



# SMARTPHONE APP SIMPLIFIES INVASIVE SPECIES MAPPING IN KENYA'S NORTH RANGELANDS

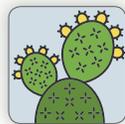
The Invasive Species Mapper is a citizen-science smartphone app that crowdsources invasive species detection to give managers information on their current extent and spread. The SERVIR-Eastern & Southern Africa hub at RCMRD developed the app to improve information on the distribution and management of invasive species in Kenya.



The invasive prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia stricta*), native to the Caribbean, has invaded eastern and southern Africa.

This invasive causes economic losses through direct injuries to livestock, decreased ecological value of infested areas, decreased productivity of grazing lands, and increased grazing pressure on uninvaded lands.

Widespread invasion of the prickly pear threatens pastoralists' livelihoods and way of life.



"The Invasive Species Mapper app gives the user a complete list of local invasive species and field marks to help in their identification. Users, including livestock farmers and local community leaders can easily geo-tag an invasive species incursion and take a photo with the user's smart phone. Locality and species identification information is then uploaded to RCMRD's database where it is processed for mapping known locations and areas that may be at risk of future invasion."

"The negative impact to our lands from the prickly pear is undeniable. We are looking at additional ways to reduce the effects of the plant on our grasslands, our livestock, and our livelihoods. It is for this reason that additional solutions such as this Invasive Species Mapper must be implemented to increase the rate at which the plant is destroyed."

—John Letai, Deputy Director, Environment and Natural Resources of the Laikipia County Government

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