



# AERIAL SURVEILLANCE UNIT

MONTHLY REPORT

JUNE 2018





## AERIAL STATISTICS

**JUNE 2018**

<b>HOURS FLOWN</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>KMS COVERED</b>	<b>20,610</b>
<b>AREAS PATROLLED</b>	Tsavo East Triangle, Yatta, Ithumba and Tiva, Ndiandaza – Kone, Chyulu Hills National park, Eastern boundary of Tsavo East and Southern Tsavo West.

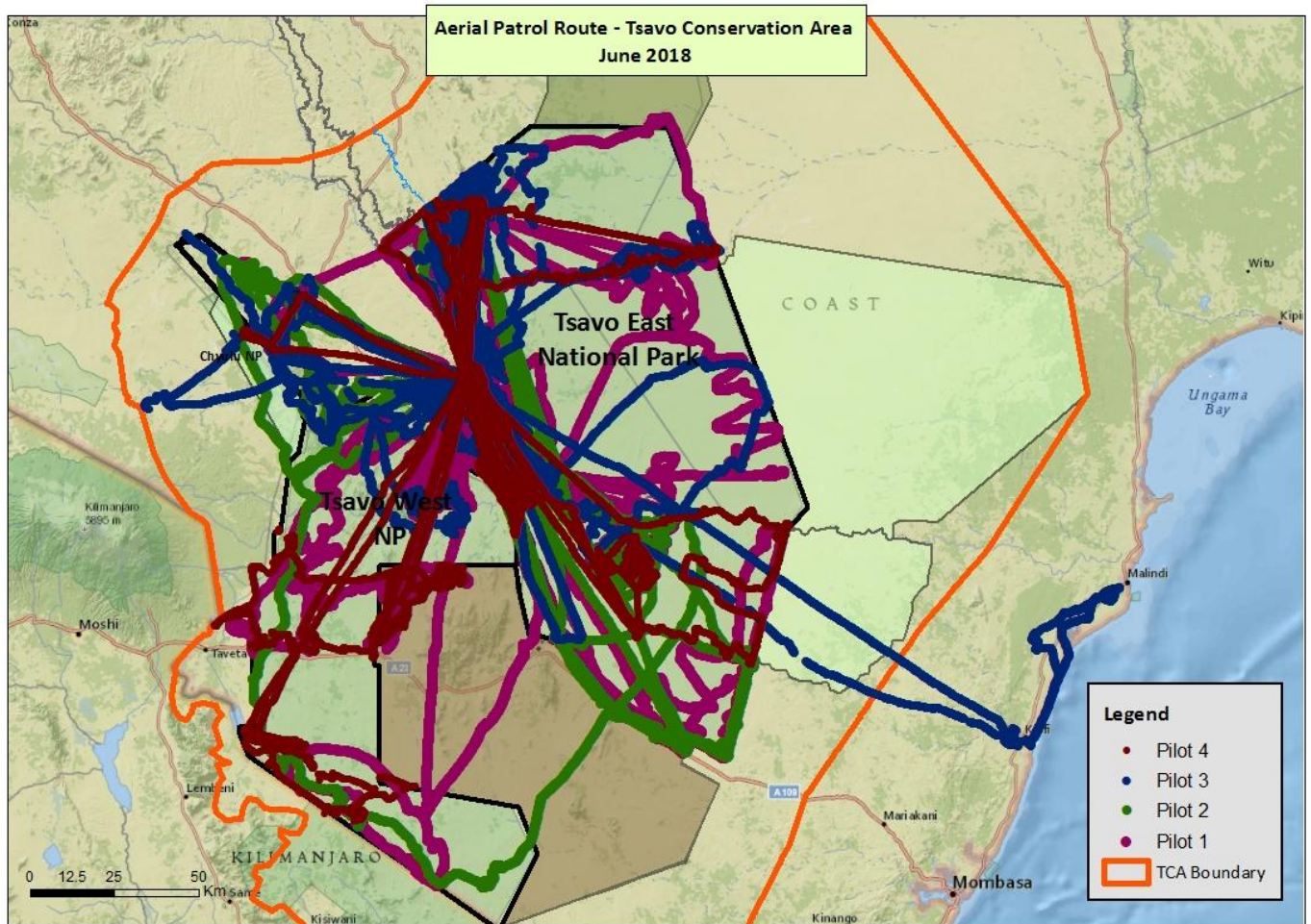






JUNE 2018

# MONTHLY AERIAL PATROL MAP









# MONTHLY AERIAL SUMMARY

June has proved to be a month of change; the rains which have graced the greater Tsavo area in the last few months have subsided, and water has become less widespread in all corners of the park. A consequence is that poaching and other illegal activities will likely be on the rise moving forwards, meaning it will be all hands-on deck for both the fixed wing and helicopter pilots.









Ground teams have been discovering more and more snares, the hot zones being around the area where the Tiva River leaves the Yatta Plateau; earlier in the month, over 60 snares were discovered in this location. Subsequent helicopter patrols proved to be highly beneficial, leading to the discovery of a harbour used by bush meat poachers (and very recently vacated). Their belongings were seized by ground teams and the harbour was destroyed. Further helicopter patrols through June discovered and destroyed another two other harbours as well.

Routine aerial patrols by DSWT pilots have also been finding old shooting blinds strategically placed next to waterholes, which are quickly destroyed by teams either on the ground or on patrol with the helicopter. The DSWT helicopter responded to a report of gunshots in the remote eastern sector of the park during the month, no carcasses were found, but there were several herds of cattle in the area; KWS dealt with this illegal intrusion.



Snares being lifted by the KWS/DSWT Rangers





A poaching harbour sighted from the air and destroyed by the DSWT/KWS Rangers



Unfortunately, near the end of the month there was one case where a DSWT desnaring team discovered a giraffe that had been poached for bushmeat in Tsavo West, relatively close to Kamboyo and the boundary at Kathekakai. It was a fresh scene and the KWS/DSWT Dog Unit was quickly mobilized, with fixed wing aircraft standing by to offer aerial support if needed. On this occasion tracks did not lead to apprehending the offenders.

For two weeks in June, Mr Jay Crafter from Invicuts K9, a specialist canine training unit, spent time at Kaluku helping with both the training of the dogs and their handlers in all their operational aspects as well as helping with their regular ground patrols throughout the park. The DSWT helicopter was also involved in a number of the exercises.









Both fixed wing and helicopter have been involved in the on-going battle with livestock in the parks as well as charcoal production in the Chyulus and various ranches neighbouring Tsavo, whilst KWS clearing of illegal marijuana plantations is ongoing. Most of the livestock incursions have been along the eastern boundary of Tsavo East and in southern Tsavo West along the Kenya-Tanzania border, where DSWT has been working in conjunction with KWS to tackle the problem. Operations include either pushing the livestock out with the aircraft or providing KWS ground units with coordinates, which relieves the KWS of the hard task of locating herds and settlements from the ground. Most of these incursions are in very remote corners of the park with little road infrastructure, meaning the only way to effectively identify the hotspots is from the air.

Charcoal production in both the Chyulus and in the Kishushe/Mbulia ranches is lower than it has been in past months, with the average number of kilns found seeming to drop with each patrol. This is very encouraging and hopefully by continuing with routine patrols in these areas, this trend will continue.

The on-going KWS operation to clear the illegal marijuana plantations in the Chyulu Hills is also gaining ground. The majority of the known patches have been destroyed. Regrowth has been a factor and regular aerial patrols to identify any cases of this are enabling ground teams to destroy it before they become fully established again. The DSWT helicopter has been particularly useful due to the fact that it isn't affected by the high winds, which are common in the Chyulus at this time of year, in such a way that the fixed wing aircraft are.







Illegal enclosures set up for livestock grazing in the Park



June had no reported cases of Human-Wildlife Conflict, although as the area dries up it is likely that this will become a more common occurrence; the DSWT Air Wing is always ready to respond to any call.

The DSWT fixed wing aircraft have also been assisting Mr. Danny Woodley, who has been conducting a survey to determine areas with the biggest risk of fire in the parks so that a strategy can be developed with KWS to mitigate the risk. After acquiring a new Bambi bucket, the helicopter is now also better equipped to assist in fighting any new fires as they start in Tsavo and the Chyulus in the coming dry months.

Towards the end of the month, the helicopter again showed how beneficial it is when it was used to assist in slinging equipment up Ithumba hill to replace sections of the corroded repeater mast – an important part of the Trust's communications infrastructure in the area.







The DSMT helicopter helping with maintenance work on the mast



Highlights for the month of June include a number of rhino sightings, large congregations of elephants, which is always encouraging to see, a pack of Wild dogs between the SGR and Mombasa road and two male lions eating a fairly large Crocodile near Durusikale.















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