



# AERIAL SURVEILLANCE



# UNIT

# MONTHLY REPORT

# MARCH 2016

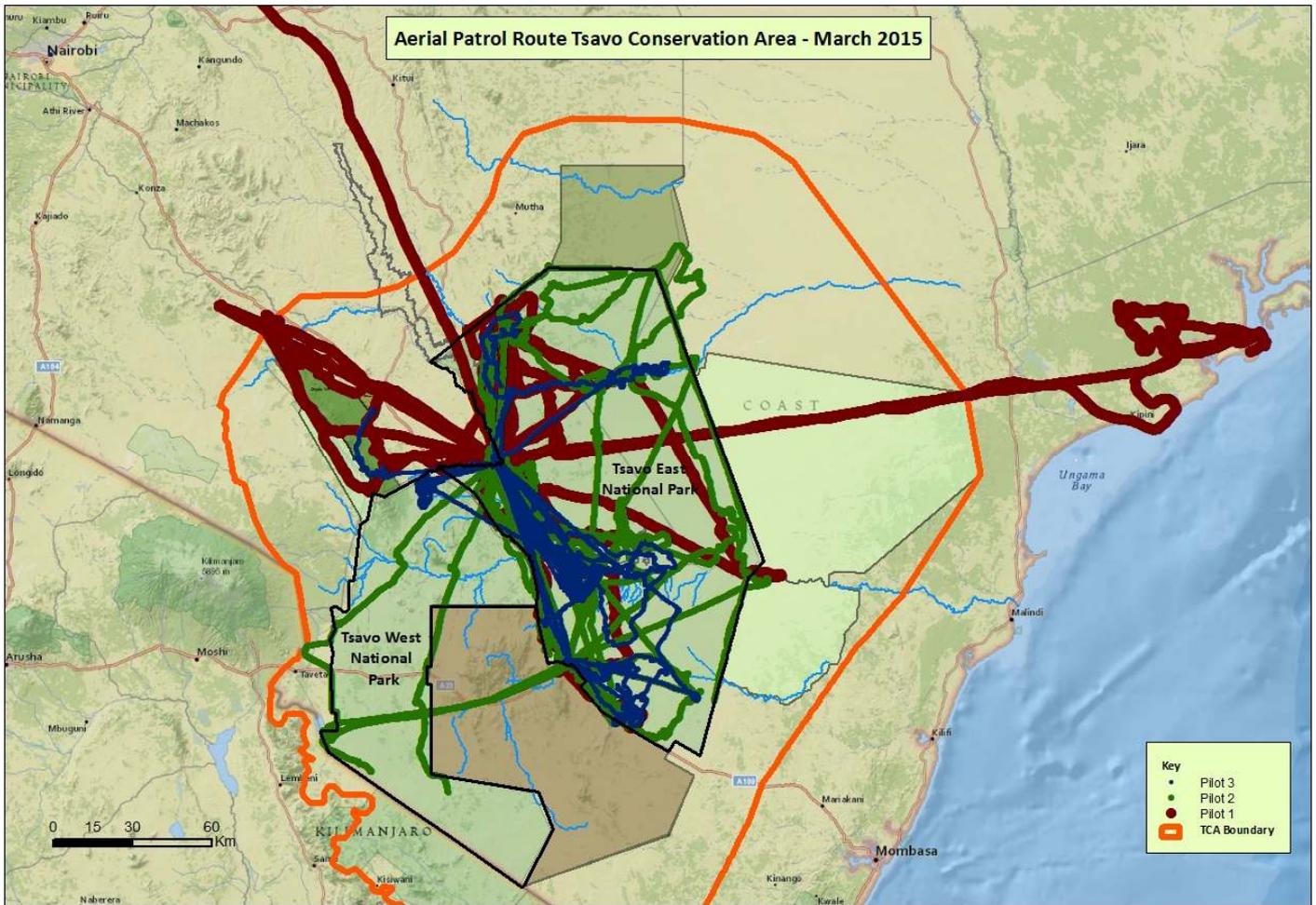




## AERIAL STATISTICS

## MARCH 2016

<b>HOURS FLOWN</b>	<b>135.2</b>
<b>KMS COVERED</b>	<b>18,987.2</b>
<b>AREAS PATROLLED</b>	<b>Tsavo East and West National Parks, Chyulu Hills, Kibwezi Forest and bordering Ranches and community areas</b>



March was a month of record high temperatures across Tsavo and much of Kenya. It was a month of hot and extremely bumpy flying for the DSWT pilots. Whilst some waterholes remained with water and the Tiva River even flowed after some downpours further inland, much of Tsavo dried off.

Elephants were widespread coming together in large herds towards the end of the month in anticipation of the rains. Regular patrols were carried out daily by the Trust air wing including attending to a number of elephant treatments as well as some orphaned baby elephant rescues.





Predictably as the land dried up the cattle began to move back into the park. In Tsavo East, the Trust aircraft kept up a daily watch on cattle movements, resulting in a coordinated operation by KWS management to remove cattle from the park.

KWS rangers on the ground focused their efforts on the cattle problem and came out triumphant after many days of catching herders and setting up a boma to impound cattle. As a result, by the end of the month the numbers of cattle inside Tsavo East NP were minimal. The aircraft continue to monitor the situation.

Illegally grazing cattle being pushed out of the Park





A number of baby elephant rescues needed the support of the Trust aircraft this month. A report came in early March from a tour operator who had seen an elephant calf with a damaged leg. After three attempts to find it, the calf was finally located with its mother who had left the herd to remain with her calf which was about 4 years old.

At first the calf was treated by the DSWT/KWS Mobile Vet Unit, and returned to its mother, yet after continued aerial monitoring on a daily basis it was witnessed that the mother abandoned the calf when it became too immobile to keep up.

The Trust ground teams were quick to respond with the aircraft guiding them from above. The calf was sedated by the vet as it was a calf over three years old, and transported it to the Voi Stockade where it received intensive treatment. Unfortunately, by month end it had died from its injuries.



*Before the calf was rescued, being left by the herd*

*The calf being captured by the ground teams*



Towards the end of the month, while on routine patrol, one of the Trust pilots sighted another small wounded calf following behind its mother who was waiting for it at the back of the herd. Over the next week the calf was sighted daily and monitored, especially as the herd was in a very unfavourable area. The calf was clearly badly wounded and lagging further and further behind its mother whilst the injury was becoming worse with infection evident. A decision was made by the KWS Veterinary officer to rescue it. A helicopter moved in while the ground team were close by and the baby was rescued and flown to Nairobi. It was later found to have a shattered femur close to the knee joint and is receiving special attention at the Nairobi orphanage.

Another little orphan elephant was sighted by a KWS patrol team who called in the ground unit and Trust aircraft. Soon the baby was found and rescued and driven to Voi by the Voi Stockade team. An aircraft from Nairobi picked up the little elephant and delivered him to the Nairobi orphanage where he is doing well. His name is Galla and he is already placed on the Trust's fostering program having settled well and joined the Nursery unit.



*The baby elephant rescued by the helicopter who had a shattered femur*



*Galla being rescued successfully and taken to Nairobi*

Six adult elephants were treated by the DSWT/KWS Mobile Vet Unit with the aid of the Trust's aircraft. Because of this effective and timely treatment all were given a good chance of recovery. One big bull was treated while ITV's Mark Austin was following the DSWT's field teams reporting live from Kenya when he was present for the treatment, making it possible for them to tell the story of the Trust's long and important partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Service in Tsavo.

During a regular aerial patrol one of the Supercubs sighted an elephant with a slight limp, which was soon identified as an elephant treated for a foot injury back in November 2015. The bull appeared to be in good health and was moving well on the foot. It is always encouraging to learn of old friends that have received treatment from the DSWT/KWS Vet Units, and know that they are ok!





Two elephant carcasses were sighted while on patrol. KWS ground teams visited them on the ground and could not determine the cause of death, although the tusks had been removed by poachers. Three old shooting blinds were also sighted in the same area and destroyed by the ground units.

Following a report from KWS rangers the Trust's Cessna 185 flew the DSWT/KWS Mobile Veterinary Unit to where a lion had been poisoned by Maasai herders. The herders administered lethal poison to the remains of a cow carcass, which the lion had killed inside the park, where the cattle should never have been. Along with the dead lioness were two palm nut vultures, one immature Bateleur eagle and one jackal - all casualties. Specimens were taken back to the labs to be further analysed.





Other significant sightings this month included two groups of wild dogs, both packs about 18-20 strong; Large numbers of vultures on a number of separate occasions were seen too, which is heartening, as over the years vultures have been suffering due to poisoning.

A giraffe was located from the air, trapped in a snare and killed for bush meat; A striped hyena on his evening sortie to find food was also seen.





We have been watching with interest the ongoing progress of the Standard Gauge Railway through Tsavo knowing that it will bring much confusion and conflict as migration routes have been compromised. Until the wildlife and particularly the elephants learn of the few underpasses along the line, times will be challenging and our aircraft and teams will need to help KWS with these predicted challenges.





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