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MONTHLY PROGRAMME ACTIVITY REPORT

APRIL 2014

SUMMARY

Intermittent rainfall marked the onset of April throughout the mountain. Fewer elephants were recorded utilizing the Corridor. Fencers though were busy spraying and clearing weeds and other plants growing along the fence line. Other field interventions made by field and secretariat staff remained ongoing as highlighted below:

- Tree planting and reforestation work
- Community sensitization activities
- Fencing initiatives in Ntirimiti
- The Joint Wildlife Protection Team
- Marania Wildlife Guards
- The Horse Patrol Team
- The Elephant Corridor Team
- Meetings and workshops

The report covers MKT activities for the period 31st March 2014 to 30th April 2014. The following field teams provided updates: *Marania Wildlife Guards*¹; the *Elephant Corridor Team*², the *Horse Patrol Team*³ as well as reports by the northern area supervisor - Maurice Thure 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 under the leadership of the Senior Wildlife Community Officer. Humphrey Munene⁵ provided updates on tree planting, education and awareness. The report for April 2014 was compiled by Maurice Onyino Nyaligu⁶.

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 Mutuma, Samuel Gikunda Japhet and Martin Murugu Gachienja

⁴ JWPT is composed of Edwin Kinyanjui Ngure, (team leader), 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

1. INTRODUCTION

The following are field activities, related outcomes, discoveries and interventions undertaken and observed by field and secretariat staff during the month of April.

Interventions

- Tree planting and reforestation in Karuri area of Ontulili forest block
- Community sensitization and awareness outreach initiatives under the auspices of the Rhino Ark fence
- Fencing initiatives
- Team building, appreciation and support to the firefighting team

Discoveries and observations

- Illegal logging, illegal honey collection and illegal charcoal burning within the National Reserve /Forest Reserve
- Snares, poacher signs, poacher hideouts and related wildlife mortalities
- Elephant Corridor fence intrusion, manipulation and destruction
- Ambushes, arrests and apprehensions

1.1 Programme patrol and field activity intervention areas

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

- *Elephant Corridor Team* - Elephant Corridor and the immediate Corridor precincts'
- *Marania Wildlife Guards* - Marania forest, Kimbo area of Muchiene forest, Chemi chemi ya Ndovu, Kiwanja ya Dyer, Mlima Dinga, Mlima Suruwa, Kisima area, Elephant Corridor, Mlima Nyeusi and Mlima Ngaita areas all within Northern side of Mount Kenya National Reserve
- *Horse Patrol Team (HPT)* - Marania forest, School of adventure area, Marania River side, Emburi area, Karoli area of Ontulili forest, Solo camp area, Kisima area and Mlima Ngaita area all within Northern side of Mount Kenya National Reserve
- *Joint Wildlife Protection Team (JWPT)* - Ruthumbi area and parts of immediate adjoining vicinity
- *Tree planting and fencing initiatives* - Karuri area of the Ontulili forest block
- *Community outreach initiatives* - Chuka and Chogoria in Meru County.

2. PROJECT UPDATES

2.1 Tree planting and reforestation activities

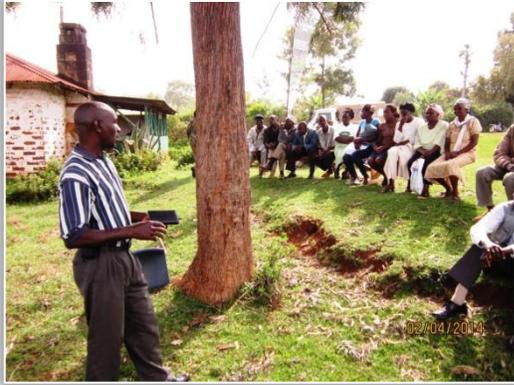
This rainy season unlike previous years may turn out to be a challenge for reforestation activities due to delayed and low levels of rainfall if the situation does not change on time. As reported last month, planting in the Karuri area of the Ontulili forest block during this planting season will focus on replacing dried seedlings planted last year in the old allotted planting areas and partial planting in the newly allotted areas by KFS. On the 16th and 17th several seedlings were transported using the JWPT Land Cruiser. In total, 10,000 seedlings (5,500seedlings from Gatinka Tumaini



Women Group and 4,500 from Kianjogu Mwanzo Mwema Women Group) comprising a mix of *Juniperus procera* and *Olea africana* were delivered to farmers at Karuri for planting during this season. Since the seedlings were transported to the planting site rains in the Timau area have been low, sparse and far in between. Newly planted seedlings have begun showing signs of drying up due to the searing sun. However, the situation is likely to change if the rains resume on time.

2.2 Community sensitization and outreach initiatives (Rhino Ark fence)

This month, the first phase of the Mt. Kenya fence project by Rhino Ark, the Government of Kenya and other partners was completed at the 52km stretch. Construction of this phase started from Kiringa River in Kirinyaga County to Thuci River marking the boundary of Embu County and Tharaka-Nithi County. The second phase has just started after community sensitization meetings were held by the concerned stakeholders (KWS, KFS, Rhino Ark, MKT, and the local adjoining CFA's) during the last week of March and first week of April 2014. This phase will cover the forest belt under the jurisdiction of Chuka forest station, Chogoria forest station both in Tharaka Nithi County and part of Ruthumbi Forest station in Meru County. The sensitization meetings also doubled up with an education component



facilitated by the Trust's field coordinator but also incorporating Rhino Ark, KFS and KWS personnel. A number of Environmental Education awareness films were screened to the immediate surrounding communities. The short documentary film 'Running Dry' in particular was aired at the community gatherings during the awareness and sensitization meetings. The JWPT and the Trust's field coordinator were present at all gatherings.

2.3 Workshop and training on the administration of justice to address wildlife related crime within the Samburu /Laikipia /Mt. Kenya region

From the 10th - 12th of April 2014, a consultative stakeholder workshop cum training on the administration of justice to address wildlife related crimes within the Laikipia /Mt. Kenya /Samburu region was held at the Mpala research centre in Laikipia. The workshop arose from concerns amongst several stakeholders in the region that wildlife related crimes were not being properly prosecuted within the judicial process. Rhino Ark, Space for Giants, Mount Kenya Trust and Kenya Wildlife Service (in particular) were represented. The Trust was represented by the Trust's programme officer. The workshop covered amongst other issues:



- An overview of the criminal trial process from arrest to the completion of the judicial action
- Court room operation process
- Role, composition and overview of the guidelines for court users committees

- Introduction to the criminal procedure code
- Introduction of the relevant Acts
- Drafting of charge sheets
- Handling of evidence, and
- Recording of witness statements.

Feedback emanating from the training and workshop is already being relayed to field based teams in order to expedite wildlife related crimes in the region.

2.4 Workshop on assessment of management effectiveness of Mount Kenya as a World Heritage Site

A workshop on *Assessment of management effectiveness of Mount Kenya as a natural world heritage site* took place at the Old House - Nanyuki from the 14th – 18th April 2014. The workshop was convened by



the Africa Nature Program with the support of UNESCO, the African World Heritage Foundation and IUCN. Facilitation was done by John Makombo of the Uganda Wildlife Authority. This was the first such assessment carried out at the site and was based on a toolkit (Enhancing Our Heritage toolkit) developed by the WCPA /IUCN and UNESCO and is designed to assess progress made in attaining management effectiveness of natural world heritage properties. KWS and KFS site managers on Mount Kenya attended while the Trust was represented by the Programme Officer. The assessment is made up of 12 toolkits looking at broad aspects of management (biodiversity, tourism, security etc). Results of the exercise will feed into the periodic reporting exercise by the State Party and in redressing issues raised by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee regarding the site. Although not represented, the assessment also included the extended property of Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and the

Ngare Ndare Forest Reserve.

2.5 Support to the Elephant Walk organized by the Elephant Neighbours Centre

The Elephant Neighbours Centre (a local NGO based in Langata) is organizing an elephant sensitization walk from Nyahururu town to Nanyuki via Nyeri from the 6th to the 20th of June 2014. The walk is being organized under the theme *'Ivory belongs to Elephants'* and is supported by KWS, LWF, MKT and other stakeholders. MKT made a financial pledge to support the walk as well as committing some of the environmental films and sending the JWPT to join the walk through a section from Nyeri town. The Trust was represented by the Programme Officer.



2.6 Illegal logging, honey harvesting and illegal charcoal kilns within the National Reserve /Forest 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.	1 st April 1630hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	An unidentified indigenous tree found chopped for suspected firewood use	-	
	1 st April 1726hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Three (3) unidentified indigenous trees found felled for suspected use as firewood	-	
2.	4 th April 1425hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	An indigenous 'Mwako' tree found felled although not chopped	-	
	4 th April 1525hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Team members come across several piles of firewood from a 'Mukaragati' tree in one locality	-	
3.	9 th April 1159hrs	Mlima Dinga	Marania Wildlife Guards	Illegal logging of Red cedar (<i>Juniperus procera</i>). Trunks split for use as fencing posts	37N 0327092, UTM 0004657	
4.	16 th April 1040hrs	Mlima Suruwa	Marania Wildlife Guards	A lorry, (registration KZU 213) discovered loaded with three (3) feet of firewood mixed with Rosewood (<i>Hagenia abyssinica</i>) and Bluegum (<i>Eucalyptus spp.</i>)	-	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
5.	23 rd April 0720hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Team members lay an ambush for illegal charcoal burners without success. KWS rangers from Ruiru later lay another ambush in the night	-	
6.	23 rd April 1304hrs	Kiwanja ya Dyer	Marania Wildlife Guards	Team members encounter a site where honey harvesters set illegal hives	37N 0323963, UTM 0000786	
7.	24 th April 1042hrs	Marania forest	Marania Wildlife Guards	A lorry (registration KZF 421) observed loading several unidentified indigenous tree trunks felled using power saws in the company of KFS rangers	37N 0327541, UTM 0007228	
	24 th April 1133hrs	Marania forest	Marania Wildlife Guards	Five (5) men discovered loading Cypress (<i>Cupressus lusitanica</i>) shatters and unidentified indigenous logs. The men had permits and were accompanied by KFS rangers	37N 0327619, UTM 0007610	
8.	28 th April 1028hrs	Mlima Dinga	Marania Wildlife Guards	A number of Red cedar trees found felled and split into fencing posts	37N 0326917, UTM 0004420	
	28 th April 1154hrs	Mlima Dinga	Marania Wildlife Guards	Several Rosewoods that had fallen naturally seen being loaded onto a lorry (KAE 238Q) belonging to a Tigania man	37N 0327538, UTM 0005619	

2.7 Snares, poacher signs, hideouts and related wildlife mortalities

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

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
1.	1 st April 1320hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Team members find four (4) old snares designed to entrap small sized wildlife	-	
2.	3 rd April 1421hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	An area on the moorland, suspected to be in use by poachers along Marimba /Rutundu area	-	
3.	6 th April 0831hrs	Marania forest	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) lame Waterbuck (<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus</i>) observed in a herd of twenty eight (28)	37N 0322078, UTM 0005918	
4.	7 th April 1026hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Team members find and destroy an old snare	-	
5.	8 th April 1046hrs	Mlima Dinga	Marania Wildlife Guards	A fresh adult male Bushbuck (<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>) carcass encountered. The Bushbuck suspected to have been killed by a predator	37N 0326760, UTM 0005227	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
6.	14 th April 1045hrs	Marania river side	Horse Patrol Team	Two (2) lame Zebra (<i>Equus quagga</i>) observed in a herd of forty five (45)	37N 0323856, UTM 0007200	
7.	15 th April 1230hrs	Marania forest	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) lame Zebra observed in a herd of fifteen (15)	37N 0326971, UTM 0007711	
8.	16 th April 0822hrs	Emburi area	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) lame Eland (<i>Taurotragus oryx</i>) observed feeding in a herd of twenty two (22)	37N 0319833, UTM 0004545	
9.	19 th April 0600hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	Team members carry out a joint operation with KWS, Kenya Police and Administration Police in search of poachers in Njoroiboro village in Nkunga forest suspected to have speared an elephant	-	
10.	20 th April 0856hrs	School of Adventure	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) lame Buffalo (<i>Syncerus caffer</i>) observed in a herd of eight (8)	37N 0324087, UTM 0007239	
11.	21 st April 1040hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	The joint team discovers a tree that poachers' use while spearing elephants from above. Tree felled and burnt		
12.	23 rd April 0930hrs	Marania forest	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) lame Zebra seen in a herd of fifteen (15)	37N 0328079, UTM 0007660	
13.	24 th April 0920hrs	Emburi area	Horse Patrol Team	A wire snare capable of entrapping a large mammal found and destroyed	37N 0319783, UTM 0005868	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
14.	25 th April 0840hrs	Karoli area	Horse Patrol Team	Twenty (20) suspected poacher huts found and destroyed by team members	37N 0313476, UTM 0005868	
	25 th April 1005hrs	Karoli area of Ontulili forest	Horse Patrol Team	Five (5) women found illegally collecting firewood without a permit. Two (2) axes, one (1) machete and three (3) ropes recovered	37N 0311294, UTM 0003261	
	25 th April 1112hrs	Karoli area	Horse Patrol Team	One spear, two blood stained jackets, four fresh limbs of warthog, two machetes with blood stain, four sufurias containing blood, one and a half kilogramme piece of fresh meat (suspected to be that of zebra), five sucks with blood stain and one suck containing honey recovered from home of suspected poacher Kaburu	37N 0312279, UTM 0005647	
15.	28 th April 0845hrs	Solo camp area	Horse Patrol Team	Two (2) lame Zebras observed in a herd of sixty eight (68)	37N 0321803, UTM 0004241	
	28 th April 1030hrs	Marania river side	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) lame Zebra seen in a herd of fifteen (15)	37N 0323119, UTM 0001949	
16.	29 th April 0703hrs	Kisima /Emburi farms boundary	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) wire snare capable of entrapping a large mammal found and destroyed	37N 0321162, UTM 0006909	

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	PARTICULARS	COORDINATES	PHOTO
	29 th April 1102hrs	Kisima /Emburi farms boundary	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) wire snare capable of entraping a small sized mammal found and destroyed	37N 0321224, UTM 0006022	
	29 th April 1120hrs	Kisima /Emburi farms boundary	Horse Patrol Team	One (1) wire snare capable of entraping a small sized mammal found and destroyed	37N 0321163, UTM 0006300	

2.8 Elephant Corridor fence intrusion, destruction and manipulation

Fence intrusions along the Corridor perimeter continue to be observed. Most incidents relate to harvesting of grass especially when animal fodder is hard to come by in the adjoining community areas. As with previous months however, elephants continue to be observed destroying trees within a section of the forest particularly within the northern section as elaborated below.



#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS
1.	6 th April 0617hrs	Marania Corridor	Elephant Corridor Team	A lone Elephant noted to have brought down a huge tree resulting in a shot
2.	12 th April 1403hrs	Kamiti Corridor	Elephant Corridor Team	Five (5) Blue gum (<i>Eucalyptus spp.</i>) trees found felled and chopped
3.	17 th April 0740hrs	Kamiti Corridor	Elephant Corridor Team	Three (3) Blue gum trees found felled by elephants
4.	19 th April 1105hrs	Kamiti Corridor	Elephant Corridor Team	One (1) Blue gum tree found cut and chopped
	19 th April 1718hrs	Kamiti Corridor	Elephant Corridor Team	Five (5) Blue gum trees found missing within the Corridor

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS
5.	29 th April 1250hrs	Kamiti Corridor	Elephant Corridor Team	A man escapes after being spotted illegally collecting grass within the Corridor

2.9 Ambushes, arrests and apprehensions

The table below chronicles information relating to the above subject:

#	DATE & TIME	AREA	TEAM	OBSERVATIONS /REMARKS	PHOTO
1.	9 th April 1730hrs	Ruthumbi	Joint Wildlife Protection Team	While returning from a community sensitization meeting, team members arrest a man in possession of Podo (<i>Podocarpus spp.</i>) posts /timber frames. Suspect taken to Nkubu police station under the OB. No.52/09/04/2014	

2.10 Ntirimiti short fence

Some minor damage was reported on the Ntirimiti short fence on the 23rd April as a result of a log being dropped by loggers clear felling a *Eucalyptus (Eucalyptus spp.)* plantation next to the Marania forest station offices. The damaged section was however repaired by the community fence attendant responsible for daily maintenance of the fence. The surrounding community in particular is very keen to ensure that any damage to the fence line is quickly rectified. A young man was also arrested by members of the community after being caught deliberately damaging sections of the line. It is not clear what his motives were. Investigations are underway to establish the forces and personalities that may be using the boy to vandalize the fence.



As reported in previous months, the fence continues to perform well following improvements to the power source system some two months ago. A new 200Ah battery installed to increase the charge storage capacity and a 65Watt solar panel was added to increase the charging amperage. The voltage along the fence line has remained high both during the day and in the night since improvements were made.

2.11 Team building, appreciation and support to the firefighting team

On 11th April several members of the combined team that had jointly tackled resurgent fires in Marania forest were treated to a luncheon by Mount Kenya Trust at the Horse Patrol Team base near the boundary of the National Reserve at Kisima farm. The 'nyama choma' luncheon brought together members of the KWS ranger unit based at Marania operational post, all MKT field based teams as well as representatives of Kisima farm and personnel of Kisima security who took part in extinguishing the March fires. The get-together was facilitated by the Trust's chairman and director Mr. Jeremy Block. The luncheon was meant to show support and appreciation for the teams.