

Assessing the Conservation Status of Nubian Giraffe

Ruma National Park, Homabay County, Kenya

February 2025

Background

In Kenya, Nubian giraffe (*G. camelopardalis camelopardalis*) were once widespread across the western region, but due to habitat loss from agricultural expansion and human settlement, wild populations have experienced a significant decline. The extant Nubian giraffe populations in Kenya were derived from a single population in Soi that was translocated over several years after the defunct Soi Military base was closed. A founder population of 26 Nubian giraffe were translocated to Ruma National Park (NP) in 1983. Today, the park holds the largest population of Nubian giraffe in Kenya, with ~550 out of the 970 individuals counted in the 2021 National Aerial Wildlife Census. The last road-based photographic survey by GCF in Ruma NP recorded 340 giraffe.

This report summarises the preliminary results of the road-based photographic survey conducted by Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI) and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) in collaboration with GCF in two primary survey events in August (dry season) and November 2024 (wet season). Each survey event included two sampling rounds.

Objectives

- To determine the relative population abundance of Nubian giraffe.
- To update individual identification database of Nubian giraffe.
- To assess threats facing Nubian giraffe.
- To support the implementation of the Recovery and Action Plan for Giraffe in Kenya.
- To provide data for updating future national and global IUCN Red List reassessments of Nubian giraffe.

Results

Recorded giraffe: 552 (Aug) / 673 (Nov)
 Male : female ratio: 1:5 (both events)
 Calves : adult female ratio: 1:4 (Aug) / 1:5 (Nov)
 Largest Herd: 52 (Aug) / 73 (Nov)
 Mean Herd Size: 11 (Aug) / 15 (Nov)
 Highest giraffe observations: Kamato and Lambwe transects (see map for details)
 One giraffe was observed limping during the August survey. The cause is unknown, however, possible causes include congenital deformities, snare or other injury, infections or hoof overgrowth.

Next steps and recommendations

- All images were uploaded to GiraffeSpotter for further analyses.
- Giraffe demonstrated avoidance of areas that were characterised by

Chromolaena odorata, an invasive species that can outcompete indigenous plants species. It is suggested to map its extent as a possible threat to giraffe habitat, identify its pathways and recommend management options whilst creating awareness to the local community.

- There are anecdotal reports from KWS and WRTI indicating the presence of snares. A snare sweep exercise should be considered.
- Identify a suitable recipient area for future translocation of giraffe from Ruma NP.

Giraffe by age class and sex, Aug survey

| | Round I | Round II | Total |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| F (A) | 152 | 131 | 283 |
| M (A) | 30 | 13 | 43 |
| F (SA) | 56 | 27 | 83 |
| M (SA) | 21 | 10 | 31 |
| Calves | 37 | 54 | 91 |
| U(A) | 18 | - | 18 |
| U(SA) | 3 | - | 3 |
| Total | 317 | 235 | 552 |

F: female; M: male; A: adult; SA: subadult; U: unknown

Giraffe by age class and sex, Nov survey

| | Round I | Round II | Total |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| F (A) | 171 | 230 | 401 |
| M (A) | 40 | 30 | 70 |
| F (SA) | 30 | 37 | 67 |
| M (SA) | 18 | 13 | 31 |
| Calves | 34 | 67 | 101 |
| U(SA) | 3 | - | 3 |
| Total | 296 | 377 | 673 |

