

POLITICS MINISTRIES

GRAVE CONCERN

Wildlife numbers decline as population of goats and sheep rises – report

A new study shows an extreme decline in wildlife numbers, while the population of goats and sheep has increased sharply in Kenya's rangelands between 1977 and this year. The 'Extreme Wildlife Declines and Concurrent Increase in Livestock Numbers in Kenya' report attributes this to human population growth, increasing livestock numbers and declining rainfall. "The magnitude of decline varied among species but severely threatens the population of warthog, lesser kudu, Thomson's gazelle, eland, oryx, hartebeest, impala, Grevy's zebra and waterbuck in Kenya's rangelands," the report said. It said cattle numbers decreased by 25 per cent, while that of sheep and goats increased by 76 per cent.

The population of camels and donkeys increased by 13 and six per cent respectively in the same period. "The fundamental cause seems to be policy, institutional and market failures in Kenya," Joseph Ogotu, a researcher from the International Livestock Research Institute and one of the authors of the report, said. He said policy, institutional and management interventions are likely to succeed in reducing the declines and restoring rangeland health through strengthening and investing in community and private wildlife conservancies. According to the report, wildlife numbers declined by 68 per cent between 1977 and 2016. It said the declines raise very grave concerns about the future of wildlife.



A Kenya Wildlife Service helicopter flies over elephants in the Tsavo National Park on March 15 /REUTERS