

**Charity number: 1179460**



**Southern Tanzania Elephant Trust**  
**Annual Report and Accounts for the Year ended**  
**31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

**Charity Name:** Southern Tanzania Elephant Trust

**Registered Charity Number:** 1179460

**Principal Address:**

30 Barn Road  
Stirling  
FK8 1EP  
United Kingdom

**Trustees Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

Southern Tanzania Elephant Trust present their annual report and audited accounts for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 through 31 December 2024 and confirm they comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, the Trust Deed and the Charities SORP (FRS 102).

**Charity Trustees**

Helen Pearson  
Nathaniel Comber  
Nick McWilliam

**Name and Address of Independent Examiner**

Community360  
Winsley's House, High Street, Colchester  
Essex  
Essex  
CO1 1UG

**Governing document**

The Charity was registered as a Trust on the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2018 and is governed by a Trust Deed dated 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018.

**Trustee selection method**

The first Trustees of the Charity were appointed for a term of three years at the time of registering the Charity. The Trustees were reappointed for another three-year term on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021, and again on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2024. The current trustees may appoint new trustees by approaching individuals whom the trustees believe would bring necessary skills, knowledge, and experience to the Organization. If the individual is willing to put themselves forward, their appointment is put to the current Trustees for approval.

**Objects of the Charity**

The objects of the charity are to conserve and protect the African elephant in Tanzania and other African wildlife and habitats in Tanzania for the public benefit.

The trustees identified Southern Tanzania Elephant (STEP) in Tanzania as the organisation whose work the Trust is aiming to support, in accordance with the Trusts' objects, to facilitate the delivery of the UK Charity's objectives.

**Vision**

Creating a long and peaceful future for elephants in southern Tanzania and for the ecosystems and communities on which they inter-depend.

**Mission**

To secure a future for elephants in southern Tanzania by, directly and through partnerships, supporting elephant protection, enhancing coexistence between communities and elephants, strengthening community livelihoods, conducting research and monitoring, and awareness-raising.

## **Principal Activities**

Southern Tanzania is a globally important region for elephant conservation, with elephant populations numbering some 30,000 individuals in 2015, and approximately 70,000 in 2009 before devastating

declines from poaching for the ivory trade (Thouless et al. 2016). The region holds 35% of East Africa's elephants, and 7% of Africa's elephants (Thouless et al. 2016). The Ruaha-Rungwa and Udzungwa-Selous ecosystems of southern Tanzania are some of the few elephant strongholds and wilderness areas for large mammals left in the world. The ecosystems and elephant populations of southern Tanzania are a global treasure, requiring global support for their conservation. Elephant conservation in the region faces two main challenges:

**Securing elephant populations and habitat:** The combined efforts of the Tanzanian government, civil society and international community have greatly reduced the threat of poaching to elephants compared to previous years. However, ongoing protection efforts are needed to secure these important gains and ensure long-term recovery of southern Tanzania's elephant populations. In addition, protecting the integrity of the ecosystems that comprise elephant range is vital to the long-term survival of the elephant populations of this region.

**Human-elephant coexistence:** Farms and settlements adjacent to protected areas and in elephant corridors and dispersal areas are at risk of elephant damage, as some elephants learn to use crops as a 'high-risk, high-reward' food source. As more land comes under cultivation, elephant habitat and corridors outside of protected areas are also increasingly at risk. Every year people are killed by elephants, often because of accidental encounters. This is a complex challenge that requires long-term vision and a multi-faceted approach.

We work to conserve the elephant metapopulation of southern Tanzania through a landscape level approach. The charity's principal activities include:

1. **Supporting elephant protection in critical habitats:** supporting ground and air patrols and providing technical support to under-resourced protected areas in important elephant range, as well as building ranger capacity to map and analyse patrols and outcomes and monitor spatial and temporal trends in illegal activities.
2. **Enhancing human-elephant coexistence in communities living with elephants:** working with farmers' groups to protect farms and improve livelihoods through beehive fence projects which deter elephants from farmland and produce elephant-friendly honey; trialling novel crop protection strategies with farmers; providing farmers with access to financial services and improving household resilience through membership and training in Village Savings and Loans Associations; restoration of a critical wildlife corridor between the Udzungwa and Selous ecosystems; and awareness-raising and education activities.
3. **Conducting elephant research to inform conservation efforts:** monitoring elephants in the Ruaha-Rungwa and Udzungwa-Selous ecosystem; assessing spatial and temporal trends in human-elephant interactions and evaluating solutions; and monitoring of wildlife corridors.

## Impact for the Year End 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

The main activities during the year were increasing protection for elephants through support to wildlife rangers (Section 1), increasing community capacity for human-elephant coexistence through farm-based interventions, supporting farmer livelihoods activities, education and awareness-raising, and corridor restoration (Section 2), and research and monitoring of elephants and human-elephant interactions (Section 3). Capacity building was carried out in a number of ways through these activities.

All activities in Tanzania are carried out by our affiliate organization in Tanzania, Southern Tanzania Elephant (abbreviated and referred to from here on as STEP), a non-governmental organization registered on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019 under the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Act, 2002 Section 12(2) of Act No. 24 of 2002, with registration number I-NGO/R2/00077. The Tanzanian affiliate Organization was previously registered as a company limited by guarantee having no share capital (i.e. a not-for-profit company). With the passing of The Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) (No.3) Act, 2019 on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019, all companies limited by guarantee having no share capital were required to register under the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Act, 2002 by August 30<sup>th</sup> 2019.

The Board of Trustees of Southern Tanzania Elephant Trust in the UK (from here on referred to as STET UK) and the Board of STEP Tanzania are responsible for overall management of the organization, including setting and reviewing strategic plans and budgets, financial matters, reviewing the performance of management, and ensuring adherence to internal control policies and sound governance. and for compliance with sound governance principles. The organization is committed to the principles of effective governance, integrity, transparency and accountability. STET UK and STEP Tanzania agree on the yearly strategy and budget together. The Trustees of STET UK exercise their discretion when selecting which activities to support by having regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance as well as the following internal criteria:

1) The activity contributes to the conservation of the African elephant in Tanzania through any of the following:

- a. Increasing resources and/or capacity for law enforcement of elephant range
- b. Increasing public awareness of the value of elephants and elephant conservation
- c. Increasing the capacity of rural communities to coexist with elephants
- d. Improving the welfare of rural communities who coexist with elephants
- e. Increasing the availability of research and scientific outputs to inform elephant conservation

(2) It has been demonstrated that the activity provides good value for money

STET UK and STEP Tanzania maintain close contact with regards to implementation of activities. Each Board meets at a minimum twice per year.

## **Achievements and Performance**

### **1. Supporting elephant protection in critical habitats**

The goal of this programmatic area is to enhance protection efforts of rangers and village game scouts through support for ground and air patrols, provision of training and resources, and data optimization. Targeted support is provided to three protected areas selected for their importance to elephants, their biodiversity value, and funding and resource gaps assessed with respective wildlife management authorities. These include MBOMIPA Wildlife Management Area (WMA), a community-managed wildlife area; Uzungwa Scarp Nature Forest Reserve (USNFR), a forest reserve managed by Tanzania Forestry Services Agency (TFS); and Rungwa-Kizigo-Muhesi Game Reserves (RKM GR), managed by Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA). The means by which we provide support include:

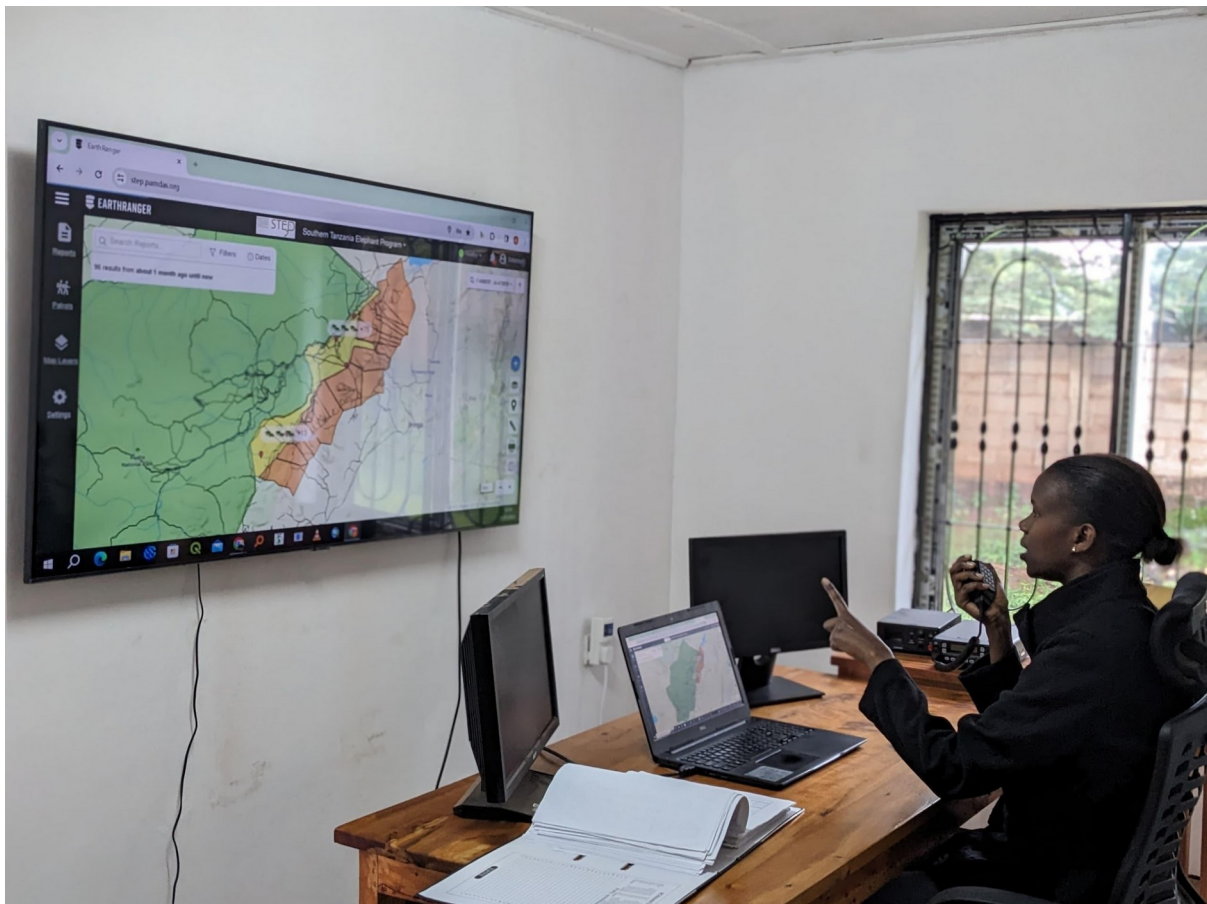
- Building the capacity of rangers and Village Game Scouts through training and equipment
- Supporting ground and air patrols
- Mapping and analysing patrol outcomes for strategic patrol planning

#### **1.1 MBOMIPA Protection Project**

STEP first began to work with the community-owned MBOMIPA Wildlife Management Area in 2018. MBOMIPA WMA is a critical part of the Ruaha-Rungwa ecosystem and especially important for elephants, as well as other endangered species such as wild dogs and lions. 2024 marked the seventh year of collaboration between STEP and MBOMIPA WMA. STEP supported teams of Village Game Scouts (VGS) to conduct foot patrols each by supplying scout wages and providing fuel and food supplies. In 2024, scouts covered 7,835 km of patrols on foot and 4,480 km by vehicle. All patrols were logged using GPS units with patrol data collected using a mobile app, with patrol coverage and outcomes mapped every month and analysed by STEP to enhance patrol effectiveness. STEP also continued with maintenance and operation of a field vehicle for the WMA to enable monthly rotation of VGS and vehicle patrols, and with provision of all necessary fuel. No elephants were poached inside the WMA in 2024, maintaining the trend from 2023.

One of the costs faced by communities living alongside the WMA is crop damage from elephants. To address this challenge, STEP supported the WMA to develop a human-elephant conflict (HEC)

response unit comprising 12 trained village game scouts in 2023. The goal of this unit is to reduce the costs associated with living alongside wildlife and to improve community perceptions of the WMA. MBOMIPA's HEC response unit continued to operate in 2024 with our support, responding to 95 human-elephant conflict incidents in 12 villages, almost double the number of responses made in 2023. The unit successfully prevented elephants from entering crop fields in 22% of cases responded to, and moved elephants out of crop fields in the remaining 78% of cases. These efforts are producing positive outcomes for both people and elephants. While 24% of elephant mortalities since 2018 have been due to conflict, no conflict-related killings occurred in 2024, reflecting the success of these mitigation measures.



*Operations in MBOMIPA WMA are monitored in real-time using EarthRanger*

## **1.2 Udzungwa Forest Protection Projects**

The Udzungwa Mountains landscape, including the Uzungwa Scarp Forest Nature Reserve (USFNR), Udzungwa Mountains National Park (UMNP), and the Kilombero Nature Forest Reserve (KNFR), is a globally recognised biodiversity hotspot and one of Tanzania's most critical water catchments. These areas harbour exceptional biological richness, supporting Udzungwa endemics and globally threatened vertebrate species (Rovero et al., 2014), including the Sanje mangabey, Udzungwa red colobus, Abbott's duiker, more than 20 endemic and 14 threatened reptiles (Lyakurwa et al., 2019), and 19 endemic and threatened amphibians. Despite the area's ecological importance, it has long been threatened by anthropogenic pressures including wildfire, logging, agricultural encroachment, and illegal hunting (Harrison, 2006; Topp-Jørgensen et al., 2009). Severe population declines have been recorded for several species due to hunting and trapping (Rovero et al., 2015), especially in USFNR. Recognising this urgency, STEP has supported the protection of USFNR since 2017 in collaboration with Wild Planet Trust (formerly Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust), Bristol Zoo, Chester Zoo, and Association Mazingira. In 2021, with funding from the Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation through the Natural History Museum of Denmark, this work was extended under the

Kilombero Forest Protection Project (KFPP) to include UMNP and KNFR. These projects fund ground patrols, ranger training, and the provision of essential equipment.

In 2024, significant progress was made under these forest protection programmes. Under the Uzungwa Scarp Protection Project, patrol teams covered 751 km on foot and logged 764 patrol hours, resulting in the removal of 698 snares, closure of 10 poachers' camps, dismantling of 2 illegal farms and 10 logging sites, and the arrest of 3 offenders. STEP also procured vital field gear for Village Game Scouts and rangers, including tents, sleeping equipment, solar lamps, head torches, power banks, rain gear, and cooking utensils. Under the Kilombero Forest Protection Project, patrol teams conducted 544 km of foot patrols, removing 270 snares, closing 20 poachers' camps, dismantling 1 charcoal kiln, clearing 6 illegal farms, and halting 7 logging activities. Equipment support included tents, rucksacks, hydration packs, tarpaulins, handcuffs, chargers, and rechargeable batteries. STEP also assisted in the development of strategic patrol plans, strengthening databases, and reporting systems.

Conservation education was also a key component in 2024. Awareness programmes in six schools (three primary and three secondary) reached 256 participants (223 students, 15 teachers, 13 Village Natural Resource Committee members, and 5 village leaders). Activities included interactive forest hikes, distribution of 80 conservation T-shirts carrying the message "Tutunze Mazingira yakutunze" ("Care for the environment and it will care for you"), 90 calendars, 18 dustbins for school waste management and recycling, 140 tree seedlings, and 400 exercise books.



*Patrol team in Kilombero Nature Forest Reserve*

### **1.3 Rungwa-Kizigo-Muhesi Game Reserves, Ruaha National Park and Lunda-Nkwambi Game Controlled Area**

2024 marked the 11th year of STEP's aerial program, which has provided >1,250 hours of aerial support to the Ruaha-Rungwa ecosystem since 2014. In 2024, STEP provided 223 hours of aerial support to MBOMIPA Wildlife Management Area, Rungwa, Kizigo, and Muhesi Game Reserves and Ruaha National Park. We also upgraded the aircraft hangar and pilot camp in MBOMIPA WMA, which serves as the base for our aerial operations.

Flights are always done in collaboration with rangers and village game scouts ready to respond to threats observed by the aircraft. In 2024, aerial patrols detected 35 illegal timber harvesting sites, four illegal mining sites, and three charcoal production sites. Follow-up by rangers and village game scouts resulted in authorities apprehending 19 individuals and dismantling 23 poaching camps.

Observations from aerial patrols also help us understand trends in threats to the ecosystem. In 2024, we continued to see a decline in encounter rates of timber cutting sites, poaching camps and elephant

carcasses observed from the air compared to 2022 and 2023, indicating that protection efforts are having a positive impact.



*STEP's light aircraft*

#### **1.4 Capacity building**

As part of the Forest Protection Projects, STEP provided monthly technical support to Reserve staff and VGS in collection, storage, analysis, mapping, and reporting of patrol data. This support helps the Reserve management to plan patrols in a strategic manner and to produce monthly patrol reports and annual reports. Patrol teams were also supported with the application of conservation technologies including Survey 123 Data Collector and GIS for patrol data analysis.

In 2024, MBOMIPA WMA recruited 25 new VGS (9 women), for whom STEP facilitated comprehensive training on their roles, responsibilities, human rights, and code of conduct.

#### **2. Enhancing human-elephant coexistence in communities living with elephants**

The goal of this programmatic area is to enhance coexistence between people and elephants in communities living in and alongside elephant range. We support communities to coexist with elephants in two project areas, the Kilombero Valley in Morogoro region, and the western boundary of Rungwa-Kizigo-Muhesi Game Reserves in Singida region. These areas are hotspots of elephant impact, with regular movement of elephants onto village land and frequent crop damage. The means by which we build capacity for coexistence include:

- Supporting farmers to implement farm-based mitigation methods to reduce crop losses to elephants.
- Conducting education and awareness-raising events in villages affected by human-elephant conflict to explain elephant behaviour, provide context for human-elephant interactions and provide advice on how to stay safe around elephants.
- Collect data on elephant movements and use this to inform education and trials of crop protection measures.
- Work with Village Governments to understand the drivers of HEC and work towards establishing Land Use Plans that facilitate human-elephant coexistence.

- Explore and support establishment of corridors to facilitate safe elephant movement.
- Immersive hands-on training and development opportunities for students and early career Tanzanian conservationists, many of whom go on to work for other organizations.

## **2.1 Kilombero Valley**

The Kilombero Valley, in the Udzungwa-Selous ecosystem, is a densely populated, fertile matrix of villages, agriculture, and grazing land. Elephants regularly attempt to cross the short distance of ~10km across the valley, between Udzungwa Mountains National Park and Magombera Forest Reserve on the edge of Nyerere National Park (formerly Selous Game Reserve). Less than 50 years ago, there was continuous forest across the valley: today, the forest has been fragmented by rapid land conversion due to agriculture. The route is a critical connection between the western and southern elephant metapopulations of Tanzania (over 30,000 individuals) and the only link that can be maintained and restored. Intensive agriculture in the valley has created a hard edge between forest and farmland, making farms vulnerable to elephant crop damage. The multi-faceted land use challenges of the Valley have informed STEP's approach to building human-elephant coexistence in the Kilombero Valley through limiting elephant movement into farmland and settlement through farm-based interventions, facilitating safe elephant movement through a designated wildlife corridor, and supporting income diversification and awareness-raising events.

### *2.1.1 Farm-based interventions, Village Savings and Loans Associations, and Awareness-Raising*

To date, STEP has supported seven farmers groups registered as Community-Based Organizations to establish seven beekeeping projects in the Kilombero Valley to protect agricultural fields from elephants. In addition to reducing elephant movement into farmland and settlement, beehive fences generate revenue for farmers' groups through the sale of honey. Economic resilience is an important factor in building human-elephant coexistence. If a household's economic resources are depleted by an incident of crop raiding by an elephant, it is unlikely that members of the household will be willing to tolerate the presence of that elephant. STEP continued to support its existing groups with field visits, in depth follow up and refresher training. STEP also continued to operate the Udzungwa Honey Collection Centre, of which all STEP beekeeping groups are members, to enable the processing and packaging of honey generated by beehive fences. Farmers harvested 281.5 litres of honey in 2024, which was processed and packed at the Honey Collection Centre.

STEP also works with farmers' groups to establish and support the operation of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), community-based financial systems in which members have access to credit and financial assistance through weekly contributions. Members can take loans from VSLAs and have access to emergency financial relief. Our monitoring has shown that VSLAs help members diversify their livelihoods, increase their incomes, and improve household resilience to elephant crop damage. In 2024, STEP supported the formation of six new VSLA groups with a total of 144 farmers (57% women). This brought the total number of VSLA groups to 21, with 554 members (62% women).

A total of 711 loans were taken out by members in 21 VSLA groups with a total value of TZS 167,482,500. Loans were used for agriculture, small businesses such as expanding and opening small shops, and small street food restaurants, and support with school fees. Such access to credit is highly valued by VLSA members in our project area.



*Financial literacy training for VSLA members in the Kilombero Valley*

### *2.1.2 Awareness-Raising and Education*

STEP supported a total of 12 film nights in 2024, reaching 6,463 adults and 3,320 children – a total of 9,783 community members engaged overall. Local Elephant Monitors also reached 947 farmers with one-to-one training. During these film nights and trainings, the STEP team and LEMs share information about human-elephant coexistence, methods to stay safe when you come across an elephant, benefits of elephants, the life of elephants, and mitigation strategies to reduce human-elephant conflict. STEP also taught a 6-module course on human-elephant coexistence in 31 schools, reaching over 3,200 students. The modules covered elephant behaviour, ecology, and biology, human-elephant coexistence, and wildlife connectivity. STEP also expanded its park visit program for primary and secondary students to national parks as an experiential supplement to educational outreach. 400 students visited Udzungwa Mountains National Park and Mikumi National Park, learned about elephants' lives in the wild and had the opportunity to experience Tanzania's rich natural heritage. STEP also facilitated student-led awareness-raising events with 20 schools reaching 9,692 students and a secondary school elephant-themed football and netball tournament reaching 8,900 students. In 2024, we held the second Tembo Cup – a conservation football tournament - reaching 35,075 community members in 15 villages. The tournament involved school student trainings and small group discussions with match spectators around football grounds.



*Primary school students reached through STEP's conservation education program*

### 2.1.3 Corridor Restoration

2024 was another productive year towards our long-term vision of restoring the Nyerere-Udzungwa Wildlife Corridor (previously known as the Kilombero Elephant Corridor) between the Udzungwa Mountains and Nyerere National Parks via the Magombera Nature Forest Reserve. The goal is to peacefully manage the regular movements that elephants make persistently across the Kilombero Valley, even though their once forested routes have been turned into farmland over the last 50 years. This corridor facilitates connectivity between Tanzania's southern and western elephant populations, a vitally important stronghold for East Africa's population. In Tanzania's National Corridor Assessment and Action Plan, this corridor is ranked 24<sup>th</sup> out of 61 corridors nationally in 'conservation value', and 2nd out of 61 corridors in 'vulnerability'.

STEP has been facilitating this multi-stakeholder restoration project since 2018, involving communities, civil society, the government, and the private sector to restore this ecological connectivity and enhance food and personal security for the local farming population. At the heart of the project are the communities of the three villages of Sole, Mang'ula A, and Kanyenja, who have agreed to setting aside ~7% of village land to enable the corridor.

In 2024, a third round of valuation and compensation by the Government of Tanzania of the remaining plots inside the corridor was carried out, bringing the total number of households fully compensated to 368. We also supported community-led protection of the corridor by facilitating 19 village game scouts (VGS) from the corridor villages to conduct patrols and community outreach. All scouts have received training in code of conduct, human rights, bushwalking, data collection, and safety around dangerous wildlife. Also in 2024, we launched a new on-site corridor education program, allowing community members to learn about key activities like electric fence installation, camera trapping, and habitat restoration while fostering discussions on long-term corridor management and human-wildlife conflict mitigation. Led by trained VGS, the initiative encourages community involvement and ownership. Construction of 10 km of electric fencing along the corridor boundary was completed, and through our partnership with Reforest Africa, 60,000 trees were planted in the corridor for habitat restoration.

For many years, STEP has been carrying out consultations and awareness raising in five villages surrounding the corridor, and we saw the results when, on July 19, 2024, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) issued the Government's notice of intent to designate the wildlife corridor, the first such notice to be announced under the Wildlife Corridor Regulations of 2018. Under the Regulations, there follows a 90-days consultation period for stakeholders to submit claims and

objections to the Government. STEP facilitated village meetings and widespread announcements throughout the area to ensure that everyone in the community was aware of this process. At the end of the 90 days, no objections had been raised and District officials, on behalf of the communities, have formally requested the Ministry to proceed with designation of the Corridor. Formal designation of the corridor was completed in April 2025.



*Elephants inside the Nyerere-Udzungwa Wildlife Corridor*

## 2.2 Rungwa-Kizigo-Muhesi

Bordering Ruaha National Park to the north and west, Rungwa-Kizigo-Muhesi Game Reserves comprise 15,200 km<sup>2</sup> of wildlife habitat. Historically an elephant stronghold within East Africa, the area lost 60% of its elephants between 2009 and 2015 to poaching (Thouless et al. 2016). Between 2015 and 2018, the elephant population remained stable. However, human-elephant conflict is a rapidly emerging threat to elephants in the area. Human settlement along protected boundaries, in conjunction with a lack of land use planning, has led to more frequent human-elephant interactions. STEP works to mitigate human-elephant conflict through a combination of farm-based interventions, establishment of Village Savings and Loans Associations, and awareness-raising and education activities.

### 2.2.1 Livelihoods activities and Village Savings and Loans Associations

2024 saw the continued growth of our VSLA work with communities around Rungwa-Kizigo-Muhesi Game Reserves. STEP provided technical assistance to 48 existing Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) across the Ruaha-Rungwa landscape, benefiting 1,035 community members (51% women). STEP also supported the formation of 12 new VSLAs in this landscape, with a total of 244 farmers (57% women). In 2024, these VSLAs issued a total of 1,794 loans, amounting to a total value of TZS 309,651,332. These loans were used for various purposes, including small-scale business ventures, agricultural activities, and covering educational expenses such as school fees.

In March 2025, STEP conducted a household survey to assess the impact of VSLAs on food security, resilience, ability to meet basic needs, and perceptions of elephants and conservation in villages adjacent to Kizigo and Muhesi Game Reserves and MBOMIPA WMA.

In Kizigo and Muhesi villages, all indicators of food security were better among VSLA members than non-members. For instance, the percentage of households that had experienced a lack of food due to financial and other resource constraints in the previous 12 months was 5% for VSLA members and 15% for non-VSLA members. The average household dietary diversity score was 38.6 VSLA

members and 34.7 for non-members, a difference of 11%. In villages adjacent to MBOMIPA WMA, we compared indicators of food security for VSLA members and non-members in 2023 and 2025, to measure longitudinal change. In MBOMIPA, indicators of food security improved for both VSLA members and non-members between 2023 and 2025 (this may reflect annual or seasonal variation), however, improvements were larger for VSLA members than non-members. For instance, the percentage of households that had experienced a lack of food due to financial and other resource constraints in the previous 12 months declined from 50% to 4% for VSLA members between baseline and endline, and from 41% to 16% for non-VSLA members. The average household dietary diversity score increased from 38.4 to 42.4 (10% increase) for VSLA members, but remained stable for non-members (35.9 in 2023, 35.3 in 2025).

With regards to household resilience, in villages adjacent to Kizigo and Muhesi GRs, there was no difference between VSLA members (67%) and non-members (70%) in the percentage that had experienced financial shocks in the previous 12 months. However, VSLA members were less likely to have sold their crops to cope with the shock (18%) than non-members (31%). Similarly, VSLA members were less likely to have sold livestock to cope with the shock (9%) than non-members (16%). Of VSLA members that had experienced a financial shock in the previous 12 months, 44% took a loan from the VSLA to cope with the shock. In MBOMIPA, there was a small difference between VSLA members (70%) and non-members (75%) in the percentage that had experienced financial shocks in the previous 12 months. VSLA members in MBOMIPA were slightly less likely to have sold their crops to cope with the shock (26%) than non-members (34%), however there was no difference in the percentage that had sold livestock to cope with the shock (7% for VSLA members, 6% for non-members). Of VSLA members that had experienced a financial shock in the previous 12 months, 40% took a loan from the VSLA to cope with the shock.

We also measured contribution to poverty reduction through a Basic Necessities Survey (BNS). BNS is a poverty assessment tool based on a community-articulated assessment of 'basic needs'. We calculated a BNS score by summing, across all items that 90% or more of community members agreed were necessary household items/services, the proportion of households that owned the item. A higher score indicates that a higher proportion of household items are met. In Kizigo and Muhesi villages, the BNS score for VSLA members was 15.2 compared to 13.8 for non-members, a 10% difference. For VSLA members around MBOMIPA WMA, the BNS score increased by 22.8% from 18.3 in 2023 to 22.4 in 2025. During the same period, the BNS score for adjacent households that were not VSLA members increased by only 2.5% from 16.6 to 17.0.

The survey also found a positive association between VSLA membership and perceptions of protected areas and elephants. In Kizigo and Muhesi villages, tolerance for elephants was higher among VSLA members than non-members (77% of VSLA members wished to see an increase in the elephant population in the Game Reserves, compared to 62% for non-members). VSLA membership and outreach also positively influenced whether community members were aware of benefits from the GRs (64% of VSLA members were aware vs 42% of non-members) and whether it was important for the GRs to continue to exist (89% of VSLA members said GRs should continue to exist vs 83% of non-members). In MBOMIPA WMA, tolerance for elephants was higher among VSLA members than non-members (94% of VSLA members wished to see an increase in the elephant population in MBOMIPA, compared to 81% for non-members) VSLA membership and outreach also positively influenced whether community members said they personally benefited from MBOMIPA WMA (91% of VSLA members said they benefited vs 76% of non-members).

STEP also works to diversify household livelihoods, increase incomes, and enhance farmer resilience to elephant impacts through poultry vaccination trials. Many households in the Ruaha-Rungwa landscape keep chickens as a source of food and income, but face the challenge of chickens dying from disease. Through our poultry vaccination trials, we offer households one year of subsidized access to the vaccine for Newcastle disease, which is a significant cause of chicken mortality, as well as training in poultry management. We focus on households that did not previously vaccinate their chickens with the goal of demonstrating the benefits of vaccination. In 2024, we expanded our trial of poultry vaccination to four villages in MBOMIPA WMA, vaccinating 1,542 chickens with 73 households. Here, chicken mortality due to disease declined from 6% prior to vaccination to 1 and 2% after the second and third round of vaccination. 95% of households said they would recommend the vaccine to other households that keep chickens. In addition, 95% of households said their household

income had increased since vaccinating their chickens, and 90% said they would be willing to pay for the vaccine.

A key challenge that remains, however, is the lack of a reliable local supply chain for the vaccine. Establishing a dependable vaccine supply chain will therefore be a crucial next step in ensuring continued access to vaccination for poultry farmers in this rural and remote area.

### *2.2.1 Awareness-Raising and Education*

In 2024, we continued community outreach and education efforts. In collaboration with Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority and Itigi District Council, STEP's Human-Elephant Coexistence team hosted the fourth instalment of the *Tembo Cup* Football Tournament (Tembo is Swahili for elephant). These tournaments aim to raise awareness about human-elephant coexistence, the benefits of protected areas, and to create a positive association with elephants through an engaging community activity. During the tournament, spectators attended matches as well as film nights and school outreach events. These events focused on building a culture and norms of loving and respecting elephants, as well as on safety around elephants to handle potential encounters with elephants on foot on village land. Over 38,000 people were reached through these football tournaments and associated events.

Our team of local elephant monitors (LEMs) also conducted awareness-raising with communities outside of these large-scale events. LEMs reached 7,743 community members with one-on-one training and 4,068 with household-level film shows. In these visits, LEMs share information about safety measures around elephants and ways to protect their food stores and farms from elephants.

Our monitoring shows that people engaged by STEP's outreach programs have greater awareness of benefits provided by protected areas, a higher self-reported ability to maintain their safety around elephants, and higher tolerance for elephants compared to those not engaged. Those who participated in outreach activities were more likely to express a desire for elephant populations to increase in adjacent protected areas and in the country, compared to those who were not engaged.

We also found that our human-elephant coexistence film has contributed to more positive attitudes toward elephants. After viewing the film, more people expressed a desire to see an increase in elephant populations compared to before the screening.



*A netball being awarded to a women's team participating in the Tembo Cup*

### **2.3 Capacity building**

In 2024, two Tanzanian interns participated in human-elephant coexistence activities and learned fieldwork and community engagement methods.

Many VSLA members have expressed a desire for financial skills training to help them make informed financial decisions, maximize the impact of VSLA loans for their livelihoods, and plan for loan repayment. In 2024, we engaged a consultant to provide financial literacy training to 152 VSLA members (68% women) and to capacitate 11 Local Elephant Monitors (3 women) and three STEP officers (1 woman) to become financial literacy trainers themselves. The training focused on three key areas: loan management and repayment, household budgeting, and financial planning. Participants learned strategies to manage and repay loans effectively, helping to prevent debt accumulation and maintain financial stability. Practical approaches to household budgeting were also covered, ensuring participants could track expenses and meet financial goals.

STEP also facilitated customer care and safety during walking safari training for 13 guides and 1 ranger from Udzungwa Mountains National Park.

### **3. Conducting elephant research to inform conservation efforts**

The goal of this programmatic area is to collect and analyse data to inform the formulation of meaningful and sound conservation strategies, as well as to monitor the impact of our conservation work. The geographic focus of this program comprises the Ruaha-Rungwa ecosystem and the Kilombero Valley. The main activities under this program include:

- Running a long-term elephant research project in Ruaha National Park to assess population status and to investigate tusklessness, ecology and behaviour.

- Monitoring elephant distribution and status in the forests of the Udzungwa Mountains.
- Monitoring wildlife corridors.
- Assessing spatial and temporal trends in human-elephant interactions and evaluating solutions.
- Collaboration and development opportunities for early career researchers from inside and outside of Tanzania.

### 3.1 Monitoring elephants in the Ruaha-Rungwa ecosystem

The Ruaha-Rungwa elephant population declined by over 50% between 2009 and 2015 due to poaching for the ivory trade (Thouless et al., 2016), and STEP's long-term research and monitoring aims to understand the consequences of poaching for elephants in the ecosystem, as well as to study recovery from poaching. Since 2015, STEP has collected data on over 3,200 elephant sightings. Elephant sightings are matched against an elephant ID database of known individuals for Ruaha, which includes over 200 family groups and 400 bulls. In 2024, we documented 368 elephant sightings over 89 monitoring days, identifying 53% of these sightings against our database. Research Assistant Christina Mgonja is compiling detailed histories of 20 known family groups to study births and calf survival for her upcoming MSc thesis at the University of Glasgow. A key outcome of this work will be an article presenting these demographic findings, which will provide important insights into the status of the Ruaha elephant population.



*STEP researcher in the field monitoring elephants in Ruaha National Park*

### 3.2 Monitoring elephants in the Kilombero Valley

A key objective of STEP's work in the Kilombero Valley is to support the recovery of the Udzungwa-Selous elephant population and to secure long-term connectivity for elephants between Udzungwa and Selous through restoration of the Nyerere-Udzungwa Wildlife Corridor, a historic corridor that spans the Kilombero Valley. Since November 2023, we have been monitoring use of the Nyerere-Selous-Udzungwa corridor by elephants and other wildlife using camera traps. To date, these corridor camera traps have detected 26 mammal species, including elephants, serval, side-striped jackal, honey badger, buffalo, red duiker, suni, bushbuck, and large-spotted genet. We will also identify individual elephants from camera trap images and create a database of elephants that have been detected in the corridor, allowing us to estimate the number of elephants using the corridor. We also conduct monthly foot transects in the corridor to record elephant signs. Encounter rates of elephant dung in the corridor were higher in 2024 than in 2023, suggesting increased use of the corridor by elephants.



*Monitoring elephant use of the Nyerere-Udzungwa Wildlife Corridor*

### **3.3. Monitoring human-elephant interactions**

To help plan and evaluate human-elephant coexistence strategies, we continued monitoring of elephant activity and crop losses on village land with a team of community enumerators known as Local Elephant Monitors. Our monitoring data suggest that crop damage levels were stable in 2024 relative to 2023. Our data also helped us to identify key predictors of crop damage, including distance to village centre, human population density, distance to river, and recency of conversion from natural habitat to cropland.

### **3.4 Trialling farm- and household-based interventions**

Finding affordable and effective ways to protect farms from elephants is one way that we aim to enhance coexistence between people and elephants. The development and trialling of elephant deterrents with farmers continued to be an important area of innovation and learning for STEP. In

2024, we continued our work with village governments and farmers groups to maintain existing crop protection fences using solar-powered strobe lights and metal strips in two villages.

In villages around Kizigo and Muhesi Game Reserves, elephants sometimes damage crops stored at the household post-harvest. To address this, we trialled an alternative food store design (originally developed in Zambia) with 20 households, all of which had experienced food store damage in the past year. In 2024, we evaluated the trial and found that the improved food stores effectively protected crops from elephant damage. None of the improved food stores incurred damage, while 30% of nearby control households with traditional food stores experienced damage. Households mentioned multiple benefits to the improved food stores, including protection from insect damage and improved food quality. Following the trial, we built a further 10 food stores with households contributing 20% of the costs, demonstrating demand for this intervention and willingness to contribute financially.



*Improved food store to keep crops safe from elephant damage*

### **3.5 Capacity building**

One of our key goals is to build research capacity in Tanzania by supporting Master's students in the conservation field. This support includes guidance in designing research projects, mentoring and training in data collection and analysis, and bursaries to assist with fieldwork.

In May 2024, Irene Laizer, one of the first students supported under this program, graduated from the Sokoine University of Agriculture. Later in the year, Grace Mchome submitted her dissertation in October 2024 and was offered further mentorship and coaching through an internship with STEP. Grace was also selected for the Women in Conservation Technology program hosted by Grumeti Fund, WildLabs and Fauna and Flora. Looking ahead, in 2025, Christina Mgonja, a STEP research assistant, secured a scholarship from the Karimjee Foundation to pursue an MSc degree at the University of Glasgow.

STEP Research Associate Dr. Josephine Smit also participated as an instructor in Grumeti Fund's Women in the Field program for the fourth time in August 2024, teaching data analysis and visualization in R statistical software and scientific writing. Nina Akyoo, one of the course participants subsequently joined STEP as an intern. STEP has provided internship or employment opportunities to 11 alumni of the Women in the Field program since its inception in 2019.



Grace Mchome presenting her MSc research findings

## References

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Topp-Jørgensen, E., Nielsen, M. R., Marshall, A. R., & Pedersen, U. (2009). Relative densities of mammals in response to different levels of bushmeat hunting in the Udzungwa Mountains, Tanzania. *Tropical Conservation Science*, 2(1), 70-87.

### **Policy on Reserves**

The Charity operates with limited cash reserves. The Trustees' objective is to maintain a sufficient balance to meet committed expenditure on current projects and cover foreseeable administration expenses.

### **Financial Review**

Attached

**Approved by the trustees on 01 September 2025 and signed on their behalf by:**

Helen Pearson

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Helen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dated: 01/09/2025



**CHARITY COMMISSION**  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name

Southern Tanzania Elephant Trust

No (if any)

1179640

## Receipts and payments accounts

**CC16a**

For the period  
from

Period start date  
1/1/2024

To

Period end date  
12/31/2024

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations	4,355	33,101	91,295	128,750	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b> (Gross income for AR)	4,355	33,101	91,295	128,750	-
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total receipts</b>	4,355	33,101	91,295	128,750	-

### A3 Payments

Consultancies	3,898	800	7,302	12,000	-
Insurance	-	-	-	-	-
Bank charges	44	30		74	-

Transfer to STEP Tanzania	-		39,039	39,039	-
Independent Examination of Accounts	-	800	-	800	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>3,942</b>	<b>1,630</b>	<b>46,341</b>	<b>51,913</b>	<b>-</b>

<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

<b>Total payments</b>	<b>3,942</b>	<b>1,630</b>	<b>46,341</b>	<b>51,913</b>	<b>-</b>
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<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>31,471</b>	<b>44,954</b>	<b>76,837</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>31,471</b>	<b>44,954</b>	<b>76,837</b>	<b>-</b>

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Donations	413	31,206	44,954
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>31,206</b>	<b>44,954</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	Agreement Error	OK

		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	Details			
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	Details			
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

		-	-
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**B5 Liabilities**

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
<i>Helen Pearson</i>	Helen Pearson	01/09/2025

# **SOUTHERN TANZANIA ELEPHANT TRUST**

Charity registration number 1179460

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

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**SOUTHERN TANZANIA ELEPHANT TRUST**

**CONTENTS**  
**FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

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	Page
Legal and Admin Information	1
Independent examiner's report	2
Receipts and payments account	3
Statement of assets & liabilities	4
Notes to the financial statements	5

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SOUTHERN TANZANIA ELEPHANT TRUST

LEGAL & ADMIN INFORMATION  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

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Status

The trust was formed as an incorporated charity on 1st August 2018.

Trustees

Nicholas McWilliam  
Helen Pearson  
Nat Comber

Charity number

1179460

Independent Examiner

Community360  
Winsley's House  
High Street  
Colchester  
CO1 1UG

Business address

30 Barn Road  
Stirling  
FK8 1EP

Bankers

Natwest  
Cleveleys Branch  
Lancs  
FY5 2AL

# **SOUTHERN TANZANIA ELEPHANT TRUST**

## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

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I report on the accounts of Southern Tanzania Elephant Trust for the period ended 31st December 2024 which are set out on pages three to five.

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The Charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 (The Act)) but that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's Statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes considerations of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

David Courtier FMAAT AATQB for and on behalf of:  
Community360, Winsley's House  
High Street, Colchester, Essex



Date 24/10/2025

# SOUTHERN TANZANIA ELEPHANT TRUST

## RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

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	Notes	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
<b>Receipts</b>					
Donations, legacies and other similar receipts	2	4,355	33,101	37,456	52,679
<b>Total receipts</b>		<u>4,355</u>	<u>33,101</u>	<u>37,456</u>	<u>52,679</u>
<b>Charitable payments</b>					
Charitable activities	3	11,244	39,869	51,113	20,288
Governance		-	800	800	400
<b>Total payments</b>		<u>11,244</u>	<u>40,669</u>	<u>51,913</u>	<u>20,688</u>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>		<u>(6,889)</u>	<u>(7,568)</u>	<u>(14,457)</u>	<u>31,991</u>
<b>Cash funds as at 1 December 2023</b>		7,302	83,992	91,294	59,303
<b>Cash funds as at 31 December 2024</b>	4	<u><u>413</u></u>	<u><u>76,424</u></u>	<u><u>76,837</u></u>	<u><u>91,294</u></u>

Notes on pages 5 form part of these accounts

# SOUTHERN TANZANIA ELEPHANT TRUST

## STATEMENT OF ASSET AND LIABILITIES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
<b><u>Monetary assets</u></b>			
Cash at bank and in hand:		76,837	91,294
<b>Total monetary assets</b>		<b>76,837</b>	<b>91,294</b>
<b><u>Funds</u></b>			
Unrestricted	4	413	7,302
Restricted	4	76,424	83,992
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>76,837</b>	<b>91,294</b>
<b><u>Other monetary assets</u></b>			
<b><u>Liabilities</u></b>			
Independent examiner fee	5	400	400
		<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>

These accounts were approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by :

Signed: 

Date: 23.10.2025

Helen Pearson - Chair of Trustees

# SOUTHERN TANZANIA ELEPHANT TRUST

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

- These accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis, following best practice as laid down in the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (SORP 2019) issued in 2019, with all revenue and expenses shown on a cash basis.

Non-monetary Assets and Liabilities are shown as actual values at the end of the year.

### Period

These accounts cover a 12 month period from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2024.

<b>2. Donations, legacies and other similar receipts</b>	<b>Unrestricted Fund £</b>	<b>Restricted Fund £</b>	<b>2024 Total £</b>	<b>2023 Total £</b>
Donations	4,355	33,101	37,456	52,679
	<b>4,355</b>	<b>33,101</b>	<b>37,456</b>	<b>52,679</b>
<b>3. Charitable activities</b>	<b>Unrestricted Fund £</b>	<b>Restricted Fund £</b>	<b>2024 Total £</b>	<b>2023 Total £</b>
Insurance	-	-	-	265
Consultancy	11,200	800	12,000	-
Return of funds	-	-	-	20,000
STEP Tanzania	-	39,039	39,039	-
Bank charges	44	30	74	23
	<b>11,244</b>	<b>39,869</b>	<b>51,113</b>	<b>20,288</b>
<b>4. Cash Funds</b>	<b>Balance at 01/01/24 £</b>	<b>Incoming £</b>	<b>Outgoing £</b>	<b>Balance at 31/12/24 £</b>
<b>Unrestricted</b>				
General fund	7,302	4,355	(11,244)	413
	<b>7,302</b>	<b>4,355</b>	<b>(11,244)</b>	<b>413</b>
<b>Restricted Funds</b>				
Wild Planet Trust	24,787	28,101	(1,130)	51,758
Bristol Chester Zoo	5,000	5,000	-	10,000
Association Mazingira	10,391	-	-	10,391
MBOMIPA Protection Project	3,511	-	-	3,511
Corridor restoration	17,083	-	(17,083)	-
Pro Wildlife	23,221	-	(22,456)	765
<b>Totals</b>	<b>83,992</b>	<b>33,101</b>	<b>(40,669)</b>	<b>76,424</b>

- The Independent Examiners Fee will be £400.00.
- No remuneration was paid to any trustee or to any person(s) known to be connected with any of them.
- There were no related parties within the year.
- The charity is operating on a going concern basis.
- During the year, there were Nil employees (2023: Nil).