

CHANGING CLIMATE DESTROYS THE WILDLIFE IN KENYA



This year, 205 elephants died in Kenya because of the shortage of water. Drought creates problems not only for the wildlife in Kenya but for many other African animal species.

The climate changes that affect Africa, being also at the heart of COP27, do not concern only human beings. **A prolonged and abnormal drought in Kenya killed 205 elephants and several other wildlife between February and October 2022.** The African nation and much of East Africa are experiencing the worst drought in 40 years, Kenyan Tourism Minister Peninah Malonza said. The progress made in safeguarding elephants thanks to the restriction on illegal hunting is being nullified by the absence of rain because of the climate changes in recent years.

Rains Are Coming But They Are Not Sufficient

Although sporadic rains are expected in the Horn of Africa region as the winter season approaches, Kenya's Meteorological Department expects below-average rainfall for much of the next few months, raising fears that the threat to the wildlife in Kenya is not over.

A short rainy season usually occurs in Kenya between November and December, but the warm temperatures of the last few months do not allow for a sufficient amount of water to meet the needs of local animals. Fourteen species were affected by the severe drought: in addition to the 205 dead elephants, 512 wildebeest, 381 common zebras, 12 giraffes and 51 buffaloes died in the same period, many of which lived in Kenyan national parks which are very important tourist attraction for the country. There have also been 49 deaths of Grevy's zebra, a rare and endangered species.

Wildlife Crisis in Kenya

Although considering the losses is the first step, the numbers published by the Kenyan authorities are far from being complete, the Ministry of Tourism warned in a report, given that other carnivorous animals may have devoured some carcasses.

"So, there is the possibility of greater mortality", the ministerial report declares. The areas north and south of the nation with Nairobi as its capital are the hardest hit by drought and they are also home of most of Kenya's elephant population.

Former Kenya tourism secretary Najib Balala said that global warming now kills 20 times more elephants than poaching. Prolonged drought across the Horn of Africa has left some 18 million people without food and water in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, according to the reports from the World Food Program. The work at COP27 aims to answer the problems caused by climate changes in the region, but now the crisis affecting animal species adds to the difficulties to be faced on the African continent.

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