

Drought kills hundreds of animals in Kenyan wildlife preserves

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?Hundreds of animals have died in Kenyan wildlife preserves during East Africa's worst drought in decades.?

Nairobi, November 7 (RHC)-- Hundreds of animals, including elephants and endangered Grevy's zebras, have died in Kenyan wildlife preserves during East Africa's worst drought in decades, according to a report released over the weekend. The Kenya Wildlife Service and other bodies counted the deaths of 512 wildebeests, 381 common zebras, 205 elephants, 51 buffalos, 49 Grevy's zebras and 12 giraffes in the past nine months, the report states.

Parts of Kenya have experienced little to no rain over four consecutive seasons in the past two years, which seriously impacted people and animals, including livestock. Elephants, for example, drink 240 litres (63.40 gallons) of water per day, according to Jim Justus Nyamu, executive director of the Elephant Neighbours Center.

Some of the worst-affected ecosystems are in some of Kenya's most-visited national parks, reserves and conservancies, including the Amboseli, Laikipia-Samburu and Tsavo areas, according to the report's authors.

They called for an urgent aerial census of wildlife in Amboseli to get a better idea of the drought's impact on wild animals as well as the immediate provision of water and salt licks in the three most impacted regions and increasing the amounts of hay and forage provided for Grevy's zebras in northern regions.

The Kenya Wildlife Service and the Kenyan government have since made increased efforts to mitigate the crisis.

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