

# AMBOSELI ECOSYSTEM OUTLOOK

## Current situation report

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### Introduction

Our December 2025 Amboseli Ecosystem Outlook report warned that unless delayed short rains kicked in late December, the January to March dry season would pose severe conditions for families depending on livestock, and farmers bordering the pastoral lands. We posted an early warning alert to herders to be prepared to buy in hay before prices escalated sharply, and to sell livestock before market prices dropped steeply.

As it is, the delayed short rains did pick up in late December, then unexpectedly continued steadily through January and February before easing up in March. The unseasonal rains restored the shrinking pastures and body condition of livestock and wildlife to the point of averting a severe dry season and drought conditions.

Our most recent monitoring across the Amboseli ecosystem shows a rapid recovery in pastures, a marked improvement in livestock and wildlife condition, and an uptick in milk yields and market prices.

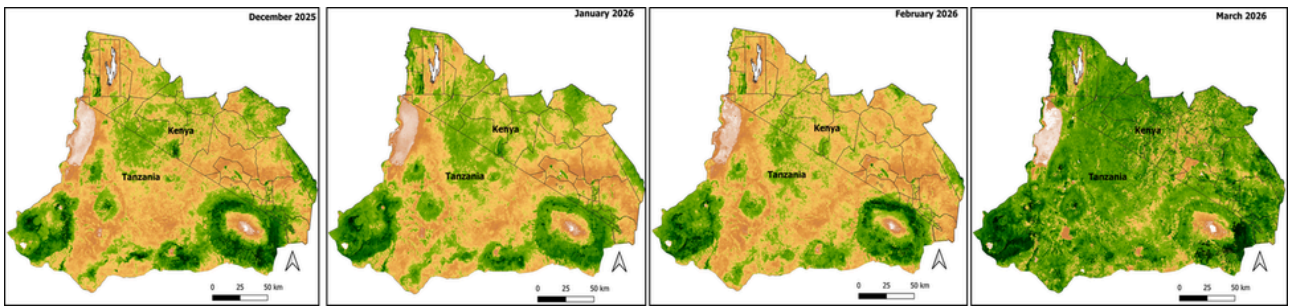
The outlook for Amboseli has, as a result of the unseasonal rains, turned from a severe dry season to abundant pasture and a recovery of livestock and wildlife conditions projected to last through at least June and July.

In the event of good long rains in late April and through May, the outlook will remain good through the August to October dry season.

The current outlook for pastures, livestock and wildlife is given against the long-term background in the following graphics and supporting notes.

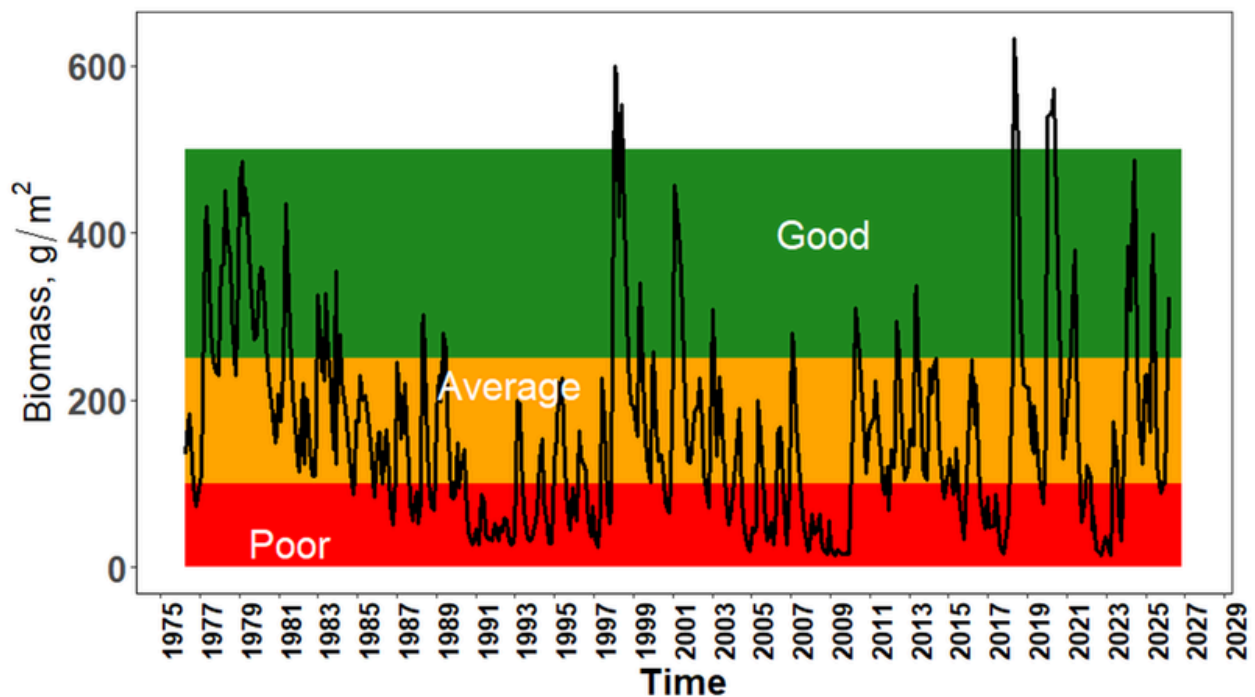


## Vegetation greenness



**Figure 1: NDVI maps show the severe pasture outlook in December 2025 being relieved by widespread unseasonal rains in the January, February and March.**

## Long-term pasture levels

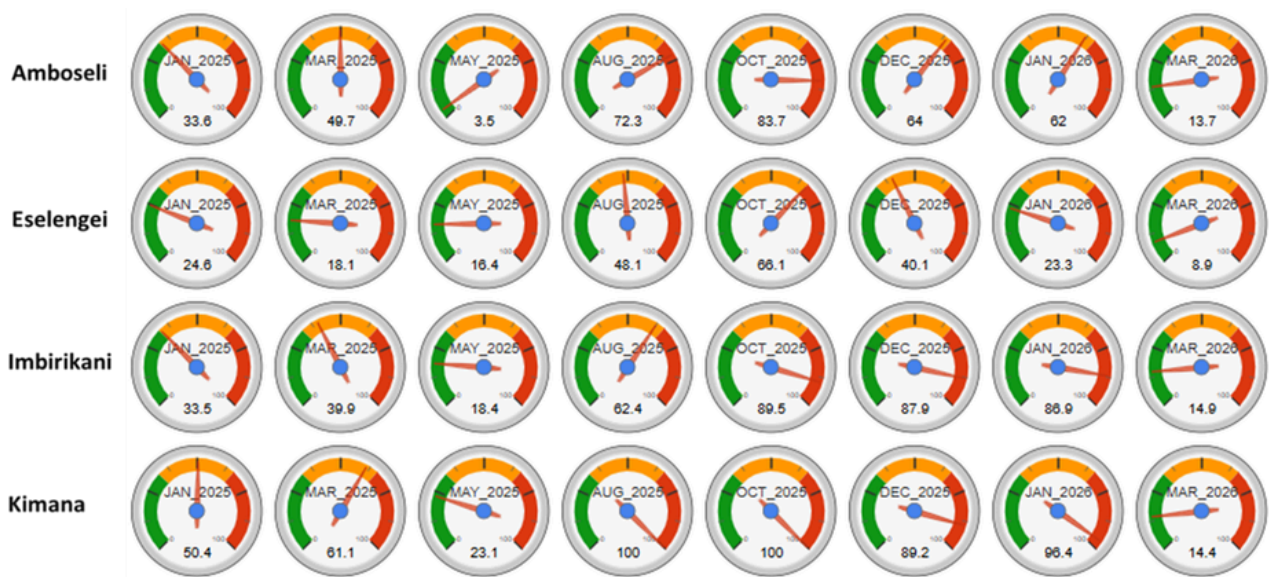


**Figure 2: Amboseli pasture conditions measured by standing biomass in ACP monitoring plots show a sharp increase from the poor condition in December 2025 to good conditions in what would have been a severe dry season in January, February and March when Amboseli experience unseasonal rains.**



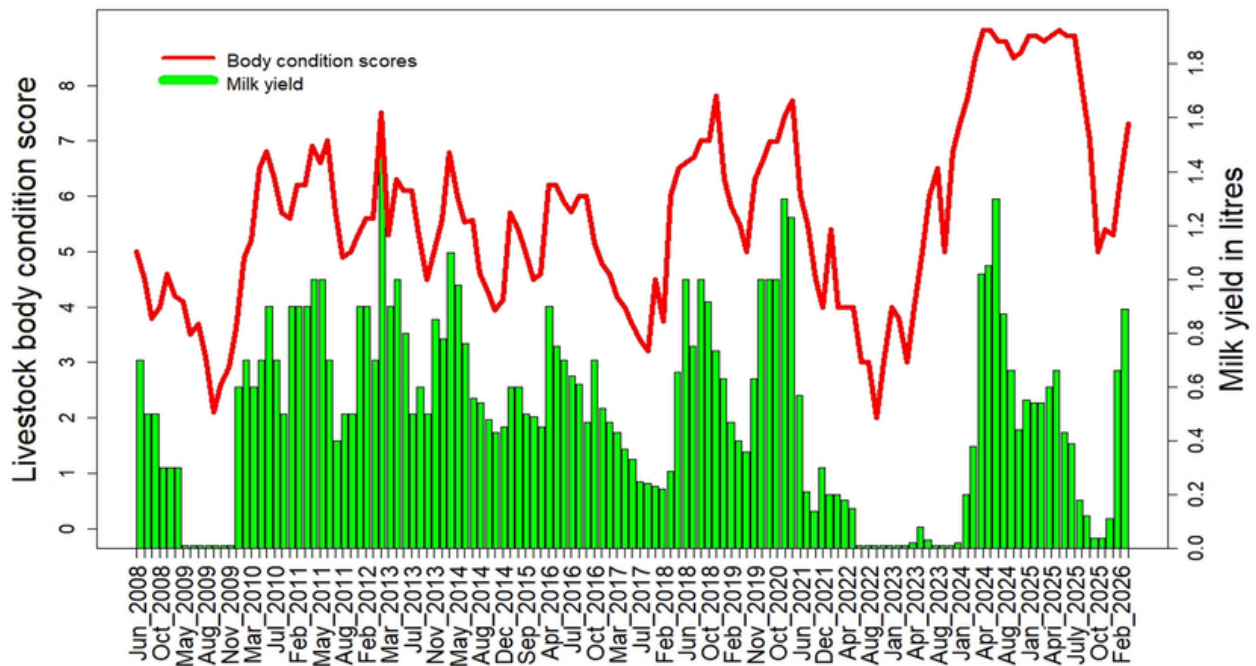
***An elephant moves through dense green pasture in Amboseli following the January to March rains.***

### Grazing pressure gauge



**Figure 3: Grazing pressure was extremely high by late 2025 and into early 2026--before being relieved by unseasonal rains and strong pasture recovery by March 2026.**

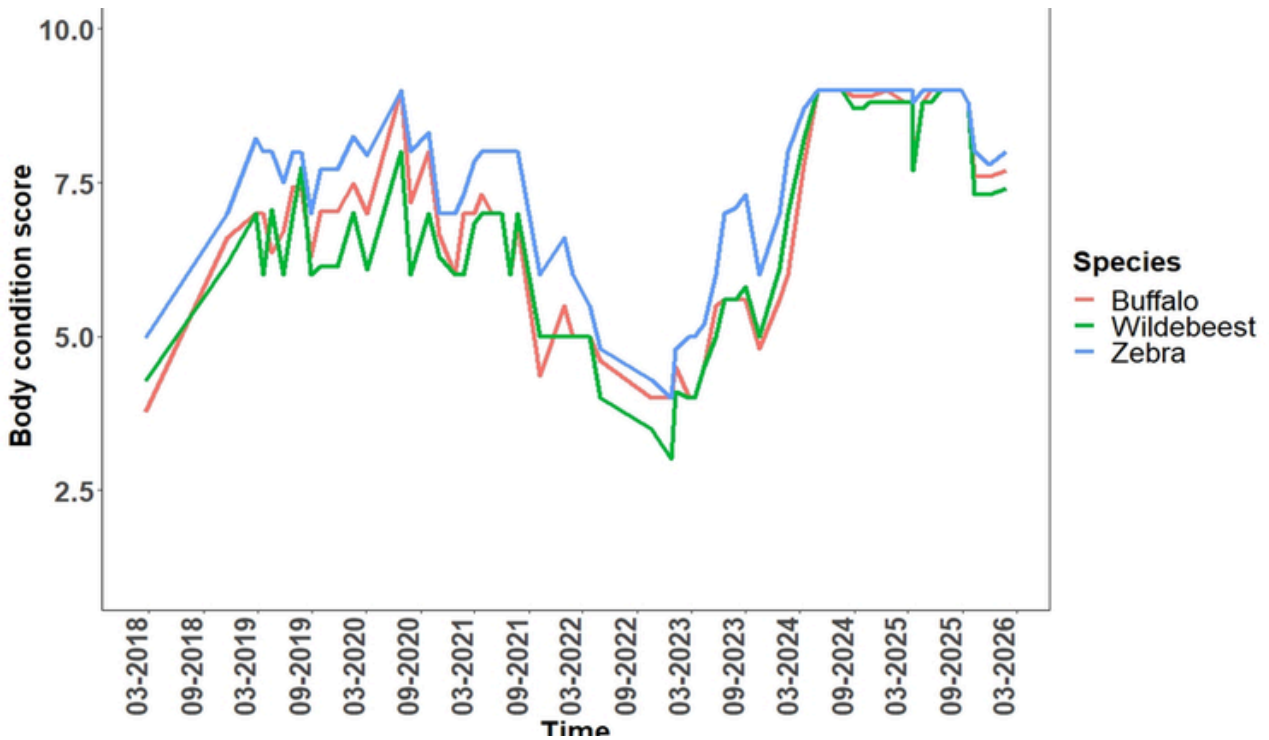
## Milk yields, body condition and market prices



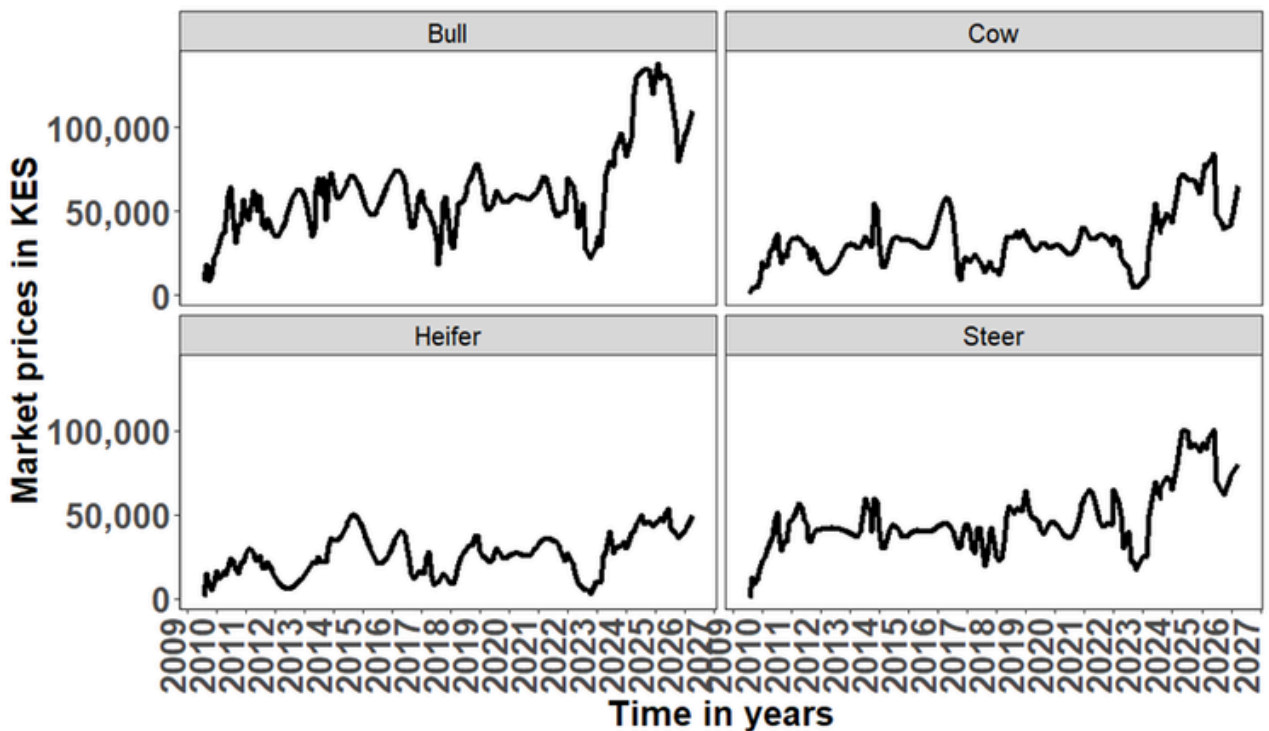
**Figure 4: Livestock body condition and milk yields began recovering with the unseasonal dry season rains in January through March. Herders say milk yield will further increase in the coming months as pregnant cows start to drop calves.**



***Field observations from Amboseli during March 2026 showing seasonal pasture recovery and improved livestock body condition.***



**Figure 5: Wildlife body condition, which began falling in December, was halted by the unseasonal January to March dry season rains. Buffalo, zebra and wildebeest condition should reach a peak in the April to May long rains.**



**Figure 6: Livestock market prices were set to decline steeply with the failure of the short rains in November and December. They picked up as rangeland conditions improved with the unseasonal January to March rains. Market prices will likely hit an all-time high in the April to May rains.**

## The outlook for Amboseli

The outlook for pasture, livestock and wildlife conditions across the Amboseli ecosystem is excellent for the coming few months. If the long rains expected in late April through May are good, the healthy conditions will sustain livestock and wildlife through the June to October dry season.

We caution, however, that the heavy grazing due to permanent settlements around the Amboseli Basin remains extremely high. Unless the persistent grazing on the rangelands is relieved by grazing rotation and livestock sales, pastures, livestock body condition and market prices will decline. The pasture deterioration will increase the likelihood of the heavy livestock and wildlife losses suffered in the 2009 and 2023 droughts, cause further economic stress and intensify conflict with wildlife.

The heavy grazing pressure is also causing extensive flooding in Amboseli National Park as the surrounding heavily settled and eroded lands caused runoff from heavy rains to inundate the low-lying Amboseli Basin.

The extensive flooding of the Amboseli Basin began in the early 1990s, coincident with the switch from seasonal migrations to permanent pastoral settlements, and a sharp growth in settlement numbers. Temporary measures were taken in 2020 to relieve the flooding through deepening the natural channels draining the floods into Lake Amboseli.

We shall shortly issue a report on the causes and sources of flooding and measures which can be taken to avert the extreme damage to the national park.



**Heavy rains in March produced extensive flooding across the central region of Amboseli National Park due to runoff from heavy eroded pastures caused by permanent settlement in the surrounding landscape. The flooding closed the closure of the Amboseli airstrip and extensive damage to tourist view circuits.**

## ***When the Grass Came Back***

*A Poem By Sakimba Kimiti, ACP  
Community Researcher*

*The long rains arrived early this year,  
not with noise, but with quiet certainty.  
After the short rains failed,  
the land had begun to feel stretched—  
grass thinning, water retreating,  
herders walking farther than they should  
have to.*

*There was a weight in those days.  
In the slow steps of cattle, in the watchful  
eyes of those who depend on them.*

*Then the rain came—steady, even,  
enough. It touched the plains without  
hurry, and in time, the green returned.*

*Livestock responded first.  
Ribs faded from view,  
milk returned to calabashes,  
calves stood stronger beside their  
mothers.*

*Herds who had wandered far  
began to trace their way back.  
Homes filled again with familiar rhythms—  
people and animals, close as before.*

*Relief settled quietly among families.  
Not celebration, exactly,  
but an easing—a sense that, for now,  
things were holding.*

*Yet the land does not shift for one life  
alone.  
Wild animals have come closer too,  
moving beyond the park into shared  
ground.*

*Lions are seen more often now, their  
presence a reminder of older patterns.  
Herders know this balance well.*

*Losses to predators are not new,  
and often fewer than those from illness.  
But when a lion takes an animal,  
it is rarely the weakest.  
It is the strong one,  
the one that carried promise.*

*That absence is felt.*

*Still, the rains have done their work.  
They have restored more than pasture—  
they have restored a measure of confidence.*

*For now, the plains of Amboseli are green  
again.  
Livestock are steady.  
Families remain near one another.*

