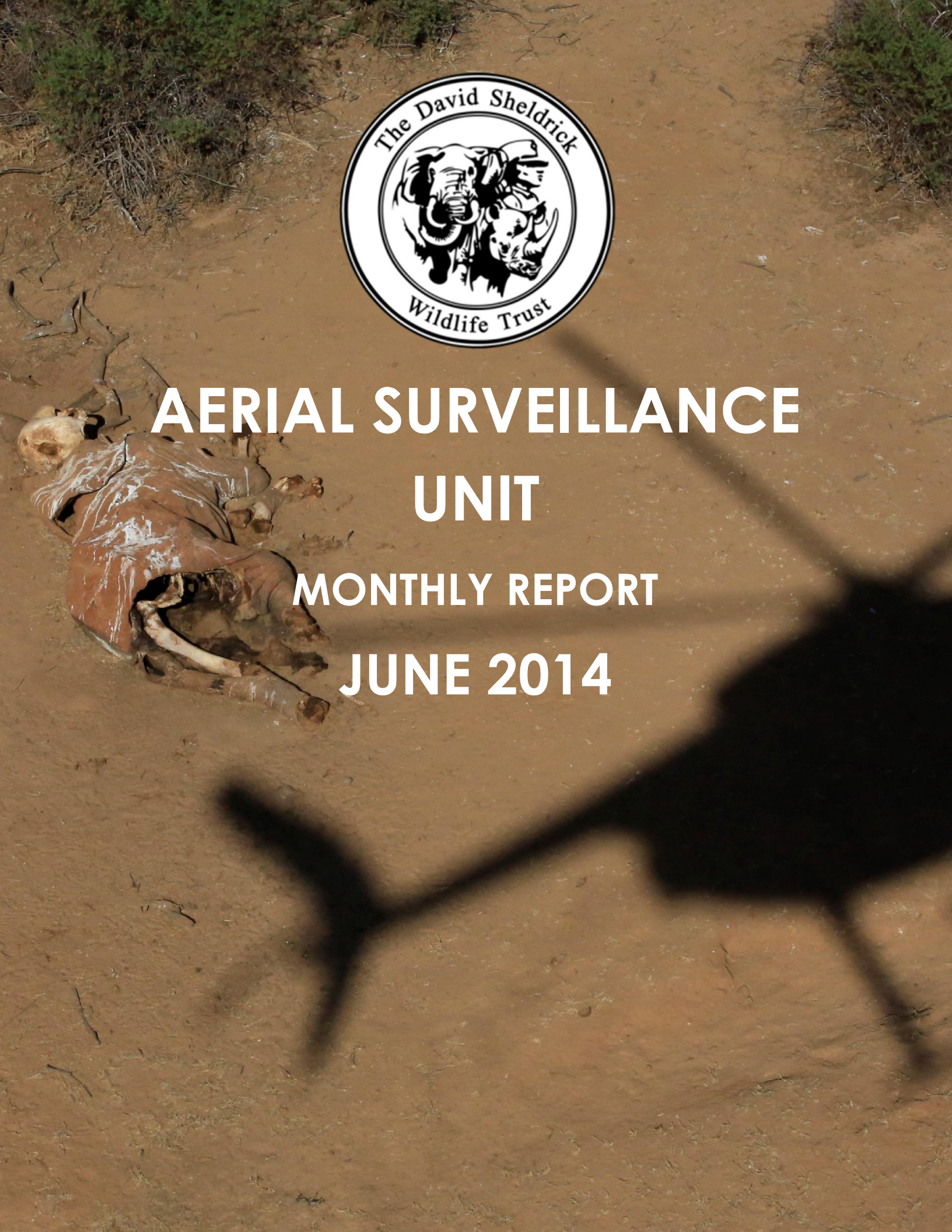


AERIAL SURVEILLANCE UNIT

MONTHLY REPORT

JUNE 2014

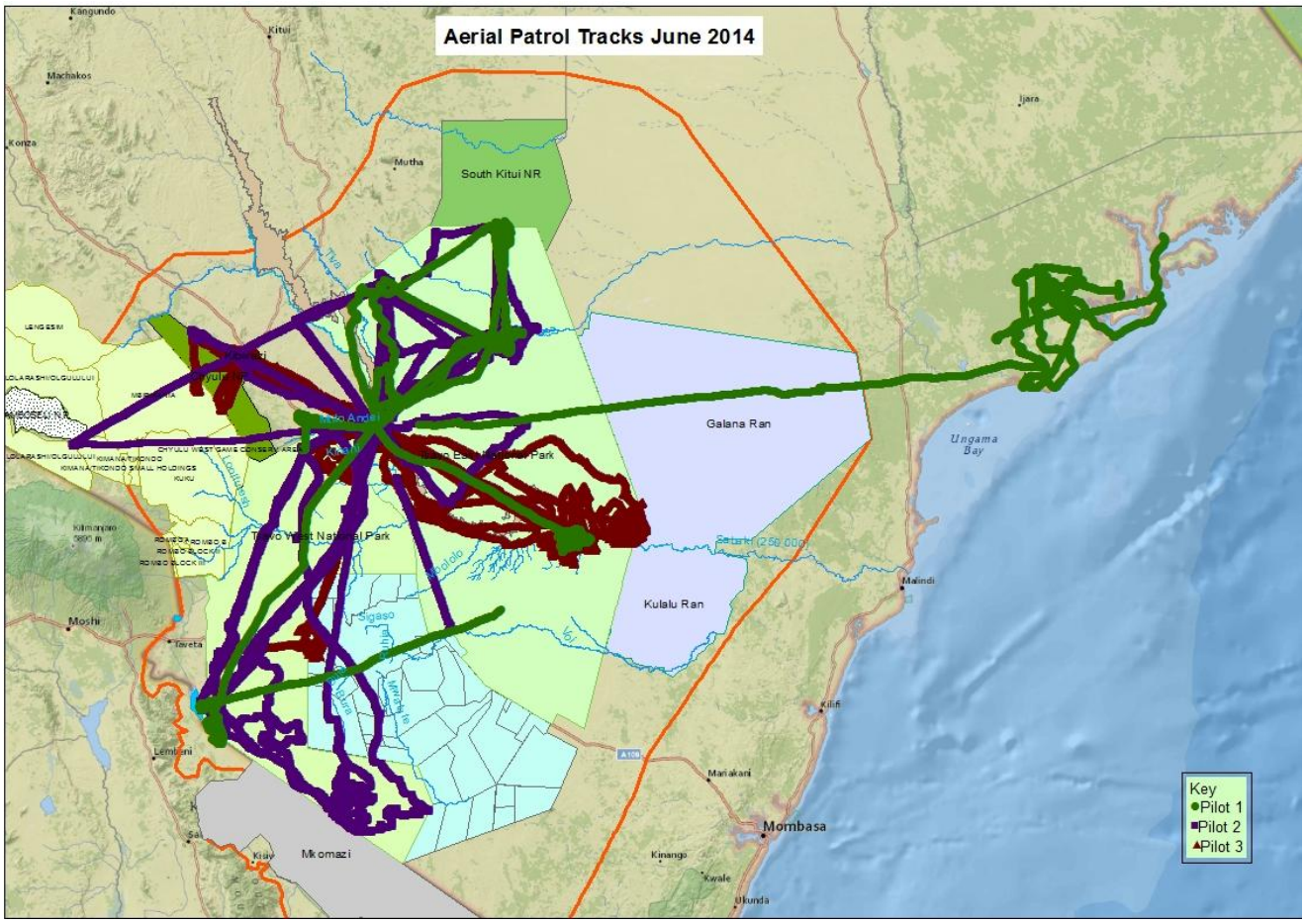
AERIAL STATISTICS

JUNE 2014

HOURS FLOWN Helicopter (21.3hrs) & Planes (83.5hrs)	**104.8**
KMS COVERED	**12, 048**
AREAS PATROLLED	**The unit patrolled extensively throughout the TCA with focus on southern Tsavo West, the northern area of Tsavo East, Lamu District and the Chyulus Hills**

JUNE 2014

MONTHLY AERIAL ROUTES



It started to dry off across Tsavo East and West National Parks during the month of June. The majority of the days were flown on aerial patrols over the Tsavos, in particular the northern area of Tsavo East NP and the southern areas of Tsavo West which has experienced a rise in poaching incidents recently. The Cessna 185 visited the Trust's Amu and Witu projects in Lamu County twice this month to assist with aerial patrols, where Amu is still flooded after heavy rains and experiencing a huge influx of cattle. The Chyulu Hills were also patrolled with one area of logging sighted and numerous charcoal kilns found, which were followed up and destroyed by the ground team.

JUNE 2014

MONTHLY FLYING SYNOPSIS

Early in the month a follow up patrol was carried out along the northern boundary of Tsavo East NP where charcoaling had been sighted the previous month. Two trucks were located inside the park collecting charcoal which had already been bagged. The DSWT/KWS ground team, using a KWS truck, recovered a full load of bags and destroyed numerous charcoal kilns.

5Y-DWT

Orma cattle have begun to venture into Tsavo East National Park from the east along the Tiva River as the area dries off. The Trust Cub has been patrolling the area on a daily basis in order to assist KWS ground teams with the round up and capture of cattle and herders.

The cattle numbers to the south of the Tiva have reduced this month. Large numbers of cattle continue to plague the southern part of Tsavo West. KWS ground teams have worked diligently to capture cattle and herders this month, yet there has been a group of large bull elephants in the area surrounded by cattle, which puts the elephants at a higher risk of being poached or being a target of human-wildlife conflict.

Eight carcasses were sighted from the air through the month of June; six in Tsavo East NP and two in Tsavo West NP. Of the eight, tusks were intact on four. Six of the cases were confirmed poaching victims, the other two are uncertain.

The Cubs have also located a number of shooting blinds and shooting platforms, mainly in the northern area of Tsavo East. Working closely with the Trust's ground units the blinds and platforms have been destroyed.

An elephant was sighted with a severe cable snare injury, where the snare was cutting in to the elephant's neck. The DSWT Mobile Vet Unit based in Voi was called and the following day the young cow was located from the air and darted.

Although the neck was severely cut by the snare the elephant rose again and went on its way. It was not sighted again despite searching for it from the air, although it is thought that with the large numbers of elephants in the area it rejoined its herd.

The Cessna 185 visited Lamu on two occasions this month to assist the DSWT/LCT teams operating in the area. The majority of Amu Ranch has been flooded due to good rains this year. Stunning herds of buffalo were spread across Amu, along with large numbers of giraffe and topi. Large numbers of pastoralist's cattle were sadly also sighted around Amu which could pose a threat to the area as it dries off after the rains.

The aircraft also carried out patrols over Witu Forest, which the DSWT has recently received management rights to conserve in partnership with the Kenya Forest Service and the Lamu Conservation Trust.

The Trust assisted the KWS Air Wing to train two future patrol pilots this month. Using the KWS Super Cub out of the Tsavo West HQ airstrip the two pilots were put through their paces as they familiarized themselves with the tricky traits of a Super Cub.

It is hoped that one of the pilots soon engages in full time patrols across Tsavo West while the other ventures to another area of need in Kenya.

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