

Project Updates: July 2016.

We continued to collect field data for this project to investigate the two questions underpinning this project: (i) where and at what levels are illegal activities happening in the protected areas?; and (ii) how efficient are the game rangers in detecting animal traps (wire snares) set by poachers in the protected areas? We conducted transect walks and recorded a range of illegal activities in Maswa, Ikorongo and Grumeti Game Reserves and Serengeti National Park. We also conducted experiments in all protected areas by setting out dummy snares as well as recording environmental variables to explain snare detection probability. In this second phase of research fieldwork, we replicated samples of transects for illegal activities in the national park and two reserves, except in Maswa, and conducted additional experiments to cover wider areas. Fieldwork is still ongoing and is expected to be completed in September 2016 when all dummy snares will have been collected and removed from the protected areas.

Our preliminary results show four main types of illegal activities: cattle incursion, wire snaring, tree cutting and illegal animal killing by ambush. Cattle incursion is distributed within 10 km interior of protected area borders whereas wire snaring is widely distributed across the areas with tree vegetation. We found great variability in the techniques used by poachers in illegal hunting. They range from site recursion, concealment of evidence of poaching success that included hiding of kill remains (often animal heads), carcass procession resembling lion's kills, night ambush hunting using machetes often on savanna plains to the use of various tools such as wire snares, pit traps and motorcycle as a quick way of chasing animals on hunt. More results will be available after data collection is completed. Photographs taken during this field work is attached (see email attachments).

Field Photographs



Field research assistants recording data at a dummy snare in the Serengeti National Park (photograph by Alfian Rija)



A researcher (Alfan) recording data at one of the experimental dummy snares in the Serengeti National Park (photography by Hillary Matemu)