15th ECO WARRIOR AWARDS

‘RETHINKING TOURISM: CELEBRATING CHANGEMAKERS’
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Ecotourism Kenya seeks to continually improve the standards and inclusivity of sustainable tourism. These awards afford us the opportunity to showcase noteworthy efforts in sustainable tourism business. It’s not just about the winners, it’s the work the entrants are putting year in, year after as the major interest is on the creativity and innovation being displayed in the submissions.

Our mandate is to look for creative and sustainable ways of linking communities, conservation and tourism business. We don’t execute this mandate in we have been fortunate to have great partners in many of you who enable us achieve our vision and mission. We have partnered with the government through the Ministry of tourism and Wildlife, various county governments and have worked closely with the support of KTB, Tourism Fund, Tourism Finance Corporation and NEMA. We have also development partners who recognize the key role EK plays in developing the sustainable tourism landscape. We are finalizing a long term EU Green Tour project that developed programs and training tools to embed sustainable tourism value chains in Kenya and we are happy to announce that we have a partnership with UNEP to begin to explore the development of minimum sustainable tourism standards in the East Africa Region. This is crucial as we begin to have a tourism narrative that is developed locally to deal with local realities.

As we celebrate World Tourism Day and the international theme is rethinking tourism, with a focus on re-imagining the sectors growth in terms of size and relevance. Re-imagining will require stepping back, stepping up and stepping out to make a difference.

Stepping back – this is the industry looking at the past activities and actions that have led us to where we are. We need to learn from our mistakes and take an honest look at what we as an industry have done to shoot ourselves in the foot but also to celebrate the good we have done....
because there are many good things out there in the industry. We need to look at how we have misrepresented sustainable tourism either by omission or commission. We need to ask whether we can step back and take a look at what the tourism value chain actually is comprised of and how as one of the 4 main economic pillars of Kenya, we can begin to see growth, employment and job opportunities beyond accommodation, travel and tours, and guiding.

**Stepping up** – This is the action step. This is where we look at developing the solutions and seeking partnerships to co-develop the transformation we seek. We need to look around at the industry and see who has been doing business differently and making a difference. Many EK members embraced a sustainable tourism business model despite there being no incentives to do so and some have been members and doing this for over 20 years! These businesses need to be supported and recognized for their positive contribution to the face of tourism as some of the best brand ambassadors for Kenya’s tourism product offering. Ecotourism Kenya has collaborated with several industry players and donors to bring wider inclusion in the tourism value chain, for accommodation facilities, tour operators and destinations. We are on track to having the first Green Destination registered from Africa coming from Kenya under the Green Destinations Certification program. We start from a point of awareness which can be a major source of exclusion and move on to entry points for involvement using a sustainability model. We don’t want to just develop tourism businesses that understand the mechanics of sustainable tourism, we are more interested in growing a movement with a different business ethic.

**Stepping out** - This is the growth stage, where we scale the movement, where it becomes the norm to have tourism data and statistics that truly reflect the resilience and challenges of the tourism businesses on the ground. At this level, we would have an arsenal of local community projects that can be used as benchmarking examples of what a successful grassroot based business looks like in the tourism industry. To this end, we at Ecotourism Kenya want to look at what happens after an Award ceremony. We are launching the fist edition of ‘Beyond the Trophy’. This will be a year long engagement with the winners of the Eco-Warrior Awards. We want them to tell their story, to inspire and challenge others by showing how they are improving and innovating. They will tell their authentic story, the good the bad and the ugly. We will also work with the Category Sponsors to give visibility
to what initiatives they are carrying out to transform this industry. We will also involve the winners in various knowledge transfer activities to begin to showcase the possibilities within sustainable tourism and the positive change it brings to an industry that can be quite hard on environmental and socio-economic dynamics. We believe that the heart of sustainable tourism is rooted in sharing insights and learning points. Look out for these ‘Beyond the Trophy’ activities and initiatives on social media and mainstream media.

The EK Executive committee of Ecotourism Kenya and I look forward to continuing to interact with all the stakeholders as we step back, step up and step out to make all our businesses work for the good of this country and its inhabitants.

Mr. Richard Ndiga,
Chairman - Ecotourism Kenya
About Ecotourism Kenya

Ecotourism Kenya is a civil society organization directly serving more than 550 members, and reaching out to hundreds more in Kenya and East Africa. Ecotourism Kenya promotes responsible tourism practices within the tourism industry. This entails encouraging the adoption of the best practices in the use of tourism resources, working with local communities and managing wastes and emissions. Through strong social, business and environmental awareness EK has been able to cater for its membership and industry. It has provided relevant guidance for attaining sustainable solutions to challenging issues in tourism development to both communities and tourism practitioners.

Currently, Ecotourism Kenya has rolled out city hotels certification program. This will complement the current ecorating certification program and will target the certification of accommodation facilities in town and city settings. With funding from Tourism Fund (TF) and Green Tour Kenya (EU funded), we have rolled out the program in Nairobi first by training 13 accommodation facilities on the city hotels standard in preparation for their participation in the certification process.

Ecotourism Kenya intends to train more accommodations in 3 regions in the year 2023. The regions targeted are: Mombasa, Nakuru and Kisumu. We look forward to partnering with city hotels in their journey to being more sustainable. Top benefits of the city hotels certification program include:
- Continuous improved efficiency of resources used and reduced negative environmental impact.
- Technical advice (feedback) from the evaluation process that extends beyond the audit process.
- Improved positive Tourism Fund and Green Tour Kenya (EU funded) company visibility and credibility both locally and internationally.
- Use of an internationally recognized logo which acts as an attraction for the conscious traveller.
- Growth of a network of tourism businesses that contribute positively to the local communities within which they are located.
About Ecowarrior Award

After 2 years of a steady recovery of the tourism industry, Ecotourism Kenya resumed the annual Eco Warrior Award now in its 15th Edition. The event is a Kenyan-born award hosted by Ecotourism Kenya that has been celebrated since 2005. The prestigious award is anchored on the desire to inspire the Kenyan Tourism industry towards responsible practices. The Eco Warrior Award returned this year with the theme: ‘Rethinking Tourism: Celebrating Changemakers’.

During the award ceremony EK launched three exciting initiatives:
1. “Upscaling Sustainable Tourism in East Africa” funded by the GO4SDGs initiative of the UN Environment Programme which will develop mandatory national sustainable tourism certification standards, support uptake of innovative private-sector financing mechanisms and build capacity in small youth/women-led enterprises to participate in sustainable tourism industry value chains.
2. ‘Beyond the Trophy’ initiative, which will journey through one year with the winners and sponsors to highlight and promote their sustainable tourism practices.
3. The City Hotels Certification program supported by Tourism Fund and Green Tour Kenya (EU funded) that will eco-certify facilities based in urban settings. The aim remains the promotion of innovative, authentic and inclusive sustainable tourism businesses.

The award ceremony was hosted by Ecotourism Kenya on Thursday 27th October 2022 and was graced by Dr. Paula Kahumbu, Chief Executive Officer - Wildlife Direct as the Chief Guest. Ecotourism Kenya Board members, Ecotourism Kenya Members, Chairpersons of Tourism State Corporations and CEO’s and chairpersons from the private sector among other invited guests, dignitaries and the tourism/conservation fraternity were also in attendance. The winners of the 2022 Eco Warrior Award were recognized and celebrated for being changemakers in the industry, through their consistency, resilience and innovation as demonstrated in their applications and as assessed by the judges led by the chief judge, Ms. Judy Kepha-Gona.
List of Judges

1. Judy Kepha - Gona - STTA (Chief Judge)
2. Dr. John Wandaka – Advisory Judge
3. Jackie Odudoh – KATO
4. Dr. Leah Ng’ang’a – KAHC
5. Marxine Waite - Green Catalyst
6. Job Odhiambo - STTA
7. Duncan Shirandula - KU
8. David Okul - MWCT
9. Angela Njehia - Tierranjani Africa
10. Barbara Schott - Tierranjani Africa
11. Vincent Oluoch-KWCA
CATALYZING COMMUNITY-LED CONSERVATION

Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) works with communities and landowners to secure critical habitat, protect Kenya’s iconic wildlife and empower communities to benefit from well managed natural resources. With the kind support from GEF UNDP Small Grants Program, KWCA facilitates upscaling of best practices, we are pleased to be a sponsor for the community conservancy award category for two years in a row.

Learn more at [www.kwcakenya.com](http://www.kwcakenya.com)

KWCA congratulates all the 2022 Ecowarriors Award Winners
Best Accommodation in Communities and Cultural Preservation

Basecamp Explorer Kenya

which was sponsored by East Africa Wildlife Society (EAWLS).

The award was presented by Ms. Nancy Ogonje, Executive Director, EAWLS and was received by Miriam Obegi, Chief Operating Officer, Basecamp Explorer Kenya.
Best Accommodation in Conservation through Establishment of Conservancies

Basecamp Explorer Kenya

which was sponsored by Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA).

The award was presented by Mr. Dickson Kaelo, Chief Executive Officer, KWCA and was received by Jeremiah Mutisya, Chief Executive Officer, Basecamp Explorer Kenya.
Best Accommodation in Collaboration with Impact Partners

Porini Amboseli Camp

which was sponsored by Tourism Fund (TF)

The award was presented by Ms. Patricia Ondeng, Manager, Corporate Comm & Marketing, TF and was received by Dr. Mohajeet Brar (PhD), Managing Director, Porini Amboseli Camp
The award was presented by Ms. Barbara Schott, Project Advisor, Green Tour Kenya Project and was received by Mr. Dominic Grammaticas, Managing Director, Governors Camp Collection.
Best Tour Operator in Promoting Community Development

Gamewatchers Safaris

which was sponsored by Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO).

The award was presented by Mr. Fred Kaigua, Chief Executive Officer, KATO and was received by Dr. Mohajeet Brar (PhD), Managing Director, Gamewatchers Safaris
Best Community Tourism Initiative

IL Ngwesi Lodge

which was sponsored by Kenya Tourism Board (KTB).

The award was presented by Ms. Fiona Ngesa, Ag. Director, Market Development, KTB.
Special recognition - Best Accommodation in Support for Marine Conservation

Serena Beach Resort & Spa

which was sponsored by Conservation Alliance of Kenya (CAK).

The award was presented by Mr. Steve Itela, Chief Executive Officer Conservation Alliance of Kenya to the Serena Hotels, Africa Management team and Marsden Nzaro, Head of Guest Activities at Serena Beach Resort & Spa.
1st Runner up in Conservation through establishment of Conservancies

Porini Mara Camp

The certificate was presented by Mr. Dickson Kaelo, Chief Executive Officer, KWCA and was received by Dr. Mohajeet Brar (PhD), Managing Director, Porini Mara Camp
1st Runner up in Collaboration with Impact Partners

Sanctuary Olonana

The certificate was presented by Ms. Patricia Ondeng, Manager - Corporate Comm & Marketing, TF and was received by Ms. Purity Wakibiru, Regional Sales Manager - East Africa, Sanctuary Olonana
1st Runner up in Responding to COVID-19 Impacts

Mara Bush Camp

The certificate was presented by Ms. Barbara Schott, Project Advisor, Green Tour Kenya Project and was received by Ms. Gabriele Nowak, Chief Executive Officer, Mara Bush Camp.
1st Runner up in Promoting Community Development

Kampur Travel Diaries

The certificate was presented by Mr. Fred Kaigua, Chief Executive Officer, KATO and was received by Mr. Kamal Vinodrai and Ms. Purvi Shah, Managing Directors, Kampur Travel Diaries.
2nd Runner up in Collaboration with Impact Partners

IL Ngwesi Lodge

The certificate was presented by Ms. Patricia Ondeng, Manager – Corporate Communication & Marketing, Tourism Fund
2nd Runner up in Promoting Community Development

Let’s Go Travel Uniglobe

The certificate was presented by Mr. Fred Kaigua, Chief Executive Officer, KATO and was received by Mr. Felix Ongoma, Product Development, Lets Go Travel Uniglobe
1. &Beyond Kichwa Tembo Tented Camp.
   Sprawled along the Saparingo River on the edge of the Oloololo escarpment. Set on a private concession, with abundant iconic wildlife and panoramic Masai Mara views, Kichwa Tembo Tented Camp dazzles with its contemporary safari feel.

2. Sirikoi Lodge
   Sirikoi is a family-run, award-winning eco-lodge surrounded by the haunting beauty of Lewa Wildlife Conservancy on the Northern slopes of Mt. Kenya.

3. Entumoto Safari Camp
   “Entumoto” means meeting point in the local language Maa, which fits well as the camp is situated where the plains meet the hills and where two valleys come together. It is a private tented safari camp elevated in the hills of the Rift Valley, commanding breath-taking views and sunsets over the Mara plains.

4. Governors’ Camp
   Governors’ Camp is Africa’s first permanent tented camp, remaining in its original site since 1972. The camp occupies the best wildlife viewing location in Maasai Mara Reserve, nestled in the riverine forest along the winding banks of the Mara River, its waters teeming with bird-life, hippos and crocodiles.

5. Governor’s Mugie House

6. Sanctuary Retreats (Tambarare)
   The brand new Sanctuary Tambarare is nestled amongst fever trees in the shadow of Mount Kenya. This is a chance to experience the awesome traditional tents with lashings of luxury; privacy in the heart of the bush; stunning social areas; fine food and refreshing drinks; and amazing wildlife adventures.

7. Asilia – Encounter Mara
   In the Mara Naboisho Conservancy. - Situated on the edge of the savannah under the
shade of acacia trees, Encounter Mara is a 10-tent camp within the Mara Naboisho Conservancy, bordering the famed Masai Mara reserve in southwest Kenya.

8. **Mara Bush Camp**
Mara Bush Camp is situated along the Olare Orok River in the famous Masai Mara, within the “Big Cat Territory” and close to various migration crossing points. The camp is fortunate to be surrounded by wildlife throughout the year!

9. **Medina Palms**
Located on the North coast of Kenya is the serene, pristine and exquisite Medina Palms.

10. **Bahari Beach Hotel.**
Bahari Beach Hotel is located opposite Nyali’s palm-lined beach in Mombasa. The Hotel offers a restaurant serving a variety of cuisines, a fitness centre and a variety of activities. Guests can relax on the beach.

11. **Turtle Bay Beach Resort Watamu**
Turtle Bay is situated on 200 meters of beach on the edge of the internationally acclaimed Watamu National Marine Park, one of the best in Kenya. The white sand beaches are ideal for sun lovers who crave tranquility on Kenya’s historic and pristine shores.

12. **Porini Camps**
Through Gamewatchers Safaris, the eco-friendly safari camps are small and authentic with rustic charm combined with creature comforts in all Kenya camps. Each Kenya camp is situated within a private wildlife conservancy for an intimate and private safari holiday experience away from hordes of minibuses and crowds of tourists.

13. **Ashnil Aruba Lodge**
Ashnil Aruba Lodge lies in the heart of Tsavo East National Park in Kenya. The Lodge features 46 rooms and 6 tents. Its location is superb, just a couple of hours from the coast of Mombasa, 5 hours leisurely drive from Nairobi and is located on the banks of Aruba Dam which was built in 1952 as a sport fishing recreational point in the park.

14. **Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge**
Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge is located in Kenya’s Tsavo West National Park, a 30-minute drive from the main Mtito Andei Gate. The lodge allows you to experience the breathtaking beauty and exhilarating adventures of the “Land of Lions and Lava” with an array of activities designed to stir your soul.
15. **Mara Engai Lodge**

16. **Kilima Camp Maasai Mara**
   Under velvety skies on the edge of the Oloololo escarpment in the Mara sits Kilima Camp with an eagle’s eye view over the best wildlife show on earth.

17. **Safarilink Aviation**
   Safarilink Aviation is a regional premier safari airline of Kenya and its hub airport is located at Wilson Airport in Nairobi, Kenya. The airline now provides daily scheduled services to 22 destinations and during the busiest periods of the year carries over 14,000 passengers per month.

18. **Emboo River,**
   Hidden in a forest along a river, Emboo River is positioned in the heart of Kenya’s Maasai Mara. It is the perfect spot to explore this spectacular ecosystem and spot all its wildlife. There are animals roaming all around the lodge and sometimes even within Emboo River. Emboo River is the first lodge to go all in on sustainability. Through innovation and technology, Emboo River applies a unique “Closed Loop System” and creates carbon negative safaris.
Rediscover the Magic

Listen to nature’s songs in serene spots. Visit any of the Kenyan Signature Experiences and make treasured memories.