



2020 Impact Report





Having just made the transition from a research project to an International NGO, 2020 was a year of consolidation and growth for KopeLion, for taking the time to consider where we had come from and to plan where we were headed.

Funding from The Lion Recovery Fund for core costs gave us the opportunity to invest in our team - filling some key positions and building the expertise within our current staff.

With a 3 year strategy in place to guide our work, for the large part of 2020 we focused on the heart of KopeLion - our Ilchokuti - champions of human-lion coexistence, who look after the livestock and the lions. Their work within the community, to provide daily lion positions, warning herders of any potential danger, minimizes attacks and makes it easier for pastoralist communities to live alongside lions. They help to find lost livestock, repair breached livestock enclosures and treat wounded animals. Everything they do is enormously helpful, appreciated and builds both trust and tolerance of lions.

While Covid-19 decimated the tourism to Ngorongoro, the KopeLion team sat tight, socially distanced when possible, and continued the lion monitoring and conflict mitigation work.

In October 2020 we jointly launched our Conservation Incentive Payments trial, with the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, residents and stakeholders, in an effort to provide tangible benefits to 6 pilot villages in return for lion presence on their lands, and in keeping with our long term goal to ensure that lion conservation in Ngorongoro is a community choice and enterprise.

Towards the end of the year we expanded - concentrating on planning and coordinating as well as financials and reporting - and by the end of 2020 I'm pleased to say that I see an organisation to be proud of in KopeLion - stable, strong, passionate and ready to leap into 2021, an organisation that doesn't just save wildlife, but primarily makes small positive changes in people's lives, and that's equally as important.

I would like to extend my thanks to the whole KopeLion team, to all those who have believed in us, supported us through a period of flux, and who continue to work alongside us into 2021 and onwards.

Bernard Kissui
Chairman, KopeLion Tanzania

Introduction

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), home to vast numbers of wildlife, a World Heritage site and an International Biosphere Reserve is also home to almost 100,000 people. The vast majority of whom are traditional pastoralists (Maasai and Barabaig) who rely almost exclusively on livestock for their livelihood.

While NCA has the ability to generate substantial revenue from tourism through the fame of its wildlife laden caldera, the Ngorongoro Crater, and its famous lions, the same lions pose a significant financial burden on the NCA's residents, killing their livestock and often prompting retaliatory or preemptive lion killings. As a result lions have disappeared from much of their historical range within the NCA, which has largely isolated the Crater population from the rest of the Greater Serengeti ecosystem and greatly reduced their genetic diversity.

Degraded rangelands largely driven by persistent high livestock pressure, the challenges exacerbated by high population growth and climate change have additionally caused the loss of valuable ecosystems that support lions, and intensified their loss in the NCA.

Started as a collaboration between scientific researchers and the pastoralist communities of the NCA in 2011 to stop the loss of lions, the Korongoro People's Lion Initiative (KopeLion) is a non profit organisation in the USA and in Tanzania.

Mission

To enable lasting coexistence between people and lions in Ngorongoro

Vision

Lions survive and thrive alongside people in Ngorongoro and surrounding landscapes in northern Tanzania

"We profit a lot from the Ilchokuti. If our livestock are attacked by predators, they come and treat their wounds, with medicine provided by KopeLion, and even today we are still milking those COWS."

Elder from Misigiyo village



Impact 2020

Increased lion observation across our area, indicates a return of, and more lions into the Ngorongoro Conservation Area's community lands.



2,617 people informed about KopeLion coexistence activities through outreach meetings



174 livestock enclosures repaired, 32% more than 2019



590 livestock wound treatment visits
879 animals treated after predator attacks



75,000 Kms walked by our Ilchokuti protecting livestock and lions



4,266 lost animals returned, 93% of all lost livestock were found



42,569 Kms driven for lion monitoring & conflict mitigation



6 lions with GPS collars
365 days early warnings of lion presence to pastoralist herders

Average Monthly Lion Observation Days per Ilchokuti Zone



Theory of Change

Lion populations are declining across Africa at a catastrophic rate, with over 90% of their historic range lost to date. In a world of diminishing space, their future is increasingly tied to shared landscapes. Yet, where lions live alongside people, without effective incentives for their conservation and without tolerance and the recognition of the benefits they bring, conflict killings pose their greatest threat.

MITIGATING CONFLICTS:
Supporting communities in Northern Tanzania to alleviate human-lion conflicts and preventing the traditional/retaliatory killing of lions.

INCREASING TOLERANCE:
Safeguarding the presence of lions in Northern Tanzania by ensuring that communities are fully engaged in their conservation and earning tangible benefits, directly linked to lions.

MONITORING LION POPULATIONS & BEHAVIOR:
Using science and traditional knowledge to find innovative solutions for lion conservation in Northern Tanzania.

BEHAVIOR CHANGE

The value of lions is recognized by the community and tolerance towards lions is improved.

OUTCOME

Increased and continuous lion population and range.

LONG TERM GOAL

Lion population recovery in Northern Tanzania is a community choice and enterprise.

"Please ensure KopeLion pass on information if a collared lion comes to Nainokanoka, Alaililai and the north, so that we too can inform our people and protect that lion."

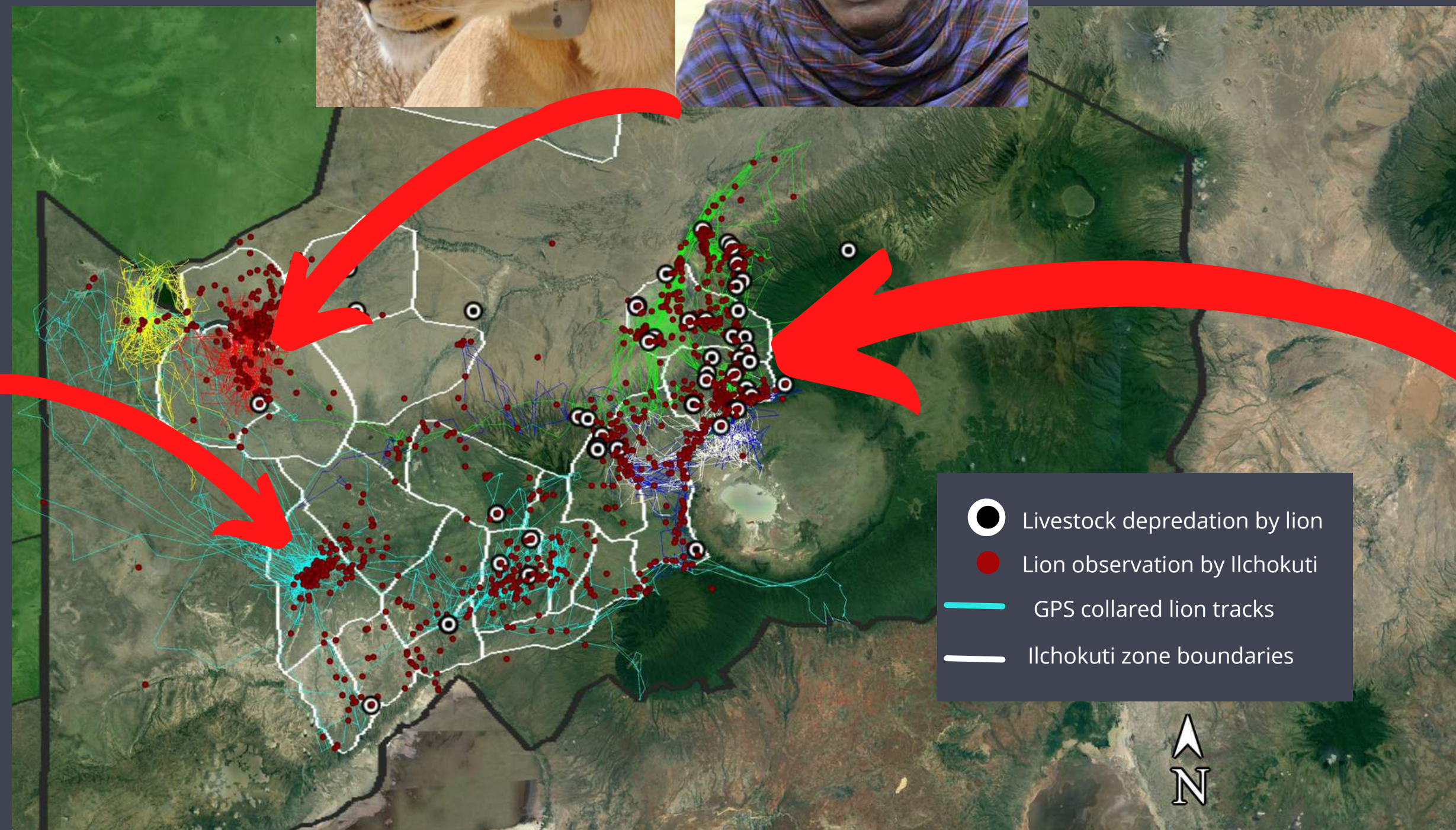
Saning'o Kilel, Isendui Village

Mitigating conflicts

Supporting communities in Northern Tanzania to alleviate human-lion conflicts and preventing the traditional/retaliatory killing of lions. KopeLion's 23 Ilchokuti work in their home areas to mitigate conflict between lions and pastoralists on a daily basis



Mbekure Mujuu's favourite lions are the family of Nadine because they tend to stay in one area and mostly reside in his zone of Naibataat. They are easier to monitor and protect because they don't have a habit of eating livestock, even when this area is full of seasonal grazing livestock. Mbekure manages his tracking and GPS technology expertly, despite residing in a very remote area of the NCA.

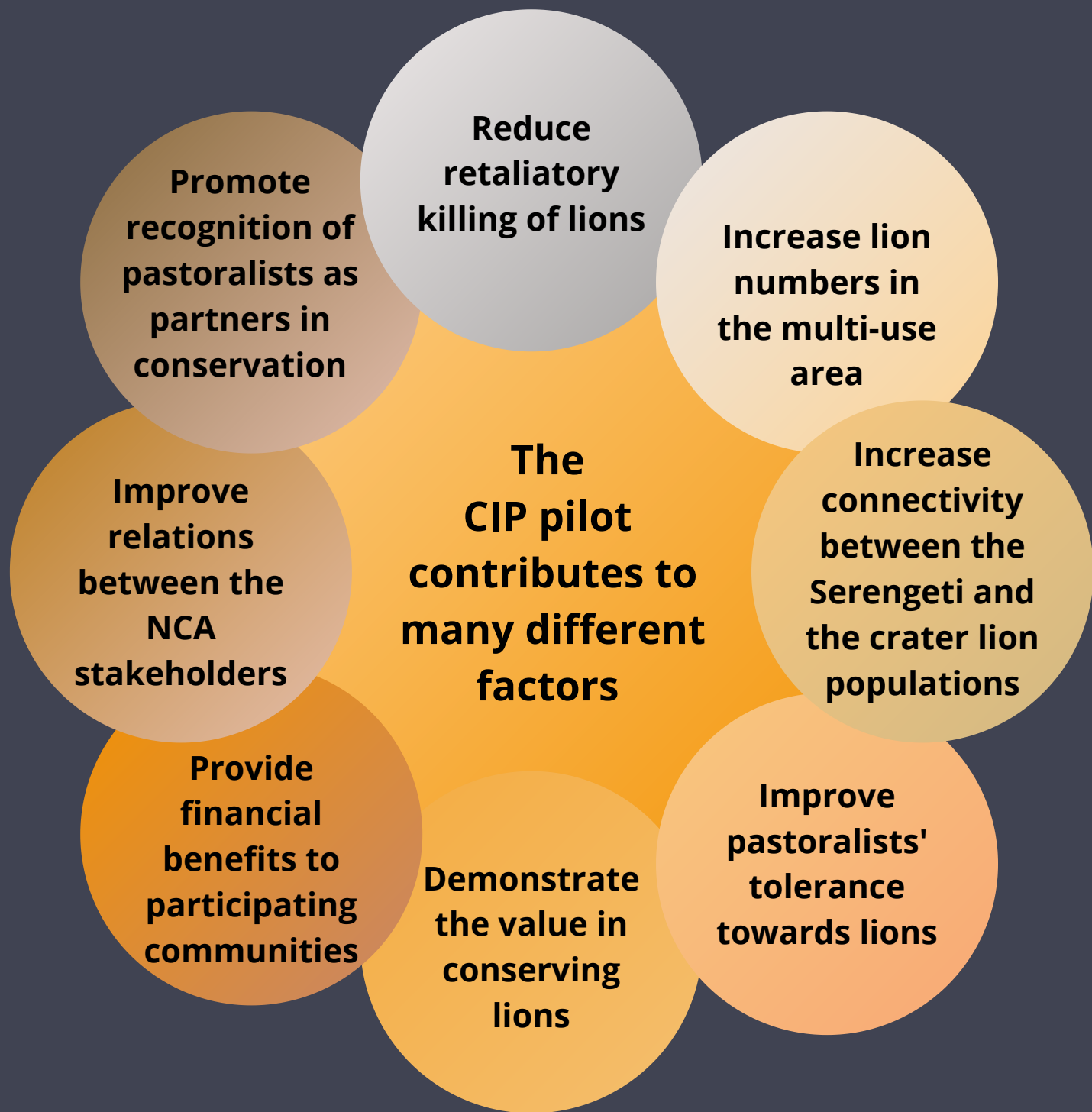


Laambarakwo Saning'o's time is taken up keeping Lemunge away from conflict when he passes through the Engarusi valley. Lemunge uses this area a lot because there is an abundance of wildbeest and zebra and very few pastoralists with cattle. Lambarakwo regularly reports seeing high numbers of plains game, and the treatment of livestock injured by predators other than lions.

Rumas Olelekipa is kept busy in the Indepes Zone by Laipangwa and his pride of females and their cubs, who recently moved out of the crater to occupy these community lands. While Laipangwa could live peacefully within the community because he does not prey on livestock. Rumas's challenge is ensuring the lionesses, for whom livestock makes an easy meal for their cubs, stay away from the livestock. Its been tough working in this area in 2020, and has taken daily tracking, good communications and conflict resolution skills to keep the peace and enable these lions to live in close proximity to pastoralists.

Increasing Tolerance

Conservation Incentive Payments Pilot (CIP)



A 3 year trial on paying for the presence of lions, in 6 villages, began in October 2020 with support from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, its residents and stakeholders, and funded by the Lion Recovery Fund. Awareness raising about the initiative was first conducted across the NCA in 23 villages. In February 2021 the first payments were made for the maximum amount each village could earn in a 4 month period, a combined total of \$7,730. The funds are designated to community development projects.

Payments for lion presence

Compensation and consolation schemes have been largely ineffective at resolving human-carnivore conflicts around the world. Conservation incentive payments (CIP) are a promising alternative to compensation schemes. Under a CIP program, people are not reimbursed for their losses; rather, they are financially rewarded for helping to achieve conservation goals, such as an increase in carnivore numbers. The key feature of any CIP program is that benefits are provided if and only if the conservation objective is achieved. This allows CIPs to align a community's economic interests with conservation goals, engage local people as conservation partners, and help ensure that valuable conservation dollars yield results.

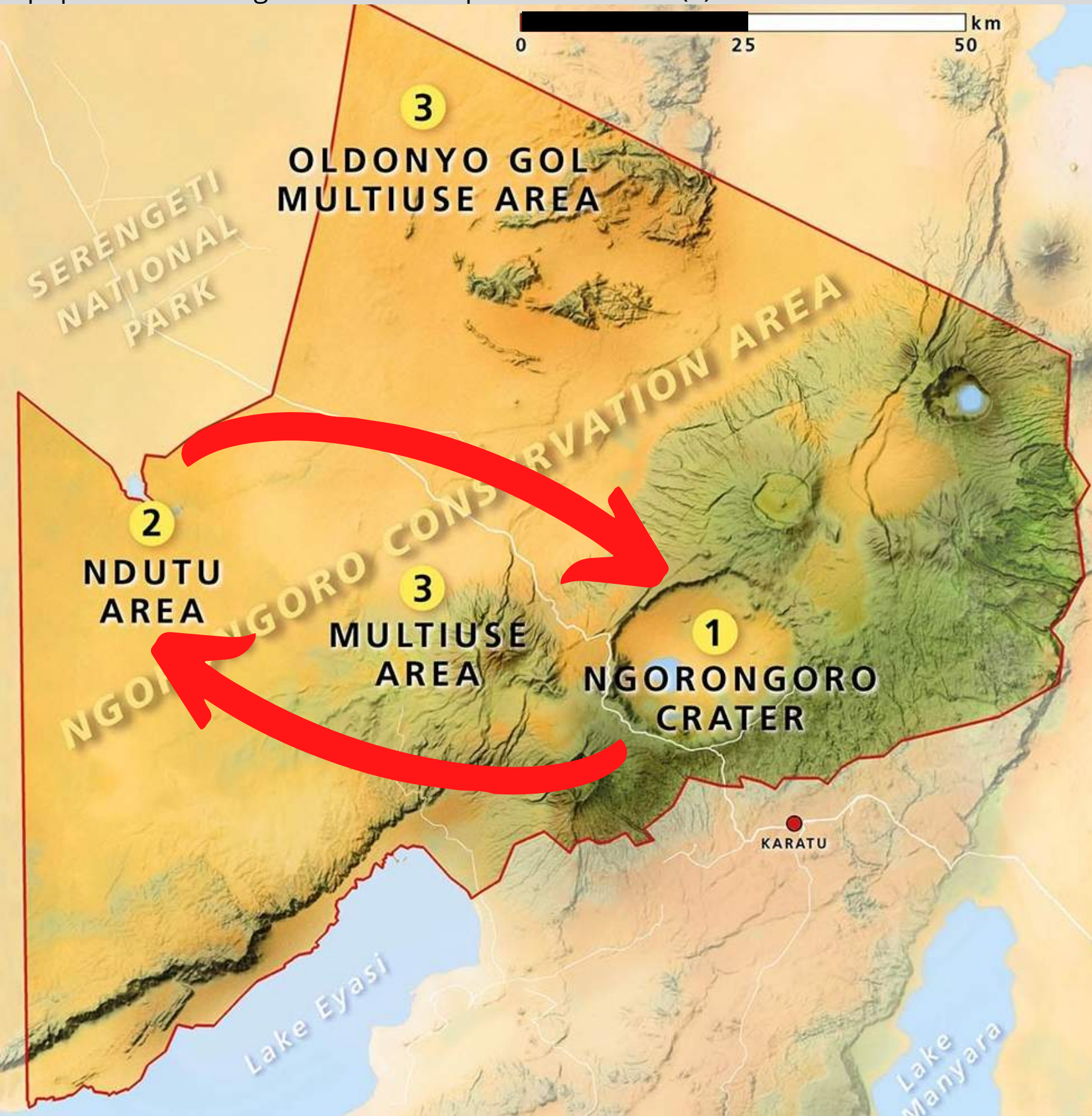
"Coexistence (with wildlife) is our major contribution to Tanzania and to the world at large. Even with the pain and costs we bear, we must persevere."

Komiando Olepesi,
Nongoile Village



Monitoring lion population & behaviour

KopeLion's work has made it possible for male lions to safely disperse between Ngorongoro Crater and the Serengeti National Park and to settle with pride(s) and sire offspring away from their natal pride. Rebuilding the genetic health and abundance of the lion populations in the the Ngorongoro Conservation Area by restoring the historical link between the Ngorongoro Crater (1) and the Ndotu (2) populations through the multi-use pastoralist areas (3)



Ndotu Area



Laipangwa, a 5 year old male from the Twin Hill pride in Ndotu. After roaming for years, Laipangwa has apparently settled in the multi-use zone bordering the Crater and stays with a pride of Crater born females and their cubs



NguvuKazi from the Masek pride in Ndotu and the son of Nosikitok traversed to the Crater in 2018 and was seen mating with females from the Lakes pride. Recently he has resided on the north east rim of the crater with Noongoile and her niece from the Lakes pride, and their 3 cubs.



Ngorongoro Crater



Nebahati born into the Lakes pride in the Ngorongoro Crater, moved out of the crater in 2020, with 4 younger lioness and has maintained her pride on land shared with the pastoralist community, alongside Laipangwa, a five year old male from Ndotu and their eight cubs.



Noongoile from the Crater Lakes pride has been in the company of NguvuKazi since 2018. In 2019 they were seen to have moved to the NW rim and floor of the crater. She stays with her shy cousin, and together they have raised three cubs



Ngorongoro Crater



The Lagunita males, once a trio of brothers born in the crater, but now only two, are currently firmly established in Ndotu and have sired 3 cubs with Nadine and other lioness from the Twin Hill pride



Lemunge and his brothers stem from the Munge pride in the Crater. They successfully traversed to Ndotu and in 2019 took over 3 of the Ndotu prides, including siring cubs with Nosikitok. Lemunge is nomadic once more, traversing the multi-use zone again and again



Ndotu Area



Nadine and the Twin Hill pride had 8 cubs with the Munge males in 2020 and then an further 3 cubs with the Lagunita trio, who are presently their resident males.



Nosikitok and her Masek pride sisters had cubs in 2019 with both the Munge brothers from the crater and with the Lagunita trio from the crater. The cubs did not survive and they now have 8 cubs with their new resident males



Building & implementing

Recently transitioned from a field based research project to an International NGO, in 2020 KopeLion build on its foundations, developing values and culture, leadership and governance, strategy, resources, systems and partnerships to sustain it for the long term.



Our aim for 2020 and onwards is to grow KopeLion, in every way.

In 2020 we grew our team numbers; adding to our capacity in development & strategy, finance and administration, programme coordination and in field operations.

We also grew our partners and collaborations, and working with them we're consolidating what we have, analysing our data and exploring new ways to use it to work with pastoralist communities and lions, and how best to balance their coexistence. We're investing in learning, with a plan in place for 2021 to train all our Ilchokuti in first aid, livestock nutrition, wound treatment and digital data collection. Study leave is used to gain outside qualifications, and internally we learn about each other's work through regular team meetings and through clear communication and support networks.

As we grow, we will additionally grow the tolerance of the community towards lions and ultimately grow the lion population and connectivity in Ngorongoro and northern Tanzania.



We are grateful to our team and to so many other people for their support and contributions to our work.

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Ilchokuti

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Loseryan Kulangai
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Machanyoda Gidamane
Masanja Tulito
Mbekure Mujuu
Mussa Nongirimban
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