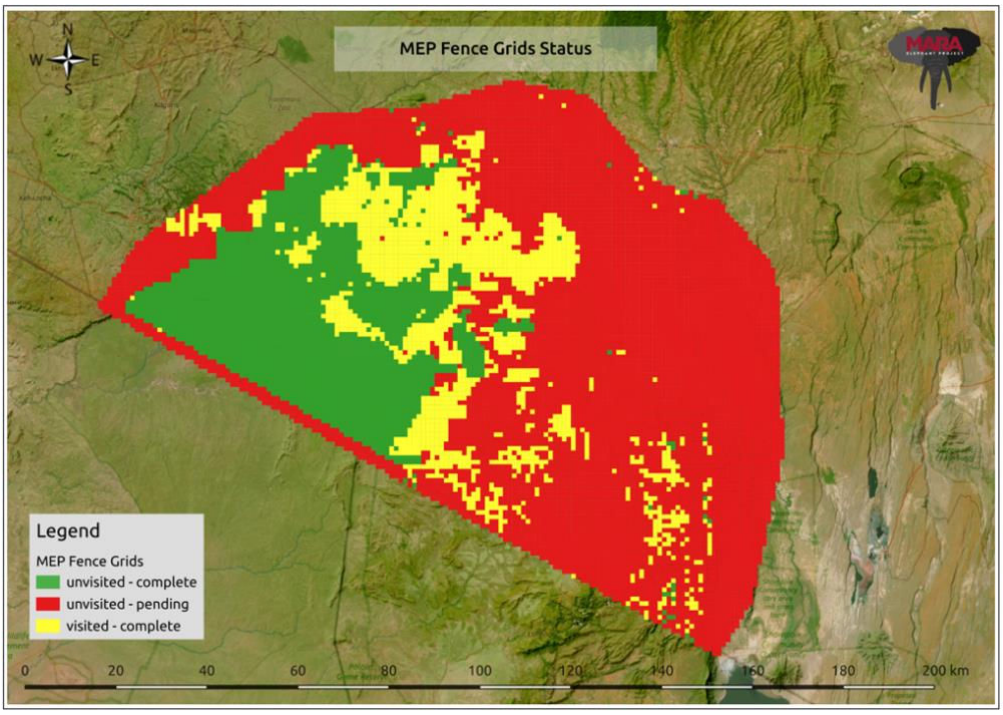
MEP



Coexistence Farm

General Update

In November, the coexistence project received zero rainfall. This had a major toll on the crops which had just been harvested such as the tea tree and were looking to regrow. The Coexistence and Education Programme conducted a three-day mentorship programme with 295 students and 65 parents from Ormeoshi Primary School. The activity covered several topics, including academic performance, conservation, and health, and concluded with the planting of 100 trees in celebration of Kenya's National Tree Planting Day. The event was carried out in collaboration with The Maa Trust, Women in the Wild, and Enoonkishu Conservancy. This marks the final education activity for 2025.

As we prepare to include more schools in 2026, the Education Programme Team met with the Operations Team to understand MEP's areas with high human–elephant conflict (HEC). This will inform targeted interventions to strengthen human–elephant coexistence awareness and empowerment in hotspots such as Olderkesi, where Pusanki and Ositeti record up to 98% HEC cases. The Coexistence Programme also begun preparations for the second cohort of the Out-grower Programme. Two groups of interested women attended an introductory meeting where they were oriented on MEP's coexistence out grower model. In the coming months, more outreach will be conducted to raise awareness and encourage wider participation.

Climate Report

MEP's Co-Existence Farm Rainfall Recording November 2025

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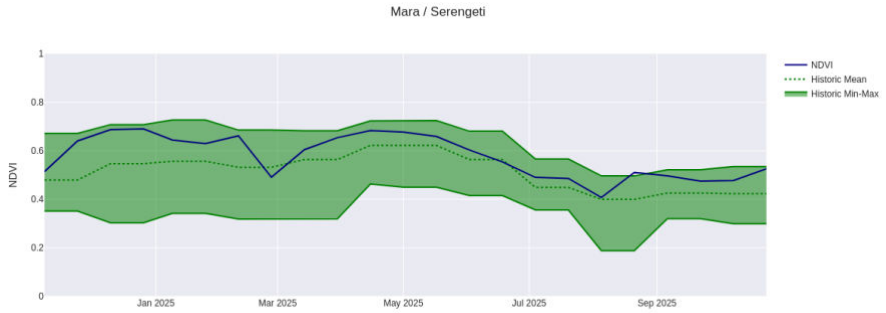
No Rainfall was recorded in the month of November.

Collared elephants; Nancy Q, Lolotoo, Edwin, and the Tuskless bull all monitored by MEP Rangers and Researchers in November.

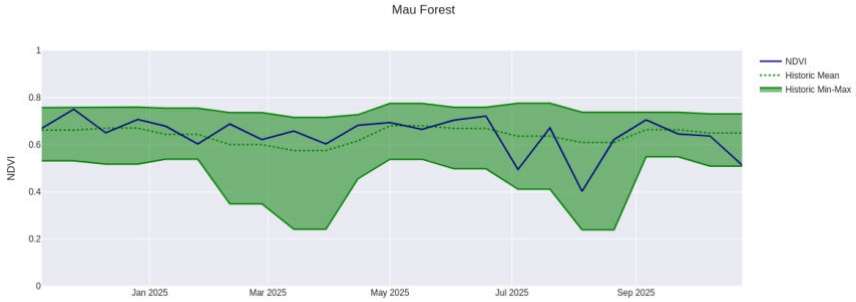
ENVIRONMENT: NDVI

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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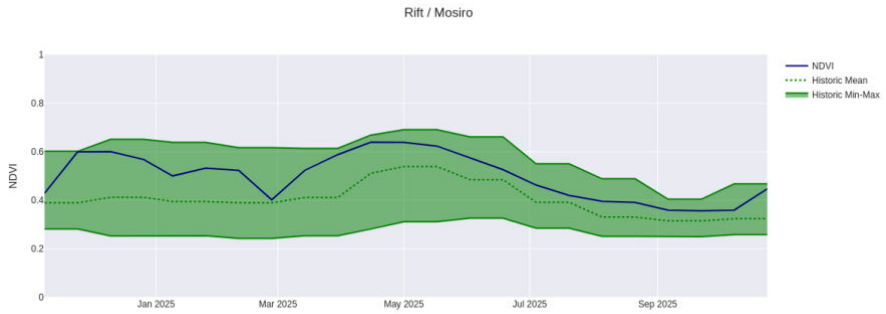
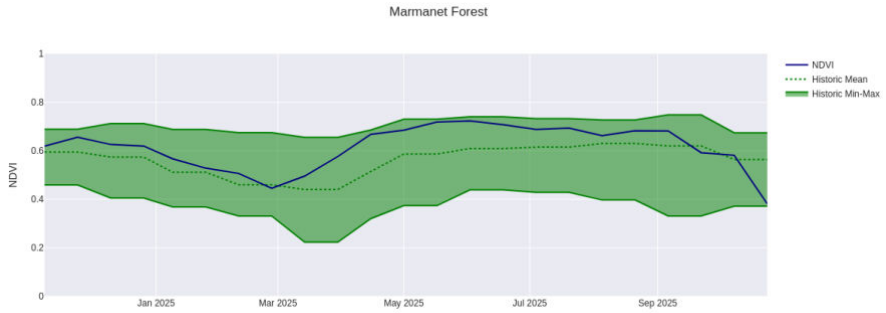
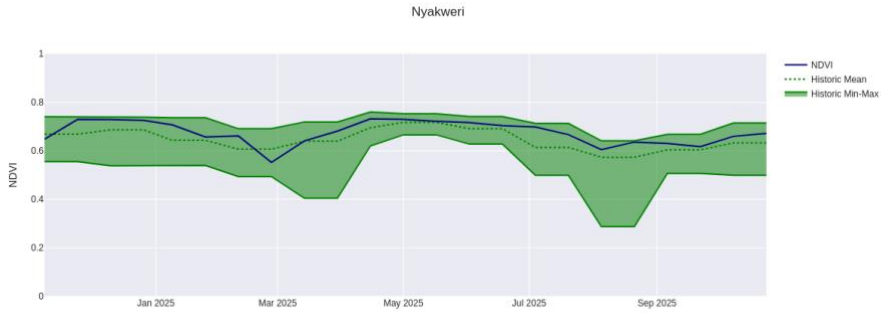
Rift Valley /Mosiro



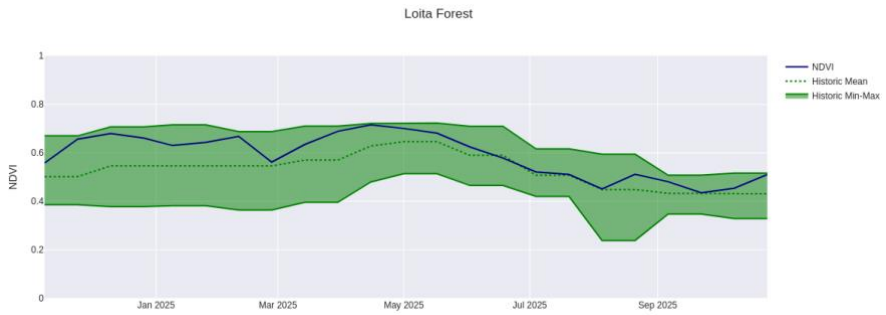
Marmanet Forest



Nyakweri Forest



Loita Forest



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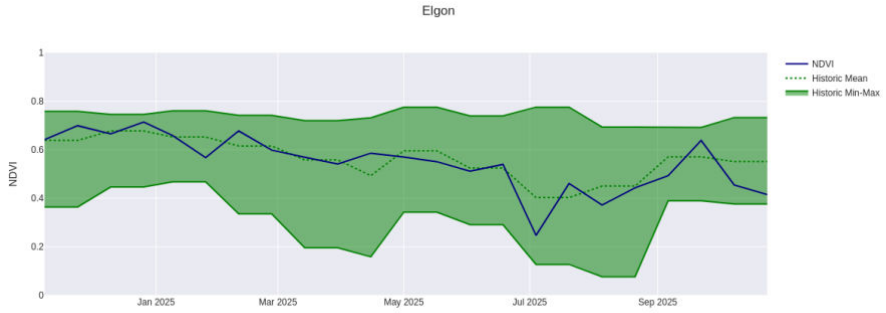
Elgon



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