# Lightning strikes kill 16 cattle in Rukwa as conservationists criticise grazing in reserves- Tanzania

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*16 cows killed by lightning in Kalambo nature reserve, Rukwa region. Photo | Neema Mtuka.*

By Neema Mtuka

**Rukwa.** The recurring issue of cattle being struck by lightning in Rukwa Region continues, with 16 more cows dying while grazing in Ngolotwa Village, Kalambo District, on January 1, 2025.

The cattle, valued at over Sh12 million, were struck within the Kalambo Nature Reserve as the owner remains unidentified.

This follows a similar incident on December 9, 2024, when 22 cows were killed by lightning in Songambele Village, Sumbawanga District.

Kalambo District Chief Conservator, Mr Ibrahim Mkiwa, visited the scene and confirmed the incident.

He emphasised that grazing in protected areas is prohibited, as it damages natural vegetation and detracts from the reserve's appeal.

“It is illegal for pastoralists to graze livestock in reserves. Such actions destroy the beauty of these areas, which are meant to preserve their natural state,” said Mr Mkiwa.

He warned that violators would face severe legal consequences and urged the community to help protect natural resources by refraining from illegal tree-cutting.

The district’s Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Ennosy Luvinga, confirmed the death of cattle from lightning strikes.

The carcasses were ordered to be incinerated for public health reasons to prevent any health risks.

A resident, Mr Edson Juakali attributed grazing in reserves to a lack of designated grazing land.

“We urge the government to allocate proper grazing areas to prevent further damage and reduce conflicts,” said Mr Juakali.

The district's Forestry Officer, Mr Geoffrey Mwasomola, called on herders to comply with environmental conservation laws and ensure they use designated grazing areas.