



AERIAL SURVEILLANCE UNIT

MONTHLY REPORT
NOVEMBER 2014

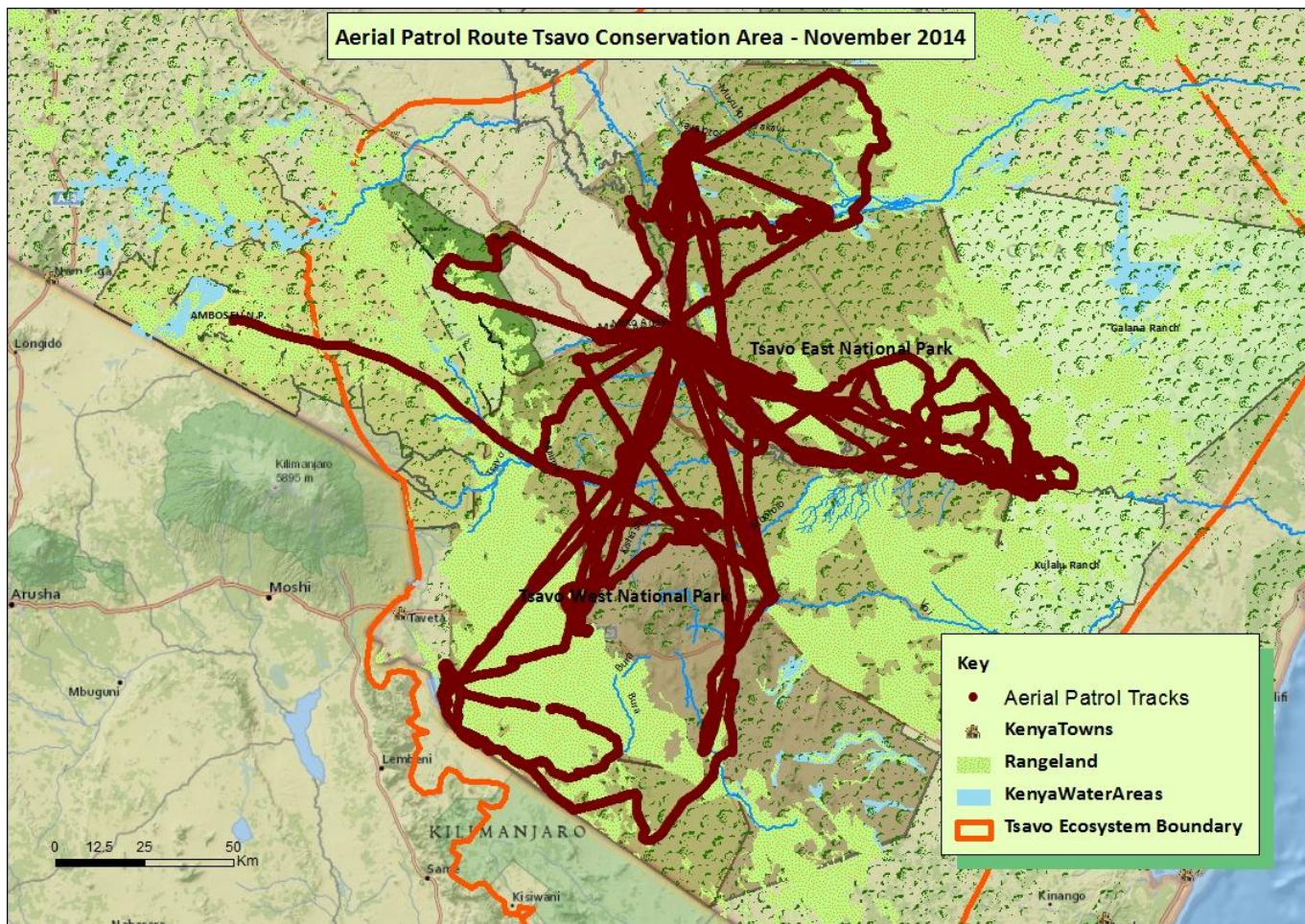


AERIAL STATISTICS

NOVEMBER 2014

HOURS FLOWN	92.6
KMS COVERED	12,328
AREAS PATROLLED	Northern Area TENP; Central TENP; Galana Conservancy; Jipe; Ranches; Amboseli NP; Wote Community Area; Chyulu Hills NP





November rains arrived mid-month ending a hot dry period of six months. By the end of November Tsavo was transformed into a blanket of green. The Aerial Unit continued to overfly the expanse of Tsavo, watching the transformation from red to green. In the lead up to the rains the annual gatherings of elephants began with herds of 500 coming together for a few days before dispersing into their family groups. Last year this congregation happened in October - this year a little later, all guided by the rain.







One fresh carcass was sighted from the air during November, a victim of a poison arrow. Its ivory had been taken by the poachers. Two sets of ivory were also sighted from the air and recovered by KWS ground teams. The cause of death of these two is unknown. A sick elephant was sighted in Amboseli NP but by the time the vet could be flown to the site the elephant had collapsed and died. It is believed the cause was a twisted gut.

Although the rains arrived this month the number of cattle inside the Parks has remained very high. When the rains break and the rivers are in full spate much of the area is extremely wet and muddy, which is the reason the ground teams find it hard to get to the livestock herders in remote areas of the Park by vehicle, giving the herders the opportunity to push their cattle further into the protected areas. Continuous monitoring of their movements by the Aerial Unit informs KWS where they are in relation to elephant herds.

Regular patrols of the northern most boundary of Tsavo East NP have reported no further charcoal burning operations inside the Park, although South Kitui National Reserve continues to be charcoaled at commercial levels, with camps and trucks permanently based just outside the Park boundary.





The Senior KWS Warden of Tsavo East NP, Mr. Dominic Wambua, joined the Aerial Unit on patrol on two occasions covering the entire Tsavo East NP. During the flights he was able to assess the charcoaling threat in the Northern Area around Gazi, as well as sighting a poacher's hideout.

The KWS team was also instrumental in facilitating the movement of elephants, which had become trapped in community land during the month and were causing a lot of distress to the local people residing in the area. An emergency operation took place between the KWS, the DSWT Aerial Unit as well as the local communities outside the park, who were becoming increasingly aggressive towards the elephants and vice versa.

The Senior Warden, Wambua, was able to talk to the community members on the ground while directing the DSWT helicopter to push the elephants back towards their home area near the Chyulu Hills. The KWS made every effort to ensure the local communities were warned about the presence of the elephants utilising local radio channels to broadcast the news. After a 4 day period the elephants finally arrived safely in the Chyulu Hills National Park.





On the 10th November the DSWT Aerial Unit and Amboseli Mobile Veterinary Unit was alerted about famous big tusker "Tim" who had been seen wounded in Amboseli. Helicopter pilot Humphrey Carter flew with KWS Vet Dr Njoroge and spotted the elephant with a wound high on his left rear leg, which was leaking puss.

Once Tim was immobilized it was obvious that we had a deep spear wound, which fortunately had not yet become too infected. With timely intervention he was treated by the Unit and is on the road to recovery ([read more about the story here](#)).





On the 19th November the helicopter and KWS VET Dr Njoroge attended to two emergency elephant cases in Amboseli National Park. The first of the day was a large male who had two broken tusks and a spear wound on his right hip weeping puss. The elephant was a very big bull and it was later found out that it had been darted and revived in the past. Having been successfully darted again the elephant took a record 43 minutes for the tranquiliser to finally take effect before Dr Njoroge and his team were on the spot in less than a minute. They quickly cleaned the wound and began administering antibiotics before he was up and on his way with every chance of making a full recovery.

The same day the helicopter and Dr Njoroge then headed to Sengelei to find a collared bull that needed follow-up treatment. Dr Njoroge saw that elephant was limping and that his left foreleg was still swollen. He decided to treat the elephant with more antibiotics and with medicine that would speed tissue repair and is very hopeful this is the final treatment needed before the elephant could make a full recovery.









Photographs copyright © 2014 The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

