



AERIAL SURVEILLANCE UNIT

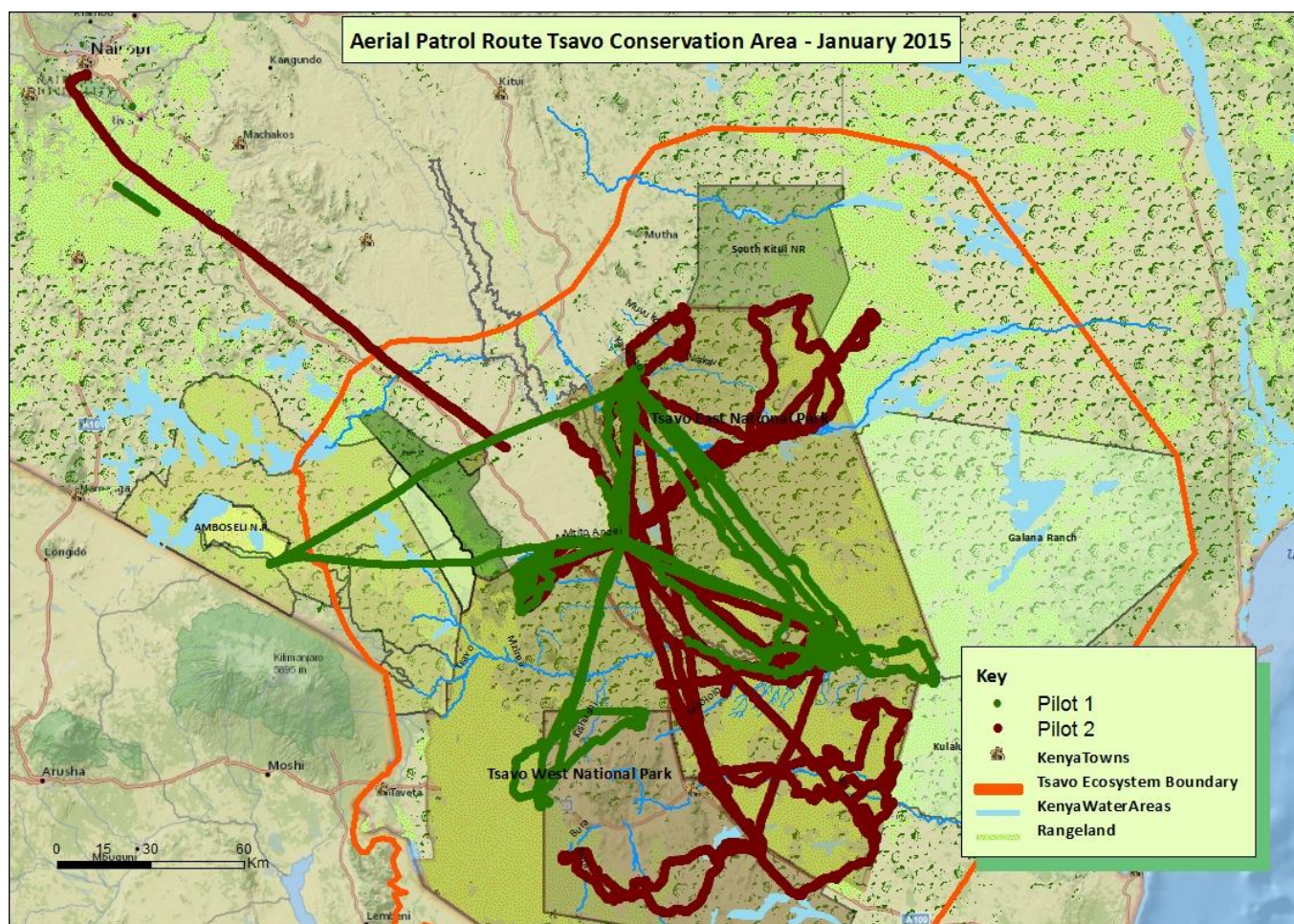
MONTHLY REPORT
JANUARY 2015



AERIAL STATISTICS

JANUARY 2015

HOURS FLOWN	101.1
KMS COVERED	13,294
AREAS PATROLLED	Galana Conservancy; Tsavo River; ManEaters; Tsavo Triangle; Voi River; Lugards; Emusaya; Mbulia Ranch; Ndia Ndasa; Kithasio; Lualenyi Ranch; Kanjaro; Jipe; Ziwani; Kamboyo; Lali Hills



January, the month of transition from wet to dry. Always a month where the aerial unit has to be on special watch for poaching activity around waterholes as Tsavo dries up. As a result the majority of aerial patrols this month focused on the waterholes across Tsavo.





Seven shooting blinds were found and destroyed this month, all hidden in bushes next to waterholes. As the water sources across Tsavo dry up after the rains the movement of elephants and other animals becomes more predictable. As water becomes limited it is at these areas the poachers set their hides and wait for unsuspecting targets. Thanks to constant aerial patrols, and follow up from the ground teams, the poachers' activities have been thwarted and kept to a minimum.

Five elephant carcasses were sighted from the air in the month of January, ranging from very fresh to old. One old carcass was sighted from the air with tusks still intact and the tusks were recovered by KWS rangers. While it is difficult to determine and confirm the cause of death of the older ones the fresh carcass was a result of poisoned arrow.





Three wounded elephants were sighted from the air this month and as a result able to receive lifesaving treatment from the KWS veterinary officers seconded to the Trust funded Tsavo Mobile Veterinary Unit.

One bull had a cable snare around his leg and this was first detected by the ground anti-poaching teams who could see from the tracks he was in trouble. DSWT Aerial support was called upon and it took nine hours of flying to eventually locate him to then administer treatment. The full story can be read [here](#).





January is also a month for human-wildlife conflict with crop raiding elephants with a taste for maize, water melons and other crops targeting community fields at night. Reports have been received of elephants helping themselves to community crops on many populated boundaries of the protected areas this month and prompt assistance is called upon and required. Areas that have been experiencing crop raiding elephants and requiring aerial support include Mbulia Ranch bordering Tsavo West, along with the communities to the north of Tsavo East and communities bordering the park around the Taita Hills.





The helicopter assisted in removing six elephants from the community next to Kibwezi Forest. There was a big bull, three females and two calves involved. KWS rangers were on the scene to calm the crowd. The helicopter pushed the elephants back in the direction of the protected areas and the bull led the way from the beginning, the others following in a line behind him.

The community mostly stayed out of the way of the elephants. After about half an hour they had moved one kilometre towards the Chyulu National park through a difficult wooded area. At this point the bull became tired of being pushed around by the helicopter and started testing the fence with his trunk. With the siren blaring, the helicopter moved closer to push him away from the fence. His mind was made up. Ignoring the helicopter and the siren, he smashed the fence down and dragged it behind him up the hill. He managed to pull out 16 posts in the process!

The remaining elephants were pushed two kilometres to the end of the fence line and into then into the park. This took approximately an hour. Meanwhile a crowd had begun to gather which frightened the elephants which made moving them in the right direction more challenging and increasingly dangerous for the gathering crowd. Finally the elephants reached the park where they will hopefully remain.





The helicopter with KWS rangers spot-checked all the water sources in the vicinity of the Yatta Plateau throughout the month, while rangers scouted the area on the ground the helicopter gave top cover. At one site a large male buffalo burst from a bush and had to be driven away from the rangers by the helicopter!

At another site on top of the Yatta the rangers discovered a bag of flour and beans that had been dropped by poachers. Signs of a camp in the area or signs of recent activity could not be found despite a thorough search. On another occasion KWS rangers were dropped at a shooting platform beside a water point where they discovered a cooking fire, a box of matches, guinea fowl feathers and blood of about two days prior.





Surprisingly large numbers of cattle and goats remain inside the two parks this month. Normally following the rains the pressure in the parks is relieved. In Tsavo East the area west of Kone and the area west of Lali Hills saw large numbers of manyattas, cattle and goats. In Tsavo West large numbers of cattle were sighted in the areas around Lake Jipe and Ziwani. .

Ongoing patrols of the Northern Area of Tsavo East have identified a number of loggers' bicycle tracks heading into the park. The remoteness of the Northern Area makes it very challenging for the ground teams to catch these loggers. Frequent follow up patrols have been carried out resulting in number of arrests.





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