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## 8.8 Kenya

### Protected and conserved areas in Kenya<sup>55</sup>

Kenya has 411 protected areas covering 72,545 km<sup>2</sup> of land and 904 km<sup>2</sup> of the ocean (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019)).

The post-independence government inherited four national parks and six game reserves, gazetted through a parliamentary process. In addition, there are quite a number of game reserves that are under the management of local authorities. There also a host of privately or/and communally owned wildlife conservancies. Subsequently the numbers of the parks and reserves have greatly increased.

Of the 12% of land designated as protected areas including forests, 50% are found in arid and semi-arid lands. The current trend shows a sharp decline in animal species diversity and population abundance in these ecosystems. Realising that these protected areas were incapable of adequately meeting biodiversity conservation goals and providing support to livelihoods, the idea of establishing private sanctuaries and community conservancies has gained momentum over the last few decades in Kenya. These form the lifeblood of the current protected areas system, with more than 70% of all large wildlife living permanently or seasonally outside of protected areas managed by government agencies.

### Transboundary protected and conserved areas

Kenya includes part of five transboundary conservation areas, namely: i) Amboseli-Kilimanjaro-Longido, ii) Mount Elgon, iii) Serengeti-Mara, iv) Tana-Kipini-Laga Badana Bushbush Land and Seascape, and v) Tanga Marine Reserves System and Tanga Coelacanth Marine Park and Diani Chale and Kisitee-Mpunguti.

### Policy context

A comprehensive report on legislation and policy related to protected area management, governance, and equity was undertaken by the BIOPAMA programme. It identified 41 relevant laws and policies in Kenya (Tessema, 2019).

### Key species<sup>56</sup>

Kenya is endowed with diverse ecosystems and habitats that are home to unique and diverse flora and fauna. Over 7,000 plant species have been recorded in Kenya with over 1,000 of those endemic or near-endemic. Some 356 plant species have been assessed through the IUCN Red List process as threatened, a third of which are endemic to Kenya. It is estimated that over 5,000 species of fungus occur in the country although only 2,000 have been documented.

Kenya's 1,100 bird species include eight endemics.

55 The section draws on information contained in Kenya's Fifth National Report to the CBD (Republic of Kenya, 2015).

56 Ibid.

**Figure 8.15 Kenya Summary**



Total Population (millions)  
**51.39**



Population growth (annual %)  
**2.30**



Surface area (km<sup>2</sup>) (thousands)  
**580.40**



GDP (current US\$) (billions)  
**87.91**



GDP growth (annual %)  
**6.30**

Source: The World Bank Group, 2018.

**Area Protected:**

**411 protected areas**



covering **72 545 km<sup>2</sup>** of land



covering **904 km<sup>2</sup>** of ocean

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2019i



**315 mammal species**

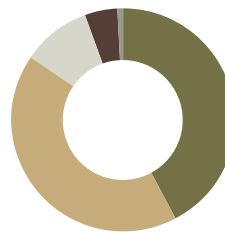


**1 100 bird species**



**200 reptiles**

**Protected and conserved areas in Kenya in IUCN Management Categories**



- Not Applicable (No. 9)
- Not Reported (No. 345)
- VI. Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources (No. 16)
- IV. Habitat/Species Management (No. 5)
- II. National Park (No. 36)

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019j).

**Coverage of protected areas in Kenya**

Type of protected area	Area protected or conserved*	Area protected or conserved**
Terrestrial and inland water	12.36%	8.00%
Coastal and marine	0.80%	Not found

\* WDPA dataset

\*\* From National Report on Biodiversity

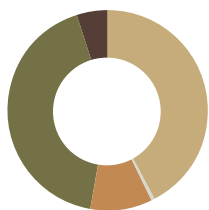
Source: Republic of Kenya (2015); UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019j).

**Protected and conserved areas designated as global sites of importance in Kenya**

Global designation	No. of sites
UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves	6
UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Natural or Mixed)	3
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)	6

Source: Ramsar (2019); UNESCO (2019a (2019b)).

**Protected and conserved areas in Kenya in IUCN Governance Types**



- Not Applicable (No. 9)
- Not Reported (No. 345)
- VI. Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources (No. 16)
- IV. Habitat / Species Management (No. 5)
- II. National Park (No. 36)

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019j).

**Priority areas for conservation**



**6 sites**  
Alliance for Zero Extinction sites



**68 sites**  
Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas



**72 sites**  
Key Biodiversity Areas

Source: AZE Secretariat (2019); BirdLife International (2019b, 2019c).

**National designations of protected and conserved areas in Kenya**

National designation	No.	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Community Wildlife Sanctuary	1	223
National Park	23	28 844
National Reserve	31	17 941
Group Ranch	1	66
Private Nature Reserve	1	197
Game Sanctuary	1	0
Private Protected Area	2	522
National Sanctuary	6	36
Private Ranch	4	645
Marine National Reserve	5	510
Marine National Park	4	61
Nature Reserve	2	17 941
Not Reported	5	8
Forest Reserve	234	18 776
National Park (proposed)	1	145
Community Conservancy	21	2 719
Community Nature Reserve	28	30 016
Private Reserve	16	8 121
Wildlife Sanctuary	1	109
Locally Managed Marine Area	9	37

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019j).

Over 200 reptiles (five marine turtle, five tortoise, 100 snake, 100 lizard, one crocodile and five terrapin species) and 110 amphibian species occur throughout the country except at the top of high mountains such as Mount Kenya. Kenya is also home to 315 mammal species, including a number of endemics and near-endemics, including the Grevy's zebra (*Equus grevyi*) and the hirola (*Beatragus hunteri*). Declines in many mammal species, apart from the African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), have been attributed to land use change, drought, poaching, disease and competition for resources.

Kenya's freshwater and marine ecosystems contain both biologically diverse and commercially important fish populations. Over 60 of these species are threatened according to the IUCN Red List. Over 35,000 invertebrate taxa have been recorded and described, with many thousands more remaining to be described.

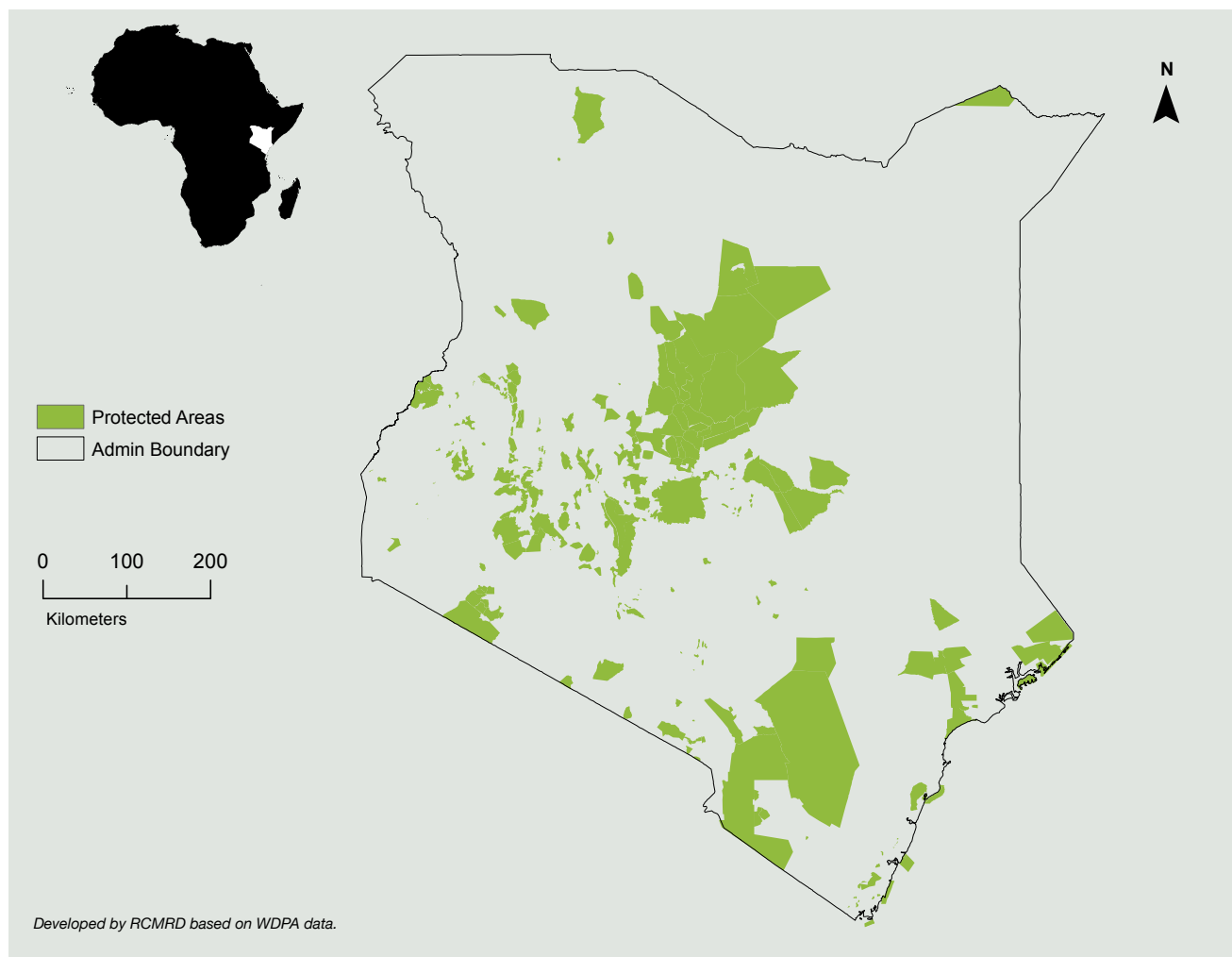
### Pressures and threats<sup>57</sup>

The overriding threat facing biodiversity in Kenya is habitat degradation, fragmentation and loss, such as land use changes,

physical modification of rivers or excessive withdrawal from rivers, loss of coral reefs and damage to sea floors due to trawling. The main drivers are: human population growth, exerting pressure on biodiversity habitats and land resources; and poverty leading to unsustainable use of land resources and biodiversity and limited financial resources to support biodiversity conservation.

Other critical threats include climate change, invasive alien species, overexploitation and pollution. Certain taxa, such as amphibians and reptiles, are particularly impacted by overexploitation for local and international trade. The illegal international trade in ivory and rhino horn has also been a threat to populations of elephant and rhino in the country, while the lesser known African sandalwood (*Osyris lanceolata*) is also seriously threatened by illegal overexploitation. The illegal bushmeat trade has seriously impacted many antelope species.

**Figure 8.16 Kenya protected areas**



57 Ibid.