



AERIAL SURVEILLANCE UNIT

MONTHLY REPORT

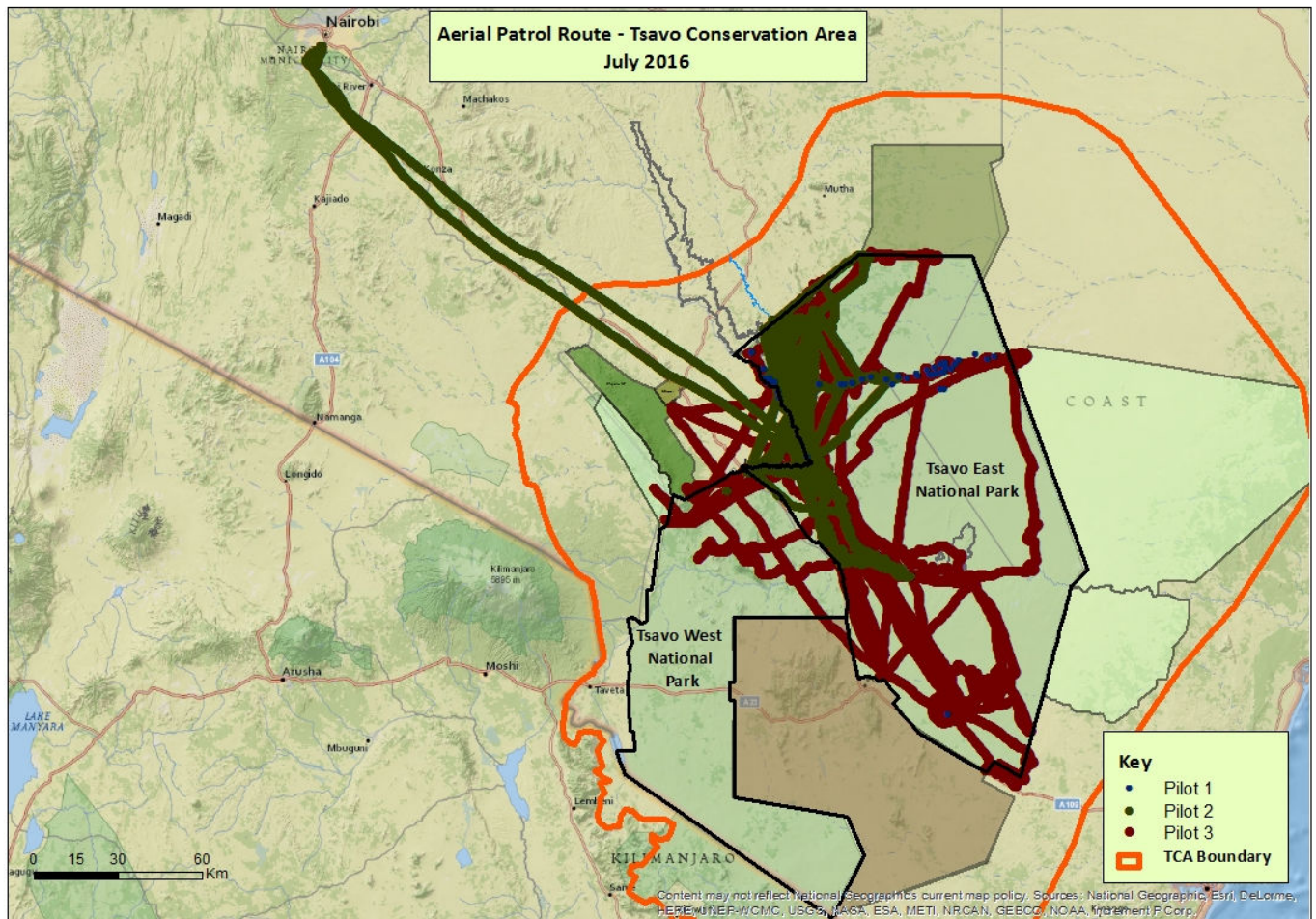
JULY 2016



AERIAL STATISTICS

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HOURS FLOWN	73.4
KMS COVERED	9190
AREAS PATROLLED	Tsavo East and West National Parks, Chyulu Hills, Kibwezi Forest, bordering Ranches and community areas



During the month of July, the DSWT's Aerial Unit anticipated a large influx of veterinary cases, as is usually the case at this time of year. However, we were fortunate in finding very few. A total of 3 elephants were treated with the assistance of the Trust's aircraft.

An additional 3 elephants were also sighted with injuries during July, which had either healed or were healing on their own and treatment was not necessary, such as the cases of a mother elephant with a calf, who had a severely deformed leg. This elephant had been sighted on several occasions by tourists and even relocated by the aircraft only to disappear before the veterinary team could assess the injury. On this occasion, however, the vet team was on standby when the aircraft located the elephant and Dr. Poghon was able to inspect the injury from a short distance away. Although the mother has reduced mobility, the injury is completely healed and does not require treatment.





MONTHLY AERIAL SUMMARY

On the 6th of July ex-orphan Makireti returned to the Ithumba stockade with an arrow lodged in her side. Jagged barbs on the arrow prevented it from being easily removed, so Dr. Poghon's services were requested. That night Makireti was kept inside the stockades and the following morning the Aerial Unit was sent to collect Dr. Poghon from the MWCT Research Centre in Chyulu Hills where he had been collaring a problem lion. Once on the scene Dr. Poghon immediately went to work preparing his dart. Makireti was darted inside the stockade and then let out once the dart had started to take effect. Shortly after she fell asleep standing up and was pushed over by the team so that the treatment could commence.

Another ex-orphan, Kibo, had been waiting patiently outside the stockade for Makireti and stood beside her for almost the entire duration of the treatment, touching her trunk and gently nudging her with his foot to try and wake her. The dart was removed with some difficulty as it had hit a rib and bent on impact. This turned out to be a very fortunate thing, because the injury would have been much more serious had the arrow pierced the chest cavity. Makireti is now doing much better, and has recovered from this traumatic ordeal. Since her treatment, a total of 4 poachers have been arrested in the Ithumba area in possession of poisoned arrows, so it is hoped that her aggressor is among them.



Kibo watching over Makireti's operation at the Ithumba stockades



The DSWT/KWS Mobile Veterinary Unit removing a poisoned arrow from Orphan Makireti

On the 9th of July an elephant with an abscess caused by a poisoned arrow was located by one of the aircraft having originally been sighted by a vehicle taking water from Dida Harea, one of the boreholes installed and maintained by the DSWT to provide water for wildlife in remote areas of the Park. The Trust's Bura Anti-Poaching Team monitored the elephant on the ground until KWS Vet Dr. Njoroge from the KWS/DSWT Amboseli Mobile Vet Unit could arrive to treat the wound. The treatment was successful and the elephant is expected to make a full recovery.

The third elephant, a young bull, was sighted by one of our ground teams and darted by Dr. Poghon with assistance from the DSWT's helicopter. An arrow was also removed from his back where it had been festering for over a week. Fortunately, he was found in time and is also expected to make a full recovery.

Only one elephant carcass was discovered during the month, which was an elephant near the Tiva River – an obvious victim of poaching, having had its tusks removed. Again, it is hoped that its killers are among those who have been apprehended by our ground teams during the month.



One of the elephants treated during the month in the Dida Harea area showing an abscess on his side caused by a poisoned arrow

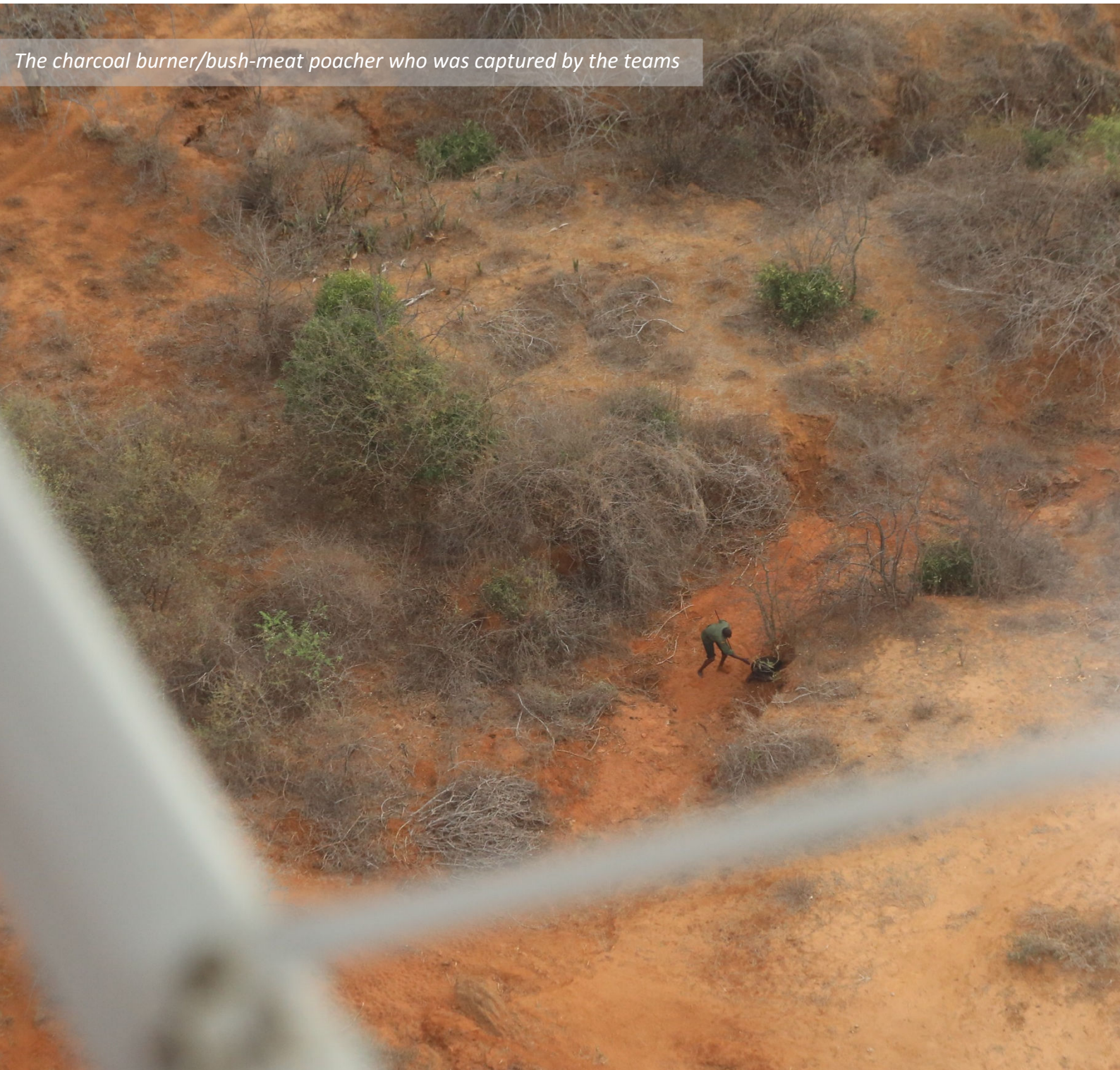


An elephant carcass was spotted near the Tiva River with his tusks already removed by poachers

The majority of illegal activities sighted during July consisted of illegal grazing and charcoal burning. Pressure during the dry months from herders on the eastern boundary of the Parks is high and many thousands of livestock are brought into the Park when water and grazing has become scarce elsewhere in bordering community lands. On the western side of the Park along the Athi River, charcoal activity has increased recently with many charcoal kilns sighted by the Aerial Unit and later destroyed by ground teams.

On the 30th of July, a charcoal burner/bush-meat poacher was sighted from one of the aircrafts and in a joint operation between the Aerial Unit and the Trust's new Yatta Anti-Poaching Team, he was successfully captured after nearly an hour of pursuit. He was found in possession of 32 snares and later booked at the police station.

The charcoal burner/bush-meat poacher who was captured by the teams



Livestock herders illegally settling in the Parks and grazing their cattle





Highlights of the month were the sighting of a pride of lions on the Tiva River and a leopard perched on a rocky kopje near the Yatta.

The DSWT pilots were also encouraged to see a number of Grevy's Zebra and a herd of over 2000 buffalo.







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