



Protect, Conserve, Inspire

REPORT

June and July 2017



Rangers in action mitigating HEC with the vehicle David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust donated to MEP.



General

There has been little rain to speak of during this period. The wildebeest migration has started in the southern section of the Mara Conservancy but there is little sign of the Loita migration in the overgrazed conservancies. Fencing in the Loita plains plays the most significant role in cutting-off this migratory pattern. The Narok-Sekenani road-building project will be the next large barrier for all wildlife moving between the eastern and western portions of the ecosystem.

We responded to 78 conflict incidents in the last two months, the highest level of conflict recorded this far. At the new ranger base in Isokon Transmara the rangers are chasing elephants out of farms nearly every night. Large herds of elephants have been moving up the escarpment from the protected area through corridors, which are easier to climb. Conflict related elephant deaths have also increased during this period. During this period, we report five dead elephants. Three of which were killed as a result of conflict.

MEP had a notable arrest on the 7th of July where one suspect was arrested in Loita with 32 kgs of ivory. The second notable arrest was on the 17th of July when the Tanzanian Authorities, following MEP intelligence, arrested three suspects with 46 kgs of ivory and two firearms. This area is adjacent

to the Loita Hills on the Tanzanian side of the border reinforcing our concern for elephant security in the area.

We have not able to extend to the Loita area due to a lack of resources. We have stopped poaching in most of our areas of operation. In Loita where we have had little presence poaching is still an issue. The thick cover and lack of access roads makes it easy to miss poachers and even elephant carcasses. We will continue to furnish foot patrols inside the forest when we can.

Other activities in the last two months:

- Opened a new station in the southeastern portion of the ecosystem
- Collared Hanzhou in the Mara Conservancy
- Received permission to collar 10 elephants in the Serengeti
- Held a MEP the 2nd AGM of board of trustees on the 18th of June 2017

Partnership Development:

MEP has received permission to collar 10 elephants in the eastern Serengeti. MEP partnered with organization RESOLVE who have been working with HEC projects with a focus on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in the area. Resolve and MEP have partnered on the UAV project to train rangers in Tanzania since 2014.

Rob and Sarah O'Meara have been very supportive in the Loita area and have provided a base of operations and accommodation for our rangers in the Loita area. They have also build a close relationship with the community and continue to develop the community woodworking and bee keeping skills in the area. The CEO and MEP Chairman visited their camp in July and the forest surrounding the area is nothing short of magical.



Colobus monkeys sunning themselves above the trees in the Loita Forest.

Fundraising:

Alice Yu gave a very generous donation for an elephant collar. We also received donations from For Rangers for ranger welfare and salaries as well as several donations from individuals like Mary Anne and Jim Rogers for general operating expenses and Lori Price for an elephant-proof fence and

sustainable woodlot for the school MEP is sponsoring. Expert Drones continues to support MEP's UAV program and gave a donation for new equipment.

Fundraising Materials

The MEP leaflet has now been distributed to the following camps and hotels: Richard's River Camp, One Forty Eight Hotel, Tribe Hotel, Serian "The Original" Camp, Kicheche Mara Camp and Ortofta Castle in Sweden.

Donor/Guest Visits to MEP HQ

Over the last two months we have been delighted to welcome a number of visitors to MEP including Tusk Trust's CEO Ellen O'Connell and her team at the end of June. Drew McVey, Technical Adviser, from WWF Kenya who visited MEP earlier this month.



Left: Suspect arrested in Loita. Center: Suspects arrested in TZ. Right: Firearms recovered in TZ

Security:

We sent our recce team to Loita twice during this period. When the team goes to Loita they are responsible for following the elephants, arresting illegal loggers, gathering intel from community and informants, and responding to conflict. It is not so easy to keep up with the elephant herds in the forest. Collaring an elephant in this area would improve this.

On the 6th of July we got an intelligence report of suspects with four pieces to elephant ivory to sell in the Olkarin area in Loita. The same afternoon we deployed the MEP/KWS rapid response team from the MEP HQ to lure out the ivory dealers and arrest them. Two suspects turned up at the open plain rendezvous with their ivory. Three of our team members approached them over the open ground on a motorbike. As soon as they met up they made the arrest. Unfortunately one got away. The team gathered some good intel from the suspect at the KWS HQ in Ewaso Ngiro.

As the tusks were quite fresh we suspect they are from two of the poached elephants in Loita at the beginning of the year.

On the second operation, we attempted to lure out a renowned poacher who is using a .375 caliber hunting rifle to kill elephants. During this operation the suspect became very cagey and fled the scene leaving 13 kilos of ivory with the informant.

The Loita team also stopped two illegal logging outfits and recovered a large amount of *podocarpus* timber, which was donated to the local primary school under the authority of KWS.

Incidents SitRep:

Dead elephant on: 16/6/2017	In Olare Orok conservancy a dead elephant was found by tourists at Olare Kempinski camp, he died in a small river right in front of the dining room. The cause of death considered as human elephant conflict. The elephant was speared on the right side. Tusks were recovered and handed over to the KWS Lemek station. Mike file number: 10/17
Dead elephant on: 8/7/2017	A dead elephant was found in Olkinyei conservancy by MEP rangers during their normal routine patrol, on the eastern side of the saltlick. The cause of death considered Natural. Tusks were recovered and handed over to the KWS Ewaso Ngiro station. Mike file number: 11/17
Bush meat recovered and arrest: 7/7/17	1 suspect arrested at Ewaso Ngiro area with 44 kgs Zebra meat. Suspect taken to Narok police station and booked.
Ivory recovered and arrest: 7/7/17	1 suspect was arrested in Loita area with 32kgs of ivory. The suspect was taken to Narok police station and booked.
Dead elephant on: 8/7/2017	A dead elephant was found in Olorte village, the carcass was reported by local chief to the KWS rangers, at the border of Kenya and Tanzania. The cause of death considered as Human elephant conflict. Tusks were recovered and handed over to the KWS Wuaso Ngiro station. Mike file number: 12/17
Ivory and skin recovered and arrest: 17/7/17	2 suspects arrested in Kisii area with 4kgs ivory and 1 leopard skin. Suspect taken to Kisii police station and booked.
Ivory recovered and arrest: 17/7/17	3 suspects arrested Olosokwan village in Tanzania area with 46 kgs and 2 ancient firearms. The suspects were taken to Ngonogoro Police Station. This operation was led by TANAPA. MEP provided intel.
Ivory recovered: 17/7/17	13 kgs ivory recovered in Loita forest. The suspect smelled a rat and left the ivory with the informant and escaped. Tusks were handed over to KWS Narok station.
Dead elephant on: 18/7/2017	A dead elephant was found in Enoonkishu conservancy by MEP rangers during their normal routine patrol on the western side of the Mara Nubian camp. The elephant was spotted the previous day with a spear and reported dead the following day. Suspected to be speared in Munyas farms at night. Tusks were recovered and handed over to the KWS Wuaso Ngiro station. Mike file number: 13/17
Dead elephant on: 18/7/2017	A dead elephant was found in Naboisho conservancy near Ndorobo camp by Naboisho rangers during their normal routine patrol, the cause of death considered as unknown. Tusks were recovered and handed over to the KWS Ewaso Ngiro station. Mike file number: 14/17



Rangers erecting chili fences along elephant corridors on the Olololo Escarpment at Isokon.

HEC

All ranger outposts have been responding to HEC during this period. In the Munyas area elephants have been using the Laila Forest as a staging area to move into the farming area at night. The chili fence we erected in this area was effective in stopping them. Unfortunately, a bull herd was caught during the day in the farming area and 1 bull was killed by means of spearing.

In response to the conflict on the escarpment we built chili fences though all the corridors. This had a positive effect on stopping the elephants although it should be noted that the rangers witnessed members of the herd forcing individuals though the fence by pushing them though it. By the end July many farmers harvested their crops and we expect a decrease in conflict in the next period. The farmers were very grateful for our presence and gave the team maize and goats to eat as a thank you.



Dr Limo removing an arrow from an elephants foot in Olarro Conservancy on the 9th of July.



An elephant in conflict on the top of the escarpment in Tanzania on the 28th of July:



Elephants in farms on the 13th of June near the Serengeti National park in Tanzania.

Helicopter Update:

In June the KWS Airwing conducted the 500-hour service and check. The helicopter remains a vital tool for MEP operations across the ecosystem especially for moving elephants out of farms. Recently a reconnaissance in the Mau forest enabled the KWS to locate a number of illegal logging activities deep in the forest.

Elephant Tracking:



Chelsea with her new baby in the Olkinyei area.

We have been visiting collared elephants, which are in the proximity of geofences and farms and driving them back to safe areas.

On the 23rd of July we collared a new female candidate named Hanzhou in the southeastern section of the Mara Conservancy. We hope that Hangzhou and her herd of 14 will give us important HEC data on the top of the escarpment. The collaring was conducted with visitors from China.



Hangzhou in the Mara Conservancy.

On the 31st of July the CEO attended an interesting presentation at the Predator Hub about Multi-species habitat use and distribution outside protected areas in the Maasai Mara landscape. Emily Madsen one of the project's MSc students conducted the well-thought-out study in a relatively short time of 2 months. The elephant collar data used was quite old being extracted from Dr. Joyce Poole's Mara Ecosystem Connectivity Report. In essence the study indicated that the increased fencing and settlement along the Sekenani Road is cutting off movement of key species. A second round of interviews has since been collected and we plan to share the collar data to put together a second report specifically for the county government identifying the key corridors, which cross the Sekenani

Road. We hope to work with the government in partnership to guide the development of underpasses along the road for wildlife.

Meetings:

Wilson Sairowua attended the following meetings and workshops:

- 13th June WWF workshop on HEC at Keekorok Lodge in the MMNR where Sgt. Dickson Njapit demonstrated the use of UAVs to move elephants to representatives from Narok County Government and officials from Cameroon, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe.
- 17th to 22nd July- Trained rangers from all the conservancies on how to use the WILD app.
- 29th July to 1st August intelligence training in Voi on handling informants

Staff:

Ibrahim Funan was promoted to sergeant in the intelligence unit. Mechanic Moses Lekakwar will receive a salary increase do to his increased workload.



Migration in the southern portion of the Mara Conservancy.