

Annual Report  

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2017/2018



GIRAFFE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

## Note from the GCF Directors

What an exciting journey! When we took the plunge and decided to put all our efforts into conserving giraffe full-time, we didn't know what to expect. And in all honesty, we still don't...

As we learn more about giraffe – their ecology and, most importantly, their numbers and distribution – positive and negative news is often closely interlinked. Targeted conservation research teaches us new things about giraffe, and it allows us to approach their conservation differently: based on facts and knowledge rather than assumptions and hearsay. Together with our many partners around the globe, we continue to collate, analyse and share detailed information on giraffe – information which is more available than ever before. As a result, we can see that some giraffe populations are increasing significantly. Not all of these results are actual population increases, but rather more accurate assessments owing to the more detailed collation of numbers and data we have achieved. Regardless, this is a positive sign, and we believe that our combined efforts can make a difference, before it is too late.

African governments continue to show increased general interest in conservation, particularly in giraffe. And while we have well-established relationships with a few African countries (often governed by a Memorandum of Understanding), others are starting to get in touch to establish collaborations for working together to help save their giraffe. All in all, we believe that together we can ensure a bright future for giraffe in Africa – at least for some populations – and we hope that our efforts are providing an impetus for this.



It is a privilege that we could turn our passion into our occupation, and even though some people still think we are a little bit crazy, we love what we are doing. And this is largely due to all of you – our partners and supporters, and especially our small dynamic team that works throughout the continent. So, we would like to take the opportunity to say a big THANK YOU for all your support, collaboration, trust and friendship!

Saving giraffe is a team effort; none of us could have done this alone. Together, we are making a difference for giraffe in Africa!

*Steph & Julian Fennessy*

**Cover:** GCF is standing tall for all giraffe populations in the wild throughout Africa.  
Credit: Adobe Stock

**Above:** Giraffe have been heading towards a silent extinction, but with your help the tide is slowly turning..  
Credit: Adobe Stock

***The Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) is the only organisation in the world that concentrates solely on the conservation and management of giraffe in the wild throughout Africa.***

***United by a common goal, GCF is a family of organisations consisting of GCF Trust (Namibia), GCF-USA (Ohio, USA), GCF-East Africa (Kenya) and Freunde von GCF (Germany). All four organisations are legally and financially separate entities, working under the umbrella of GCF. Their shared commitment to a sustainable future for all giraffe populations in the wild is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding.***

Who is GCF?	1
GCF Objectives & Principle Activities	2
Conservation Partners & Partnerships	3
Programmes & Projects in Africa	7
Giraffe Spotter/Resource Centre	11
Capacity Building	13
Twiga Tracker	16
World Giraffe Day	17
Giraffe Action Fund	19
Giraffe Conservation Policy & Strategies	21
Giraffe Conservation Awareness & Outreach	23
GCF Financial Summary	25
Donors	27
Contact / Support	40

**Above:** Giraffe calves are particularly vulnerable to predation and stand up within 30 minutes after birth. *Credit: Martin Harvey*



**Above:** There are only less than 100,000 giraffe remaining in all of Africa and their number has dropped by almost 40% over the past 30 years. Credit: Pixabay

## Who is GCF?

- An international science-based conservation organisation that provides innovative approaches to save giraffe in the wild.
- The go-to organisation for giraffe conservation that is proactive and reactive, with a strong collaborative and dynamic team working within a network of partners on all levels.
- The Leader in supporting a sustainable future for giraffe in/and their natural habitats.
- GCF will continue to organically grow and increase awareness to save giraffe in the wild.

## What drives GCF?

- To be a bold, independent organisation
- To not be regimented
- To be disciplined and 'always on'
- To be an open book
- To not over-promise
- To be passionate
- To not be afraid of pushing boundaries
- To be open-minded and flexible
- To be adaptable
- To build trustworthy partnerships and relationships

## GCF Objectives & Principle Activities

GCF is dedicated to a sustainable future for all giraffe populations in the wild.

GCF's objective is to raise awareness and support towards securing a future for giraffe and the conservation of their habitat in Africa, and more specifically to:

- Support the conservation of viable and existing habitat for giraffe.
- Identify key threats to giraffe in Africa and develop innovative ways to mitigate them.
- Raise awareness of and promote the value of giraffe conservation in African Range States as well as internationally.
- Plan, develop, implement and administer projects and programmes – including the appointment of project staff – in support of its primary aim, in co-operation with local communities and partner institutions, as appropriate.
- Collaborate with local, national and international partners on giraffe conservation efforts in the interests of giraffe conservation in African Range States.
- Raise funds for giraffe conservation and management across Africa.
- Maintain a close working relationship with the IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group (GOSG) to provide comprehensive awareness and technical support.

# Conservation Partners

Working with partners is at the core of GCF's values and operational model. Over the past years we have managed to forge successful partnerships with several key conservation partners and donors. As the list is extensive and growing, it is sometimes difficult to exactly define a long-term conservation partnership, particularly as these come in many different shapes and forms, from modest monthly donations to large scale financial support and from close friendships to formalised organisational collaborations. Below, we have listed a few conservation partners that have stood out during this financial year:



3

4



Dr Pete Morkel, Puros and Sestontein Conservancies (Namibia), Pakuba Safari Lodge (Uganda)

GCF's research with our partners has shown that there are four species of giraffe in Africa. It is not possible to determine the species by pattern alone. Credit: Pixabay

# Partnerships around the World

The BBC/PBS documentary 'Giraffes: Africa's Gentle Giants' continues to help us raise awareness for giraffe conservation and, at the same time, also continues to win awards. The PBS version was nominated for an Emmy Award for Outstanding Nature Documentary. As it was up against stiff competition, it did not win in the end but the nomination alone was a big win for giraffe in Africa.

In support of community-based collaborative reticulated giraffe conservation efforts in northern Kenya, we work closely with San Diego Zoo Global Institute for Conservation Research, who spearhead the programme; several Kenyan organisations (Kenya Wildlife Service, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Namunyak Conservancy, Northern Rangeland Trust and The Nature Conservancy); and the local people of northern Kenya. In order to secure a sustainable future for these giants in the wild, a collaborative, localised and multi-pronged approach is required to stem the decline of reticulated giraffe, and to create sustainable conservation initiatives together with the people who share their living space with giraffe.



GCF works closely with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to conserve giraffe in Kenya by providing financial and technical support. Our support has enabled KWS to hold two giraffe working group meetings, update the draft National Giraffe Conservation Strategy and Action Plan, and undertake DNA sample collection of all major giraffe populations in the country. Kenya is home to three of the four giraffe species, and we are working with a team from KWS to collect over 300 DNA samples from all three giraffe species to further analyse speciation and potential hybridisation.

GCF's relationship with the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) is cemented through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which nominates GCF to advise on all giraffe conservation initiatives in the country. Based on this MoU, GCF has supported translocations, population and disease surveys, and collaring initiatives in Uganda. GCF will continue to work with UWA to advance giraffe conservation in the country.

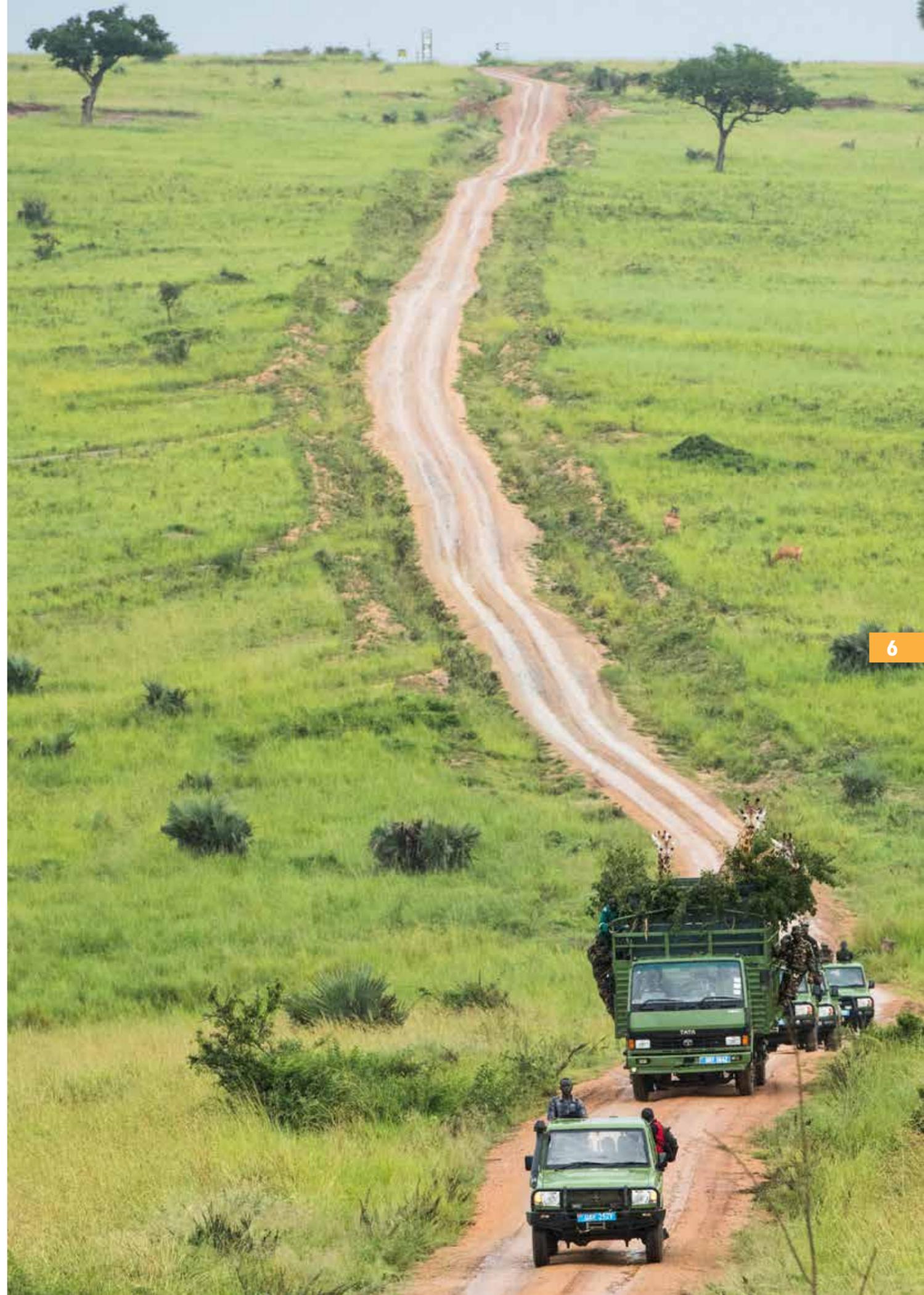
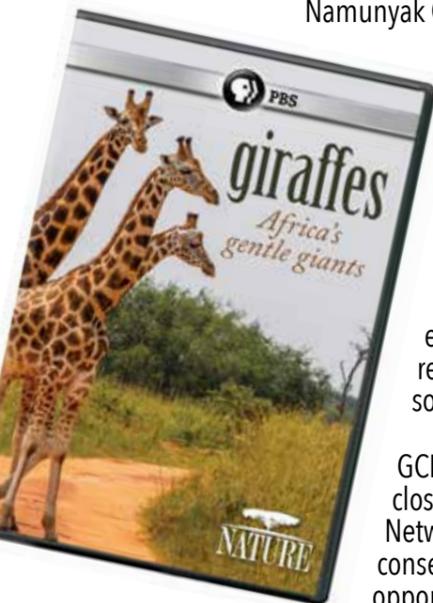
Last but definitely not least, we should mention all our amazing donors and supporters who go out of their way to back us and who come up with creative ideas for raising money in support of giraffe conservation – from garage and cake sales to climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in the name of giraffe conservation – we cannot thank you all enough.



**Right:** During Operation Twiga II 19 Nubian giraffe were translocated across the Nile River in Murchison Falls National Park to supplement the satellite population in the southern part of the park that was established during Operation Twiga I in 2016. Credit: GCF

Twiga Walinzi (giraffe guards) are teams of pastoralists who conduct patrols for giraffe and manage a camera trap system to monitor wildlife in and around the Namunyak Community Conservancy and Loisaba Conservancy in northern Kenya. In addition, members of the San Diego Zoo education team, together with communities and educators from the area, are exploring whether a local giraffe conservation education programme in the region would be useful and, if so, how best to approach this.

GCF continues to engage closely with African Parks Network (APN) on giraffe conservation and management opportunities in areas where APN works throughout Africa. Together with APN, we are currently involved in projects and programmes in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi and Rwanda.



# Programmes & Projects in Africa

GCF's recent research has shown that there is not only one, but four species of giraffe. GCF is the only organisation in the world that works on conserving all four of these species. Here is a short overview of our work on these four species in 2017/18.

**Northern giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*)** The three subspecies of the northern giraffe occur across Eastern and Central Africa, with the West African giraffe at the western extent of its range in Niger. Over the last year, GCF has increased its conservation and research efforts to better understand these three subspecies of northern giraffe. Of all giraffe, this species is the most threatened in the wild.

## West African giraffe ■

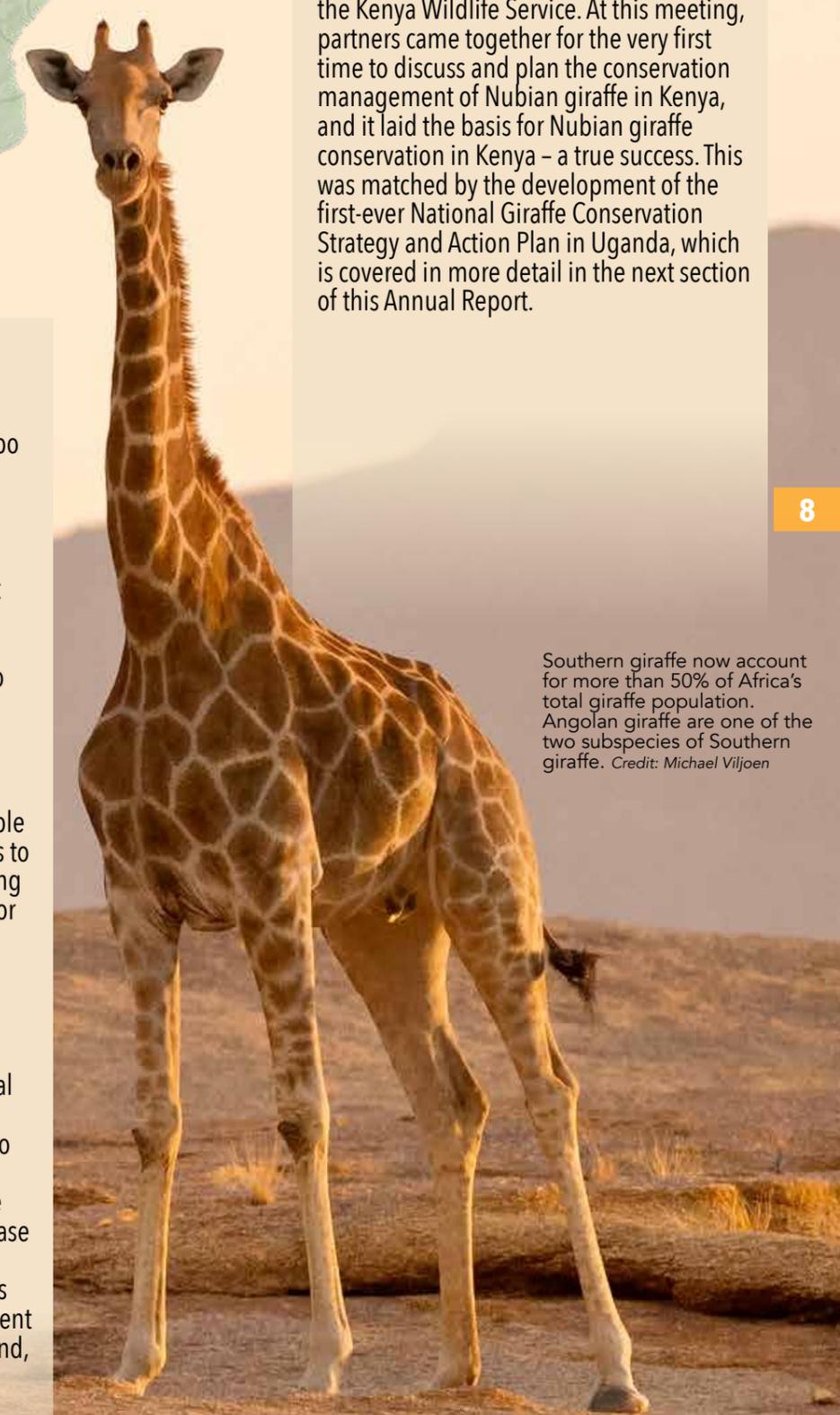
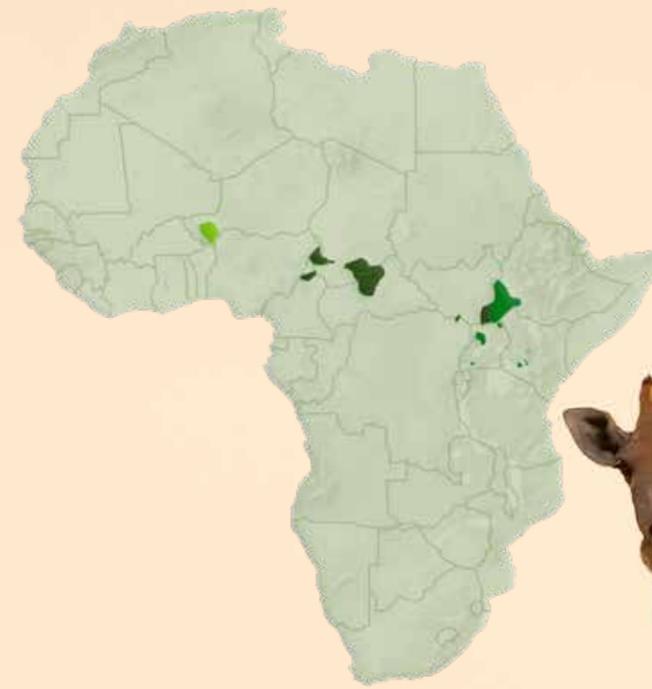
only occur in Niger. Here, GCF joined forces with the Sahara Conservation Fund (SCF) to increase giraffe conservation support in the country. Together, the two organisations now employ a small and dedicated team in the country, which comprises a Conservation Programme Officer responsible for giraffe and antelope conservation, a Finance/Admin Officer, and a driver. GCF and SCF continue to provide financial and technical support to the Niger Government and the Association for the Valorisation of the Ecotourism in Niger (AVEN). AVEN is an association of ecotourism guides who facilitate giraffe-based tourism in the area, and help protect this endangered giraffe population through a host of related activities. AVEN staff undertake regular monitoring of giraffe and participate in annual counts conducted by the government. At the same time, they raise awareness of the importance of these animals and their cultural heritage with local people who share their living space with giraffe to reduce human-wildlife-conflict. Our support to AVEN includes the purchase of equipment (uniforms, a GPS, a camera, motorbikes), office renovations, environmental education, annual giraffe surveys, translocation assessments, and local capacity building.

This year, working with the Government of Niger and partners, we undertook a solid field and desk-top baseline assessment for giraffe re-introduction to the Gadabeji Game Reserve in late 2018. The initial findings look positive and with on-going work we hope to soon create a new home for West African giraffe – stay tuned.

## Kordofan giraffe ■

numbers in the wild are low, with an estimated 2,000 spread across some of Africa's more inhospitable countries. Over the last few years we have supported, and continue to support, giraffe conservation efforts to save the last giraffe in DRC's Garamba National Park. These efforts are implemented in close collaboration with African Parks Network. Together with the Czech University of Life Sciences, we have supported an MSc student to undertake a solid baseline of the population and assess current threats and movement behaviour of giraffe in Garamba National Park. Additionally, we have provided critical equipment support to local rangers as well as capacity-building opportunities to develop their skills for the long-term management of the population. In Cameroon, we partnered with Bristol Zoological Society by supporting the assessment of Kordofan giraffe in the country and by providing technical advice to giraffe conservation efforts in the country. Our growing programme in Central Africa highlights the importance of these last surviving giraffe and it is committed to making a difference before it is too late.

Our collaborative conservation efforts around **Nubian giraffe ■** conservation have continued to grow in Kenya and Uganda, resulting in new populations and increased numbers. In Uganda, we have assisted the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) to double the Nubian giraffe populations in the country from two to four populations. In late 2017, we moved another 19 giraffe to the south side of Murchison Falls National Park, accounting for a total of 37 translocated



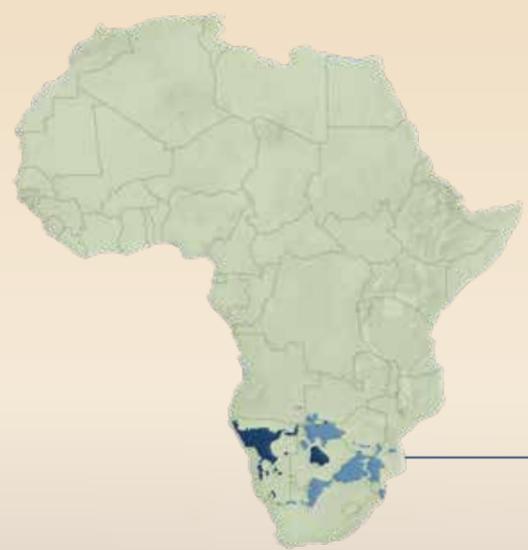
at the same time, it was undertaken as a training programme for the African Fund for Endangered Wildlife – Giraffe Center staff in Nairobi.

Another key component of our Nubian giraffe efforts in Kenya was facilitating and co-hosting the first-ever National Nubian Giraffe Working Group meeting at Soysambu Conservancy, together with the Kenya Wildlife Service. At this meeting, partners came together for the very first time to discuss and plan the conservation management of Nubian giraffe in Kenya, and it laid the basis for Nubian giraffe conservation in Kenya – a true success. This was matched by the development of the first-ever National Giraffe Conservation Strategy and Action Plan in Uganda, which is covered in more detail in the next section of this Annual Report.

giraffe over two years. Many of the individuals are sighted regularly and we are hoping that numbers will increase naturally over the coming years. In Kidepo Valley National Park, we continue to see a slow and steady growth of the giraffe population during our annual censuses. Since fitting new GPS satellite tags to several giraffe, we also learn more about their movement patterns – seeing some of the giraffe moving towards the South Sudan border is worrying. In Lake Mburo National Park, we provide valuable project support to the local NGO Giraffe Education and Research (GEAR) for the continuous monitoring of this newly established population, as well as valuable environmental education and awareness to the schools and communities surrounding the Park. Supporting local efforts is key for the long-term conservation of giraffe in the wild.

In Kenya, we completed a detailed year-long assessment of Nubian giraffe numbers in two key Parks, Ruma National Park and Mwea Game Reserve. We now know that Ruma National Park is home to the largest population of Nubian giraffe in Kenya, while the Mwea Game Reserve population is bouncing back after a disease outbreak a few years ago. This on-the-ground monitoring is valuable and helps support the conservation and management activities of the Kenya Wildlife Service, and,

Southern giraffe now account for more than 50% of Africa's total giraffe population. Angolan giraffe are one of the two subspecies of Southern giraffe. Credit: Michael Viljoen



**Southern giraffe (*Giraffa giraffa*)** The two subspecies of the southern giraffe (Angolan and South African giraffe) occur across Southern Africa. Together they make up more than 50% of the continent's total giraffe numbers. This region's giraffe are bucking the trend, and they provide a positive conservation story which is based on sound conservation management practices.

With our base in Namibia, the country continues to be one of our focus areas for giraffe conservation. Our long-term conservation research and monitoring programme for the desert-adapted **Angolan giraffe** in the far northwest communal conservancies of the country is helping to provide a better understanding of their ecology, behaviour, seasonal and long-term movement patterns. With limited long-term scientific monitoring data available on giraffe in general, this programme provides important insights and information to help guide giraffe conservation throughout Africa. A key component of this programme is training and capacity-building while working closely with local and international students, local conservancy members and community-based tourism operators – all to increase their education, awareness and support for conserving these desert-dwelling giraffe.

GCF's work on **South African giraffe** focuses on Zambia and Zimbabwe, where we continue to build relationships with governments to increase the profile and giraffe-related conservation activities in order to get giraffe on their conservation agendas. Furthering giraffe conservation in the region is key, and we have initiated conversations with the Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) Transfrontier Conservation Area Initiative for a KAZA-wide Giraffe Conservation Strategy and Action Plan. With regard to giraffe in South Africa, GCF's involvement is limited as most giraffe live in small management units.

**Reticulated giraffe (*Giraffa reticulata*)** In northern Kenya, the reticulated giraffe population is rebounding from an estimated decline of almost 80% in the last 30 years. To better understand their numbers and range, we have partnered closely with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), San Diego Zoo Global, and other local and international partners: Northern Rangeland Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Loisaba Conservancy, Smithsonian Conservation Institute of Biology, and Senckenberg Museum. Through this initiative, we play a valuable role in encouraging community-based conservation efforts within the reticulated giraffe range. As part of this initiative, Twiga Walinzi (Swahili for giraffe guards) work across a large landscape in northern Kenya to monitor the reticulated giraffe population, as well as provide valuable education and awareness in the local communities. Increased support for reticulated giraffe conservation is important and is provided through a multi-faceted approach to reduce poaching, better understand local perceptions, and assess spatial ecology, numbers and range. With most of the world's wild reticulated giraffe occurring in Kenya, it is an important landscape to protect, collaboratively with its people.



**Masai giraffe (*Giraffa tippelskirchi*)**

Gaining a better understanding of Kenya and Tanzania's Masai giraffe population is important as this giraffe species is the second most numerous. As part of these efforts, we provided support to finalise the first National Giraffe Conservation Strategy & Action Plan in Kenya, contributed to the first-ever Masai giraffe IUCN Red List Assessment (due to be released towards the end of 2018), and facilitated discussions and development of the first-ever Tanzanian Giraffe Country Profile that outlines their conservation status and threats, historical and current. Additional to the above, valuable support from World Giraffe Day 2017 has helped to equip our team and partners across the Masai giraffe range in southern Kenya with much-needed monitoring tools in an effort to better understand the impact and drivers of illegal hunting (poaching) and human perceptions of giraffe locally, and to support transboundary conservation movement of giraffe.

In Zambia, through the Leiden Conservation Foundation (one of our key partners), we continue to support the long-term giraffe conservation efforts of the Zambian Carnivore Programme, in close collaboration with Conservation South Luangwa, in anti-poaching and giraffe monitoring. Using individual photographic mark-recapture surveys, their efforts helped to more accurately assess the population in the Luangwa Valley and our support to their team will enable the emergence of new and exciting findings in 2018.



**Left:** There is no blue print for giraffe conservation in Africa, however, working with partners is important for success.  
Credit: Billy Dodson

# GiraffeSpotter - Wildbook for Giraffe

Together with our partner San Diego Zoo Global, GCF has supported Wild Me in the development of an exciting online giraffe conservation tool:

**GiraffeSpotter - Wildbook for Giraffe ([giraffespotter.org](http://giraffespotter.org))**, which is a photo-identification database of giraffe encounters and individually catalogued giraffe in the wild. The database is populated and maintained by giraffe conservationists, researchers and managers, who collect and analyse giraffe sighting data in order to learn more about population numbers and their distribution.) GiraffeSpotter - Wildbook for Giraffe uses photos of the patterns of giraffe on both sides of their body and neck (with a focus on their right side) to distinguish between individual animals. Cutting-edge software supports rapid identification using pattern recognition and photo management tools. You, too, can assist with giraffe conservation research by submitting photos and sighting data. The information will be used in mark-recapture studies to help with the Africa-wide conservation of these iconic animals. To date, we have focussed on its development and initial trial phase with giraffe photos from northern Kenya and Namibia. We invite all partners to help us fill the gaps across Africa to better understand numbers and distribution of all giraffe species.

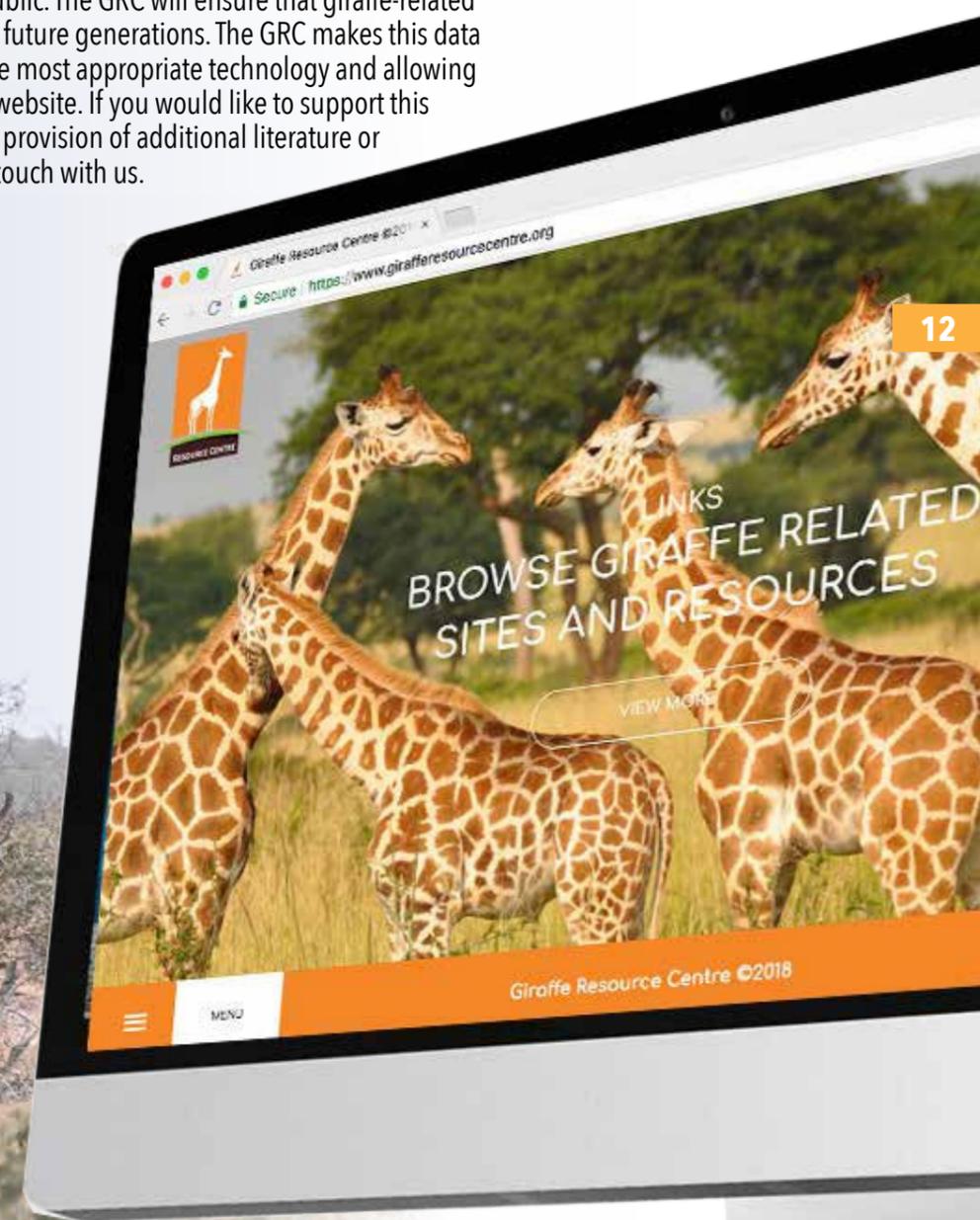


11



# Giraffe Resource Centre

**The Giraffe Resource Centre (GRC) ([girafferesourcecentre.org](http://girafferesourcecentre.org))** is an online knowledge centre for all things giraffe and it aims to collect, preserve and catalogue available publications and images in one central repository. Some giraffe species are threatened with extinction and require greater protection and management, both in the wild and in captivity. Sharing of knowledge among everybody who is involved with giraffe and their habitats is crucial for their efficient and effective conservation and management. Important articles about giraffe ecology, management and husbandry are regularly published, but they are often difficult to access, especially for those living and/or working in Africa. The GRC seeks to be a key tool for research, conservation and management. All relevant information about giraffe in the wild or captivity and in museums or laboratories can be catalogued in the GRC and made available to the research community, captive partners, conservation agencies, as well as to the press and the general public. The GRC will ensure that giraffe-related sources remain available for future generations. The GRC makes this data easily accessible by using the most appropriate technology and allowing access through a dedicated website. If you would like to support this important initiative with the provision of additional literature or funding, then please get in touch with us.



12



# Capacity Building

While GCF has established itself as the leader in giraffe conservation, we also think about the future of giraffe and the people living with them in Africa. GCF continues to support, at different levels, local and international students who are working throughout the continent. Our Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP) reaches over 2,000 Namibian primary school students annually. Furthermore, this programme is supported by a continuous stream of Namibian university interns who can apply their theoretical knowledge practically and hands-on in the field.

In Kenya, we offer an internship position for a young Kenyan graduate to be involved in all facets of giraffe conservation in the wild. We also provide technical field support and advice to giraffe conservation institutions. Our East Africa Coordinator trained two staff members of the African Fund for Endangered Wildlife – Giraffe Center in field research techniques. While enhancing capacity for giraffe research, this data is also serving as a baseline for future research and informing the draft Kenyan National Recovery Plan for Giraffe.

**GCF also provided financial and/or technical advice and supervision to the following students:**

- Michael Brown (Uganda), PhD support – Dartmouth College, USA
- Anna Lena Burger (Namibia), PhD support – Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany
- Madelaine Castles (Namibia), PhD support - University of Queensland, Australia
- Mathias D'haen (DRC), MSc support – University of Life Sciences, Czech Republic
- Emma Hart (Namibia), PhD support – University College Dublin, Ireland
- Kylie McQualter (Botswana), PhD completed – University of New South Wales, Australia
- Arthur Muneza (Kenya), PhD support – Michigan State University, USA
- David O'Connor (Kenya), PhD support – Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany



Michael Brown, Uganda



Arthur Muneza, Kenya



Emma Hart, Namibia

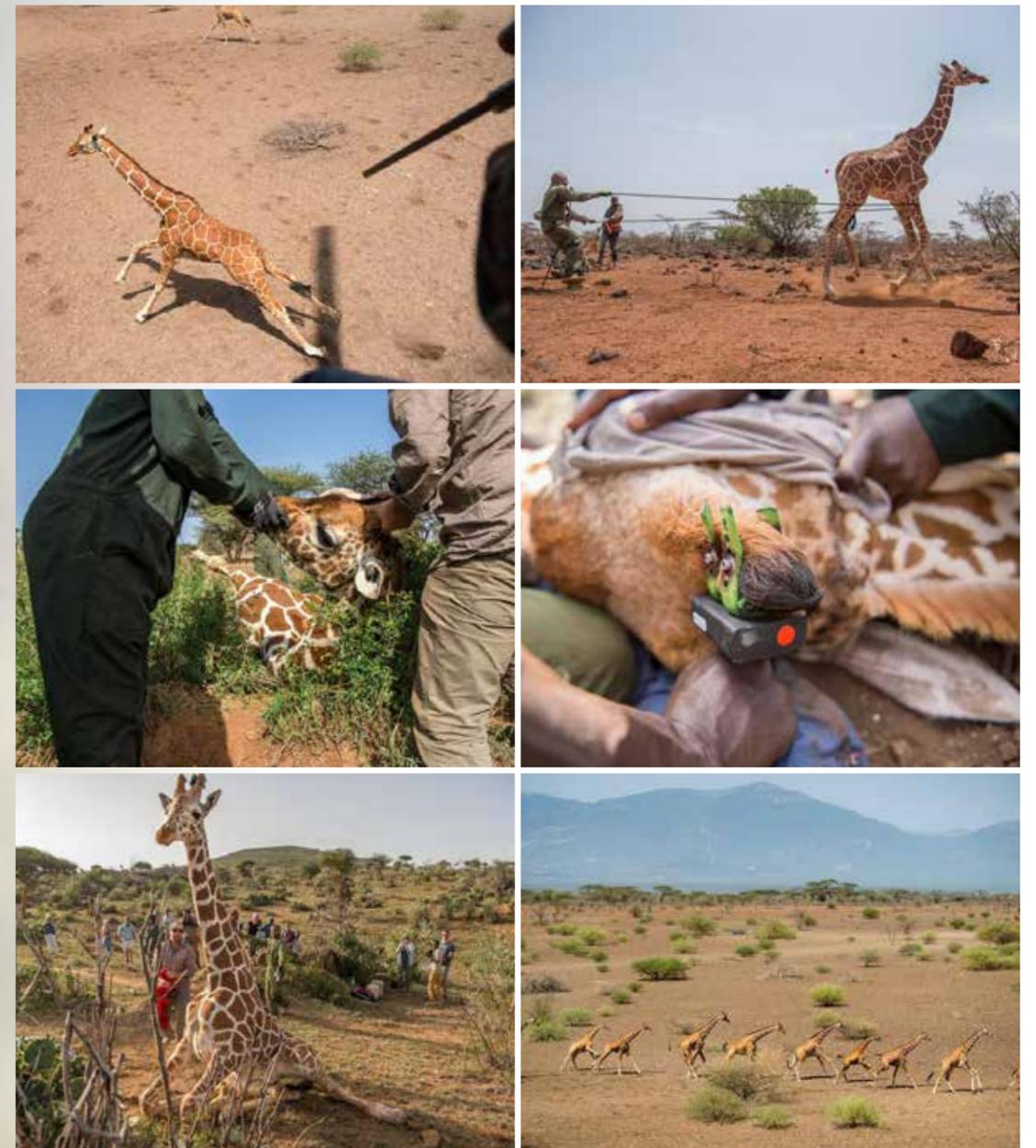


In Namibia, GCF runs the longest conservation research programme on giraffe in Africa as well as an environmental education programme in the capital Windhoek. *Credit: GCF*

# Twiga Tracker

In collaboration with Savannah Tracking, a Kenya-based technology company, we have taken giraffe GPS satellite tagging to the next level. We have developed and tested innovative satellite tracking units that can be fixed to giraffes' ossicones – called ossi-units. These new units are powered by solar technology. Utilising this renewable resource appears logical in Africa as it offers a more sustainable solution and, at the same time, it increases the lifespan of each unit. The units are fitted to the ossicones, which has shown to be a safe and long-term solution for the animals. Since our initial field testing in Namibia, the ossi-units have now been deployed successfully in northern Kenya, northern Uganda and north-western Namibia as part of an Africa-wide effort to better understand giraffe spatial ecology in support of their conservation and management.

GCF is excited to launch a new Africa-wide initiative called Twiga Tracker. In collaboration with San Diego Zoo Global, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and Wildlife Conservation Alliance we are planning to track all four species of giraffe across their range in Africa. The first ossi-units have been deployed and this continent-wide programme will inform and support future giraffe conservation in Africa. Stay tuned for updates from this exciting initiative and get in touch if you would like to become part of the solution for saving giraffe in Africa!



**Left & Above:** Fitting a GPS satellite unit to a giraffe is no easy task. It involves a lot of skill, requires a capable and fearless team and financial resources. *Credit: Ami Vitale and Ken Bohn*

# World Giraffe Day 2017: Operation Twiga II

In a daring mission, the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), with the support of GCF and partners, set about boosting the recently established Nubian giraffe population on the southern bank of Murchison Falls National Park in Uganda. In August 2017, an additional 19 giraffe were translocated across the Nile River from the northern to the southern side of the Park.

With pending oil exploration in this core giraffe range, it is important to ensure a secure future for these highly threatened Nubian giraffe. As noted by Dr Patrick Atimnedi, UWA's Manager of Veterinary Services, "The range of development projects in the northern sector has the potential to impact negatively on the giraffe stock. As this Park is separated by the Nile, and giraffe, unlike other animals like elephant, cannot swim across the river, they are concentrated in the northern sector; that is why we have to help them cross that natural barrier."



A lot of planning and commitment was required to make Operation Twiga II a reality (twiga is Swahili for giraffe). After 18 Nubian giraffe crossed the Nile River in Murchison Falls National Park in early 2016, this important and recently established satellite population was boosted with more individuals to help it thrive and develop into a healthy and sustainable population.

Over the course of three weeks, the team lead by UWA spent long hours in the field, individually capturing and translocating giraffe. After a short stay in the boma (enclosure) on the northern side of the Park, the giraffe crossed the Nile River on a ferry in small groups, travelling in style on the back of a translocation truck. The truck was donated to UWA by GCF in 2016 from funding raised on World Giraffe Day in 2015.

The UWA team continued to improve their giraffe capture skills, supported by renowned expert and African conservation legend Dr Pete Morkel, who was again brought in for support and training by GCF. No single giraffe capture is ever the same. Operation Twiga II was funded by the Metzger Foundation, with support from Wildlife Conservation Alliance. The Uganda Wildlife

Education Centre (UWEC), Makerere University and an array of international zoo partners provided hands-on support during Operation Twiga II. AZA Giraffe SAFE zoos provided critical medical supplies and blood work monitoring, while also gathering valuable data to improve giraffe husbandry in captivity. The first-ever X-rays of giraffe hooves in the wild were taken by Cheyenne Mountain Zoo during Operation Twiga II. These X-rays, together with hoof prints, measurements and photos taken from each individual giraffe, will help to improve hoof care in zoos around the world and may also help to prevent the early onset of arthritis in zoo giraffe.

Our thanks go to Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, Colorado State University, Columbus Zoo, Equine Lameness Prevention Organization, and Living Desert for their field support.

Four of the translocated Nubian giraffe were fitted with ossi-units to aid post-translocation monitoring and to help us to see how they settle into their new home! The team also spotted a few of the previously translocated giraffe on the southern side, including Melvin, the involuntary star of the BBC/PBS documentary 'Giraffes: Africa's Gentle Giants', who seems to be thriving in his new home.

What an amazing giraffe conservation effort by the dedicated UWA team, in particular

Dr Robert Aruho and Dr Eric Enyel. We at GCF were proud to be part of this amazing team effort to boost Nubian giraffe distribution and hopefully help grow their population. "Giraffe conservation is a team effort, and we at GCF are proud to have brought so many stakeholders together for the long-term conservation of this iconic animal - we are confident that together we can continue to make a difference for giraffe in Africa." - GCF Directors, Dr Julian and Steph Fennessy.

With only approximately 2,645 individuals remaining in the wild, Nubian giraffe are in peril. Almost 50% of the wild Nubian giraffe population live in Murchison Falls National Park. Nubian giraffe are a subspecies of the northern giraffe, which is one of the least numerous giraffe species with less than 5,200 individuals remaining. It is time to act now to protect these iconic animals, before it is too late!



**Above:** GCF continues to support the Uganda Wildlife Authority in their efforts to save Nubian giraffe in Uganda. Credit: GCF

# Giraffe Action Fund (GAF)

The Giraffe Action Fund (GAF) is an exciting new initiative of GCF's to increase field conservation of and management actions for giraffe across Africa. GAF replaces GCF's Small Conservation Grants to put a stronger emphasis on giraffe conservation actions in the wild – big and small. In addition to financial support, the GAF also includes technical and field support from the GCF team for some projects.

Giraffe numbers have declined by almost 40% in the last thirty years, to less than 100,000 in the wild. It is likely that giraffe numbers were tenfold only a century ago. GAF aspires to secure and increase current numbers and distribution of giraffe throughout their range in Africa.

GAF encourages new levels of collaboration, partnerships and networking among and between governments, local and international organisations, conservationists and donors alike, and aims to link in with existing key conservation efforts in the same landscapes. Activities can extend across different land management types: protected areas, and forestry, communal and private land that is suitable for giraffe conservation. Investments by GAF include efforts to increase giraffe range, reduce human-giraffe conflict, enhance law enforcement, develop national/regional strategies and actions, conduct campaigns to increase education or raise awareness, and develop strategies to secure habitat giraffe need to roam freely.

GAF identifies and supports the most innovative field conservation actions and campaigns that directly protect and promote conservation of this iconic species:

- Action efforts to increase giraffe numbers, distribution and habitat.
- Action anti-poaching of giraffe across the continent.
- Action conservation education and awareness to save giraffe and to minimise their biggest threats.

19 Priority is given to projects that:

- Are effective and yield direct and significant conservation benefits for giraffe.
- Are catalytic by initiating management presence and conservation action in parts of giraffe range where such presence is not currently available, or by allowing for a notable scaling up of approaches known to be effective.
- Leverage additional funding by unlocking other sources of financing for the conservation project.
- Are sustainable and can be maintained in the absence of recurrent GAF support.





## Giraffe Conservation Policy & Strategies

### National Giraffe Conservation Strategy and Action Plan Development

The Uganda Wildlife Authority is at the forefront of giraffe conservation in Africa. Supported by GCF and with the assistance of IUCN, Uganda's first National Giraffe Conservation Strategy and Action Plan was developed and is ready to be launched. After Niger and Kenya (draft), Uganda is only the third country to finalise such a strategy. With approximately 50% of the wild population of Nubian giraffe living in Uganda, this document comes at a critical time.

Niger is already in its second revised version of their National Giraffe Conservation Strategy and Action Plan. As one of the poorest countries in the world, Niger was the first country to finalise and launch such a plan for giraffe in Africa. West African giraffe numbers are steadily increasing, and this conservation success stresses the importance of developing national plans and having full buy-in from the government to save giraffe.

In Kenya the draft National Giraffe Recovery Plan is under final review, with the aim of it being launched in 2018.

Another draft plan is under development for the Democratic Republic of Congo, while the governments of Tanzania and Zimbabwe have initiated discussions with GCF on how to best proceed with developing such plans in the near future.

### Convention of Migratory Species (CMS)

At the request of the Government of the Republic of Angola, GCF supported the proposal development of listing giraffe on Appendix II of the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS). In October 2017, this proposal was endorsed by CMS at the 12th Conference of Parties (COP12) in the Philippines. While giraffe are protected throughout much of their range in Africa, the CMS listing is the first international body to grant giraffe special protection. We hope that the CMS is uniquely placed to facilitate increased collaboration across bordering conservation range States and will improve awareness and management of the plight of giraffe internationally.

### Convention on International Trade in Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

The Government of the Czech Republic opened discussions with the IUCN SSC Giraffe & Okapi Specialist Group on proposing a listing of giraffe under the Convention on International Trade in Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at the Conference of Parties in Sri Lanka in 2019. GCF provided their expertise and assisted in reviewing initial discussion documents to ensure the science component of the proposal was sound. Additionally, GCF has provided and continues to provide technical advice around the preliminary trade assessments undertaken in Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe in order to inform the proposed CITES listing.

## AZA Giraffe SAFE

GCF provided valuable technical support and guidance to the development and implementation of the AZA Giraffe SAFE programme and its 3-year plan. To date, 14 AZA zoos have joined the programme and we are excited to see how our collaborative efforts can increase support for giraffe conservation in the wild.

ASSOCIATION  
OF ZOOS &  
AQUARIUMS

SAFE  
SAVING ANIMALS  
FROM EXTINCTION



# Giraffe Conservation Awareness & Outreach

## GCF in the USA

The majority of GCF's financial support continues to be raised in the USA. Giving talks and presentations is an important part of developing a presence across the USA and reminding people of the plight of giraffe. Dr Julian Fennessy, Tom Leiden (President GCF-USA) and the GCF team again gave numerous talks at zoos and events throughout the country. While each of these events is important, we have only included a few highlights below.

23



### WCN Expo Presentation

As invited guest speakers, Dr Julian and Stephanie Fennessy presented at the annual Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) Fall Expo 2017 in San Francisco. Many visitors had a chance to meet the GCF team - including Arthur Muneza, GCF's East Africa Coordinator, and Tom Leiden, President of GCF-USA - at our table at the Expo and learn more about our work. What an exciting opportunity to bring giraffe to the bigger stage! There was a lot of interest in giraffe conservation and increasing awareness of their plight. In the week following the WCN Expo, the team also attended WCN's conservation and fundraising workshops, which also allowed for time to learn more, build new friendships and forge future collaborations.



### Giraffe Care Workshop

During the annual Giraffe Care Workshop at Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in December 2017, GCF's East Africa Coordinator Arthur Muneza presented daily sessions on giraffe conservation in the wild. This was a great opportunity to introduce the work of GCF and other giraffe conservation efforts in Africa to a wider audience. Based on the positive feedback, plans are well underway for the next workshop in 2018.



### Octavian Forum

GCF's Director Dr Julian Fennessy was fortunate to share a stage with names like chess legend Garry Kasparov, former Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar, and conservation philanthropist Thomas Kaplan when presenting at the first Octavian Forum at Sotheby's in New York in October 2017. Sharing the giraffe story on this stage will hopefully hit a different audience than previously attracted.

## GCF Internationally

This year, the GCF Directors travelled to Australia and New Zealand and participated in successful fundraising events, both in Sydney and Auckland. Spreading the giraffe conservation story is at the core of GCF's objectives, and simultaneously raising much-needed funding is a large bonus. As GCF's BBC/PBS documentary 'Giraffes: Africa's Gentle Giants' had not yet been shown in Australasia, it was a great opportunity to showcase our work at the official premieres in these countries. The timing was perfect, as the events coincided with the documentary's nomination for an Emmy Award in the USA.

## GCF in the United Kingdom

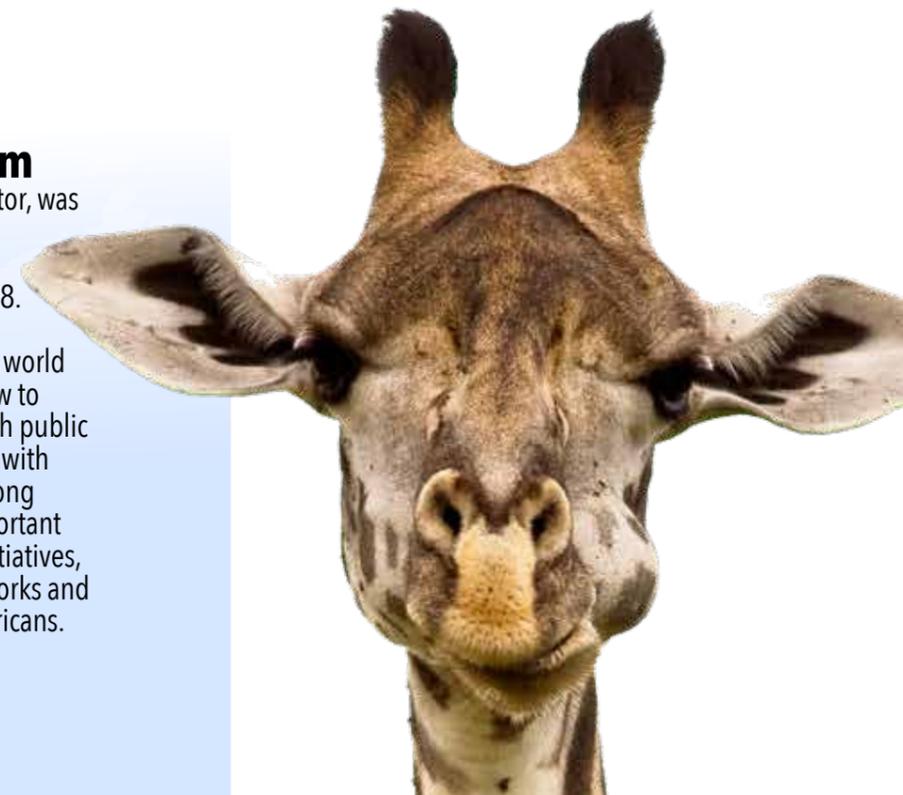
Arthur Muneza, GCF's East African Coordinator, was invited by the National Geographic Society to attend the first-ever National Geographic Explorers Festival in London in January 2018. The Festival brought together recipients of National Geographic grants from across the world to participate in experiential training on how to communicate conservation research through public presentations and visual storytelling, along with enhancing their leadership skills. Arthur, along with the other Explorers, presented his important research to a wider public. Through such initiatives, we continue to grow our collaborative networks and provide training opportunities for young Africans.

## GCF in Europe

### EU Parliament

The BBC/PBS documentary continues to be a great tool for raising awareness about giraffe conservation and GCF. The Czech national delegation of the EU Parliament invited GCF to screen the documentary at the EU Parliament building in Brussels in September 2017. The screening was co-hosted by the Ambassador of the EU to Namibia Jana Hybášková and GCF.

This year also saw GCF leaving a larger footprint in Europe as the GCF Directors gave several presentations on giraffe conservation and GCF's work to a wide range of audiences throughout Germany. Spreading the word on the plight of giraffe will continue to increase interest and will hopefully, in the long run, also lead to increased support for conservation efforts on the ground in Africa.



The online Adopt-a-Giraffe programme has become a popular fundraising mechanism for GCF. In this financial year, over 900 donors adopted one of our six adoptive giraffe in North-western Namibia. Standing tall for their entire species, Dobby, Kaoko, Kunene, Monkey, Muffin and Winky Wonk can be symbolically adopted for a fee, starting from US\$50 per year, and in return adopters receive four updates from the field in Namibia, which will include information about these six special giraffe should they have been spotted during the reporting period.

There is never a dull day in the bush and it is amazing to see how the desert environment changes throughout the year.

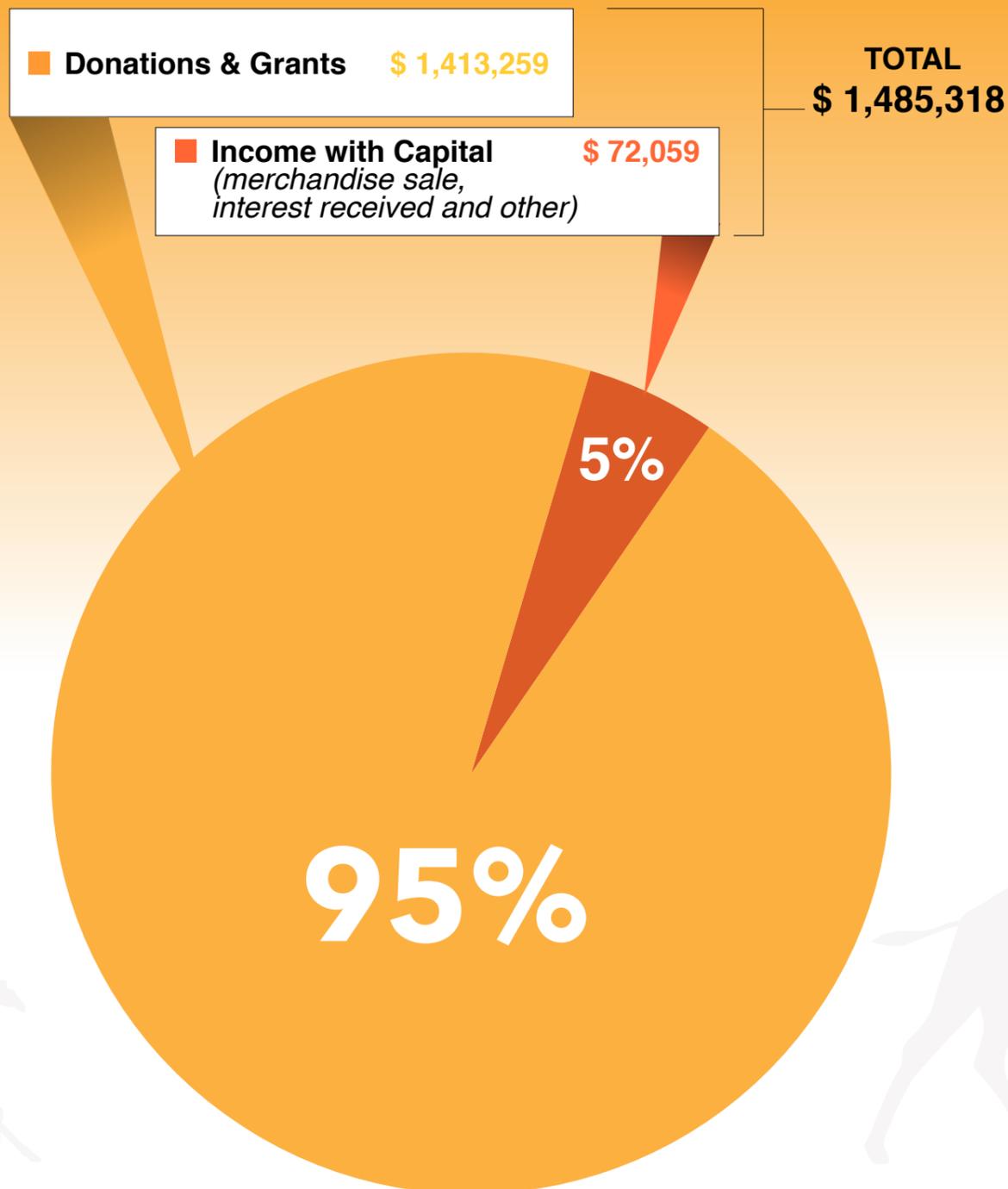


24

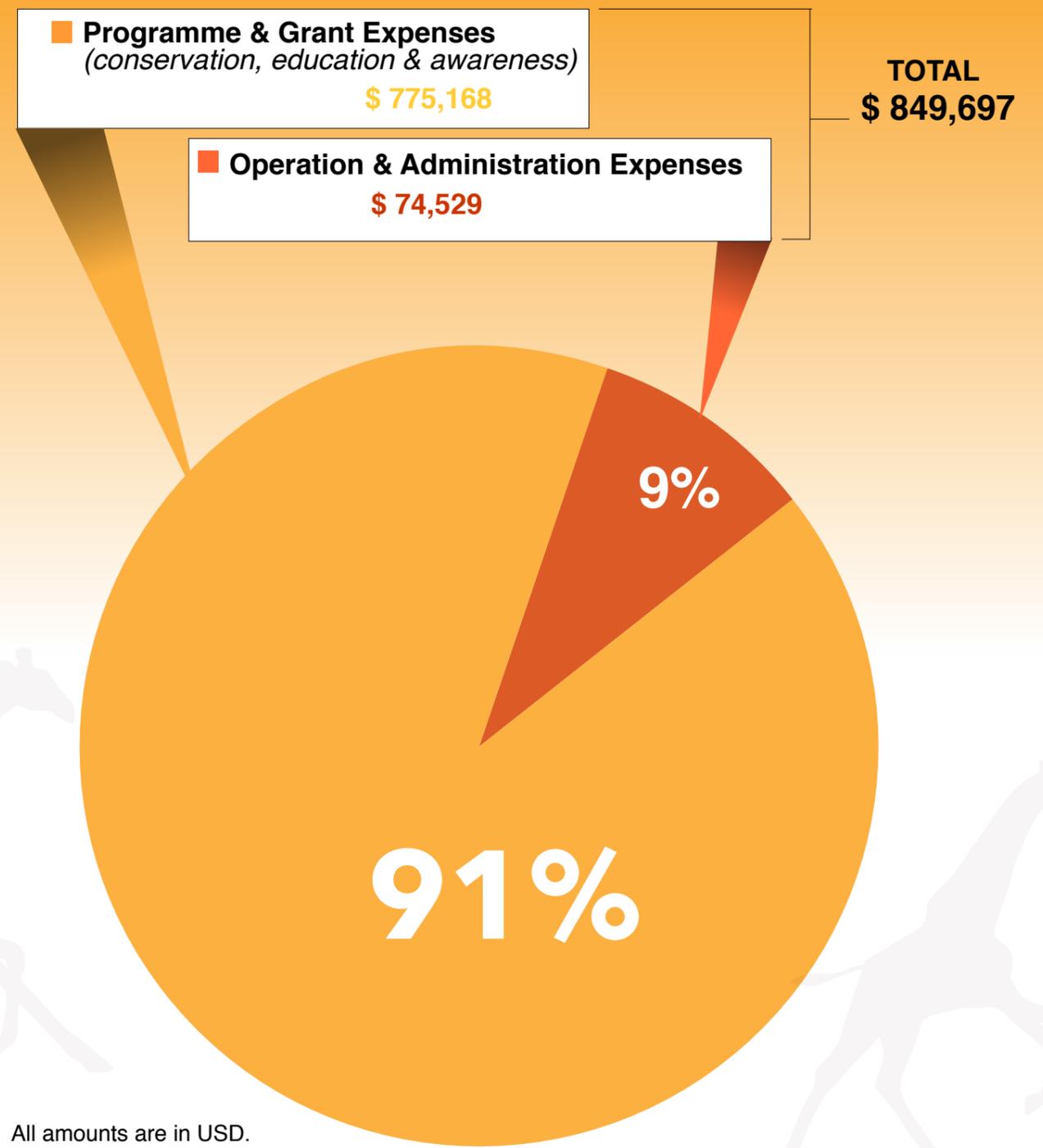
# GCF FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Increased interest in giraffe conservation has translated to an increase in available funding and support. Over the last year, GCF has been fortunate enough to employ a few essential staff members to help further our mission and vision in Africa. Importantly, however, GCF remains a small and efficiently run organisation with minimal administrative overheads. This means that we are still able to spend 91 cents of every dollar donated to GCF directly on giraffe conservation and management in Africa. Exploring new partnerships and expanding our giraffe conservation footprint throughout Africa continues to remain at the core of our business model - and having critical resources allows us to do this more efficiently.

## Funds Received



## Expenditure



All amounts are in USD.

# DONORS

During this financial year, GCF received financial support from many organisations and private donors from over 40 countries. Without this support, we would not be able to undertake critical giraffe conservation and management efforts across Africa and internationally.

## \$50,000 and above

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 Cheyenne Mountain Zoo  
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 Wildlife Conservation Network  
 The Woodtiger Fund  
 World Giraffe Day 2017

Kromer Family Foundation  
 Lehigh Valley Zoo  
 The Living Desert  
 Naples Zoo  
 Saint Louis Zoo  
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 Candis Stern  
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 Utah's Hogle Zoo  
 Vanguard Charitable  
 Gerald Weber Sr  
 Wildlife Conservation Global  
 Zoo Park de Beauval

## \$25,000 – \$49,999

Anonymous  
 Chester Zoo  
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 JP Animal Adventure  
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## \$5,000 – \$9,999

Annenberg Foundation  
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 Anje van der Naald  
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 Woburn Safari Park  
 Yorkshire Wildlife Park  
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## \$10,000 – \$24,999

African Fund for Endangered Wildlife  
 The American Gift Fund (Mey Share Foundation)  
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 Blank Park Zoo  
 Born Free Foundation  
 Detroit Zoo  
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 Ivan Carter Wildlife Conservation Alliance

## \$1,000 – \$4,999

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