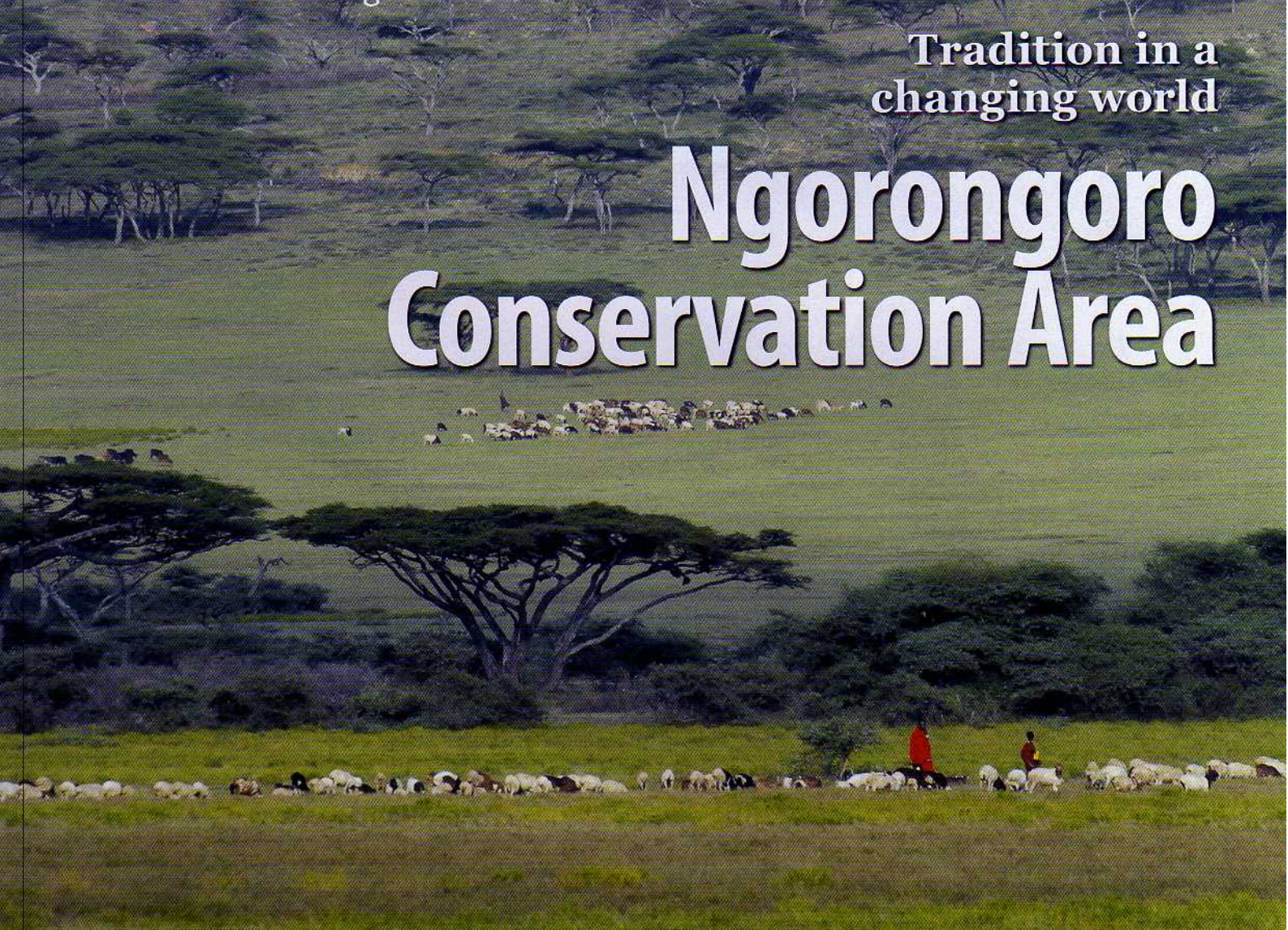


Tradition in a  
changing world

# Ngorongoro Conservation Area



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**T**he United Republic of Tanzania's Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) is one of Africa's most important wildlife areas and a bold experiment in multiple land use. At its core is the world famous Ngorongoro Crater – a giant caldera in which the dramas of life on the African plains are played out each day by a diverse assemblage of large mammals – wildebeest, zebra, lion and rhino – in a primeval 'Garden of Eden'. Beyond the crater rim, Maasai pastoralists in bright red shukas proudly herd

their cattle across the plains, seemingly oblivious to the herds of wild animals sharing this vast landscape, the 'endless plains' of Serengeti.

Ngorongoro was one of the first natural sites to be accorded World Heritage status in Africa, back in 1979. It was an obvious candidate to join the list of Earth's most precious places: not only does it encompass the extraordinary crater with its resident populations of wildlife, but also provides critical wet season grazing for the great herds of wildebeest, zebra and gazelle –

nearly 2 million animals – which make their annual traverse of Serengeti in the world's most spectacular wildlife migration, following the rains in a perpetual quest for fresh nutritious grazing. And, hidden below the surface, are clues to human origins and the species our ancestors encountered as they strode across this landscape for nearly 4 million years at places such as Laetolil and Olduvai Gorge – now world-renowned palaeontological sites.

The NCA covers some 8,300 km<sup>2</sup>, but its attributes and ecological integrity are inti-

