

[www.mountkenyatrust.org](http://www.mountkenyatrust.org)

## **MONTHLY PROGRAMME ACTIVITY REPORT**

OCTOBER 2013

## SUMMARY

Project areas highlighted in this month's report are:

- Education and awareness initiatives
- Tree planting and reforestation activities
- The Joint Wildlife Protection Team
- Marania Wildlife Guards
- The Horse Patrol Team
- The Elephant Corridor

The report covers MKT activities for the period 30<sup>th</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013. Reports were provided by the following employees: Humphrey Munene on *Education and Awareness* initiatives as well as *Tree planting and Reforestation*. Northern sector reports were provided by the following; the *Marania Wildlife Guards*<sup>1</sup>; the *Elephant Corridor Team*<sup>2</sup>, the *Horse Patrol Team* as well as the northern area supervisor - Maurice Thure on interrelated aspects as well as security updates. Southern sector updates were collated by the *Joint Wildlife Protection Team*<sup>3</sup> led by Edwin Kinyanjui Ngure. The October report was compiled by Maurice Nyaligu.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Marania wildlife guards is a team comprised of Kipruto Kosgey, Julius Mutuma Kalonga, Joseph Gitonga, Paul Kithinji and Jasper Muthuma

<sup>2</sup> The Horse patrol team comprises of Joseph Michubu, Pius Mutuma, Samuel Gikunda Japhet and Martin Murugu Gachienja

<sup>3</sup> JWPT is composed of Edwin Kinyanjui Ngure, Dominic Gitonga, Charles Nyaga, George Mwenda, and Francis Wachira.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Programme related activities for October are highlighted below:

- Illegal logging
- Snaring of wildlife, mortalities and poacher related incidents
- Elephant mortality incidents
- Fence intrusion, destruction and manipulation
- Ambushes, arrests and apprehensions
- Illegal charcoal kilns, grazing, fuelwood and bhang (*Canabis sativa*) plantations
- Habitat destruction by elephants
- Observations of lion footprints in lower Corridor
- Environmental education and awareness
- Tree planting and reforestation

### 1.1 Programme patrol and field activity intervention areas

The following project activity areas were patrolled and visited by field based teams in October. These are:

- *Elephant Corridor Fencing Team* - Marania to Kisima line, Marania gate, and the Kamiti fence line
- *Marania Wildlife Guards* - Marania forest, Chemi Chemi ya Ndovu area, Mlima Dinga, Elephant Corridor, Kimbo area, Kisima forest, Kiwanja ya Dyre, Mlima Ngaita and Daraja ya Charlie
- *Horse Patrol Team (HPT)* - Marania forest, School of Adventure, Mlima Ngaita, River Marania, Mlima Emburi, Solo camp, Emburi area, Karoli area, Chemi chemi ya Ndovu and Kiwanja ya Dyre
- *Joint Wildlife Protection Team (JWPT)* - Ruthumbi area and parts of immediate vicinity
- *Field Coordinator* - Maara District of Tharaka Nithi County in localities bordering the Chogoria forest block on environmental education and awareness. Ontulili forest block and parts of Buuri district on aspects related to tree planting and reforestation work.

### 1.2 Patrol areas covered by the HPT and JWPT in October

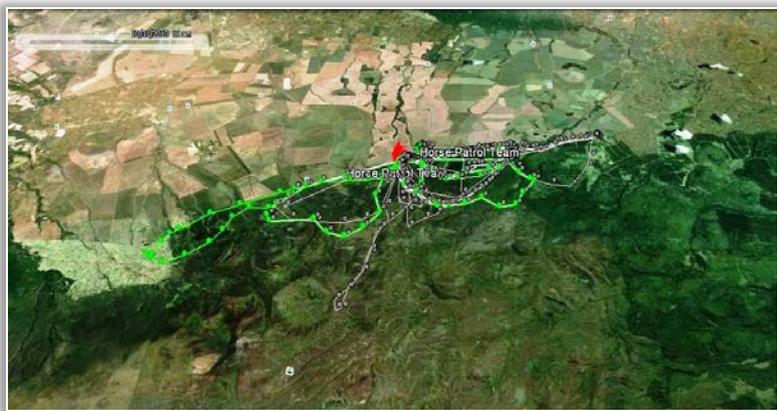


Figure 1: Area patrolled by the HPT for the month of October 2013

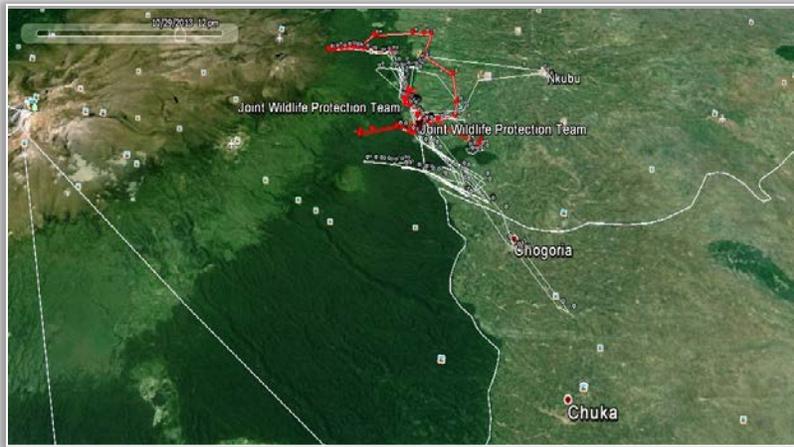


Figure 2: Area patrolled by the JWPT for the month of October 2013

## 2. PROJECT UPDATES

### 2.1 Illegal logging

This October, cases of illegal logging were reported by the JWPT and the Marania Wildlife Guards. Logging was across species; Red cedar (*Juniperus procera*), Rosewood (*Hagenia abyssinica*), Cypress (*Cupressus lusitanica*) Camphor (*Ocotea usambarensis*) and Podo (*Podocarpus spp.*) were all affected.

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
1.	1 <sup>st</sup> October 1506hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Five (5) Podo ( <i>Podocarpus falcatus</i> ) beams discovered and retrieved back to the forest station in Ruthumbi	37M 0341342, UTM 9980816	
2.	5 <sup>th</sup> October 1747hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Fresh off-cuts discovered abandoned in an open area with little canopy	37M 0339492, UTM 9981566	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
	5 <sup>th</sup> October 1800hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Illegally logged Camphor ( <i>Ocotea usambarensis</i> ) cut for use as timber. Several timber planks ready for transportation	37M 0359542, UTM 9981326	
3.	7 <sup>th</sup> October 1747hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Unidentified indigenous tree cut for use as firewood	37M 0340085, UTM 9992282	
4.	9 <sup>th</sup> October 1644hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	An old Camphor tree felled recently felled and chopped. Off-cuts all over the place	37M 0344367, UTM 9983186	
	9 <sup>th</sup> October 1718hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Illegal logging of unidentified indigenous trees for use as firewood	37M 0344699, UTM 9983388	
5.	11 <sup>th</sup> October 1221hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Two (2) Podo trees cut and milled at site using a power saw	37M 0339264, UTM 9981608	
	11 <sup>th</sup> October 1330hrs	Chemi Chemi ya Ndovu area	Marania Wildlife Guards	Illegal logging of Rosewoods ( <i>Hagenia abyssinica</i> ) using power saws	37N 0326208, UTM 0004490	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
6.	12 <sup>th</sup> October 1141hrs	Kiwanja ya Dyre area	Marania Wildlife Guards	Several Red cedar ( <i>Juniperus procera</i> ) trees illegally logged for use as fencing posts	37N 0326935, UTM 0004655	
	12 <sup>th</sup> October 1213hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Two (2) Red cedar trees burnt at the base and felled with intention of using as fencing posts	37M 0334584, UTM 9993814	
	12 <sup>th</sup> October 1324hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Two (2) loggers arrested with six (6) posts of Red cedar (see arrests)	37M 0333674, UTM 9993686	
7.	14 <sup>th</sup> October 1652hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Two (2) beams of unidentified indigenous tree species recovered following patrol	37M 0344149, UTM 9982644	
8.	20 <sup>th</sup> October 1217hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	One (1) suspect arrested in possession of four (4) Red cedar posts and four (4) Suni ( <i>Neotragus moschatus</i> ) carcasses (see arrests)	-	
9.	22 <sup>nd</sup> October 0930hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Unidentified indigenous tree cut down for use as firewood	37M 0340031, UTM 9992446	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
10.	24 <sup>th</sup> October 1244hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	A Red cedar felled down by burning and logs chopped off	37M 0333183, UTM 9993121	
	24 <sup>th</sup> October 1255hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	A fresh Red cedar tree cut and chopped in an area within the moorland above the Bamboo ( <i>Arundinaria alpina</i> ) zone 2,920m a.s.l	37M 0333183, UTM 9993132	
11.	29 <sup>th</sup> October 0900hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	An identified tree cut for use in the firewood business	37M 0340255, UTM 9984614	
	29 <sup>th</sup> October 1038hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Forty two (42) pieces of Podo discovered milled for use as timber. KFS rangers agreed to return later and retrieve the timber	37M 0339049, UTM 9985214	

## 2.2 Snaring of wildlife, mortalities and poacher related incidents

Poaching related incidents including snaring were reported by all field based teams this October. These incidents are tabulated below:

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
1.	4 <sup>th</sup> October 1020hrs	Mlima Ngaita	Horse Patrol Team	Suspected poacher and dog prints encountered. About five (5) poachers and ten (10) dogs	37N 0322834, UTM 0006147	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
2.	12 <sup>th</sup> October 1120hrs	Emburi /Karoli area	Horse Patrol Team	Two (2) lame Zebras encountered. Snares suspected to be the cause	37N 0318753, UTM 0002314	
	12 <sup>th</sup> October 1151hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	A fresh Bushbuck skin found in a suspected poacher hideout near a stream	37M 0334756, UTM 9994072	
3.	14 <sup>th</sup> October 1009hrs	Elephant Corridor (lower Corridor area)	Fencing Team	Fresh Hare parts discovered by MKT fencer	-	
4.	16 <sup>th</sup> October 0930hrs	Elephant Corridor	Fencing Team	Fencer encounters unidentified dead bird. Cause of death unknown	-	
5.	19 <sup>th</sup> October 1136hrs	Ruthumbi (Iraru river in Themwe area)	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Several human and dog prints noted during routine patrol in the area	37M 0338581, UTM 9987496	
	19 <sup>th</sup> October 1735hrs	Elephant Corridor	Fencing Team	A dead dove encountered by fencer during patrol	-	
6.	20 <sup>th</sup> October 1142hrs	School of Adventure zone	Horse Patrol Team	Four (4) suspected poacher and several dog footprints encountered	37N 0322775, UTM 0002314	
	20 <sup>th</sup> October 1217hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Team discovers and demobilizes a live snare capable of entrapping an	37M 0336672, UTM 9991426	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
				animal		
7.	24 <sup>th</sup> October 0935hrs	Kisima forest	Marania Wildlife Guards	A fresh Bush pig head discovered at a suspected poacher hideout, also serving as a resting and cooking place	37N 0322766, UTM 0006073	
8.	29 <sup>th</sup> October 1017hrs	Marania forest	Horse Patrol Team	Two (2) lame Zebras observed in a herd of five (5)	37N 0324225, UTM 0007288	

### 2.3 Elephant mortality incidents

At least two old elephant mortality incidents were reported by Marania Wildlife Guards and the Joint Wildlife Protection Team at Chemi Chemi ya Ndovu and in Ruthumbi respectively. Details of the incident are summarized herein below:

#	DATE & TIME	COORDINATES	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	PHOTO
1.	11 <sup>th</sup> October 0730hrs	37N 0328260, UTM 0007888	Chemi Chemi ya Ndovu	Marania Wildlife Guards	An old set of elephant teeth discovered by the road side during patrol	
2.	12 <sup>th</sup> October 1235hrs	37M 0334305, UTM 9993698	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	An old elephant carcass; sex indeterminate, tusks missing. Cause of death unknown, skull appeared to have been severed by some object)	

### 2.4 Fence intrusion, destruction and manipulation

Although no arrests were made, several intruders were seen attempting /entering into the Elephant Corridor precincts' this October. These incidents are highlighted in bullet form below:

- On 6<sup>th</sup> October at about 1230hrs - four boys found illegally harvesting grass near the underpass but they manage to escape
- On 7<sup>th</sup> October at about 1030hrs - four men and one woman seen illegally harvesting grass at the lower section of the corridor but manage to escape
- On 11<sup>th</sup> October at about 1828hrs - MKT fencer encounters two boys illegally harvesting grass but escape leaving behind two bags full of grass
- On 17<sup>th</sup> October at about 1730hrs - MKT fencer ambushes two women and five men illegally harvesting grass at Kamiti section without success
- On 17<sup>th</sup> October at about 0912hrs six men are discovered illegally harvesting grass after damaging the fence net to gain access into the corridor compelling MKT fencer to request for reinforcement from Marania security
- On 22<sup>nd</sup> of October at about 1020hrs MKT fencer found four women illegally harvesting grass at the middle section but they manage to escape
- On 26<sup>th</sup> of October at about 1202hrs - MKT fencer found six boys illegally harvesting grass at the lower section but they managed to escape leaving behind three bags of harvested grass
- On 26<sup>th</sup> of October at about 1200hrs two women caught illegally harvesting grass at the middle section but they escaped as MKT fencer approached them.

## 2.5 Ambushes, arrests and apprehensions

The following is a chronology of ambushes, arrests and apprehensions this October:

- Two (2) loggers, Gerald Mbaya Gitobu and Charles Kithinji Kirima were on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October arrested with six (6) Red cedar posts in the Marimba area of Ruthumbi forest. The JWPT handed them over to Nkubu police station where charges were conferred upon them OB: No. 25/12/10/2013. Team members managed to follow up on the court case which resulted in five months imprisonment or a fine of Ksh. 20,000
- On 20<sup>th</sup> of October at about 1130hrs MKT fencer Patrick Mari in the company of Kisima security managed to arrest seven women in the corridor while illegally harvesting grass. However, the women had to be set free due to a lack of motorable transport to the police station
- On 20<sup>th</sup> October at about 1217hrs, the JWPT in the company of KFS rangers managed to arrest Joseph Muriithi and Cyrus Kwiriga in possession of four (4) Red cedar posts and four Suni carcasses. The suspects were taken to Nkubu police station and booked under OB: No. 49/22/10/2013
- On 29<sup>th</sup> of October at about 1820hrs fencer Patrick Mari and Kisima security arrested one man - Amos Kirinya in possession of two bags of grass illegally harvested from Kamiti corridor, a lack of motorable transport to the police station resulted in his release.



## 2.6 Illegal charcoal kilns, grazing, fuelwood and bhang (*Canabis sativa*) plantations

Illegal charcoal kilns, illegal grazing, illegal fuel wood and firewood collection as well as bhang plantations were unearthed by the Marania Wildlife Guards and the Joint Wildlife Protection Team as depicted in the table below:

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	COORDINATES	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS
1.	7 <sup>th</sup> October 1625hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	37N 0314287, UTM 0004164	A total of ten (10) cattle observed grazing in the Reserve without a permit
2.	7 <sup>th</sup> October 1805hrs	Ruthumbi forest	Joint Wildlife Protection team	37M 0340664, UTM 9992441	A wheelbarrow made of wood confiscated while ferrying firewood. Owner ran on being spotted
3.	18 <sup>th</sup> October 1319hrs	Kimbo area of Muchene forest	Marania Wildlife Guards	-	Several old charcoal kilns identified. A Bhang plantation also discovered in the immediate vicinity of the kilns
4.	24 <sup>th</sup> October 1451hrs	Ruthumbi (Kithirune area)	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	37M 0336344, UTM 9996010	Sixteen (16) domestic animals including cattle, sheep and goats observed grazing without a permit

## 2.7 Habitat destruction by elephants

As with preceding months, elephants were reported to have destroyed a number of trees on several occasions. These incidents are tabulated below:

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	INCIDENT	COORDINATES
1.	8 <sup>th</sup> October 1020hrs	Marania forest	Horse Patrol Team	Five (5) elephants observed destroying several indigenous tree species	37N 0326764, UTM 0007611
2.	12 <sup>th</sup> October 1012hrs	Emhuri /Karoli area	Marania Wildlife Guards	Several elephants observed destroying shrubs and trees	37N 0319532, UTM 0004444
3.	26 <sup>th</sup> October 1040hrs	Marania forest	Marania Wildlife Guards	A pine tree ( <i>Pinus patula</i> ) observed to have been uprooted by an elephant	37N 0327847, UTM 0006910

## 2.8 Observations of Lion prints in the lower Corridor

Following routine surveillance of the Corridor fence perimeter on 26<sup>th</sup> of October at about 0715hrs fencer Robert Murega came across lion (*Panthera leo*) footprints at the lower Corridor next to elephant gap. This was the first time the sighting has been made and is suspected to have come from Lewa Wildlife Conservancy through Ngare Ndare forest.



## 2.9 Environmental education and awareness

This month's environmental education initiatives were implemented in Maara District of Tharaka Nithi County in localities within the immediate vicinity of the Chogoria forest block. The area is dominated by mixed crop farmers but generally several human activities are ongoing within the forest both legal and illegal. Cases of human wildlife conflict are also prevalent in the area due to

absence of an electric fence perimeter. These initiatives were implemented in collaboration with KWS Chogoria sector warden and the KWS Mt. Kenya education warden. The objective this month was to sensitize community members and school pupils on the dangers of forest destruction and consumption of game meat. This information was conveyed to audiences through the short documentary film 'Running Dry' that clearly shows how Kenya's water catchment forests on Mount Kenya, Aberdares and the Mau complex were destroyed in the late 1980's to early 2000's. The occasions also served as an opportunity to convey to pupils the National Governments' initiative to secure the Mount Kenya forest protected area ecosystem with an electric fence in order to safeguard it from further destruction and also guarantee continued supply of ecosystem services to succeeding generations. A three (3) day outreach exercise was able to reach eight (8) learning institutions namely; Mutindwa Primary School, Mutindwa Day Secondary School, Chief Mbogori Girls' Secondary School, Makuri Girls' Secondary School, Gantaraki Academy, Gitare Primary School, Kianjagi Day Secondary School, and Chogoria Teachers College. In total, about 2,300 pupils were sensitized with message and during an interactive question and answer session with the pupils; it was impressed upon them to pass the message to their parents and guardians.



## 2.10 Tree planting and reforestation

October marked the onset of the short rainy season and planting of seedlings is set to begin early November. Tree seedlings procured from the three women groups' supported by MKT next to the Ontulili Forest Block are ready for collection and transportation to the planting site in Karuri. The key species to be planted this season are; *Juniperus procera*, *Olea africana* and the *Podocarpus falcatus*. Other seedlings will be procured and planted as advised by the resident KFS officer.



Efforts by the Trust and its partners also received a boost following a visit to the Kianjogu Mwanzo Mwema Women group by the District Commissioner - Buuri District. This was a very good sign of support from the National Government towards community groups actively engaged in conservation and reforestation activities. The DC promised to support group members in their quest to improve their livelihood through dairy cattle farming. He said the National Government had recently availed a funding facility for women and youth groups and would facilitate funding for the women group should a proposal reach his office.