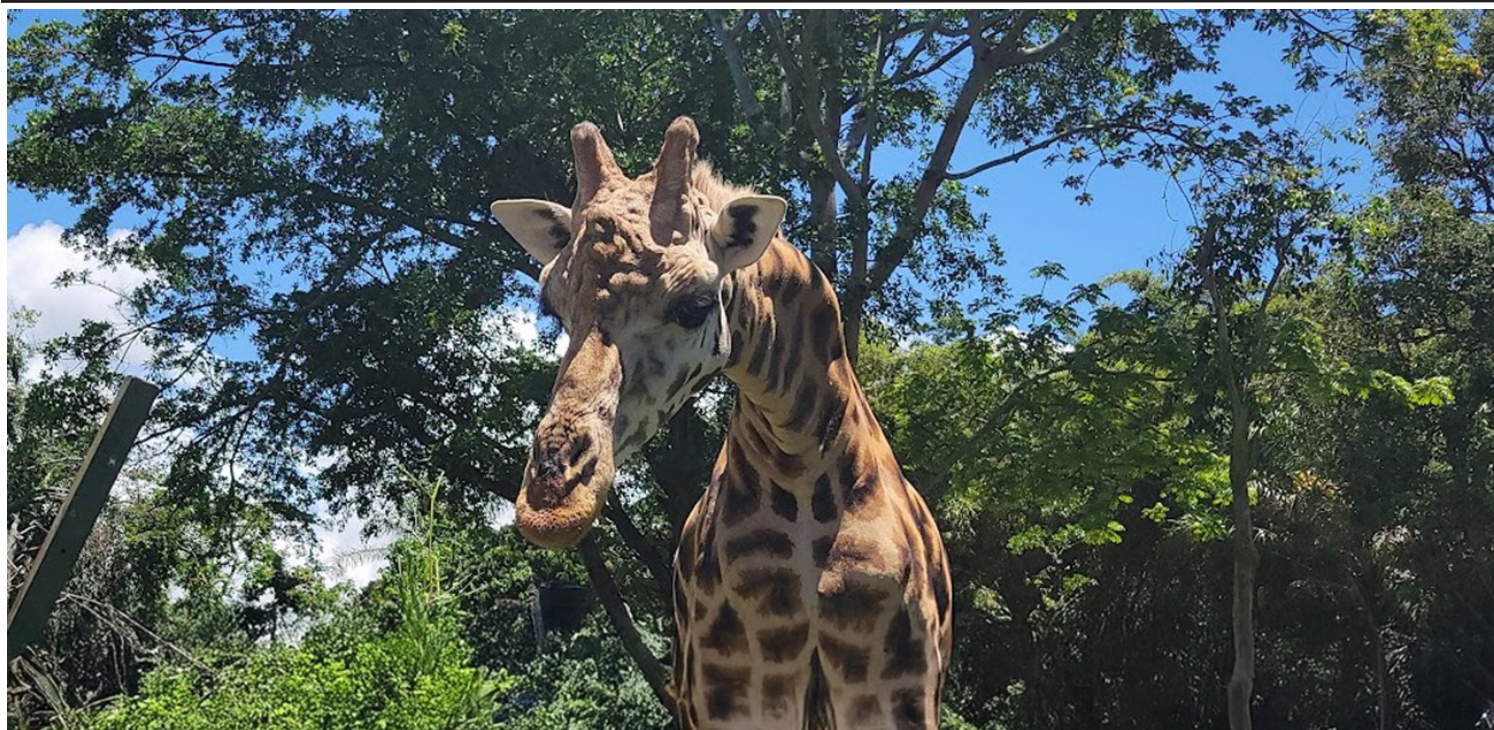


THE TWGA TIMES

PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION, AND EDUCATION



“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”

Jane Goodall

Inside This Volume

- The 180 Mile Walk
- Who Takes out the Trash?
- Wildlife Corridors Save Giraffes
- When Maasai go, so do Giraffes
- Volkswagen's Secret Scheme

Letter from the Director

Dearest Giraffe Lovers,

first, I want to thank you for your unwavering support during the 180 mile hike across the Great Plains. This was an extraordinary trip and it was meaningful. It is my hope that others will take up the mantle and make their own journeys to bring awareness to the crisis facing giraffes. Our efforts generated nearly 5,000.00 in donations and that makes a huge difference in helping us with our primary project, creating Twiga Territory.

Now is the time we will be focusing on the buying and building in earnest. This month we have outlined grant proposals for nine different grants ranging from 4,000 to 35,000. In addition we will be soliciting businesses in Florida, South Dakota, Oklahoma and California for any donations they can spare once their budgets are complete.

Next month we will be including our monthly report on what money we have raised, how it is being spent and what our needs are. We will not be hosting any events the

rest of this year in order to give our full attention to the other side of fundraising, namely grants and corporate donations, but I cannot stress enough how essential it is for our survival to have our monthly donors. \$25, \$40, \$100 dollar donations are what keep us alive. We have you to thank for it.

Our recent report on giraffe numbers is more disturbing than we thought. In the documentary on, “The Silent Extinction” from *Giraffe Conservation Foundation*, we now know that there are only 10% of Masai giraffes left since their numbers began plummeting in 1985. *Survival International* is working to protect native lands where giraffes roam, but they are spread throughout East Africa and are overwhelmed. Our project very narrowly focuses on the steppes of Kilimanjaro, which is Masai giraffe territory. Phase one of our project will cost an estimated 80,000. We now have 15,000. It is small, but it is a start.

As I close this letter I guess the last thought I’d like to share is this. . . what would it take to help you feel like your donation makes a difference? You are here, so something about this effort appeals to you. What would inspire you to take action, reach out, make a commitment, be a part of something greater than you can imagine? It’s not rhetorical. It’s genuine. I’d like to know how we can bring you into our little family that is struggling to save one precious species. Let us know. Theworldgiraffealliance@gmail.com or Theworldgiraffealliance.org. I’ll be waiting to hear from you.

Kupenda na Amani- Michele

On a Mission for Giraffes-The 180 Mile Walk

When the World Giraffe Alliance decided it was time to make a bold move, the 180-mile walk seemed like the perfect choice. Little did we realize how few people were willing to take time out of their lives to walk for giraffes.

Were they busy? Were they committed elsewhere? Was it the wrong timing?

Whatever the reason, only one person was able—or willing—to go: Michele. We considered postponing the event to allow more time for planning, but the consensus was this: if we wait a year there is no guarantee we will have more participants. Perhaps setting the example would inspire others. So the decision was made.

At 67, Michele made the choice to walk ten miles a day over eighteen days. When asked about the experience, Michele said:

“It wasn’t something I wanted to do—it was something I had to do. How else could I convince others that some things are worth the sacrifice? It’s one thing to write a check. It’s something else to give up your life, spend hours walking, and do it every day for nearly three weeks.”

“I was alone a lot of the time. I was on back roads where there was no rescue if I ran into trouble. I ate alone, walked alone, and ended my day alone. But what I did have with me, all the time, was the hope that someone would see the commitment and wonder, ‘Why is it so important?’”

According to the Giraffe Conservation Foundation, a science-based research organization that studies giraffes, there were once millions of giraffes across Africa. Today, among the four species of giraffes, only ten percent of these populations remain. (Faces of Africa – Giraffe: A Silent Extinction)

“Consider,” says Michele, “if forty percent of giraffes disappeared over forty-five years, that means unless we arrest the rate, in seventy-five years giraffes will be gone. This is unspeakable.”

A world without giraffes is hard to imagine. Let’s hope we never have to.

Where Does Our Waste Go? A Mirror We Can't Avoid.

By Jeff Jackson

In Tanzania, like in many parts of the world, it's not uncommon for communities to burn garbage. To many Western observers, this may appear reckless—why not recycle? Why not manage waste “properly?” But this critique often comes from a place of convenient blindness. Because the truth is, when we follow our own trash, the view isn't much cleaner.

Where does our waste go?

We dig enormous holes and bury our waste, because out of sight, out of mind! But taking toxic materials, chemicals, plastics, and compacting them into massive landfills that leach pollutants into the soil and water is not any better. In the United States alone, we produce over 290 million tons of waste each year, much of which ends up in landfills or is incinerated. Even the materials we toss into the recycling bins—believing we're making a difference—often end up shipped overseas and improperly processed.

The global waste trade is a dirty secret of the modern world. We send literal tons of electronic waste to developing countries under the guise of recycling, including old phones, televisions, laptops—items many of us thoughtlessly toss when the next upgrade arrives—they are dismantled by hand in nations with little environmental oversight. In places like Ghana, India, or the Philippines, people (not uncommonly children) burn off the plastic coatings of wires and devices to extract tiny amounts of copper or precious metals. The air is thick with toxic smoke. The land is poisoned. But we feel good because we “recycled.”

We must be honest with ourselves: any criticism of a developing country's waste practices must be accompanied by a far deeper scrutiny of our own. When we throw out batteries, aerosol cans, outdated DVD players, or small appliances, where do we think they go? Do we believe that the simple act of placing them on the curb makes them disappear responsibly?

Consider this: in many cases, recycling doesn't even mean recycling. The NIH-backed article, “Solid Waste Management: A Global Perspective” reveals that while high-income countries may boast about advanced waste infrastructure, much of their waste still ends up mishandled—especially once exported. Once the cargo leaves the port, it's often dumped in open landfills or burned in unregulated environments in poorer nations.

Burning waste, whether in Tanzania or Texas, is never a clean solution. The emissions contain carcinogens like dioxins and furans. These pollutants settle into crops, rivers, lungs. They don't disappear—they recycle back to us in the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink.

How many electronic devices are sitting in your drawer, waiting to be “dealt with later”?

Have you ever thrown away old batteries or broken gadgets with the regular trash?

Do you know where your trash goes after you put it out?

Do you know if your town or city actually recycles what it collects—or if it's quietly exporting the problem elsewhere?

We owe it to the planet—and to each other—to stop pretending that waste vanishes. It doesn't. It just moves... and often to the places least equipped to bear its burden.

Wildlife Corridors Save Giraffes

By Chris Donaghue

Giraffes are endangered because of habitat loss. It's humans that are encroaching on the land they need to survive. It's roads that cover ground, separate herds, and cause fatalities. But there is one solution to undo some of the damage. Wildlife bridges.

A Wildlife Bridge in Banff National Park. Part of the Yellowstone to Yukon Wildlife Corridor, (Y2Y). [//www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/animals/2019/04/how-wildlife-bridges-over-highways-make-animals-and-people-safer](http://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/animals/2019/04/how-wildlife-bridges-over-highways-make-animals-and-people-safer)

Wildlife bridges are designed for animals not people. They are used together with wildlife tunnels that help connect migrating herds of animals that might otherwise be fragmented from each other. This separation of herds is called bio-fragmentation and leads to the loss of genetic diversity that contributes to extinctions.

The biggest system for this sort of wildlife management is in Banff National Park in Alberta, Canada. The Banff bridges are part of the Yellowstone to Yukon wildlife corridor, (Y2Y). This is an international non-profit organization fostering the largest wildlife corridor in the world. Their efforts have helped take grizzlies, wolves, and other animals off of endangered lists. The Wildlife Corridors in Banff have been called, "Canada's biggest conservation success story," according to Tony Clevenger, of the Western Transportation Institute. He goes on to say that, "...it's the largest highway mitigation complex in the world. You won't find anything anywhere else in the world close to what we have. We have the most overpasses in one localized area and almost half of all the overpasses in North America."

This is real success, and it is exactly what giraffes need to survive. People might not think saving predators like wolves is helpful, but without the



survival of wolves, the predators that they eat will swell in numbers. This loss of species causes even worse problems.

But I don't think that anyone would want to see giraffes disappear! The thought of a giraffe on the bridge is a strange image to have in mind. But the beauty of Banff's bridges is that all animals in the region use the bridges or tunnels. That wasn't known before they were built. But a 100% success rate of getting animals to use these migrational supports shows that they work even better than they were designed to. How many things work better than they were designed to?

Giraffe Range 2020 & Historical Range

(Chris Donaghue is a free-lance writer and contributor to the Twiga Times)

When Maasai go, so do Giraffes



In the natural world, survival depends on balance. Every living thing—plant, animal, and human—plays a role in maintaining the health of the ecosystem. When even one part of that system is removed or disrupted, the effects ripple outward, often with devastating consequences.

The Maasai people are nomadic pastoralists who have lived in harmony with the land for generations. Their way of life is not only sustainable—it is essential. Through rotational grazing, deep knowledge of the terrain, and an innate respect for wildlife, the Maasai have helped maintain the delicate balance of East Africa’s Savannah ecosystem. The lands they roam are among the last strongholds for many species, including giraffes.

Yet in recent years, Western governments and corporate interests have pushed to remove the Maasai from their ancestral lands, often under the guise of “conservation.” These actions are either perpetrated by the misinformed or rooted in a harmful colonial mindset—one that imagines land as something to be controlled, fenced, or exploited,

rather than something to live with. In trying to “save” nature by evicting its most dedicated stewards, these efforts have undermined the very harmony they claim to protect.

For the World Giraffe Alliance, the forced displacement of Indigenous communities like the Maasai is not just a humanitarian crisis—it’s an ecological one. Without the Maasai, the landscape changes. Fire cycles alter. Grasslands deteriorate. Giraffe migration patterns are broken. Poaching and encroachment increase. The fabric of the ecosystem begins to unravel.

We can no longer ignore the truth: the survival of giraffes is tied to the survival of the Maasai. Their fates are intertwined.

At the World Giraffe Alliance, we are committed not only to saving giraffes but also to standing with the Maasai in defense of their land, rights, and traditions. Protecting one means protecting the other. The assault on natural land has become egregious and urgent. We will continue to push back against this infringement, and restore the balance before it’s too late.

Volkswagen Caught in a Carbon Offset Scheme



Volkswagen (VW) has been asked to withdraw from Maasai lands after promising to engage in a carbon credits project.

Carbon credits are part of a program to establish projects which are supposed to reduce, avoid, or remove greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These projects, focused on nature-based solutions or technological advancements, must undergo a certification process to verify the emissions reductions before credits are issued. Essentially, each credit represents one metric ton of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) that has been reduced or removed from the atmosphere. These credits can then be bought and sold on the carbon markets, according to Carbon-chain

Companies can use these credits to offset their own emissions or to meet regulatory requirements.

In a misleading agreement Volkswagen has violated the rights of indigenous Maasai tribes and threatens to wreck their livelihoods.

According to Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA) the “loss of control or use” of vital Maasai grazing grounds has become part of the process. MISA accused VW of making “false and misleading claims” about Maasai participation in decision making about the project.

Many Maasai pastoralists have already been evicted from large parts of their grazing lands for national parks and game reserves, with highly lucrative tourist businesses operating in them. Now a major new carbon-credit generating project by Volkswagen Climate Partner (VWCP) and US-based carbon offset company Soils for the Future Tanzania is taking control of large parts of their remaining lands, and threatening livelihoods by upending long-standing Maasai grazing practices.

Ngisha Sinyok, a Maasai community member from Eluai village explained: “Our livestock is going to be depleted. We will end up not having a single cow. It is not a solution to climate change. It is just a business for people to make money using our environment. It has nothing to do with climate change.”

Another Maasai man, who wished to remain anonymous said: “They use their money to control us.” Maasailand never had a price tag. In Maasailand, there is no privatization. Our land is communal.”

SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL issued a Blood Carbon report revealing that the whole basis for “soil carbon projects” is flawed and unsupported by evidence. In Kenya, the Northern Kenya Grasslands Carbon Project was suspended and put under review by VERRA, the carbon credit verification agency.

The World Giraffe Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to the preservation of giraffes and the land they inhabit. Through global collaboration, we educate, raise awareness, and take action to protect nature and save these gentle giants.

©The World Giraffe Alliance, 2025 Visit: TheWorldGiraffeAlliance.org or Facebook.com/TheWorldGiraffeAlliance/

Volume 10 Contributors: Michele Mattingly, Jeffrey Jackson, Chris Donaghue Photos: Adobe Stock, Creative Commons