



PROJECT REPORT · 2024 – 2026

Where the Storks Come Down.

How four villages in Central Tanzania turned bird hunters into beekeepers,
footballers and conservation champions.

Addressing the Illegal Killing of Birds (IKB)

Kongwa & Mpwapwa Districts · Dodoma Region · Tanzania

Implemented by **Nature Tanzania** · Supported by the **NABU International Foundation for Nature**

Two years, two districts, one very large bird.

Every October, thousands of White Storks that nested on European rooftops come down to feed in the farmlands of Kongwa and Mpwapwa. Too many of them never leave. This is the story of what we did about it.

Between June 2024 and June 2026, Nature Tanzania worked in the villages of Central Tanzania where migratory birds gather in their thousands — and where they are trapped, catapulted and poisoned for food and for cash.

We began from an uncomfortable but useful conclusion: **the illegal killing of birds here is not really a wildlife crime problem. It is a poverty problem wearing feathers.** The people killing storks are overwhelmingly young men with no income. Enforcement alone was never going to work.

So we built something different — a four-pillar approach that offered people a better deal than hunting: beehives and goats instead of poison; school clubs and football leagues instead of lectures; and rigorous bird monitoring to tell us honestly whether any of it was working.

This report is written for our members, our partners and the public. It sets out what worked, what did not, and what we believe should happen next.

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AT A GLANCE

32 months · EUR 60,000 · 2 districts · 10 villages · 7 schools · **62,000+ people reached**

The headline numbers

125

MODERN BEEHIVES IN
PRODUCTION ACROSS SIX
VILLAGES

3_m TZS

EARNED BY COMMUNITY
GROUPS FROM HONEY SALES

10,210

PEOPLE REACHED BY THE
KORONGO FOOTBALL LEAGUE

205

BIRD SPECIES RECORDED
ACROSS 25 SURVEY SITES IN
2026

2,500+

TREE SEEDLINGS PLANTED TO
RESTORE BIRD HABITAT

3,394

ILLEGALLY KILLED BIRDS
DOCUMENTED — THE FIRST
HARD EVIDENCE BASE

THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FINDING

The killing has moved, not stopped. Inside the villages where we worked — where there are beehives, goats, school clubs and football teams — communities report that bird hunting has fallen away. But our own monitoring found the hotspots have simply shifted next door, to villages such as Matanga, Chitabuli, Chingwingwili, Nguzo and Darajani, where no alternatives exist. That is simultaneously the clearest evidence that the model works, and the clearest argument for extending it.



01 · The problem, plainly stated

A White Stork in Songambebe village, Mpwapwa District. Birds like this one travel some 10,000 kilometres from Europe to feed in these fields — which is exactly where the danger is.

Why birds are being killed in Central Tanzania

Kongwa and Mpwapwa sit directly beneath a major migratory flyway. The birds are large, they are conspicuous, and they feed on open ground in precisely the places where people farm.

From around October each year, Palearctic migrants from Europe and intra-African migrants moving south converge on the farmlands, dams and seasonal wetlands of these two districts. Flocks of thousands of **White Storks** (*Ciconia ciconia*) and **Abdim's Storks** (*Ciconia abdimii*) arrive together.

Our field monitoring identified three methods of killing: **poisoning, trapping and catapulting**. Of these, poisoning is by far the most damaging. Carbofuran – an agricultural chemical freely available in local shops – is mixed into or sprinkled onto meat scraps and carcasses that storks readily take.

The harm does not stop with the bird. Carbofuran contaminates soil, wetlands and biodiversity, and poses a serious health risk to the people who then eat the poisoned birds – especially children.

But the motive is not hostility towards birds. It is economics. Bird meat is free protein and a sellable good, and the great majority of hunters are young men with no other source of income.

That single observation shaped everything that followed. If hunting is an income strategy, then the intervention has to be an income strategy too.

WHY THE WHITE STORK MATTERS

The storks wintering in Kongwa and Mpwapwa are the same birds that nest on rooftops and church towers across Germany and Eastern Europe. What happens in a Dodoma maize field is felt an entire continent away.

Where the killing is concentrated

For the first time, the project has been able to name the hotspots rather than describe the problem in general terms. Ten locations were identified through systematic monitoring and community interviews. Critically, **most of them lie outside the villages we were funded to work in**.

DISTRICT	CONFIRMED IKB HOTSPOTS	PROJECT SUPPORT IN PLACE?
Kongwa	Matanga, Chitabuli, Chingwingwili, Kibaigwa, Mtanana, Chamae	No
Mpwapwa	Nguzo, Darajani, Songambebe, Pandambili	No
Project villages	Manungu, Morisheni, Chimlata, Mlanga, Machenje, Msagali, Ng'hambi, Chimaligo, Mbugani, Chunyu	Yes – hunting reported to have declined

Incidents peak during the January–February migration window. Community members consistently linked continued hunting in the unsupported villages to young people who have no alternative source of food or income.

Our approach: four pillars, one logic

Give people a better economic option than hunting. Reinforce it through the young. Deliver the message through something they already love. And measure honestly whether the birds are actually better off.

PILLAR 1

Alternative livelihoods

Beekeeping, goats, pigs and poultry – targeted directly at the people most involved in bird killing, always combined with training and repeat follow-up visits.

PILLAR 2

Nature education

School environment clubs, bird-watching, drawing competitions and clean-ups, so that the next generation never learns to see bird hunting as normal.

PILLAR 3

Sport for conservation

A football league named after the White Stork, taking the conservation message to young men in a setting they chose to attend.

PILLAR 4

Bird monitoring

Systematic counts and kill records, so that claims about impact rest on evidence rather than on optimism.

Two design choices mattered more than any other. **First, assets were never handed over alone.** Every hive, goat and pig came with training and with repeated follow-up visits – because giving someone an animal is not the same as giving them an enterprise. **Second, we worked through government rather than around it.** District Commissioners, District Executive Directors, ward and village leaders, forest and beekeeping officers and school heads were all brought in as delivery partners. This gave the conservation message a reach and an authority that no NGO could manufacture on its own.

“The project's success should be judged not only by economic gains, but by a measurable reduction in the illegal killing of birds.”

MR MAYEKA SIMON MAYEKA · KONGWA DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, AT THE GOAT HANDOVER CEREMONY

He then instructed district technical officers to integrate bird conservation into current and future district development plans. This is, in our judgement, the most significant institutional outcome of the entire project: it moves bird conservation out of an NGO work-plan and into the machinery of local government.

Where we worked

DISTRICT	VILLAGES	MAIN ACTIVITIES
Kongwa	Manungu, Morisheni, Chimlata, Mlanga, Machenje (Kongwa Dam)	Beekeeping · goat farming · environment clubs · school bonanza · sports bonanza · bird monitoring
Mpwapwa	Msagali, Ng'hambi, Chimaligo, Mbugani, Chunya	Beekeeping · pig & poultry farming · goat farming · Korongo Football League · environment clubs · tree planting · bird monitoring



03 · Livelihoods that replace hunting

Kongwa District Commissioner Mr Mayeka Simon Mayeka hands over goats to project beneficiaries in Manungu village, on behalf of Nature Tanzania and the NABU International Foundation for Nature.

Four enterprises, one honest ledger

Beekeeping worked from the start. Goats were chosen by the community themselves. Pig farming nearly collapsed in a dispute about money. Poultry failed outright – and then came back, funded by the beneficiaries' own pockets.

Beekeeping – the anchor enterprise

Beekeeping became the project's flagship livelihood because it pays twice. It generates cash, and it gives beneficiaries a direct financial reason to protect standing indigenous trees, since honey yields depend on healthy vegetation.

In August 2024, working with the Kongwa and Mpwapwa District Governments, we ran two-day training sessions in Manungu, Morisheni, Ng'hambi and Msagali. Crucially, the sessions were delivered not by us but by **District Forest Conservators, Beekeeping Officers and Environment Officers** – which means that technical capacity now sits inside government and remains there after we withdraw.

VILLAGE	HIVES	HONEY (KG)
Manungu	31	40
Msagali	28	40
Ng'hambi	25	25
Morisheni	22	30
Mlanga	13	15
Chimlata	6	60
Total (Dec 2024)	125	210

79 people were trained, 36 of them women (46%). By the end of 2024, 125 modern hives were in production across six villages.

The first supported harvest produced 210 kg. Harvests have continued each season since: 100 kg sold in early 2025 raised **TZS 1,000,000**, and a further 200 kg in the first half of 2026 raised **TZS 2,000,000**. Every shilling goes to the community groups.

Nature Tanzania also sells the groups' honey at its own offices and at national exhibitions in Dodoma and Njombe – connecting a village enterprise to a national market.

REPLICATION WITHOUT PROJECT MONEY

Three beekeeping beneficiaries went on to establish their own private enterprises, each investing in seven modern hives with **no further project support**. Nobody asked them to. It is the clearest possible signal that they consider beekeeping commercially real.

Goat farming – chosen by the community, not the project



Goats belonging to project beneficiaries in Manungu village, Kongwa District. The herd has grown from 9 animals to 50 through natural increase and the revolving scheme.

During community consultations, participants told us they preferred goats to poultry: easier to manage, cheaper to feed, less demanding of veterinary support. We followed their judgement – and it was vindicated when the first poultry attempt was destroyed by disease.

In early 2025 the project provided **25 goats to 50 beneficiaries** in Morisheni and Manungu, **30 of them women (60%)**. Together with offspring, the herd grew from 35 to 50 animals by June 2026.

At Manungu, 22 beneficiaries agreed a **revolving goat model**: each person receives one goat and returns one offspring to the group once it has bred. The scheme therefore keeps reaching new households indefinitely without another shilling of donor money.

Pig farming – and the crisis that nearly ended it

This is the most instructive story in the report, and we tell it in full because the lesson is worth more than the tidier version would be.

Forty-two former bird hunters, organised into a football team under an earlier phase of work, launched pig farming at Ng'hambi village. It went well. Starting with 14 pigs, eight sows produced 32 piglets, taking the herd to 46. The group sold 36 pigs and earned **TZS 4,000,000**.

And then the money arrived, and the group very nearly fell apart. Some members felt they were doing far more work than others. Costs for feed, housing and veterinary care had never been properly planned. Above all, **no one had agreed in advance how the income would be split**. Mistrust grew fast.

We did not walk away. Nature Tanzania convened follow-up meetings bringing together 39 youth ambassadors with village, ward and district leaders, and helped the group negotiate its way out.

Three agreements emerged: a **rotation system for duties**; a **weekly contribution of TZS 2,500** (about EUR 1) from every member towards feed and veterinary care; and an honest separation of those able to commit from those who were not. Eleven members continued with the pigs; the football team retained 39.

The enterprise then restructured itself for resilience. At Ng'hambi, three sows produced nine piglets, and the beneficiaries chose to give one piglet to each of nine members — deliberately converting a fragile collective into nine individual household ventures, and removing the collective-action problem outright.



A sow and her litter at the youth-run pig enterprise in Ng'hambi village, Mpwapwa District. Between 2024 and 2026 the group sold 45 pigs; 25 remain in production.

THE LESSON WE WOULD INSIST ON NEXT TIME

The asset was never the hard part. Building a pig house and buying a founding herd is a routine procurement. What nearly destroyed the enterprise was the absence of group rules before any income was earned. **Any future handover should require a written duty rota, a contribution rule and a signed profit-sharing agreement before the first animal changes hands.** It costs nothing, and it prevents the most predictable failure there is.

Poultry — failure, then a youth-led recovery

Our first poultry initiative failed. Disease swept through the flocks, productivity collapsed, and beneficiaries sold the remaining chickens and put the proceeds into pigs and goats instead. We report this plainly. The original budget had not made proper provision for disease prevention and veterinary support, and it should have.

What happened next was the single best moment of the project. In August 2025, a group of 30 young people in Chimaligo sub-village — men who had previously relied on bird hunting — used **their own income from pig farming to buy 100 chicks** and start poultry farming again as a second business.

The project did not provide the chicks. We were not asked. Our only role was to connect the group to the district livestock officer for extension support on disease control and feeding. By the end of 2025 the birds were thriving and income from chicken and egg sales was rising.



The 100 chicks bought by the Chimaligo youth group with their own pig-farming income — the strongest evidence in this report that hunting income has genuinely been substituted.

WHY THIS MATTERS MORE THAN ANY INDICATOR

When beneficiaries reinvest *their own earnings* into another legal business, without being prompted or funded, the alternative livelihood has stopped being the project's and started being theirs. No monitoring framework can manufacture that.

Following up, again and again

Follow-up was treated as core delivery, not administration. Between August and October 2025 we held two follow-up meetings in each of five villages — Manungu, Ng'hambi, Morisheni, Chimaligo and Msagali — engaging **120 beneficiaries, 45 of them women.**

- **Beekeeping:** stable hives, rising yields; training on hive maintenance visibly improved management.
- **Goats:** healthy herd growth with minimal disease. The recurring constraint is access to veterinary services.
- **Pigs:** improved pens under construction; feed price volatility remains a real risk.
- **Poultry:** healthy chick growth and steadily increasing income from chickens and eggs.



Piglets at Ng'hambi village. Each of nine beneficiaries received one animal when the collective enterprise was restructured into individual household ventures.



Project goats grazing at Morisheni village, Kongwa District. Under the revolving scheme, every offspring returned to the group reaches another household.

AGREED NEXT STEPS WITH BENEFICIARIES

Three actions were agreed with the groups themselves, to run during and beyond the project: link beneficiaries to village and ward veterinary officers for regular animal health checks; coordinate with agricultural extension

services for further technical training; and pursue partnerships for input supply, particularly feed and equipment for pig farming.



04 · The next generation looks up

Pupils at Chimlata Primary School during a bird-watching session. For most of them it was the first time they had ever looked through a pair of binoculars.

Nature education: a long-term investment

The education pillar is not aimed at people who already hunt birds — that is what livelihoods are for. Its job is to make sure the children now in school never learn to think of bird hunting as normal in the first place.

Environment clubs ran continuously in six to seven schools across both districts: Kongwa and Chunya Secondary Schools, and Manungu, Chimlata, Ng’hambi, Msagali and Chimaligo Primary Schools.

Each session opened with the ecological role of birds — pollination, seed dispersal, pest control — then moved to the threats they face: habitat loss, climate change, pollution and poaching. Students were asked to work out for themselves how human activity contributes, and to propose their own solutions.

Sessions included drawing competitions, poster-making, building bird feeders, school clean-up campaigns, quizzes and, outdoors, practical bird-watching.

218 students took part in 2024 and 368 in 2025. Girls made up 57% of participants in 2024 and 49% in 2025 — an unusually strong gender balance for rural conservation education in this region, and one we are proud of.



IKB Project Officer Ms Neema Mwaja facilitating an indoor environment-club session at Kongwa Secondary School.

ENVIRONMENT CLUB PARTICIPATION

2024 — girls	124
2024 — boys	94
2025 — girls	180
2025 — boys	188



Environment-club students at Kongwa Secondary School with their "Save the Earth" poster, produced during a drawing competition.



Students at Manungu Primary School learning about types of pollution during a school clean-up event.

The school bonanza, April 2025

In April 2025 we brought Kongwa Secondary School and White Zuberi Secondary School together for a conservation bonanza. **1,200 students took part.**

After an interactive session on illegal killing, habitat loss and the health risks of eating poisoned birds, three competitions followed: a bird-watching competition around the school grounds in which students recorded **30 species**; a bird-drawing competition featuring the White Stork and Superb Starling as the 2025 Birds of the Year; and an inter-school football match, with conservation messages delivered at half-time.

The Kongwa District Commissioner closed the event, presented the awards, and donated 24 football jerseys and two footballs from district resources — a district government co-financing our method.

Borrowing platforms that already exist

Some of our most efficient outreach cost almost nothing. School graduation ceremonies already gather students, parents, teachers, local leaders and the wider community in one place. In October 2024 and October 2025 we were invited to speak at graduations in three schools, reaching **a combined audience of more than 13,600 people.**

SCHOOL	PEOPLE REACHED
Kongwa Secondary School	4,600
Chunyu Secondary School	3,700
Ng'hambi Primary School	3,300
Kongwa Secondary & Chimlata Primary (2025)	2,000
Total	13,600

Speaking as Guests of Honour, Ms Hawa Kamwendo and Mr Lota Melamari encouraged students to become **“Bird Conservation Champions”** in their schools and communities, and presented them with their graduation certificates.



05 · The Korongo Football League

Young men gather before a match at Ng'hambi village. "Korongo" is the Swahili word for White Stork — and these are exactly the people whose decisions determine whether the storks survive the winter.

Sport turned out to be our best classroom

Most of the people killing birds in Kongwa and Mpwapwa are young men. Most young men in Kongwa and Mpwapwa play or watch football. It is not a complicated insight, but it was a powerful one.

The Korongo (White Stork) Football League was organised with the Mpwapwa District Council and the office of the Mpwapwa Member of Parliament, and launched on 17 September 2024 at Ng'hambi village by the District Sports Officer, Mr Pius Sebastian Bakari.

Ten teams registered. Twenty-four matches were played across ten villages. Two of the teams were made up of former bird hunters who had become conservation ambassadors. A local committee of community leaders, teachers and sports stakeholders ran the competition.

At every single match, the gathering was used to deliver conservation and public health messages: the dangers of eating poisoned birds, the ecological consequences of hunting, the importance of bird migration — with the White Stork as flagship species.

Centre Boys FC took the title and TZS 800,000. Majimaji FC were runners-up (TZS 500,000) and Kilimo Kwanza FC third (TZS 200,000).

10,210

PEOPLE REACHED ACROSS 24 MATCHES — MORE THAN THE ENTIRE SCHOOL PROGRAMME COMBINED

2,250

WOMEN AND GIRLS AMONG THOSE REACHED

1.5m TZS

TOTAL PRIZE COST — ROUGHLY 147 TZS PER PERSON REACHED

AN HONEST CAVEAT ABOUT REACH

Reaching 10,210 people is an engagement figure, not a conservation outcome. Being in a crowd is not the same as changing behaviour. What the league genuinely delivered was repeated access to exactly the right audience, in a setting they had chosen, with the message carried by their own peers rather than by outsiders. That is worth a great deal — but we are not going to claim it is the same as proof.



The Ward Councillor from Chunya addressing players and spectators on the importance of conserving birds, before a match at Msagali village.



IKB Project Officer Ms Neema Mwaja hands the match ball to the captain of Msagali FC after the competition, Mpwapwa District.

Extending the model

The approach was repeated twice more. A **community sports bonanza at Manungu** in April 2025 combined traditional games — bao and pool — with a football match between the Chinyika and Manungu teams, drawing 320 people including 120 women, who publicly renewed their commitment to protecting local bird habitats. In the first half of 2026 the model moved to **Msagali village**, again reaching 320 community members, 80 of them women, with an awareness session preceding the match and jerseys and footballs handed over afterwards in the presence of the Ward Councillor and village leaders.

WHAT SPORT REALLY CHANGED

Former bird hunters were not treated as offenders to be policed. They were given a visible, respected role — as players, team-mates and conservation ambassadors. That reframing made bird conservation something a young man in Mpwapwa could be proud of, rather than an instruction handed down from an NGO or a government office.

Counting the birds — and the losses

Everything in this report rests on this pillar. Without monitoring we would have a set of pleasant activities and no way of knowing whether any of them mattered.

Monitoring was carried out during the wintering season, when Palearctic and intra-African migrants are present. We used point counts, transect surveys and direct observation, selecting sites for high bird numbers, high diversity or known illegal killing. Birds were identified with field guides and binoculars, recorded on standard monitoring sheets and in **BirdLasser**, then digitised for analysis.

Information on illegal killing came from interviews with hunters and community members, corroborated by physical field evidence: carcasses, feathers, traps and suspected poisoning sites.

The 2024/25 and 2025/26 seasons were led by **Ms Neema Mwaja**, supported by Samwel Slaa, Augustino Sanga, Robert Lebwanga and Edgar Apolinary — and increasingly by local volunteers and bird champions, which is how long-term capacity gets built.

2024 • RESIDENT BIRDS

Surveys in six villages produced six bird checklists. Wetlands held the highest diversity. **Five bird traps were found and destroyed.**

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

A public bird-watching event at Kongwa Dam recorded **29 species**, including the African Golden Oriole. The checklist is publicly available on eBird as S198519792.

The 2024/25 wintering season

Between December 2024 and March 2025, the team visited 20 sites and counted **8,814 individual migrants across 17 species**. Two findings stood out.

WINTERING MIGRANTS COUNTED, 20 SITES, 2024/25

Abdim's Stork	4,000
White Stork	1,500
Barn Swallow	200
Little Stint	200
Collared Pratincole	100
European Bee-eater	35
11 other species	79

First, the storks dominate. Abdim's Stork and White Stork together accounted for about 62% of every migrant counted — which is precisely why they are the birds most often killed. **Second, the White Storks have moved.**

Large numbers turned up at Matanga and Chitabuli, around 100 km from our Kongwa field office and outside the project area. The likely reason is farming practice: storks prefer open farmland where tractors disturb the soil and expose insects, and the birds were repeatedly seen feeding behind ploughs.

What the kill data show

During the same period the team documented **3,394 birds killed illegally, across 20 species** – by poison, catapult and mist net, for local consumption and for sale.

SPECIES MOST AFFECTED	KILLED
Abdim's Stork	1,000
Red-billed Quelea	450
Red-billed Firefinch	320
Laughing Dove	250
Blue-capped Cordon-bleu	215
Yellow-collared Lovebird	150
Helmeted Guineafowl	120
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu	120
Ring-necked Dove	110
White Stork	100
10 further species	559
Total documented	3,394

Abdim's Stork alone accounts for 29% of all recorded kills. The storks are targeted chiefly because of their size – a single bird is a substantial amount of meat.

The preferred method is poisoning. Carbofuran is mixed into meat scraps and carcasses left where storks will find them. Doves, ducks and herons proved especially vulnerable during the rainy season.

In December 2024 alone, more than **100 Abdim's Storks** were recorded killed in a single week of monitoring, between the 7th and the 14th.

Monitoring was never purely extractive. During the 2024/25 season the team used the fieldwork to reach 100 farmers, 30 livestock keepers, 40 young people and 20 village leaders with direct conservation messaging – and listened in return. Farmers raised a fair point of their own: birds control pests and pollinate crops, but some species also damage them. That exchange has changed how we frame our message.

The 2026 survey – our strongest scientific output

The January–June 2026 monitoring is the most substantial dataset the project has produced. **Twenty-five sites** were surveyed across both districts, covering wetlands, farmland, dams, rivers, open savanna and community areas.

205

BIRD SPECIES RECORDED,
FROM 64 FAMILIES

55

MIGRATORY SPECIES (150
RESIDENT)

10,382

ABDIM'S STORKS COUNTED

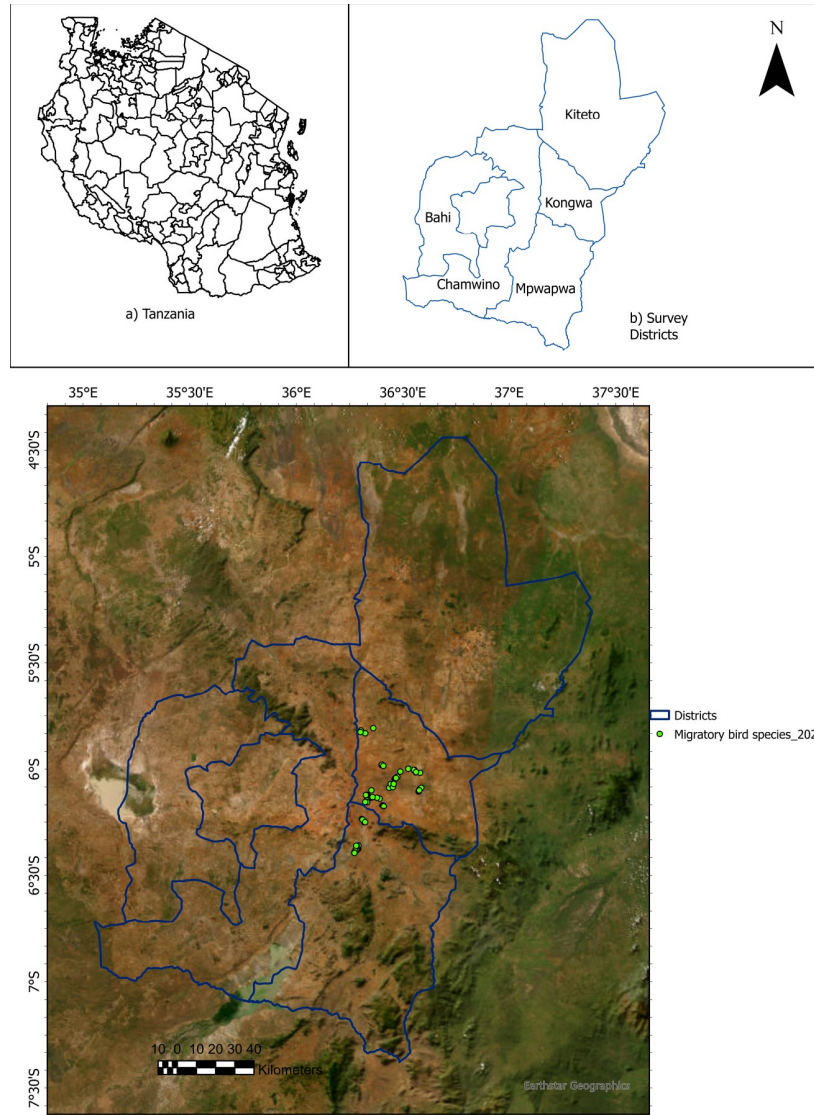
5,148

WHITE STORKS COUNTED

For the first time, and with defensible survey effort, these data establish that **Kongwa and Mpwapwa are of genuine regional significance for both resident and migratory birds in Central Tanzania**. They provide a baseline against which any future intervention — by Nature Tanzania, by NABU International, or by the districts themselves — can be measured. Resident populations appeared stable, suggesting reasonable ecosystem condition despite increasing agricultural pressure.

THE FLAGSHIP AND ITS VULNERABILITY

Large flocks of White Storks were again recorded foraging in wetlands and open farmland, confirming these districts as critical stopover and wintering grounds. But that very dependence on agricultural land is exactly what exposes the species to poisoning. The bird's strength and its weakness are the same habit.



Migratory bird records across the survey districts of Kongwa, Mpwapwa, Chamwino, Bahi and Kiteto, Dodoma Region, 2026. Each green point marks a confirmed migratory species record. The clustering along the Kongwa–Mpwapwa boundary shows both where the birds concentrate and where the risk is greatest.

Habitat, and taking the message national

Birds need somewhere to land. And a small organisation in Kongwa needs the country's ministers to know why that matters.

Trees: 2,500 seedlings, and one useful finding

Forests, shrubs and trees across the project area have been cleared for farmland, charcoal and firewood – reducing habitat, damaging soil biodiversity and accelerating erosion. The root cause, again, is poverty.

In December 2024 we supported tree nurseries at Kongwa Secondary, Mbugani Primary and Ng'hambi Primary Schools. **210 students and 20 teachers** took part. Notably, the **schools themselves paid for the nurseries**; Nature Tanzania provided the training and technical guidance. In January 2025 a further 1,500 indigenous seedlings were planted with schools and community leaders, using drought-resistant species.

A FINDING WORTH ACTING ON

The schools raised 2,145 seedlings; 1,000 survived to planting – a **47% survival rate**. But the average hides the real story. *Trichilia emetica*, an indigenous species, survived at or near **100%** at every school. Exotic *Casuarina* lost 43% and 75% of stock at the two schools that raised it.

The conclusion is simple: **concentrate future nursery effort on indigenous species**. They are better adapted, cheaper to keep alive, and worth far more to birds.

On the national stage

Nature Tanzania is the only conservation NGO in Tanzania dedicated specifically to birds and their habitats – a position formally recognised by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, which has repeatedly invited us to national exhibitions with a dedicated booth. We used those platforms to carry the IKB message far beyond Kongwa and Mpwapwa, and to sell our communities' honey to a national market.

EVENT	LOCATION	DATE	PEOPLE REACHED
Nanenane Agricultural International Expo	Dodoma	Aug 2024	2,000
World Wildlife Day	Dodoma	Feb–Mar 2025	830
World Forest Day	Njombe	Mar 2025	5,000
World Bee Day	Dodoma	May 2025	8,000
World Environment Day	Dodoma	Jun 2025	600
Nanenane Agricultural International Expo	Dodoma	Aug 2025	18,000
ESD East Africa Regional Forum	Kigali, Rwanda	2025	—
Total			34,430

The choice of the Nanenane agricultural expo was deliberate rather than incidental. Carbofuran — the chemical used to poison storks in Central Tanzania — is an agricultural input. An agricultural exposition is therefore exactly the right room in which to argue that chemicals used to kill birds also damage soil biodiversity, contaminate wetlands, and poison the people who eat those birds.

Our booth at World Wildlife Day 2025 was visited by the Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Dr Pindi Chana; the Dodoma Regional Commissioner; the Deputy Permanent Secretary; and the Conservation Commissioner of TANAPA. World Forest Day in Njombe closed in the presence of the Prime Minister, Hon. Kassim Majaliwa. One hundred White Stork posters were distributed nationally, and 40 kg of community honey were sold across the two events.

Total outreach across the project

Jun–Dec 2024		25,217
Jan–Dec 2025		36,700
Jan–Jun 2026		320+
Project total		62,200+

Reach is a basic indicator. It shows how many people were exposed to our messages; it does not prove that behaviour changed. We report it because it was measured consistently and because it shows which channels created the most opportunity — not because we mistake an audience for an outcome.

What we learned

Including the parts that did not go to plan. A report that only lists successes is not much use to anyone trying to do this work next.

On livelihoods

- **Assets without governance fail.** The pig enterprise generated TZS 4,000,000 and nearly collapsed anyway, because no benefit-sharing rule had been agreed before the money arrived.
- **Let beneficiaries choose the enterprise.** The communities chose goats over poultry because goats are easier to manage and cheaper to feed. Their judgement was vindicated when the first poultry attempt was destroyed by disease.
- **Shrink the collective when the collective is the problem.** Converting the Ng'hambi pig herd into nine individual household ventures removed the collective-action problem outright, rather than trying to manage it forever.
- **Youth ownership is the real sustainability test.** When the Chimaligo group spent its own money on 100 chicks, it demonstrated something no indicator could: that the alternative livelihood had become *their* livelihood.

On awareness and behaviour change

- **Sport reaches the right people, at scale, cheaply.** The Korongo League reached more people than the entire school programme, for TZS 1,500,000 in prize money — and it reached young men, in a setting they chose, through their own peers.
- **Use platforms that already exist.** Graduation ceremonies, district meetings and national exhibitions cost us almost nothing and carried the message to tens of thousands of people, with the borrowed authority of the institutions convening them.
- **Combining pillars is what works.** Education, livelihoods and sport together produced a more durable effect than any one could alone. We wrote this in our very first quarterly report, and it held true for the entire project.

On partnership and evidence

- **Government endorsement is a force multiplier.** A District Commissioner telling beneficiaries their success will be judged on reduced bird killing carries a weight no NGO officer can generate.
- **Evidence directs effort.** It was monitoring data, not assumption, that revealed the hotspots to be outside the project area — which now defines the next phase of work.

What did not work, and what we did not finish

We think it is important to state these plainly.

SETBACK	WHAT HAPPENED, AND WHAT WE DID
Poultry disease outbreak	The first poultry intervention failed entirely and beneficiaries sold all stock. Disease prevention and veterinary support had not been adequately budgeted. Proceeds were reinvested in pigs and goats; poultry was re-established in 2025 with district livestock officer support.
Village conservation champions not established	We planned a permanent network of trained village-level champions collecting daily IKB data. It was not created. Without it, hotspots cannot be watched between monitoring seasons. This is our most important piece of unfinished business.
Village General Assembly outreach	Repeatedly planned and not evidenced as delivered. Awareness was instead delivered at scale through sport, schools and exhibitions.
Women's vegetable groups	Not established during the project period.
No project camera	Flagged in every reporting period from August 2024 onwards and never resolved. For eighteen months the project's entire visual record was captured on an office phone. A modest budget line would have fixed it.
Veterinary access and feed prices	A persistent constraint on goat and pig enterprises. Action points were agreed to link beneficiaries with village and ward veterinary officers and to seek input-supply partnerships; not yet fully resolved.
Project vehicle	The vehicle became inoperable and repeated repair was judged poor value. Activities continued using motorcycles and vehicles lent by the Kongwa District Council, the Tanzania Forest Service and project stakeholders.

What happens next

The model works where it is applied. The killing is now concentrated where it is not. Extending it is the highest-value use of the next euro spent on this problem.

1 **Extend the model to the identified hotspot villages.**

Matanga, Chitabuli, Chingwingwili, Kibaigwa, Nguzo, Darajani, Songambele and Pandambili. This is the project's single clearest finding and its most urgent recommendation.

2 **Establish and train a permanent network of village conservation champions.**

Without continuous data we cannot demonstrate trend, and hotspots go unwatched between monitoring seasons. This was planned and not achieved; it should be the first thing funded.

3 **Front-load group governance in every livelihood handover.**

A written duty rota, a contribution rule and a signed profit-sharing agreement, all in place before assets are transferred. It costs nothing and prevents the most predictable failure.

4 **Institutionalise the sports model and budget for it explicitly.**

Sport delivered the greatest reach per shilling of any activity and speaks directly to the demographic that hunts birds.

5 **Convert district goodwill into district co-financing.**

The Kongwa DC has already instructed officers to integrate bird conservation into district plans and contributed materials from district resources. This should become a formal budget line.

6 **Introduce proper outcome measurement.**

A short knowledge-and-attitudes survey in schools, and a hunting-cessation roster for beneficiaries. We can currently demonstrate reach and activity, but not learning or behaviour change. This is the principal weakness of our evidence base and we say so openly.

7 **Pursue agroecology as a direct conservation intervention.**

Birds here are killed with an agricultural chemical. Reducing carbofuran use through agroecological practice attacks the mechanism of the killing, not merely its motive. Our Project Officer has already completed training at ECHO East Africa in Arusha.

8 **Support clear village bylaws and enforcement of existing law.**

Village-level bylaws remain one of the most practical instruments available in these districts.

What will survive the grant

Several elements of this project were designed to outlive its funding, and the evidence suggests they will.

■ **The enterprises pay for themselves.** Beekeeping produces cash flow; the goat scheme shares offspring within the group; the pig enterprise covers veterinary costs through weekly member contributions; and the poultry venture was funded by the beneficiaries themselves.

■ **The technical capacity now sits in government.** District Forest Conservators, Beekeeping, Environment and Livestock Officers delivered the training and extension. That capability remains after we withdraw.

- **Bird conservation is entering district development plans** on the instruction of the Kongwa District Commissioner.
- **The environment clubs are school-owned**, and the tree nurseries were financed by the schools themselves.
- **Replication is already happening unaided** — three beekeepers have established private ventures with no project support.
- **Our presence continues.** The Kongwa office remains open, staffed, and in regular contact with beneficiary communities through our project volunteer, Mr Nyemo Sawasawa.

The storks that winter here are the storks that nest on European rooftops.

Over thirty-two months and EUR 60,000, this project set out to reduce the illegal killing of birds in Kongwa and Mpwapwa by offering something better to the people who were doing the killing. Judged against that objective, it made real progress.

Four legal enterprises are running, led by former hunters and their neighbours. One youth group went further and started a second business with its own money. More than 62,000 people heard the conservation message. Over 2,500 trees are in the ground, 125 hives are in production, and — for the first time — Central Tanzania has a serious evidence base on where and how its birds are being killed.

We did not finish everything. The champion network was not built and the women's vegetable groups were not established. And illegal killing has not disappeared — it has moved next door, to villages we could not reach.

That is precisely why we are asking for the work to continue. We now have a model that works, a map of exactly where it is still needed, and a district government that has publicly committed to the goal. On the evidence in this report, the case for extending it is unusually strong.

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The Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism — for national platforms and recognition

Tanzania Forest Service Agency, ward and village leaders, and every headteacher who opened a classroom

And above all, the beekeepers, goat keepers, pig and poultry farmers, footballers, volunteers and schoolchildren of Kongwa and Mpwapwa.