

# Poisoning of vultures and other wildlife in East Africa (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda)

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# Biggest challenges

Poisons are cheap and easily accessed and the most cryptic of killers

If there are not concerned individuals on the ground, poisoning is overlooked.

The vast majority of poisoning in East Africa goes undetected.

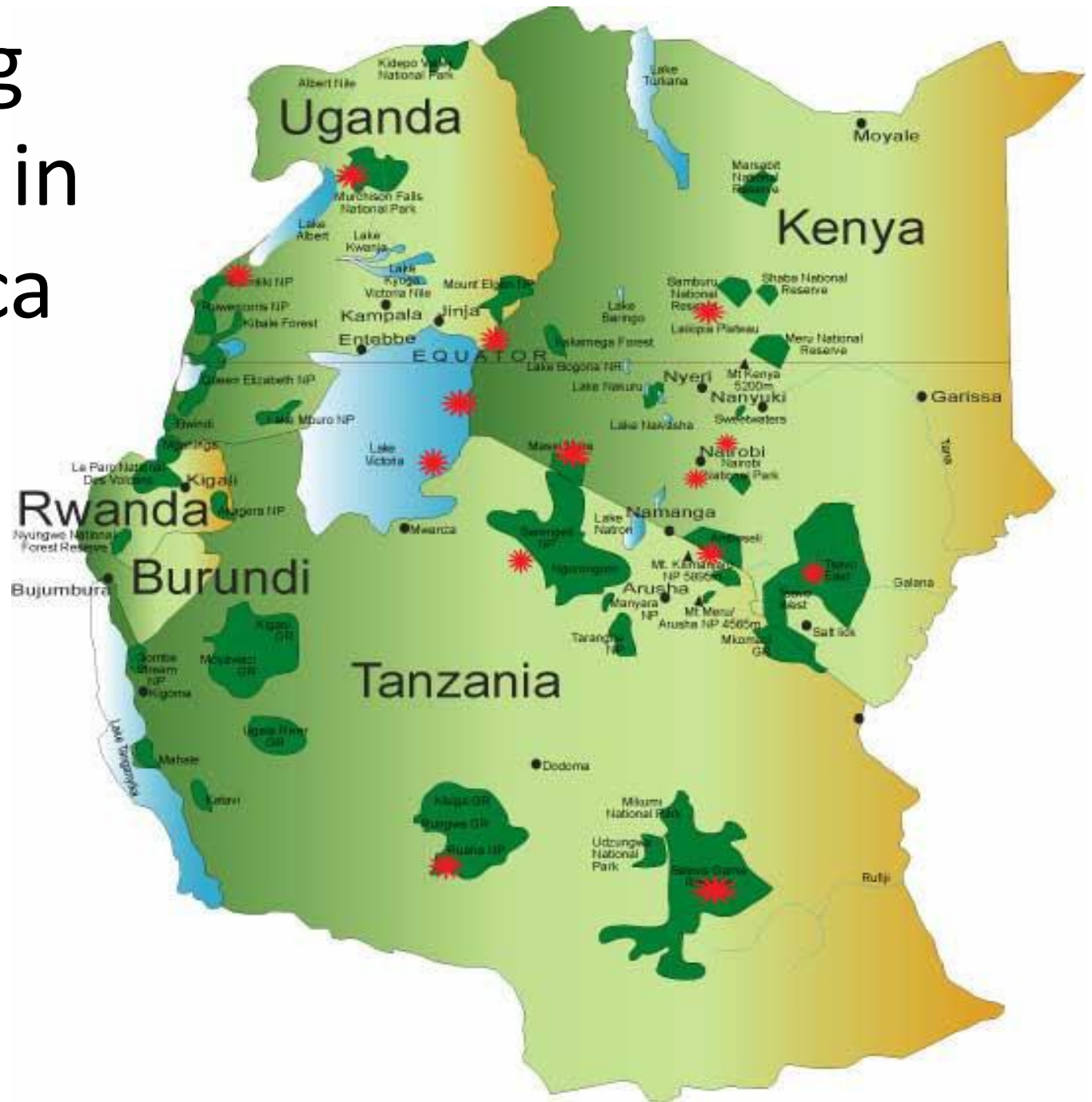
# Legislation

In all East African countries using poisons to hunt wildlife is illegal

Kenya: hunting is illegal, the use of poisons to kill problem animals is illegal

Tanzania: possession of poison with intention is an offence

# Poisoning hotspots in East Africa



# Pesticides used

## **Carbamates**

Carbofuran

Carbosulfan

## **Acaricide**

Amitraz

## **Pyrethroid**

Cyhalothrin

## **Alkaloid**

Strychnine – suspected for feral dogs

# Human-wildlife conflict

**Method:** baiting carcasses or other food sources, e.g. pumpkins, watermelons, maize cobs

**Species most targeted include:**

Bees

Hyenas

Lions

Birds of prey – eagles, kites, sparrowhawks

Elephants

Crocodiles

Otters

Rodents

**Most affected include:**

Vultures

Medium to small carnivores: jackals, mongoose, small cats, monitor lizards

Tawny Eagles



May 2009

Masai Mara Reserve, Kenya

36 vultures and a pride of 5 lions found poisoned by tourists at a cow carcass  
suspect carbosulfan





January 2011

Chyulu Hills, Tanzanian-side

1 adult lion

Carbofuran

Teeth and claws removed to sell to tourists





Tomato laced with furadan to kill rodents and mousebirds



# For food

**Methods used for birds:** soaking rice grains, baiting snails

**Species most targeted:**

Birds in rice schemes including, ducks, geese, doves, storks, widowbirds, weavers, godwits

**Methods used for fish:** pouring pesticides into lake and churning with boat engine

Fish through mainly localised fishing for tilapia in Lake Victoria

**Other species affected:**

Otters, crustaceans, dragonflies



# Open-billed storks



# Doves





# Control of feral dogs

## **Methods used:**

Baiting carcasses

## **Species affected:**

Black kites

Crows

Marabou storks

Hooded vultures

Pet dogs



# Use of vultures in traditional medicine

Roasted vulture heads  
Maswa Game Reserve  
Tanzania

**Methods used:** baiting  
carcasses



# Prevention

Difficult but most realistic chances of success

Control of feral dogs because it is typically controlled by local authorities, i.e. the veterinary department

# Obstacles to testing samples

- 1) Getting reports and samples from the field
- 2) Getting samples to testing facilities and under cold storage
- 3) Expense
- 4) If government wildlife authority tests samples, getting the results



# Testing facilities

## Local universities

### Pros:

- 1) will usually agree to do testing
- 2) No hidden agenda

### Cons:

- 1) often not cost effective to test single or small samples

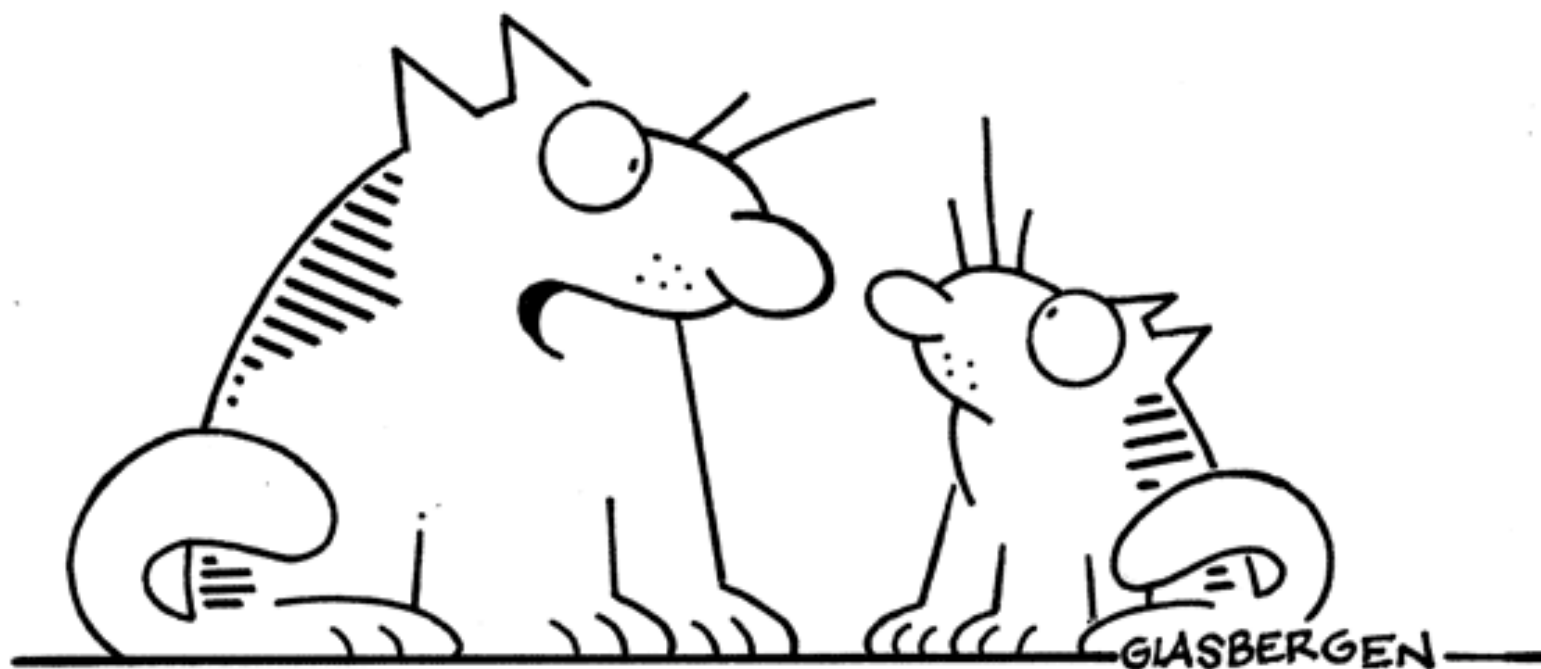
## Government labs

### Pros:

- 1) Can test single or small samples

### Cons:

- 1) Difficult to know methods used and if they are using latest equipment
- 2) Can refuse to test samples, or charge exorbitant rates
- 3) May have hidden agenda, i.e. can you trust the results?



**“If at first you don’t succeed, take a nap.  
When life gives you lemons, take a nap.  
When the going gets tough, take a nap.”**