

# NEWSLETTER



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## Kenya Unveils Blue Economy Strategy Targeting KSh 350 Billion in Revenue



Hassan Ali Joho, Cabinet Secretary for Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs, and Betsy Muthoni Njagi, Principal Secretary, at the launch of Kenya's National Blue Economy Strategy 2025-2030.

**Kenya on February 26, 2026, launched its National Blue Economy Strategy 2025-2030, outlining plans to make aquatic resources a central driver of economic growth. The framework targets expanded fisheries, maritime trade and ocean-based industries through reforms and increased investment.**

"Kenya has chosen to treat the blue economy not as a slogan but as a pillar of our development strategy," said Hassan Joho at the launch.

The government aims to raise annual earnings from about KSh 40 billion to KSh 350 billion by 2030, while tripling fish production from 163,000 metric tons to over 450,000 metric tons through aquaculture expansion, deep-sea fishing and improved value chains. Officials said the plan aligns with Kenya Vision 2030 and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA).

To support the push, Kenya is accelerating infrastructure development,

including the KSh 2.7 billion Shimoni Fish Port and the Liwatoni Fishing Port in Mombasa, with capacity for up to 24 deep-sea vessels. Five coastal landing sites are under construction across Kwale County, Mombasa County, Kilifi County, Tana River County and Lamu County, alongside nine more around Lake Victoria.

More than KSh 3.2 billion has been disbursed to fisherfolk through Beach Management Units to boost production and livelihoods. Kenya will also host the 11th Our Ocean Conference in Mombasa from June 16 to 18, 2026, focusing on global ocean sustainability.

The strategy emphasises sustainable resource use, technology-driven extraction and blue carbon initiatives, alongside workforce development and new policy tools, including a Marine Spatial Plan, Aquaculture Policy and Tuna Management Strategy. Officials said its success will depend on coordinated implementation, private-sector investment and stronger regulation.

# EAWLS Marks World Seagrass Day 2026 in Kilifi

The East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) marked World Seagrass Day 2026 in Kilifi County, uniting partners, agencies, and coastal communities to highlight the crucial role of seagrasses in supporting ocean biodiversity and fisheries.

Activities included a beach clean-up at Bofa Rocky Beach and a plenary session on seagrass ecosystems. Participating organisations included KMFRI, COMRED, IFAW, Fauna & Flora, Jumuiya ya Kaunti za Pwani (JKP), Kenya Forest Service (KeFS), Pwani University, Beach Management Units (BMUs), and local community groups.

Kenya is home to 12 seagrass species that provide essential feeding and nursery habitats for marine life and help reduce coastal erosion. The nation's seagrass meadows cover approximately 31,000 hectares but are shrinking by about 1% annually due to coastal development, pollution, unsustainable fishing, and overgrazing by sea urchins.

At the plenary, Dr. Lilian Daudi, Senior Research Scientist at KMFRI, described seagrasses as Kenya's "underwater pastures," noting their role in supporting fisheries, stabilising sediments, improving water clarity, protecting coastlines, and sequestering carbon. She highlighted ongoing restoration efforts in Wasini and the importance of documenting local Kiswahili names for seagrass species to strengthen



community knowledge. Community representatives linked seagrass directly to livelihoods, noting that fish such as Pono, Rays, and sea urchins (Mapoe) depend on these habitats. They also raised concerns about illegal "Buruta" fishing driven by poverty. Charles Nyale, Chairperson of the Kilifi County BMU Network, called for awareness campaigns to promote sustainable fishing practices.

The media's role was underscored by Mazera Ndurya, Director of Media for Nature, who encouraged journalists to participate in training and report with insight to shape public understanding and policy. Regulatory frameworks were discussed by Isak Elmi of NEMA, noting existing laws like the EMCA Act and Fisheries Management Act (2016)

## TOP

Participants take part in a beach clean-up exercise at Bofa Beach, Kilifi County, in support of marine ecosystem conservation.

## BELOW

Participants gather for a group photo at Bofa Beach, Kilifi County, marking World Seagrass Day 2026.

but emphasising the lack of a dedicated seagrass protection law. Innocent Wanyonyi of COMRED highlighted the potential of Joint Community Managed Areas (JCMAs) to enable local stewardship, though funding remains a challenge.

The event reinforced EAWLS' leadership in conserving blue carbon ecosystems, spotlighting efforts to protect and restore seagrass meadows and mangroves.



# Empowering Coastal Communities to Protect Blue Carbon Ecosystems

The East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) and partners held two community workshops across Kenya's coast to boost local participation in policymaking for Blue Carbon Ecosystems (BCEs). The first workshop took place in Lamu County from 11-12 February 2026, and the second in Mombasa County from 26-27 February 2026, with participants from Kwale and Kilifi counties—covering four coastal counties in total.

Seventy-one grassroots participants attended, including Beach Management Units (BMUs), Community Forest Associations (CFAs), persons with disabilities, youth and women groups, turtle conservation networks, community conservancies, CBOs, media practitioners, and fisheries officials. Over two days, attendees gained practical skills in policy literacy, issue mapping, alliance building, governance, and tailored advocacy for BCEs. They also learned about the importance of BCEs, relevant policy frameworks, and strategies for conservation advocacy. The workshops were organized in partnership with Fauna & Flora, the



Northern Rangelands Trust, and Jumuiya ya Kaunti za Pwani, reflecting a collaborative approach to coastal conservation.

Kenya's blue carbon ecosystems—including mangroves and seagrasses—are among the most effective natural carbon sinks, storing significant amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>. Beyond climate mitigation, they support fisheries, protect shorelines, and sustain livelihoods along the coast.



**TOP**  
Participants pose for a group photo during the Blue Carbon Ecosystems Workshop in Mombasa.

**MIDDLE**  
Jabes Okumu, EAWLS Programmes and Advocacy Manager, guides participants through a group work session on policy advocacy.

**BELOW**  
Theresa Aoko, EAWLS Policy & Advocacy Officer, leads a group discussion during a capacity-building workshop on Blue Carbon Ecosystems.



Yet, they face threats from habitat degradation, unsustainable resource use, and climate change. By strengthening local knowledge and advocacy, these workshops aim to drive national commitment to BCE conservation, addressing low awareness, fragmented efforts, and coordination challenges.

# Citizen Science Boosts Push for Lake Ol Bolossat's Ramsar Status

The East African Wildlife Society (EAWLS) brought together 19 stakeholders at the Crane Conservation Volunteers (CCV) offices in Nyandarua on January 22, 2026, to review progress on the Citizen Science Initiative at Lake Ol Bolossat. Participants included community scouts, CCV, the County Government of Nyandarua, and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) representatives.

Launched in 2023, the project began training local community scouts in April 2025 to use the SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) app for daily patrols. Scouts collect biodiversity data and report threats such as human-wildlife conflict, encroachment, pollution, and poaching to KWS and county authorities. They also engage local communities on the importance of protecting the lake's ecosystem.

Stakeholders highlighted the initiative's role in fostering collaboration, data-driven conservation, and community ownership. Ann Mukaindo, EAWLS Project Officer, said, "When science, communities, and stakeholders come together, we create real opportunities for



wetlands to thrive." County officials noted that citizen science has strengthened conservation planning and coordination across communities, scouts, and county staff.

Community leaders reported increased local responsibility, with more residents actively reporting littering, illegal dumping, and wildlife disturbances. KWS County Warden Paul Wambugu acknowledged the scouts' vital contributions and supported plans

**TOP**

Ann Mukaindo, EAWLS Programme Officer, facilitates a session on the community scouts initiative at Lake Ol Bolossat.

**BELOW**

Community scouts join Lake Ol Bolossat stakeholders for a group photo, highlighting collaboration in citizen science and wetland conservation.

to expand the initiative. Community scout Miriam Nyokabi noted that her involvement enhanced her understanding of the lake's biodiversity and the pressing threats it faces.



This is part of the project *Unlocking Biodiversity Data to Facilitate the Designation of Lake Ol Bolossat as Kenya's 7th Ramsar Site*. The project was launched in 2023, and the citizen science initiative began in April 2025. Implemented by EAWLS in collaboration with the Wangari Maathai Institute (WMI) and the Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI) with support from the JRS Biodiversity Foundation, the project concludes this year. It aims to combine citizen science, community engagement, and data-driven conservation to secure the lake's ecological future.

# EAWLS Launches 2026–2030 Strategic Planning Process

The East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) has kicked off the development of its 2026–2030 strategic plan, convening board members, staff, and partners to set long-term conservation priorities.

Facilitated by Fauna & Flora experts—Laura Owens, Jack Murphy, and Lenice Ojwang—the sessions leveraged past experiences to shape EAWLS’ future direction and strategic objectives.

Community engagement and partnerships were central themes, with discussions focusing on co-managing ecosystems alongside communities, governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders. Participants explored strategies to conserve and sustainably manage marine, coastal, inland wetland, and forest ecosystems across East Africa, while strengthening governance, policy, and legal frameworks for wildlife protection.

Key priorities identified included public awareness, sustainable livelihoods, and robust partnerships to support long-term biodiversity conservation.

Insights from the workshop will guide the final strategic plan, which is expected in May 2026.



## TOP

The EAWLS Executive Director, Nancy Ogonje facilitates a group discussion during the 2026–2030 strategic planning process.

## MIDDLE

Fauna & Flora expert Laura Owens facilitates a group discussions during the strategic planning workshop.

## BELOW

EAWLS staff pose for a group photo, marking a collaborative milestone in the organisation’s strategic planning process.

# PICTORIALS



## TOP

### Business for Conservation Conference 2026

EAWLS was represented by Ann Mukaindo, Programme Officer (left), and Theresa Aoko, Policy & Advocacy Officer (2<sup>nd</sup> right), at the Business for Conservation Conference held at Radisson Blu Hotel from 4–6 March 2026. The convening brought together over 450 participants from more than four countries to explore innovative approaches to sustainable finance, blue economy solutions, and nature-based investments. Through sessions and a field visit to the EarthAcre Biocredit Site in Athi River, EAWLS gained valuable insights into emerging funding opportunities, community governance models, and strategies for advancing wildlife economies and sustainable conservation financing.

## MIDDLE

### Uganda Wildlife Half Marathon 2026

On 1 March 2026, Moses Esabu EAWLS Membership Development Officer (front center) participated in the Uganda Wildlife Half Marathon under the theme *“Running to Educate Children of Fallen Wildlife Rangers.”* He was joined by key conservation leaders, including Dr. James Musinguzi (front left), Executive Director of the Uganda Wildlife Authority, in a show of solidarity and support for rangers' families.

## BELOW

### Makerere University Engagement

Moses Esabu in Uganda (3<sup>rd</sup> right), joined conservation partners to engage tourism students at Makerere University Business School in a knowledge-sharing session. Discussions centered on the 2026 World Wildlife Day theme, *“Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Livelihoods and Heritage,”* highlighting the link between biodiversity and community well-being.



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***“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children”***  
(Native American saying)