



2023 Annual Report:

OUR JOURNEY. OUR SUCCESSES.



**THE AFRICAN GOLDEN CAT
CONSERVATION ALLIANCE**

For the African golden cat. For local communities.



THREATENED FOR EXTINCTION

OUR MISSION:

To conserve the African golden cat through local livelihood improvement.



Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the AGCCA partners, whose dedication and hard work form the backbone of our success.

We also want to express appreciation to our local communities and the national wildlife authorities for their enthusiasm for conservation work.

We are grateful to our financial partners for their unwavering support, and for always being there for us. Together, we have built a family that is integral to the AGCCA's journey.



Wildlife in
'catastrophic
decline' due
to human
destruction.

Foreword

Mwez “Badru” Mugerwa
CHAIR, AGCCA

Esteemed AGCCA Partners, financial partners, and local communities, as we reflect on 2023, it is with great pleasure and gratitude that I present to you the Annual Report for 2023.

In the pages that follow, you will discover the remarkable achievements and milestones the AGCCA has reached in 2023.

From exceeding financial targets to launching innovative threat-reduction initiatives. Our dedicated local communities living adjacent to African golden cat (hereafter “African goldies”) habitats and strategic partners have played a pivotal role in driving our success.

These accomplishments stand as a testament to the collective effort and commitment of everyone involved with the AGCCA.

We are delighted to share our inspiring journey, dedicated to inspiring local community support for the conservation of African goldies. We have remarkably achieved this mission through the active engagement of local families in alternative livelihood-improving

initiatives that dissuade hunting while improving the local way of life.

The involvement of primary school children, local government, national wildlife authorities, and the wider local community demonstrates the all-rounded nature of our



conservation approach. The ever-growing AGCCA family, now with 35 partners in 19 of the 21 countries of the species putative range, is a testimony of our united continental effort.

The second bi-annual AGCCA summit co-hosted in Uganda and Tanzania in November 2023 strengthened our friendship and shared commitment to protect Africa's least known felid- the African golden cat.

As we turn our gaze towards the future, the AGCCA remains firmly committed to our core values and mission. Our vision for the upcoming year is ambitious yet grounded in a strategic approach that leverages our strengths, and comradery and embraces innovation.

The need to extend anti-hunting initiatives to more local families remains pertinent, as bushmeat hunting remains a serious threat across the African golden cat habitat.

In closing, I invite you to explore the contents of this Annual Report and gain insight into the remarkable journey of the AGCCA in 2023.

Your trust and confidence inspire us to reach new corners of the African golden cat range, and we are excited to share our accomplishments and aspirations with you.

Thank you for being an integral part of our story.



The need to extend anti-hunting initiatives to more local families remains pertinent, as bushmeat hunting remains a serious threat across the African golden cat habitat.

African Goldies

...are restricted to the tropical rainforests of equatorial Africa, where hunting (legal or illegal (poaching)) of wildlife for bushmeat consumption and trade is ubiquitous.

Spanning 30 countries, the tropical rainforest of Africa covers 3.6 million Km² – being the only contiguous stretch of forest wilderness after the Amazon.

The area is a stronghold for conserving the African golden cat. The predicted growth in Africa's human population, coupled with poverty and the need for animal protein, is likely to increase

bushmeat poaching for sustenance and income. The most commonly used poaching tools, such as snares, pitfalls, or nets, are non-selective, killing or injuring non-target species, including the lesser-known African goldies.

For example, in 2019, an estimated 80 African golden cats perished in snares at three protected areas in Uganda.

The root causes of poaching are poverty, lack of employment, and access to animal protein. Incentivizing and engaging local communities strengthens interventions against poaching.

Quick Facts

80

African golden cats perished in snares at three protected areas in Uganda

African golden cats are restricted to the **tropical rainforests** of equatorial Africa



Who we are

The African Golden Cat Conservation Alliance (AGCCA) - a network of dedicated African nationals (est. 2019) with a long-term vision to implement conservation activities against human threats to the African golden cat in all countries of the species range.

AGCCA implements its conservation initiatives via a two-pronged approach: 1) local community mobilisation and 2) local community livelihood

improvement. Through these initiatives, we have established strong rapport and partnerships with the local communities, national wildlife authorities, and our financial partners.

Our conservation actions are led and implemented by dedicated African conservationists alongside their local communities.

The AGCCA currently has 35 partners in 19 of the 21 range countries. These countries include Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and South Sudan, where

AGCCA partners have discovered the African goldies there for the first time.

The AGCCA partners coordinate and implement conservation initiatives for the African goldies, together with their local communities.

Our mission is clear: to spearhead the conservation of the African golden cat across the species range, together with our local communities, through community-based conservation practices.

Quick Facts

35

partners in
19 of the
21 range
countries.



A continental conservation effort

Uganda | Embaka

MWEZI “BADRU” MUGERWA

In Uganda, the conservation (threat reduction) efforts for the African goldies are implemented by Embaka - a local Community-Based Conservation Organization (CBO) registered in three districts neighbouring Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

While Embaka was recently (2021) formally registered as a CBO, it counts 12 years of successful community-based conservation and ecological research on the African goldies in and around Uganda’s protected areas.

Embaka is the local Kikiga name for the African golden cat, and it reflects our aim of engaging local communities to

mitigate human threats and their impacts on the species and its habitat through local community engagement and the provision of incentives (e.g., alternative sources of income and animal protein).

Embaka is currently working in and around five protected areas in Uganda: Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Echuya Forest Reserve, Bugoma Forest Reserve, Kasyoha-Kitom Forest Reserve, Kibale



National Park and
Mgahinga National Park.

The project at Bwindi
Impenetrable National
Park started in 2013
by Mwezi “Badru”
Mugerwa to address
the two key drivers of
unauthorised hunting:
the need for meat
and money. We have
extended our Poachers to
Protectors (P2P) program
by mobilising **599**

households, bringing the
total Embaka membership
to **1,980 households**.

We increased the number
of voluntary community-
based anti-poaching
watch groups from **37 to**
57.

Our Pigs for Bushmeat
(P4B) program established
five new “pig seed banks”,
increasing the number
to 55 with **104 animals**,

benefiting **64 families**.
We increased the number
of our Conservation Pesa
(CPesa) SACCO groups
from **10 to 12** with **452**
members.

Our Smile for Conservation
(S4C) program increased
the number of local
people who have received
free oral health care,
treatment, and education
from **539 to 777**.

Quick Facts

599

Households mobilised

57

Voluntary community-
based anti-poaching
watch groups

452

Conservation Pesa
(CPesa) SACCO groups

Uganda | Echuya

EMMANUEL AKAMPURIRA

Emmanuel Akampurira started the Echuya project in 2022 to spearhead community-based conservation of the African goldies through livelihood-improving initiatives at Echuya Forest Reserve.

We have thus far mobilised 425 people to join the conservation efforts of the African goldies.

We distributed 77 livestock (goats and sheep) as an alternative source of animal protein and household income from bushmeat consumption and trade.

We have also established four SACCO groups with 120 members. Additionally, we have introduced soccer as a platform to leverage the youth's

support for conserving the African goldies at Echuya and across southwest Uganda.

Over the next year, we plan to address the perceived human-African golden cat conflict, where African goldies have been blamed for the depredation of livestock and poultry at Echuya.

Quick Facts

77

Livestock (goats and sheep) distributed

120

Members in our SACCO groups

425

People mobilised to join the conservation efforts of the African goldies

Uganda | Kasyoha-Kitomi

ISSAC TWINOMUHANGI

At Kasyoha-Kitomi Forest Reserve, Issac Twinomuhangi, under the auspices of Embaka CBO, has been spearheading the conservation of the African goldies at Kasyoha-Kitomi since 2021. Our efforts there have continued to this day.

In 2023, we persuaded 100 more households and their members to

support the conservation of the African goldies. We established three anti-poaching surveillance teams as custodians of the African goldies in the three communities.

We provided 30 goats to 30 families as an alternative source of animal protein and household income. During field surveys, we learned that the African

goldies at Kasyoha-Kitomi are more threatened than previously imagined. Many households in the local communities adjacent to Echuya still participate in unauthorised hunting.

As a result, we are motivated to double our community conservation efforts and local engagement around Kasyoha-Kitomi in 2024.

Quick Facts

30

Goats to 30 families

100

households and their members to support the conservation of the African goldies

Uganda | Mgahinga

IRENE NATUKUNDA

The Mgahinga Gorilla starting in 2024. Led by Irene Natukunda, the project will engage local families neighbouring Mgahinga Gorilla National Park in the conservation of African goldies.

The project will establish a community-based conservation program that addresses the need for meat and money as key drivers of unauthorised bushmeat hunting.

The main objectives of the project are:

- 1) To create voluntary community-based anti-poaching surveillance teams populated by local families living closest to the national park.

- 2) To introduce an alternative locally acceptable source of animal protein to bushmeat.
- 3) To provide an alternative source of income to bushmeat trade through Savings and Credit

Cooperatives (SACCO) groups.

The overarching aim is to create conservation awareness for the African goldies following in the footsteps of other AGCCA community-based conservation initiatives.

Uganda | Bugoma

JULIUS "CAESAR" MUTALE

Julius "Caesar" Mutale spearheads the conservation of the African goldies at Bugoma Central Forest Reserve, where the species was only recently confirmed.

Unauthorised hunting for bushmeat consumption and trade is widespread posing a serious threat to wildlife.

We have engaged 300 local community members and persuaded over 50 active poachers to surrender their hunting tools.

As an alternative source of meat and income, we have so far distributed over 40 livestock to 40 families closest to the forest.

We have also engaged local village leaders and hunters' wives as conservation guardians for the African goldies, as our conservation initiatives are here to improve the welfare of the family and community as a whole.

Quick Facts

300

Local community members engaged

50

Active poachers persuaded to surrender their hunting tools

40

Livestock distributed to 40 families closest to the forest

Cameroon | Mpem and Djim

FRANKLIN SIMO

Franklin Simo together with the Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Initiative, a local wildlife conservation non-profit, lead on the conservation efforts for the African goldies at Mpem and Djim National Park in Cameroon.

Our conservation initiative aims to reduce dependence on bushmeat by improving local livelihoods. We have mobilised 271 local community members against hunting and poaching.

We have also established 10 Saving and Credit Co-operatives (SACCOS) to diversify income sources, provided 14 pigs, 6 sheeps and 2 goats to 20 families as alternatives to bushmeat, and operated

a mobile dental clinic and conservation outreach to 127 local people.

Over 200 families across ten villages adjacent to the national park have benefited from our conservation work on the African goldies.

The project's direct benefits to wildlife and local people have inspired local community support for African golden cat conservation.

Quick Facts

271

Local community members mobilised against hunting and poaching

10

SACCOS established to diversify income sources, and provided over 20 animals to 20 families

DRC | Lomani

RODRIGUE **BATUMIKE**

In September 2021, Rodrigue Batumike started a community based conservation initiative to reduce the threat poaching poses on the African goldies in Lomani National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Due to poverty, local communities living adjacent to Lomani hunt wildlife for subsistence (consumption and trade).

This project is supporting four villages (Lukunda, Deo, Fumbeka and Thsenge) to establish smallholder pig and rabbit farms as alternative sources of meat and income.

The project is also raising awareness among school children in five schools about the importance of conserving the African goldies.

DRC | Bire-Kpatous

IMRAN EJOTRE AND JOHNSON MANGIE

Imran Ejotre and Johnson Mangie lead the conservation efforts of the African goldies at Bire-Kpatous Game Reserve in South Sudan, where the species was first recorded in 2015 using camera traps.

The threats impacting the species were profiled in 2022.

Hunting for bushmeat consumption and trade was identified as a serious threat.

We directly address this threat through a community-based livestock restocking program called “Livestock Seedbank” to provide alternative animal protein sources and household income.

We have thus far established five seed banks comprising of 60 goats benefiting over 200 households.

Our major challenge delivering on our conservation work is the gross lack of livestock in the local markets, forcing us to traverse long distances to procure from

the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, further increasing the costs for the initiative.

As a solution for this, we established the first local community managed animal breeding centre to minimise the sourcing of livestock from neighbouring countries while sustaining the Livestock Seedbank program.

DRC | Gatamaiyu

SARAH OMUSULA

Sarah Omusula has been implementing community based conservation initiatives for the African goldies with local communities adjacent to the Gatamaiyu forest reserve, where we recorded the African golden cat on camera traps for the first time in 2022.

In 2023, eight meetings, totalling 200 people around the Gatamaiyu forest reserve, were held to discuss the threats to the species and its habitats.

We organised a snare removal activity with 27 community members, who also sensitised the communities on the

impacts of snaring and bushmeat hunting on human health and the ecosystem.

We recovered 12 snares that would have accidentally captured or killed the African goldies.

We have also introduced smallholder livestock and poultry business as alternatives to bushmeat and household income.

We have supported 15 former hunting families with 15 merino sheep, and another 21 families received four chickens and a cock.

We have initiated a chicken breeding centre to provide a reliable poultry supply.

Quick Facts

27

Community members, sensitised on the impacts of snaring and bushmeat hunting

15

Former hunting families supported with merino sheep, and another **21 families** received four chickens and a cock.

DRC | Afadjato-Agumatsa

MAC ELIKEM **NUTSUAKOR**

Mac Elikem Nutsuakor is leading the conservation efforts of the African goldies in Ghana, specifically in the Afadjato-Agumatsa Community Conservation Area.

The aim of the project is to mitigate the hunting of wildlife and the threat it poses to the African goldies.

We have learned from local communities that the populations of the African goldies have declined and are now perceived to be of very low abundance.

Our immediate next step is to put in place initiatives to mitigate hunting to safeguard the remaining African goldies and their habitat.

DRC | Afadjato-Agumatsa

DELAGNON ASSOUE AND ABRE SONHAYE-OUYE

Delagnon Assou and Abre Sonhaye-Ouye lead AGCCA conservation efforts of the African goldies in Togo, specifically at Fazao-Malfakassa National Park. Bushmeat hunting is a primary income source for local communities around Fazao

Hunters have moved from local to more advanced techniques of hunting.

This shift in hunting behaviour has expedited declines in wildlife abundance, including the African goldies.

Our community-based anti-hunting awareness campaign has engaged 1,100 local people in anti-hunting initiatives, including 12 communities and 100 active hunters whose livelihoods depend

on hunting for sustenance and income.

We established a community-based livestock program to provide an alternative source of animal protein to bushmeat hunting, consumption, and trade.

We have provided 28 goats and sheep to 22 families in six villages.

Quick Facts

Over **1K**

Local people engaged in anti-hunting initiatives

28

Goats provided to 22 families in six villages

DRC | Comoe

KOUADIO JUSLIN

In the Ivory Coast, Kouadio Juslin and Mimea Internationale, partners of AGCCA, are implementing conservation activities for the African goldies at Comoe National Park.

We address the need for food and income as key drivers of hunting in communities living close to Comoe.

We supplied food crop seeds to communities in three villages.

Moreover, we provided livestock—goats, sheep, and chickens—to 46 families, aiming to improve their livelihoods and reduce their dependence on hunting as a source of animal protein.

Witnessing the commitment towards conservation of these

beneficiary families was immensely gratifying.

This initial phase not only improved their way of life but also fostered stronger relationships between local communities, the Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves (the park authority), and the African goldies.

Our collective goal is to develop a community-led conservation plan for the preservation of the African golden cat.

Quick Facts

46

Families provided with livestock — goats, sheep, and chickens

28

Goats provided to 22 families in six villages

Rwanda | Nyungwe

JEAN-CLAUDE DUSABIMANA

At Nyungwe National Park in Rwanda, Jean-Claude Dusabimana and his team have been implementing community based conservation activities for the African goldies since 2021. The key threat being addressed is bushmeat hunting.

We have expanded our small-holder pig farming programme from 30 to 60 ex-hunter families.

Local families sell piglets for income, and raise the rest for meat, directly addressing the key drivers of unauthorised hunting of wildlife.

"The pig farming project rescued me from routine poaching driven by desperation for income. With no alternative, I knew it was against conservation, but now,

this conservation initiative brought about by the African golden cat has transformed my livelihood. I'll never consider poaching or encroaching on the forest again.

I urge more interventions like this to support others in our community," Venuste MUTARAMBIRWA 50 years old, Nkomane Sector.

“ The pig farming project rescued me from routine poaching driven by desperation for income... I urge more interventions like this to support others in our community.

Sierra Leone | Outamba Kilimi

PETTOY **KAMARA** AND ABDULAI **BARRIE**

Petty Kamara and Abdulai Barrie are implementing threat reduction activities for the African goldies at Outamba Kilimi National Park in Sierra Leone.

This initiative was preceded by a socio economic survey which ascertained the presence of the African golden cat and the threats it faces at Outamba Kilimi.

From the 120 questionnaires we administered, 90% of the respondents acknowledged the presence of the African goldies.

On the other hand, 90% of the respondents acknowledged the threat to the long term survival of the species is forest destruction, driven by logging as a key source of household income.

We introduced community based smallholder livestock farming as an alternative source of household income.

We established livestock "seedbanks" comprising of 30 goats in five villages around Outamba kilimi.

This initiative has inspired local community support for African golden cat conservation at Outamba kilimi.

Quick Facts

90%

of the respondents acknowledged the threat to the long term survival of the species is forest destruction

Tanzania | Minziro

EMMANUEL MARTIN

Emmanuel Martin has been implementing community conservation initiatives for the African goldies at Minziro Forest Reserve in Tanzania since 2021.

The density of the African goldies at Minziro has been estimated at 4 individuals /100 km², being significantly smaller compared to similar habitats in Gabon and Uganda.

The African goldies at Minziro are threatened by bushmeat poaching, wildfires, logging, firewood collection, charcoal burning and cattle incursion.

These threats are driven by poverty, lack of grazing areas, and high demand for charcoal and firewood in nearby townships. We have addressed the key drivers behind these threats by providing alternatives

for wood based energy and bushmeat.

We have established **XXXX** tree nurseries, with **XXX** trees belonging to **XXXXXX** indigenous species, as alternative sources of firewood. We have visited **XXXX** schools to create awareness about the African goldies to **XXX** school kids.

We have also started **XXX** livestock seed banks to provide an alternative source of animal protein to **XXX** local families.

The density of the African goldies at Minziro has been estimated at 4 individuals per 100 km², being significantly smaller compared to Gabon and Uganda.

Angola | Maiombe

EDUARDO LUTONDO

The conservation of the African goldies in Angola is spearheaded by Eduardo Lutondo. Eduardo and his team conducted the maiden surveys of the African goldies in Maiombe National Park.

After 11 months of camera trapping, the African goldies have not been recorded in Angola, despite frequent records of several emblematic species, such as the first records of gorillas and chimpanzees. We intend to continue camera trapping in the northern part of Maiombe.

Our priority is to confirm the presence of the species in Angola, and subsequently establish a community led conservation program to mitigate bushmeat hunting

and its threat to the African goldies.

Bushmeat hunting and trade remains a key threat to the species as evidenced by recent reports of African golden cat specimens in bushmeat markets in Angola.



Our priority is to subsequently establish a community led conservation program to mitigate bushmeat hunting and its threat to the African goldies.

Equatorial Guinea | Piedra Nzas

ANASTASIA AMOR **NENGONO**

In Equatorial Guinea, Anastasia Amor Nengono leads the conservation efforts of the African goldies at the Piedra Nzas. There, the key threat to the African goldies is bushmeat hunting.

We have developed a restricted access to the protected area for local hunters, combined with leveraging the commitment of those hunters to establishing community based conservation initiatives.

We have engaged with authorities and educational centres to create awareness for African golden cat conservation.

We have persuaded 110 families to support anti-hunting initiatives, and established 20 community groups as custodians of the African goldies.

To dissuade bushmeat hunting, we have provided 20 pigs (as an alternative source of meat and

income) to 20 families in four frontline villages.

Our goal is to extend these initiatives to the other communities living around the park.

Quick Facts

20

Families provided with 20 pigs as an alternative source of income

Celebrating Conservation

In November 2023, we hosted our second summit- the AGCCA bi-annual summit. The summit is a celebration of our conservation efforts.

We share lessons learned. Both success and failures. An African storytelling experience.

We also get the unique opportunity to see African goldies, thanks to our partner and friend, Thomas Price at the CTC conservation centre in Uganda.

We also visit and learn from ongoing threat-reduction initiatives.

We visited Ema's conservation program for the African goldies at Minziro in Tanzania. We witnessed his primary school environmental education program. We visited the tree nursery and livestock seed bank.

We interacted with local communities and heard first-hand how the afore-mentioned conservation initiatives have dissuaded them from hunting and destroying the African golden cat habitat.

Opportunities

AGCCA has grown remarkably from 13 partners in 2021 to 30 today. This is testimony of our unified ambition to conserve the African goldies across their range.

This growth has unavoidably come with increased funding needs. The detrimental outcome has been a scaled-down implementation of conservation activities.

Our partners notably **SWCCF**, **MBZSCF**, **re:wild**, **Panthera** and the **IUCN Cat Specialist Group** have been there for us with their financial support.

In 2023, we received a total of \$137,912 in donations: \$50,000 (re:wild), \$56,337 (MBZSCF and SWCCF), \$20,000 (Panthera) and \$11,575 (IUCN Cat Specialist Group).

Panthera donated a further 200 camera traps for use in a standardised species range-wide camera trap assessment and monitoring grid.

The accruing data is:

- 1) To better understand the species distribution and population trends while contributing to future IUCN RedList Assessments, and;
- 2) To evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of our conservation actions in mitigating the threats and the resultant positive impact on the African goldies.

For 2024, we need a total of \$200,000. We start 2024 with \$24,000 (from MBZSCF) and \$25,000 (from Re:Wild). A shortfall of \$151,000 is needed to continue our conservation work.

Quick Facts

USD 50K

Received from **re:wild** as support in our conservation efforts

Over USD 56K

Received from **MBZSCF** and **SWCCF** as support in our conservation efforts

USD 20K

Received from **Panthera** as support in our conservation efforts

USD 11K

Received from **MBZSCF** and **SWCCF** as support in our conservation efforts

200

Camera traps donated by **Panthera**





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