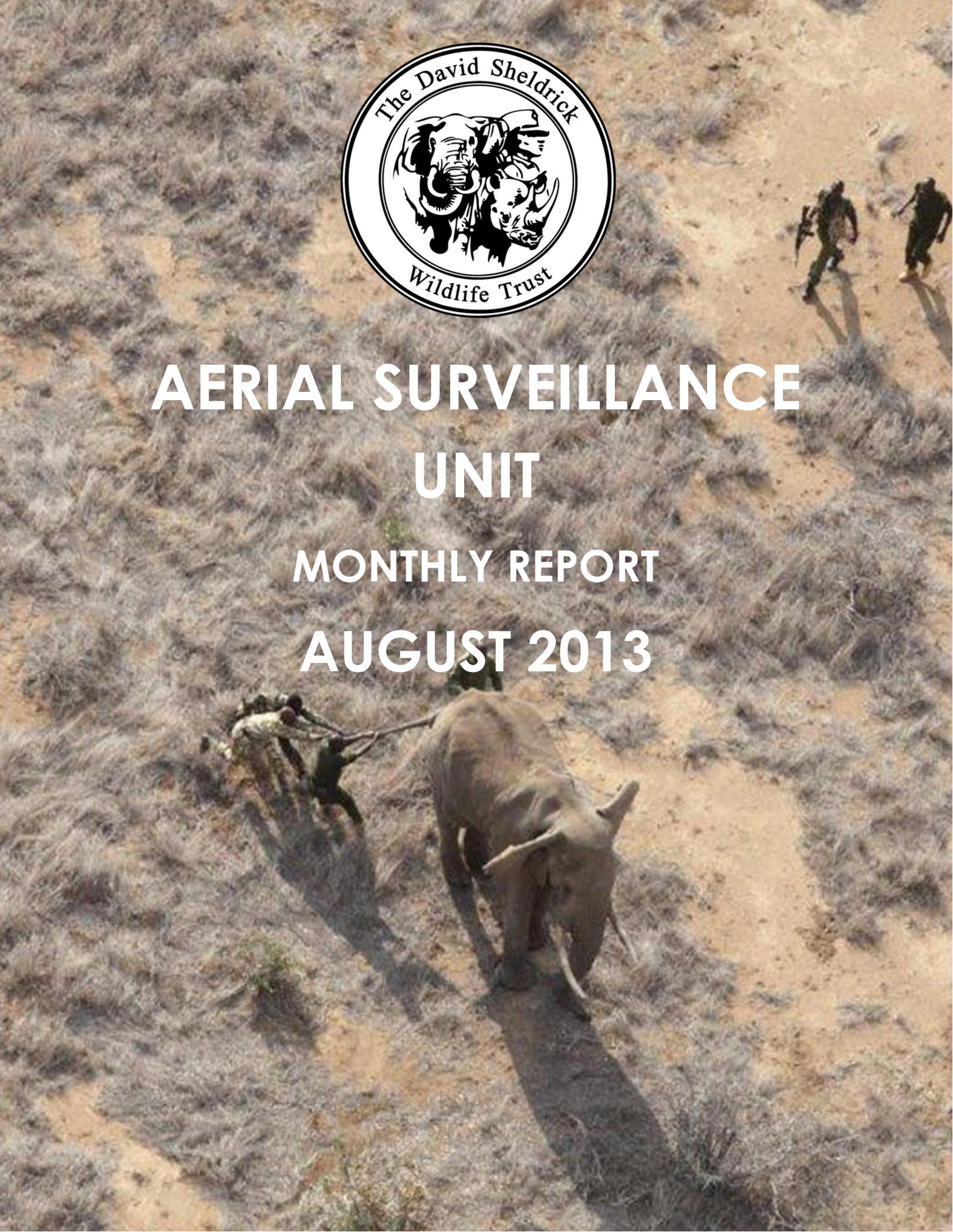




AERIAL SURVEILLANCE UNIT

MONTHLY REPORT
AUGUST 2013



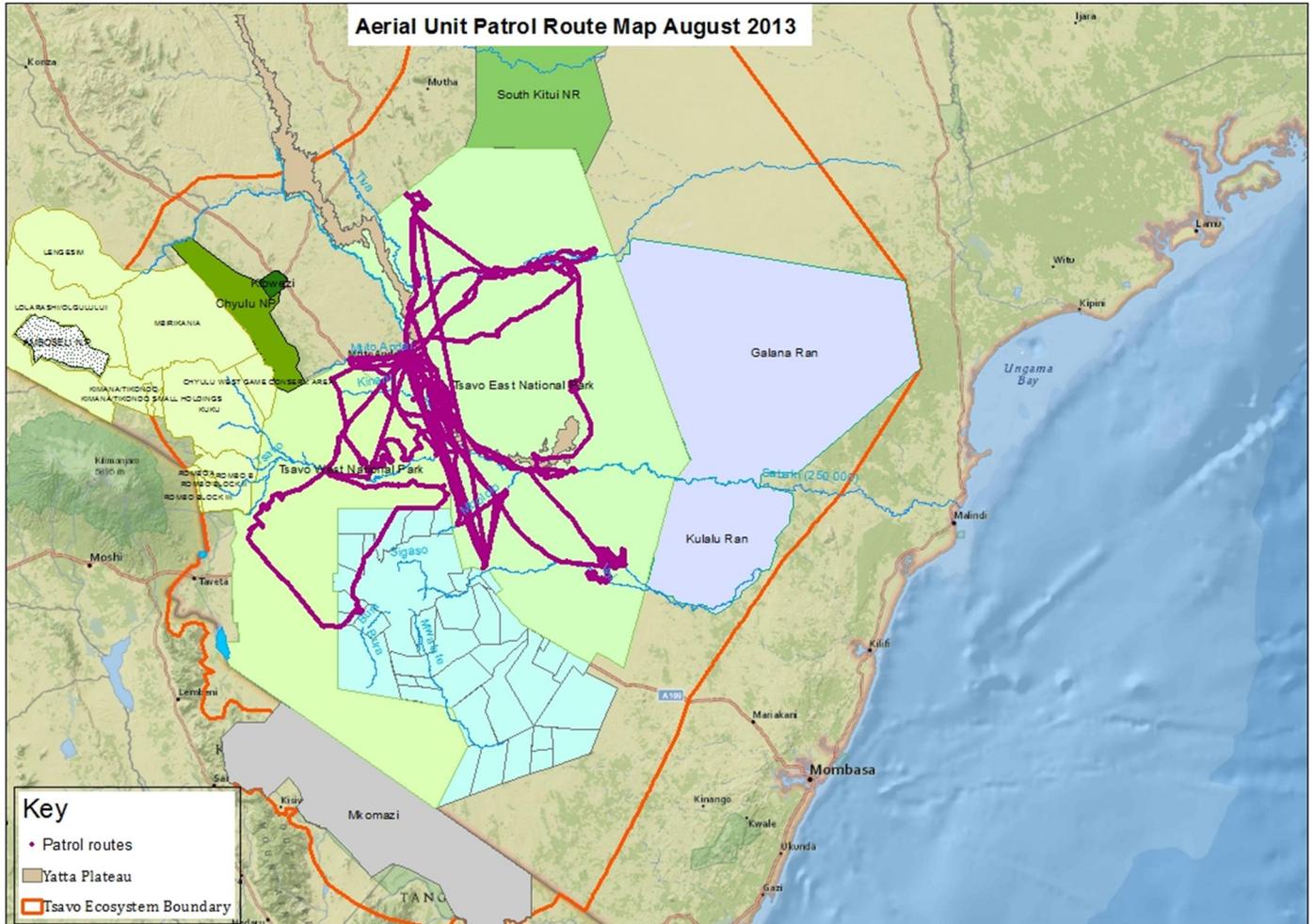


AERIAL STATISTICS

AUGUST 2013

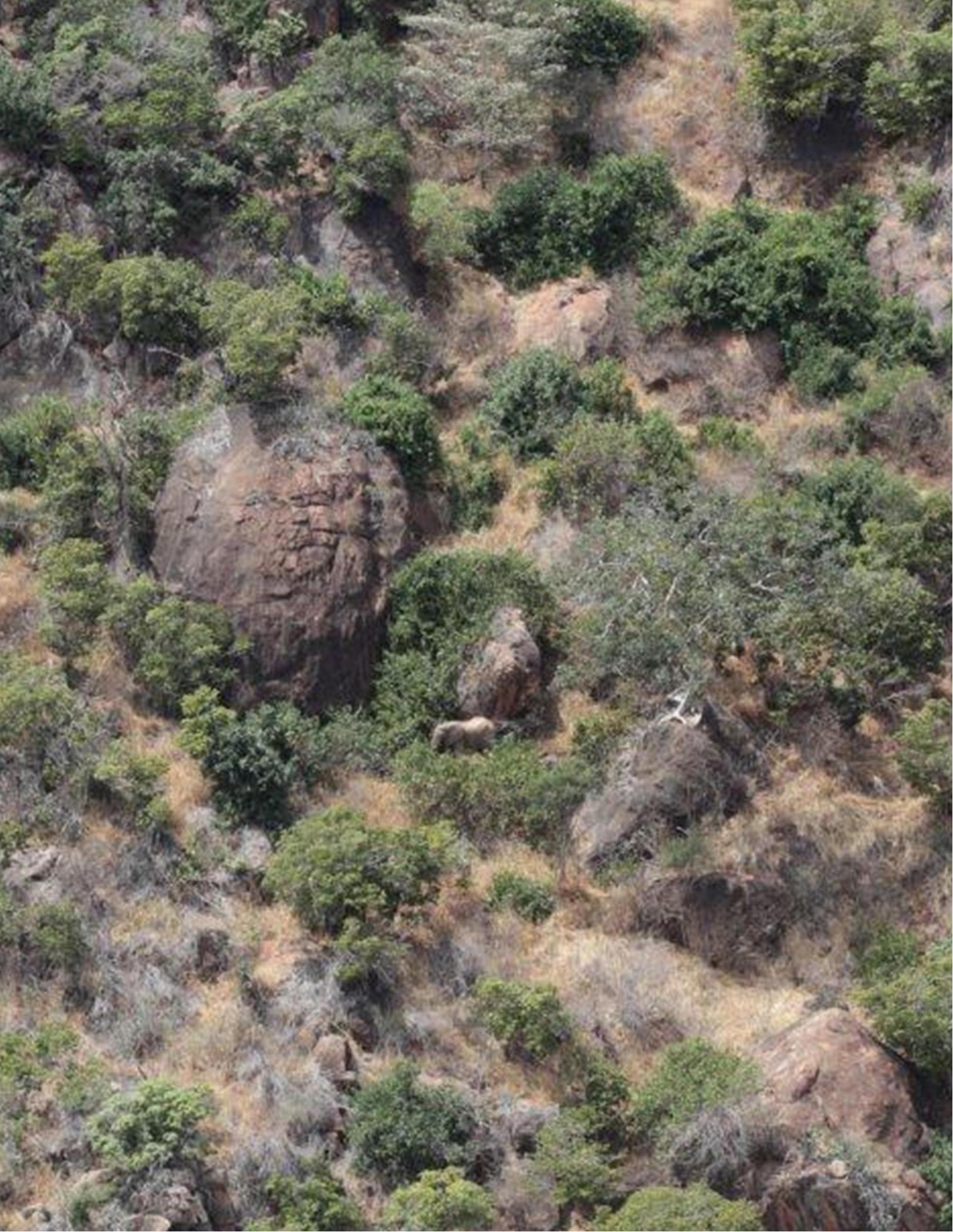
HOURS FLOWN	25.2
MILES COVERED	2137.4
AREAS PATROLLED	Tsavo East and West NP, Rhino Sanctuary, Group Ranches





During this month Tsavo East and West National Parks continued to dry off, although the weather was overcast and cool. 11 days were flown carrying out aerial patrols, elephant darting and a baby elephant rescue, whilst Tsavo West was patrolled for two days with a focus on the Rhino Sanctuary and surrounding areas.





The month started off with the sighting of an elephant carcass in the Tsavo Triangle. A follow up from our ground teams identified the culprits who were arrested and jailed. The same day a call came in from a community member in Tsavo East NP who had seen a lone elephant calf.

Early on August 3rd the plane was searching for the baby elephant which was soon spotted. Our Voi Stockade Team was called and they quickly headed out to pick up the baby elephant. Following directions from the air they soon captured the one year old calf (later named Mudanda), and took her back to Voi for care where she is doing well, and already roaming with the other Voi orphans.



As with last month the aircraft was back assisting the Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit in locating and darting wounded elephants. Three elephants were treated in the Ithumba area, which were all suffering from arrow wounds. The Vet Unit and Voi Team worked together in the Satao area of Tsavo East where a large number of elephant bulls have been seen with arrow wounds. On August 14th three elephant bulls were darted and treated in succession, the DSWT aircraft playing a crucial role in locating the bulls for the Vet Unit.

During a regular aerial patrol of Tsavo West NP one of the big bulls treated in July with a very serious arrow wound was sighted. His wound had healed well and he had clearly put on weight and was looking good.

It is often difficult to follow up on treated cases as other work arises and the treated elephant leaves the area, so it is always good to see them doing well later.



A number of shooting platforms and hideouts have been located from the air and the ground teams have followed up successfully, sometimes with arrests. On one occasion this month the aircraft surprised four poachers collecting water at a spring. They were equipped with arrows and carried white bags with supplies. All four scattered in different directions as they expected that a ground team was nearby. Unfortunately this time it was late in the evening and there was no time to get a team in to track them, until the next morning. Some items were recovered and the tracks were followed showing that they exited the park.

One challenge our ground teams have is accessing areas where patrols are necessary or a rapid follow up is required when the aircraft sights something. With the approval of KWS we have begun work on some of the roads that were washed away in the April rains. The initial work of making the river beds passable will allow for teams to carry out more thorough and widespread patrols during this dry period when poaching is at its height.

More information about the DSWT's Anti-Poaching program and each team's monthly report can be found at www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org





As it has dried off throughout July and August herds of cattle and camels have encroached further into both Tsavo East and West. On the Tiva River the herders have dug new wells upstream of Bisadi, and made bomas 50km inside the park. In Tsavo West the area south of the Taveta Rd has eased up and few cattle were seen, but on the western side around Ziwani the herds of cattle inside the park total thousands.

Other notable wildlife sightings include a large bull elephant roaming the Tsavo plains, arrow free; hippos all along the river sunbathing on the sandbanks in the cooler weather; and one elephant thousands of feet up on the steep slopes of Ngulia mountain in Tsavo West.





Reported by Nick Trent
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