

Giraffe Rapid Assessment Report for Laikipia, Samburu and Isiolo, Kenya

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Background

Reticulated giraffe (*Giraffa reticulata*) have historically inhabited the vast semi-arid rangelands of northern Kenya. However, over the past 35 year, reticulated giraffe populations have experienced a significant decline of approximately 50%. This can mainly be attributed to a number of threats, which are mostly human-induced, including poaching, habitat loss and fragmentation, disease, and climate change.

Recognizing the urgency to address these challenges, San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (SDZWA), in collaboration with the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) have conducted regular rapid assessments on reticulated giraffe populations in northern Kenya to monitor trends. This report summarises findings from assessments conducted in the first quarter of 2024 in Mugie, Chololo and Loisaba Conservancies in Laikipia County, as well as Samburu National Reserve (NR) in Samburu County and Buffalo Springs NR in Isiolo County. The survey method aimed at identifying each giraffe by using unique body pattern recognition with the help of [GiraffeSpotter](#).

Objectives

This survey sought to document the reticulated giraffe population size, distribution, and population structure through photographic surveys as well as assess the severity of threats affecting the giraffe population.

Timeline in 2024

Mugie Conservancy: 30 & 31 January

Loisaba Conservancy: 4 & 5 March

Chololo Ranch: 11 & 12 March

Samburu NR: 16 & 17 March

Buffalo Spring NR: 18 & 19 March

Results

Table 1: Key rapid assessment statistics

	A	B	C	D	E
Mugie	600	19	14	1.6	4
Loisaba	600	43	163	5.2	18
Chololo	860	25	73	4.5	16
SNR	867	35	193	38.6	30
BSNR	843	39	193	38.6	27

A: Distance covered; **B:** No. of giraffe encounters; **C:** No. of giraffe identified; **D:** Average herd size; **E:** Largest giraffe herd.

Table 2: Giraffe numbers and age class distribution

	Mugie	Loisaba	Chololo	SNR	BSNR
F (A)	4	83	48	85	85
M (A)	9	24	11	47	46
F (SA)	1	12	5	13	9
M (SA)	0	33	4	32	21
Calves	0	11	5	16	32
Total	14	163	73	193	193

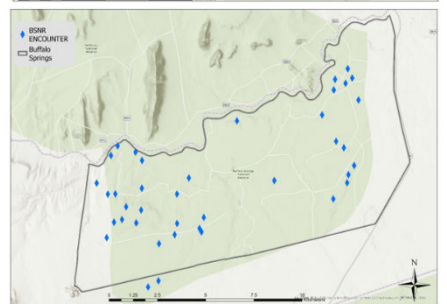
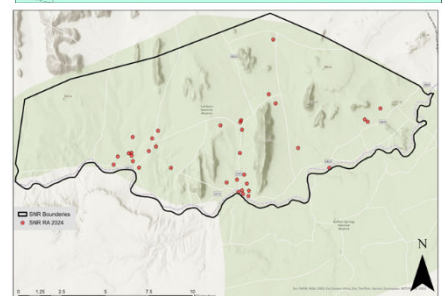
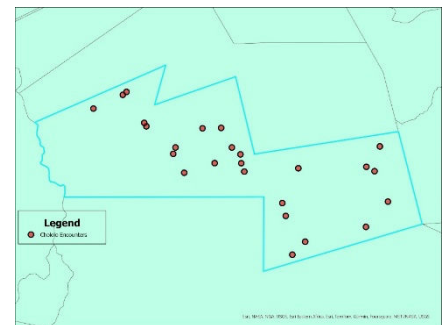
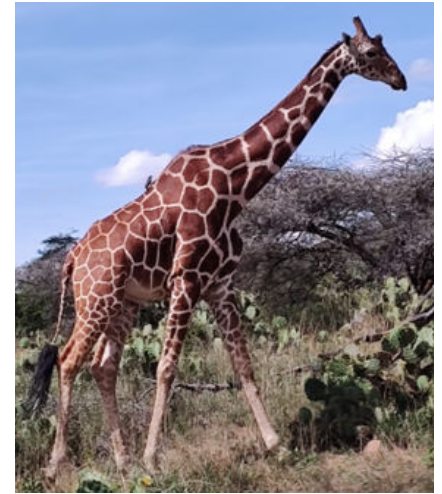
F: female; M: male; A: adult; SA: subadult
SNR: Samburu NR; BSNR: Buffalo Spring NR

Key points:

Fewer giraffe were recorded in Mugie due to dry conditions at the time. Giraffe have been observed moving in and out of the conservancy in search of food. However, the low number of calves and subadults was concerning. The Chololo, SNR and BSNR populations are new additions to the GiraffeSpotter database and will allow continuous monitoring. For instance, one giraffe in Mugie and 106 giraffe in Loisaba were resights from previous assessments, whereas 57 were individuals recorded for the first time. No signs of GSD, snare injuries or health-related issues were recorded during the assessments.

Conclusions and next steps

Continued assessments in the survey areas and adjacent sites such as Shaba NR will give insights into temporal and spatial trends of giraffe ecology that will



shape effective conservation of giraffe populations in the region.

Acknowledgements

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