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MONTHLY PROGRAMME ACTIVITY REPORT

JULY 2013

SUMMARY

MKT's interventions on the mountain continued during a mostly dry, cold and windy month. All field based teams worked in tandem with KFS, KWS and other law enforcement agencies including Lewa, Marania and Kisima security. Project areas highlighted in this month's programme report are:

- Community Environmental Education and Awareness
- Fencing Initiatives
- The Joint Wildlife Protection Team
- Marania Wildlife Guards
- The Horse Patrol Team
- The Elephant Corridor
- Workshops and Meetings

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

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

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

³ JWPT is composed of Edwin Kinyanjui Ngunjiri, Dominic Gitonga, Charles Nyaga, George Mwenda, and Francis Wachira.

1. INTRODUCTION

Programmatic activities discussed during this month's field interventions are:

- Illegal logging
- Snaring of wildlife and poacher related incidents
- Elephant mortality incidents
- Other wildlife mortality incidents
- Illegal growing of marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*)
- Arrests and apprehensions
- Charcoal burning and illegal firewood collection
- Littering and garbage disposal
- Habitat destruction by elephants
- Community education and awareness initiatives
- Fencing initiatives
- Workshops and meetings

1.1 Programme patrol and operational areas

The following project activity areas were patrolled by field based teams this July. These are:

- *Elephant Corridor Fencing Team* – Marania to Kisima line, Marania gate, and the Kamiti fence line
- *Marania Wildlife Guards* – Marania forest, Ngaita area, Daraja ya Charlie, Kisima section (Chumvi area), Equator area, Kiwanja ya Dyre, Corridor area, Mlima Dinga, Kimbo area (Kianjuri section), Chemi Chemi ya Ndovu area, Mlima Ngaita, Mlima Suruai and Corridor route
- *Horse Patrol Team (HPT)* – School of Adventure area, Solo Camp, Embori zone, Marania forest, Embori forest, Corridor, Mlima Ngaita zone, Zorilla camp forest and the Marania river side
- *Joint Wildlife Protection Team (JWPT)* – Ruthumbi area and parts of Themwe
- *Field Coordinator* – Meru County (Ruthumbi and Ntirimiti) for Education and Awareness initiatives and Fencing work

2. PROJECT UPDATES

2.1 Illegal logging



As summarized in the table below, the JWPT and the Marania Wildlife Guards field teams reported several cases of illegal logging. Logging was cross-cutting with the most affected tree species being Red cedar (*Juniperus procera*), Rosewood (*Hagenia abyssinica*), Cypress (*Cupressus lusitanica*) Camphor (*Ocotea usambarensis*) and Podo (*Podocarpus spp.*). The work of the JWPT also revealed illegal logging in Ruthumbi to be on-going in conjunction with illegal marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*) growing and snaring of small and large mammal species.

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
1.	7 th July 0635hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	Three huge Camphor trees logged. Two of the trunks had already been ferried away	37M 0343427, UTM 9982216	
2.	7 th July 0715hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	Two men caught ferrying logs for firewood	37M 0343103, UTM 9983190	
3.	8 th July 1625hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	Several Podo trees cut for use as fencing posts	37M 0343897, UTM 9982356	
4.	14 th July 1140hrs	Chemi Chemi	Marania Wildlife Guards	Several Cypress logs found awaiting transportation	37N 0327747, UTM 0007082	
5.	14 th July 1459hrs	Chemi Chemi	Marania Wildlife Guards	Unidentified indigenous trees logged	37N 0326221, UTM 0005997	
6.	14 th July 1501hrs	Chemi Chemi	Marania Wildlife Guards	Several Rosewoods and other indigenous trees logged. Also identified a loggers hideout	-	
7.	15 th July 1632hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	Medium sized indigenous trees found cut down and left to dry suspected to be for firewood use	37M 0344177, UTM 998550	

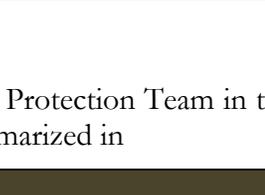
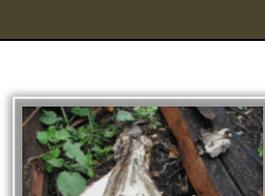
#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
8.	15 th July 1651hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	Several unidentified indigenous tree species cut	37M 0344045, UTM 9981874	
9.	18 th July 1230hrs	Kisima forest	Marania Wildlife Guards	Several indigenous trees logged and transported	37N 0323706, UTM 0006090	
10.	19 th July 1423hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	Several unidentified indigenous trees cut for use as firewood	37M 0336225, UTM 9984662	
11.	19 th July 1427hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	Found a pile of logs assembled together for use as firewood	37M 0349682, UTM 9992436	
12.	23 rd July 1235hrs	Kimbo area	Marania Wildlife Guards	Several red cedars illegally logged and transported by lorry	37M 0330069, UTM 0006278	
13.	25 th July 1415hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	Logging area identified	-	
14.	29 th July 1601hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	One (1) Camphor tree identified. Logged but not ferried	37M 0343342, UTM 9981610	

2.2 Snaring of wildlife and poacher related incidents

Cases involving the snaring of wildlife and related poacher signs were reported by the JWPT, Marania Wildlife Guards and the Horse Patrol Team. These incidents are tabulated below:

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
1.	1 st July 1000hrs	Embora area	HPT	Suspected poacher footprints from Marania forest to Embora area	37N 0329994, UTM 0005952	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
2.	4 th July 1330hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	Fifteen (15) Snares removed at Themwe area. Some old some new	37M 0336228, UTM 9984894	
3.	9 th July 0955hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	A total of five (5) snares found and removed. Three (3) old and two (2) recent	37M 0336193, UTM 9985140	
4.	10 th July 1012hrs	Kenya School of Adventure	HPT	One (1) lame zebra spotted in a group of five (5)	37M 0323042, UTM 0006415	
5.	11 th July 1011hrs	Mlima Dinga	Marania Wildlife Guards	One (1) buffalo with suspected snaring related injuries seen in a group of four (4)	37M 0324022, UTM 0002353	
6.	17 th July 1000hrs	Daraja ya Charlie	Marania Wildlife Guards	One (1) lame waterbuck observed. Injuries either from ritual fights or snaring	37M 0324902, UTM 0006219	
7.	17 th July 1310hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	A vacated hut discovered. Hut used by bhang growers and poachers as seen from several animal bones	37M 0333055, UTM 9982462	
8.	17 th July 1459hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	A large elephant snare discovered near a Bhang cultivation site. Snare next to a deep hole 1m in diameter	37M 0338433, UTM 9982802	
9.	17 th July 1613hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	Suspected poacher seen as he dropped a sack of bhang and bushmeat. Three dogs in his company shot at	37M 0336384, UTM 9983382	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
10.	22 nd July 1146hrs	Embori area	HPT	Traditional snare capable of entrapping large mammals discovered. Human and dog prints seen too	37N 0316146, UTM 0003135	
11.	24 th July 1125hrs	Marania forest	HPT	Suspected poacher footprints and camping area for poachers	37N 0324675, UTM 0005553	
12.	27 th July 1530hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	An old snare found and removed	37M 0337909, UTM 9993412	
13.	27 th July 1535hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	A meeting point for poachers' nicknamed Kamaromba area	37M 0337814, UTM 9993304	
14.	27 th July 1546hrs	Ruthumbi	JWPT	Place where poachers' meet to roast meat. Place within Marimba areas	37N 0338096, UTM 9993380	
15.	29 th July 1007hrs	Embori area	HPT	One (1) snare capable of entrapping large mammals discovered and removed	37N 0317815, UTM 0005204	

2.3 Elephant mortality incidents

At least two elephant mortality incidents were reported by the Joint Wildlife Protection Team in the Ruthumbi area of Mount Kenya this July. Details of these incidents are summarized in

#	DATE & TIME	COORDINATES	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	PHOTO
1.	9 th July 0957hrs	37M 0336194, UTM 9985101	Ruthumbi	JWPT	An old elephant carcass found. Tusks missing, sex indeterminate	
2.	16 th July 1545hrs	37M 0338197, UTM 9983790	Ruthumbi	JWPT	One (1) old elephant mortality incident. Cause of death indeterminate, tusks missing. Sex indeterminate	

2.4 Other wildlife mortality incidents

A waterbuck carcass was reported by the Marania Wildlife Guards on the 21st of July at about 1245hrs. The incident was encountered while the Guards were patrolling the Elephant Corridor along waypoint 37M 0328934, UTM 0007865. It is suspected the bull sustained injuries during ritual fighting with other males for females. A section of the stomach had been predated upon.



2.5 Illegal growing of marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*)

These incidents were reported by the JWPT on several dates within Ruthumbi. On 17th July, 5 acres of the plant were discovered following tip-off by members of the community. The incident was recorded at 1320hrs along waypoint 37M 0332791, UTM 9982716. Several huts used by the marijuana growers' were identified and destroyed through the combined efforts of MKT, KWS and KFS. A section of the plantation had already been harvested, but the team managed to uproot at least ninety five (95) live stems. On the 22nd of July following additional leads, the team discovered and destroyed a number of huts (at three localities) deep within the forest reserve; these huts are suspected to be used by bhang growers. In the process, at least five (5) sacks of harvested bhang were discovered and burnt as were three (3) acres of marijuana plantation.



2.6 Arrests and apprehensions

Only one logical arrest relating to *Cannabis sativa* growing was reported by the JWPT this July. On the 25th of July at about 1800hrs, the team managed to arrest two men: David Kinoti Mandiu and Patrick Muturi Nkanata ferrying bhang from the forest in two sacks of about 18kgs each. The two were booked at Nkubu Police station under OB: No. 46/25/07/13.



2.7 Charcoal burning and illegal firewood collection

Illegal charcoal burning was reported by the Joint Wildlife Protection Team on the 2nd of July. This incident was recorded along waypoint 37M 0339304, UTM 9986722 at about 1544hrs. No other incidents were reported by the teams.

2.8 Littering and garbage disposal

At least one incident of littering and garbage disposal in the forest reserve was reported by the Marania Wildlife Guards this month. This incident was observed on the 14th of July while the team was on patrol in the Chemi Chemi ya Ndovu area along waypoint 37M 0327142, UTM 0006008. Littering and garbage disposal is suspected to originate from members of the immediate surrounding community as well as illegal loggers and grazers within the national forest reserve.

2.9 Habitat destruction by elephants and rains

Elephants were reported to have destroyed a number of trees on at least three occasions within the northern section of the mountain this July. On the 5th of July at about 1124hrs, several rosewoods were noted to have been felled by elephants along waypoint 37M 0325336, UTM 0007371. The

incident was recorded at Mlima Ngaita by the Horse Patrol Team. A similar incident was reported by the same team in Embori area along way point 37M 0311965, UTM 0005330 at about 0844hrs. Heavy rains also contributed to some destruction in the area. Following heavy rains on the 13th of July, the HPT reported several red cedars that had fallen along waypoint 37M 0313144, UTM 0004779. Within the Corridor, however there were no major incidents involving elephants, although a number of indigenous and exotic trees were reported to have been debarked or uprooted.

2.10 Community education and awareness initiatives

Community members were the target of the Trust's outreach education and awareness programme this July. These interventions were undertaken in public market centers near the Ruthumbi Forest Station in Meru on diverse dates of the month. The two short documentary films 'Wanted Dead or Alive' and 'Running Dry' were aired to convey environmental challenges facing the mountain. Ruthumbi was chosen for this particular activity based on its significance as an area notorious for poaching and snaring. The JWPT has been stationed in the area for well over a month now, and the number of snares retrieved by the team has been significant and on the rise. Following the screening, a section of the community approached KWS and offered to avail information on poaching and other related illegal activities. This intelligence was partly responsible for discovery of the illegal Bhang (*Cannabis sativa*) fields. Both the KFS and the KWS are following on additional leads and more suspects may be arrested soon. The airing of the short documentary 'Running Dry' also elicited some reaction from the general public. A segment of the community exhibited disappointment as to how a few greedy individuals had plundered important forest resources. In general and overall, community members were made to understand and appreciate how forests neighbouring their immediate vicinity if destroyed, not only affects community members, but wildlife and the general economy of the country too.



2.11 Fencing initiatives

Despite last month's enforcement measures, a herd of elephants managed to break the Ntirimiti short fence along three different sections of the line. The likely explanation has been prevailing cloudy and windy conditions in July, the solar panels are not harnessing enough solar energy to recharge the batteries. This position has been authenticated by the technician in charge who says the fence line records no voltage at dawn. The damaged sections were nevertheless repaired by a community fence attendant with assistance of the MKT Corridor fencer. Voltage through the fence lines however will continue to be low during the night due to insufficient solar energy in the day. It is hoped that with the onset of August, weather conditions will improve for the better.



2.12 Workshops and meetings

Elephant mortality harmonization meeting

This July there was a 2nd harmonization meeting on elephant mortalities for the Laikipia /Samburu MIKE reporting site held at the Old House in Nanyuki. The meeting was facilitated by KWS and

representation was broad across the spectrum; the Trust was represented by Maurice Nyaligu. Although Mount Kenya is not considered part of the reporting sites under MIKE, its elephants range across the ecosystem and it's imperative that they are incorporated in the harmonization. A total of 102 elephant mortality incidents were reported for the period January to June 2013. Of this total, 61 were reputed to have resulted from poaching while 27 were due to natural factors; the rest were either unknown or the result of problem animal control due to human wildlife conflict. The meeting also deliberated on modalities of how to respond to poaching incidents within certain hotspot areas which continue to exhibit perennial poaching incidents such as in the Rumuruti forest. KWS has formed a national Elephant Conservation Committee that is expected to redress these concerns. In the interim, the Trust is to receive an official invite from KWS and will be represented at the inaugural launch on 29th August this year.