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MONTHLY PROGRAMME ACTIVITY REPORT

FEBRUARY 2014

SUMMARY

This February, the following interventions were made by field and secretariat staff:

- Environmental education and awareness
- Consultative meeting on fire emergency response
- The Joint Wildlife Protection Team
- Marania Wildlife Guards
- The Horse Patrol Team
- The Elephant Corridor Team
- Fencing initiatives

The report covers MKT activities for the period 31st January 2014 to 28th February 2014. The following teams provided field updates: *Marania Wildlife Guards*¹; the *Elephant Corridor Team*², the *Horse Patrol Team*³ as well as reports by the northern area supervisor on matters related to the northern sector project areas. In the eastern section of the mountain in Ruthumbi, field updates were collated by the *Joint Wildlife Protection Team*⁴ led by Edwin Kinyanjui Ngure. Humphrey Munene⁵ provided updates on the Ntirimiti fence, education and awareness. The February 2014 report was compiled by Maurice Onyino Nyaligu⁶.

1. INTRODUCTION

During the month, the following interventions related to the conservation of the mountain were undertaken by all MKT field based teams within and in the immediate vicinity of the National Forest Reserve:

- Education and awareness outreach initiatives
- Consultative meeting on fire emergencies and response measures
- Update on Ntirimiti short fence
- Wild forest fires
- Logging within the National Reserve
- Snares, poacher signs, poacher hideouts, sightings of suspects and lame animals suspected to have been the result of snares
- Habitat destruction by elephants
- Diseases and infections
- Illegal honey harvesting
- Other wildlife mortalities
- Elephant corridor fence intrusion, manipulation and destruction
- Other wildlife and habitat related observations

1.1 Programme patrol and field activity intervention areas

Project activity areas patrolled by field based teams this February are:

- *Elephant Corridor Team* - Elephant Corridor and the immediate Corridor precincts'

¹ The Marania wildlife guards is a team composed of Julius Mutuma Kalonga, Joseph Gitonga, Paul Kithinji and Elijah Cheruiyot

² The Elephant Corridor Fencing team is composed of Robert Murega, Charles Gitonga, Jasper Muthuri and Mali Weru

³ The Horse patrol team comprises of Joseph Michubu, Pius Mutama, Samuel Gikunda Japhet and Martin Murugu Gachienja

⁴ JWPT is composed of Edwin Kinyanjui Ngure, Dominic Gitonga, Charles Nyaga, George Mwenda, and Francis Wachira.

⁵ Humphrey Munene is the Trust's field coordinator

⁶ Maurice Nyaligu is the Trust's Programme Officer

- *Marania Wildlife Guards* - Marania forest, Emburi area, Mlima Suruai, Mlima Dinga, Elephant Corridor, Chemi Chemi ya Ndovu, Daraja ya Charlie, Kimbo area, Lower Marania and Kiwanja ya Dyre areas
- *Horse Patrol Team (HPT)* - Marania forest, Solo Camp area, School of Adventure area, Emburi area, Fire tower area, Kisima area, Marania River side, Kiwanja ya Dyre and Mlima Ngaita
- *Joint Wildlife Protection Team (JWPT)* - Ruthumbi area and parts of immediate adjoining vicinity
- *Environmental education and awareness initiatives* - Embu County schools

2. PROJECT UPDATES

2.1 Education and awareness outreach initiatives

This month, primary and secondary schools in Embu County played host to the Trust's annual education programme. In total, six schools were visited as tabulated below:

#	Name of School	No. of Pupils
1.	Irangi Primary School	280
2.	Mufu Primary School	400
3.	Kiangungi Primary School	460
4.	Kiangungi Secondary School	310
5.	Munyutu Primary School	275
6.	Mufu Secondary School	370



The six schools are located within a radius of 3kms from the Mount Kenya Forest boundary where ongoing fence work by Rhino Ark was completed a few weeks ago. The outreach programme provided an opportunity to clarify the importance of the fence in relation to the protection of the mountain /forest ecosystem. The short documentary '*Running Dry*' was shown to pupils and the need for the forest to be secured through fencing as a conservation strategy clearly articulated. The exercise was conducted in partnership with KWS Embu station. KWS Embu

Station Warden communicated the mandate of KWS as a conservation agency and its role in conservation and community social responsibility. The Trust's Field Co-ordinator gave a short talk on climate change and its effect on human life and well-being. Approximately about 2000 pupils were reached through the programme.

2.2 Consultative meeting on fire emergency response

Through the Programme Officer, the Trust was represented in a consultative stakeholder meeting on emergency response to fires and other tragedies within the Mount Kenya and Aberdare ecosystem held on the 26th February at the Old House in Nanyuki. This follow-up meeting was held to discuss progress made in relation to the Joint Emergency Response plan for Aberdare and Mt. Kenya started late last year. A key outcome of the meeting was an agreement to have a secretariat coordinate and fast-track the realization of the plan within a specified timeframe. The meeting was very well attended with representatives from KWS, KFS, Rhino Ark and MKT.

2.3 Updates on the Ntirimiti short fence



Additional improvements were made to the Ntirimiti short fence following recommendations made by a battery expert last month. The Chloride Exide solar expert had recommended an additional solar panel to boost the charge capacity in order to match the amperage requirements of the 200Ah battery installed last month. With assistance of a mobile welding machine, a 65watt solar panel was successfully installed by Kisima team. Following these adjustments, the battery is now recording a full charge even when solar intensity is low.

2.4 Wild forest fires

Fires and related incidents were reported by two of the northern based field teams this February as indicated below:

- 2nd February (1000hrs) - the Marania Wildlife Guards receive reports of a wild forest fire around the fire tower along waypoint 37N 0323501, UTM 0004576. Fire suspected to have been started by illegal honey harvesters. The fire was extinguished following a coordinated response by the team, Kisima farm and KWS Marania camp
- 3rd February (0740hrs) - the Horse Patrol Team join the Marania Wildlife Guards, Kisima farm and Marania farm personnel in combating a fire for the second day running along waypoint 37N 0321330, UTM 0005379
- 4th February (0730hrs) - the HPT joined other teams in combating a resurgent fire along waypoint 37N 0325880, UTM 0007341 ensuring the fire was completely extinguished.



2.5 Logging within the National Reserve

Illegal logging activities were reported by the Joint Wildlife Protection Team and the Marania Wildlife Guards. These incidents are tabulated in chronological order below:

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
1.	3 rd February 1223hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	A recently chopped unidentified indigenous tree discovered during patrols	37M 0337346, UTM 9988804	
2.	4 th February 1211hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Ten (10) Podo (<i>Podocarpus spp.</i>) found chopped and milled on site	37M 0339480, UTM 9982418	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
	4 th February 1438hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	A Podo tree chopped along a bridge on River Muntonga	37M 0338369, UTM 9981974	
3	12 th February 0958hrs	Kimbo area	Marania Wildlife Guards	Two (2) lorries KAY 826A and KAZ 882R with eighteen men and one woman, a power saw and 18 machetes	37N 0330574, UTM 0008402	
4.	18 th February 1019hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Two (2) Red cedar trees discovered chopped for use as fencing posts	-	
	18 th February 1116hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	A logging area for Red cedar identified on the moorland	37M 0333343, UTM 9990166	
	18 th February 1350hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Team members destroy ten (10) Red cedar posts	-	
5.	19 th February 1122hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	One (1) Podo tree found felled and chopped for suspected use as firewood	37M 0337762, UTM 9993002	
6.	20 th February 0830hrs	Kiwanja ya Dyre	Marania Wildlife Guards	Team members discover legally harvested Cypress (<i>Cupressus lusitanica</i>) mixed with illegally logged Red cedar (<i>Juniperus procera</i>)	-	
	20 th February 0900hrs	Kiwanja ya Dyre	Marania Wildlife Guards	Illegal logging of Red cedar and other unidentified indigenous trees	37N 0329166, UTM 0007173	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
	20 th February 1030hrs	Kiwanja ya Dyre	Marania Wildlife Guards	Illegal logging of unidentified indigenous trees	37N 0329195, UTM 0007135	
7.	25 th February 1137hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	An axe suspected to be in use by illegal loggers recovered	-	
	26 th February 1547hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	A Camphor (<i>Ocotea usambarensis</i>) tree felled down and milled with power saw on the slopes of Iruru River	-	

2.6 Snares, poacher signs, poacher hideouts, sightings of suspects and lame animals suspected to have been the result of snares

Poaching related incidents including snaring were reported by all three field patrol teams this February. These incidents are tabulated below:

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
1.	3 rd February 1130hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	A medium sized snare identified and immobilized	-	
2.	4 th February 1322hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Team members successfully immobilize fifteen (15) snares in the company of KFS rangers	-	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
	4 th February 1340hrs	Emburi area	Marania Wildlife Guards	One (1) medium sized wire snare discovered and immobilized	37N 0325880, UTM 0007341	
3.	7 th February 1230hrs	School of Adventure /Marania River area	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) lame Zebra observed in a grazing herd of ten (10). Lame on the rare right limb (snares suspected)	37N 0322119, UTM 0007518	
4.	9 th February 0912hrs	Mlima Dinga	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) lame Zebra observed in a herd of nine (9). Cause snares	37N 0322507, UTM 0004089	
5.	10 th February 1039hrs	Daraja ya Charlie	Marania Wildlife Guards	Suspected poacher footprints seen heading from west to the north	37N 0323457, UTM 0004571	
	10 th February 1336hrs	Emburi area	Marania Wildlife Guards	Poacher den (cave) suspected to be used for killing wildlife	37N 0323939, UTM 0003597	
6.	22 nd February 1020hrs	Marania River	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) lame Zebra observed in a grazing herd of ten (10)	37N 0325776, UTM 0007501	
	22 nd February 1147hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Team members identify and destroy a snare designed for medium sized mammals	-	
7.	25 th February 0851hrs	Kisima /Emburi farms	Horse Patrol Team	A single snare capable of entrapping medium sized mammals discovered and immobilized	37N 0321756, UTM 0006726	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
	25 th February 0914hrs	Kisima /Emburi fence	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) snare capable of entrapping small mammals discovered and immobilized	37N 0321172, UTM 0007481	
	25 th February 1000hrs	Kisima /Emburi fence	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) snare capable of entrapping small sized mammals found near an animal path	37N 0321104, UTM 0008535	
8.	26 th February 1444hrs	Daraja ya Charlie (Ngarinaro)	Marania Wildlife Guards	A suspected poachers' hut discovered and destroyed	37N 0328316, UTM 9998802	
	26 th February 1520hrs	Daraja ya Charlie (Ngarinaro)	Marania Wildlife Guards	Three (3) suspected poachers' huts suspected to store illegally killed wildlife	37N 0328731, UTM 9999702	
9.	27 th February 1120hrs	Marania area	Marania Wildlife Guards	One lame Red duiker thought to have resulted from snares	37N 0324940, UTM 0005506	

2.7 Habitat destruction by elephants

- 6th February (0800hrs) - the Marania wildlife guards while patrolling Mlima Suruai area came across ten elephants breaking down Cypress trees along waypoint 37N 0328271, UTM 0007518
- 25th February (0730hrs) - while on patrol in Mlima Dinga area the Marania wildlife guards came across eleven elephants breaking down blue gum trees along waypoint 37N 0327972, UTM 0007079.

2.8 Diseases and infections

- 10th February (0814hrs) - the Marania wildlife guards while on patrol in Daraja ya Charlie area came across a sickly female bushbuck along waypoint 37N 0327084, UTM 0007403
- 12th February (0902hrs) - along waypoint 37N 0320651, UTM 0007156 in Kimbo area the Marania wildlife guards came across fresh unusual Zebra droppings noted to contain worms.

2.9 Illegal honey harvesting

- 23rd February (1220hrs) - along waypoint 37N 0331972, UTM 0006390 in Kimbo area the Marania wildlife guards encountered an area where illegal honey harvesting had taken place.

2.10 Other wildlife mortalities

- 21st February (1520hrs) - while on patrol in Daraja ya Charlie area the Marania wildlife guards came across a fresh Eland female carcass and that of its unborn. The pregnant animal was suspected to have been killed by poachers who managed to remove all flesh leaving behind a skeleton and remains of the unborn. Poachers suspected to have been in the company of dogs
- 26th February (1222hrs) - the Marania wildlife guards while patrolling Daraja ya Charlie/Ngarinaro area along waypoint 37N 0327320, UTM 9999234 came across a male Duiker carcass; cause of death suspected poaching for bush meat based on carcass observations.



2.11 Elephant corridor fence intrusion, manipulation and destruction

The following is a chronology of events pertaining to fence manipulation, intrusion and destruction along the Elephant Corridor during the month of February.

- 4th February (1703hrs) - the fencer at the Kamiti Corridor section discovers five blue gum trees cut and stolen from inside the Corridor by unknown persons
- 10th February (1815hrs) - the infamous elephant '*Mountain Bull*' in the company of six other elephants seen pulling out and destroying community water pipes along the Corridor underpass
- 16th February (0912hrs) - the fencer at the lower Corridor section discovers eight blue gum trees pulled down by an unknown elephant.



2.12 Other wildlife and habitat related observations

- 7th February (0830hrs) - Kamiti Corridor fence attendant while on duty in the Corridor came across an unidentified dead snake at the Kamiti gate, cause of death could not be immediately established
- 10th February (1133hrs) - Emburi area along waypoint 37N 0319086, UTM 0005371 HPT team members discover an area where soil erosion is seriously taking place during the rainy season.