

WHV – Conservation, culture and wildlife

The African Great Rift Valley - The Maasai Mara, Kenya

Site inscribed on a Tentative List since 2010

05/07/2016 – 26/07/2016



The National Reserve is situated in Rift Valley Province, Narok and Transmara Districts. The site adjoins the Serengeti National Park along the Kenya-Tanzania border, and is considered part of the same ecosystem. The National Reserve is Kenya's most-visited protected area, world famous for its high density of herbivores and predators, and the annual migrations of Wildebeest, *Connochaetes taurinus*. It is characterized by a wide valley and a towering escarpment in the hazy distance. Habitats in the Maasai Mara are varied, including open rolling grassland, riverine forest, Acacia woodland, swamps, non-deciduous thickets, boulder-strewn escarpments, and Acacia, Croton and *Tarchonanthus* scrub.

Project objectives: The project aims to raise awareness towards the local communities the "Maasai", who live within and around the property, about the urgent need to safeguard and protect their cultural and natural heritage against bad cultural practices and poachers who continue to threat the survival of the local biodiversity. The vision is to work towards a sustainable natural environment in which humans live in harmony with nature. Besides, the project will be an immersion in the Maasai culture and customs.

Project activities: First, the volunteers will plant endemic trees to improve the ecosystem of the property. They will have the chance to take part in educational activities about conservation in Maasai schools, where they will be able to learn the local dances and ways of life in order to promote the preservation of the site and improve the animals' habitats. With the help of local Maasai instructors, they will learn how to make traditional necklaces and they will see how the *manyattas*, the Maasai houses, are built, creating interactive activities with the local community.

Partners: Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO Youth Forum Kenya, UNESCO Eastern Africa Regional office, Maasai Buffalo Dancers, County Government of Narok, Talek police station, and Maasai Mara Game Reserve.

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