



**KENYA
WILDLIFE
SERVICE**



SKY VET QUARTERLY REPORT

February 2015 TO May 2015

FROM THE DAVID SHELDRIK WILDLIFE TRUST

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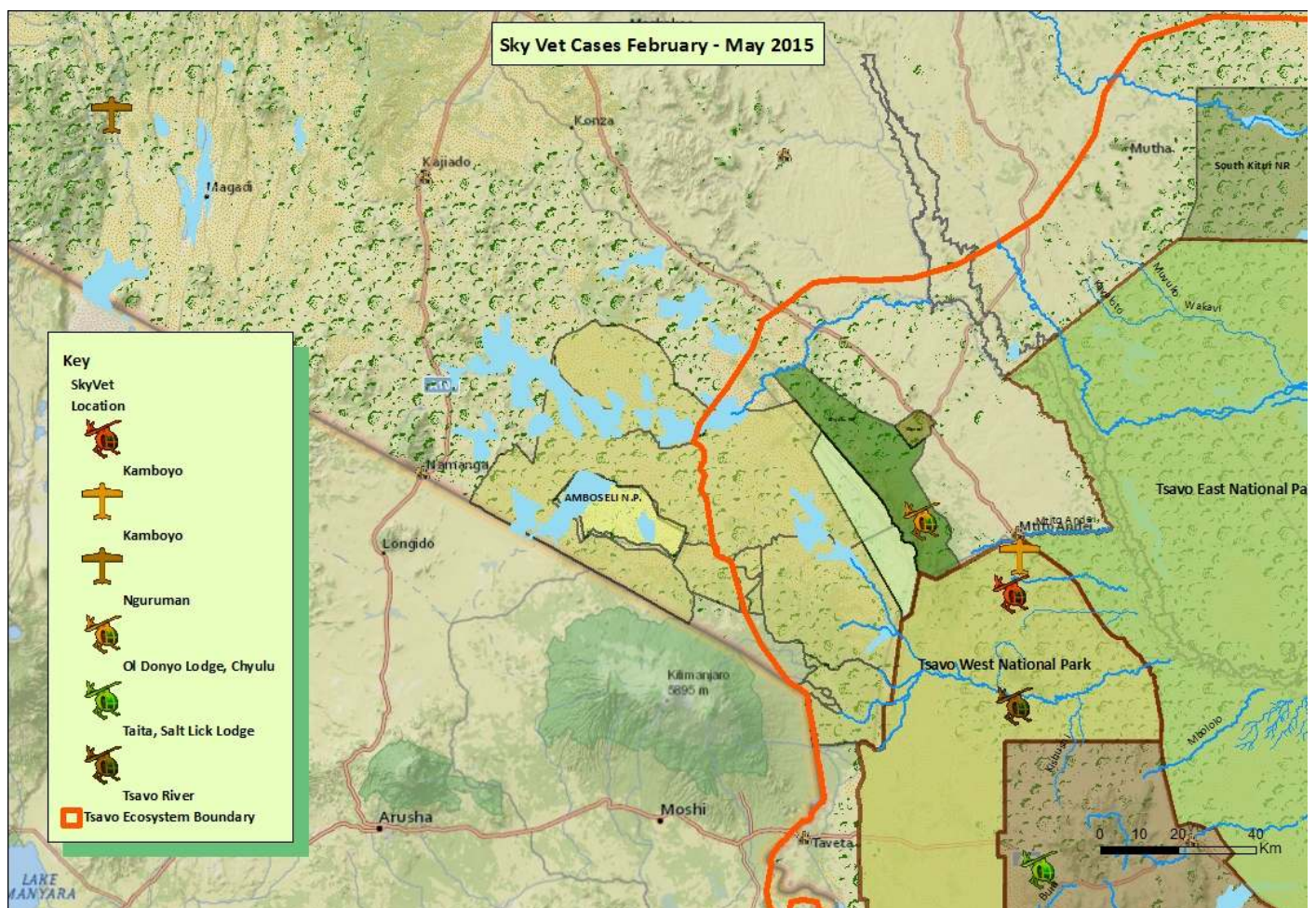
SKY VET REPORT

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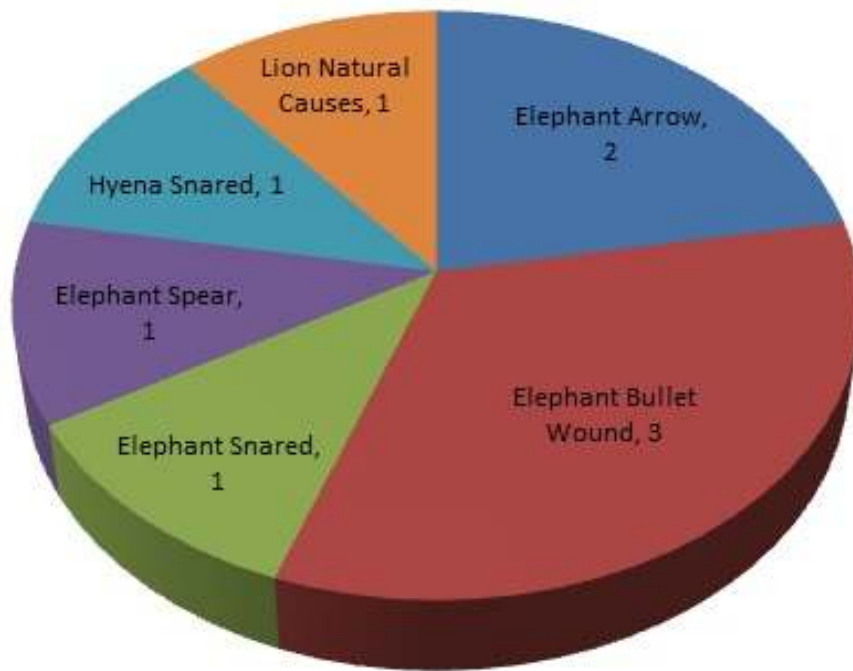


During this reporting period Sky Vets saw a small increase in cases attended. On-the-ground activities of the DSWT/KWS Mobile Veterinary Units continue to cover many cases whilst increased security measures have also had a positive effect in deterring poaching activities, yet due to certain locations and terrain conditions Sky Vets is the only option to ensure a successful mission.

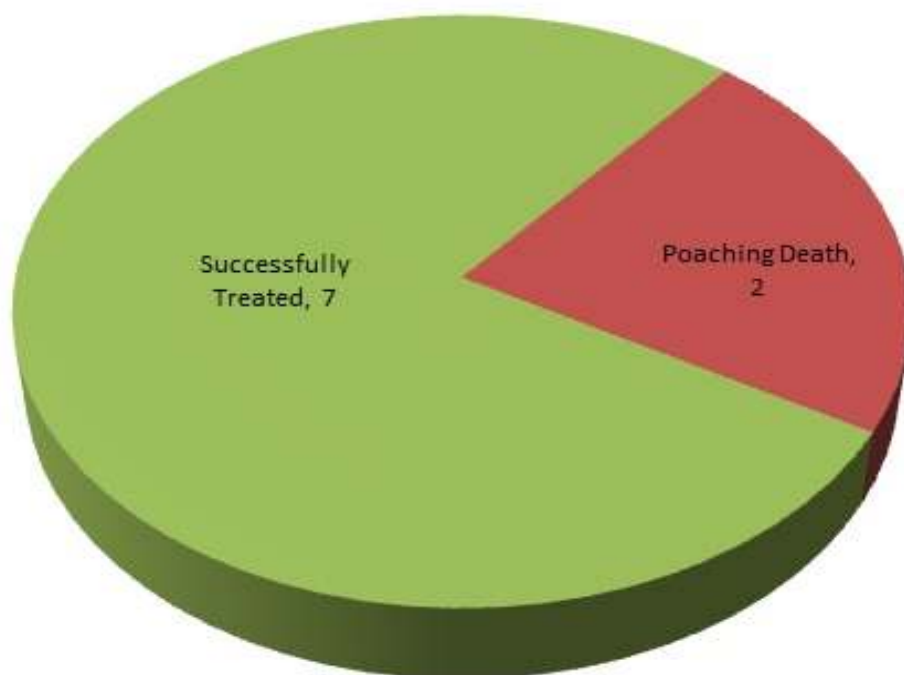
The Sky Vet program has deployed KWS vets to the following locations during this reporting period



Sky Vet Cases Feb - May 2015



Outcomes of Sky Vet Cases Feb - May 2015



CASE 1: FEBRUARY 17TH 2015**TSAVO WEST NATIONAL PARK****WOUNDED ELEPHANT**

Species
Age

Elephant
Adult

Sex

Male

**INTRODUCTION**

An elephant with a swollen right forelimb was spotted in the vicinity of the Tsavo River by the DSWT pilot and reported the case to the Mobile Vet Unit. The team attended to the elephant and decided to dart him for examination and treatment.

CHEMICAL IMMOBILIZATION & TREATMENT

The elephant was immobilized using 17 mgs Etorphine Hydrochloride in a 2 ml Dan Inject dart which was administered from the DSWT helicopter. Full immobilization took place after 8 minutes and he fell on his side. The elephant's trunk was opened using a piece of stick which was placed across the nostril entrances whilst his ears were used as a blindfold. Water was doused on the elephant to cool him down due to the high ambient temperature.

On physical examination the elephant was found to have an infected wound on the right forelimb. The injury could have been as a result of a gunshot wound. On palpation no crepitation could be felt so the team decided to go ahead and treat the elephant. The dead tissue was debrided and the wound thoroughly cleaned using water and Hydrogen Peroxide. It was then lavaged using tincture of Iodine. The bull was injected with 100 ml Oxytetracycline, 3 vials Clindamycin and 100 ml

Dexamethasone at different sites intramuscularly. Finally, topical antibiotic ointment and grey clay was then applied on the wound to facilitate healing. The operation lasted 30 minutes.

PROGNOSIS

The elephant was retreated one week after his initial treatment. During this time, the male elephant had grown extremely weak, had shown no signs of improvement, and had barely moved 100 meters from the point of last treatment.

A decision to euthanize the elephant was made, but before it could be done and due to his poor physical condition the elephant died while under anaesthesia. The tusks were removed and handed over to KWS for safe custody.



CASE 2: MARCH 3RD 2015

TAITA HILLS, TSAVO

SNARED ELEPHANT

Species
AgeElephant
Juvenile

Sex

Male

**INTRODUCTION**

The DSWT/KWS anti-poaching team reported a young elephant near Taita Hills Lodge with a snare around its neck. The DSWT helicopter picked up KWS Veterinary Officer Dr Njoroge based in Amboseli and took him and his assistant to the Sarova Taita Hills Game Lodge airstrip to meet up with the DSWT team which was monitoring the elephant.

CHEMICAL IMMOBILIZATION & TREATMENT

Dr Njoroge quickly prepared a dart and all the rest of the equipment was loaded into the vehicles. The elephant was in a group of about 15 elephants which were very nervous of the helicopter and wanted to stay under the big trees in the valley below the lodge. Dr Njoroge darted the elephant with a well-aimed shot. As the elephant herd headed in a line out onto the plains, one reached up with its trunk and removed the dart from the young elephant ahead of it.

Fortunately this happened after the dart had discharged the drug, and the snared elephant fell 5 minutes later. It was necessary for both the helicopter and the DSWT vehicle to force the mother to leave the darted elephant, which had fallen with its leg on top of its trunk. Once the mother was clear the team following the elephant on the ground quickly used the

wire cutters to remove the snare before the helicopter dropped the vet at the site, lifting up again to keep the mother away. Once the operation was complete and the young elephant was on its feet again it re-joined its mother and the herd.

PROGNOSIS

This elephant has been given a good prognosis



CASE 3: MARCH 18TH 2014

KAMBOYO, TSAVO WEST

ELEPHANT WITH ARROW WOUNDS

Species
Age

Elephant
Adult

Sex

Male

**INTRODUCTION**

A veterinary team was called upon to attend to an injured elephant bull at Tsavo West near Kamboyo air strip. The case was attended promptly via KWS Vet Dr Odian'ga through the Sky Vet program.

CHEMICAL IMMOBILIZATION & TREATMENT

This elephant was in a herd of five bulls and was sighted during routine air patrols. The animal was observed to be having multiple wounds some of which were discharging pus, suspected to have been caused by a poisoned arrow.

The KWS Sky Vet team arrived from Nairobi to Tsavo West joining up with the DSWT team on the ground. The helicopter was then used for aerial darting with the KWS veterinary officer on board. Darting was done using a Dan inject darting system and the elephant was successfully narcotized after about 10 minutes.

On arrival at the site of the recumbent elephant, the vet accessed that there were multiple wounds generally distributed on the rear limbs and posterior abdomen. The wounds were suspected to be arrow wounds and some of the injuries were

discharging pus. The wounds were probed for the presence of any foreign body yet nothing was recovered. The injuries were then lavaged with 5% Hydrogen peroxide and cleaned with copious amounts of water. Lugol's Iodine and green clay was then applied to enhance healing. Oxytetracycline antibiotic spray was also applied to abate the flies that would be attracted to the wounds. Parenteral administration of antibiotics was finally done intramuscularly using 15000mg Amoxicillin trihydrate (Betamox®).

PROGNOSIS

The elephant has been given a good prognosis and should not need further treatment although the rangers on the ground will continue to monitor his progress.



CASE 4: MARCH 19TH 2015**CHYULU HILLS NP****INJURED ELEPHANT- BULLET WOUND**

Species
Age

Elephant
Adult

Sex

Male

**INTRODUCTION**

Big life rangers patrolling in the Chyulu Hills spotted a bull elephant with a suspected arrow injury to the top of his trunk. The rangers reported the case to the Mobile Veterinary Team who attended the case. Due to the thickness of the vegetation in the area where the bull had first been spotted, the Vet Team had to use a helicopter to locate and assess the elephant. Once located, plans were made to immobilize, examine and treat the elephant. Despite the thick bush, the elephant was relatively easy to dart from the helicopter after being pushed to slightly more open ground.

CHEMICAL IMMOBILIZATION & EXAMINATION

The bull elephant was immobilized using 18mg Etorphine Hydrochloride in a 3ml Dan Inject dart administered from a helicopter. The elephant went down on his side after about 15 minutes. The trunk was kept open using a piece of stick placed across the nostrils and the ears were used as blindfolds. Due to the high ambient temperature, the bull was doused with water to keep him cool.

Upon closer examination, the elephant was found to have an approximately 1-2 week old 14 inch deep wound to his trunk, which was believed to have been caused by a bullet and not an arrow as originally reported. The wound was septic and contained necrotic tissue. The dead tissue was debrided and removed and the wound was thoroughly cleaned using water and Hydrogen Peroxide. The wound was then lavaged using Tincture of Iodine. Topical antibiotic cream and green clay were applied into the wound to facilitate healing and to avoid infection. The elephant was injected with 100ml Amoxicillin, 1200mg Clindamycin and 100ml Dexamethasone at different sites intramuscularly. The entire operation lasted about 30 minutes.

PROGNOSIS

The elephant was given a good prognosis and the Big Life team continued to monitor his progress



CASE 5: MARCH 21ST 2015**KAMBOYO, TSAVO WEST****INJURED ELEPHANT – ARROW WOUND**

Species
Age

Elephant
Adult

Sex

Male

**INTRODUCTION**

While on a routine patrol, the DSWT pilot spotted an injured elephant. They reported the incident to the Mobile Veterinary Unit who immediately made plans to attend to the case. The elephant was located in thick bush and the terrain was rocky, so darting from a helicopter was considered the best option. The DSWT provided a helicopter for the exercise through the Sky Vet program.

ANAESTHESIA AND TREATMENT

The elephant was immobilized using 18mgs Etorphine Hydrochloride in a 3ml dart. Darting was done using the Dan Inject system from a helicopter. Full immobilization took place after 15 minutes and the elephant fell on his side. His trunk was kept open using a stick placed across the nostril entrances and his ears were used as blindfolds. Due to the high temperatures in Tsavo, water was doused onto his head and ears to keep him cool.

Upon physical examination, the elephant was found to have a penetrating wound to his right flank. The wound was septic and contained pus. The wound was thought to have been caused by an arrow. The dead tissue was debrided, the wound was drained of about 3 litres of pus and an arrow head was removed from the wound. The wound was then thoroughly cleaned using water and Hydrogen Peroxide and lavaged using Tincture of Iodine. Topical antibiotic cream and green clay

were packed into the wound to facilitate healing and avoid infection. Finally the elephant was injected with 200ml Oxytetracycline and 100ml Flunixin Meglumine at different sites intramuscularly. The operation lasted about 40 minutes.

PROGNOSIS

This bull has been given a good prognosis



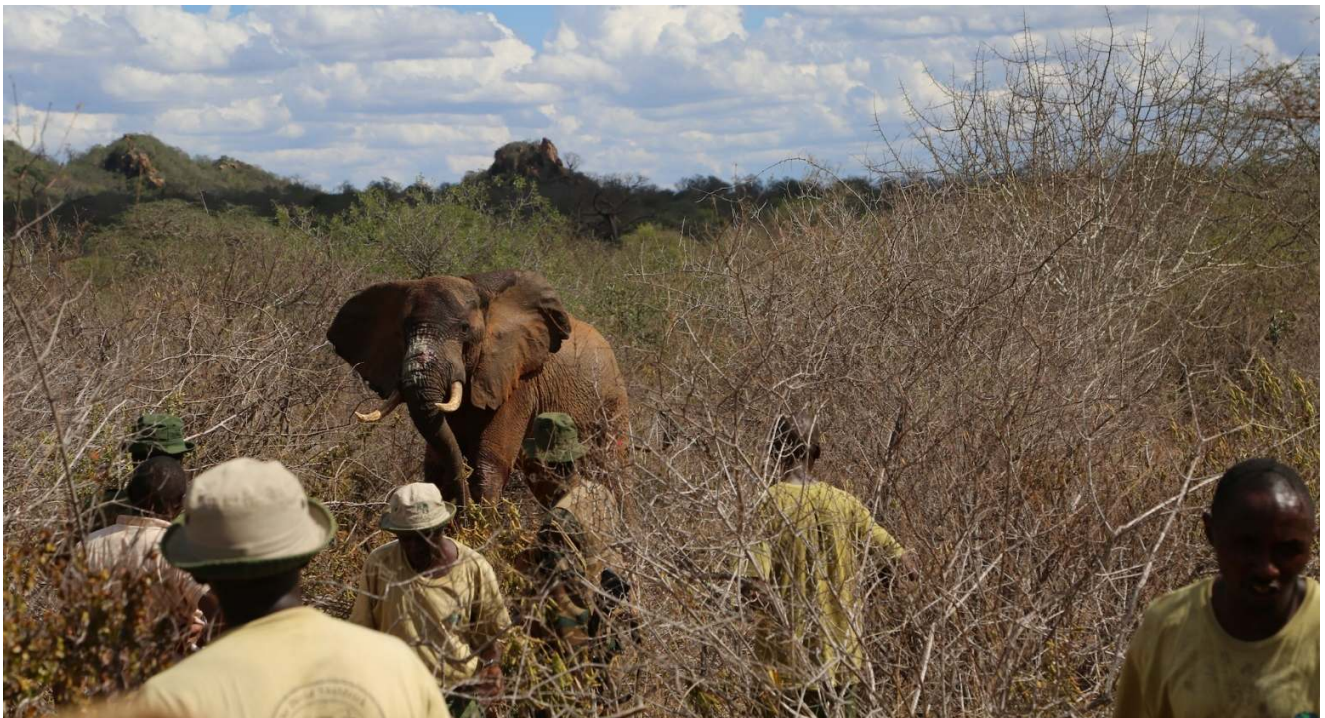
CASE 6: APRIL 8TH 2015**ITHUMBA, TSAVO EAST****INJURED ELEPHANT – ARROW WOUND**

Species
Age

Elephant
Adult

Sex

Male

**INTRODUCTION**

The DSWT pilot at Ithumba spotted a male elephant with a left forelimb injury. The veterinary team had to locate and assess the elephant from one of the DSWT's aircrafts since the vegetation was so thick and the helicopter wasn't available due to technical problems. Plans were then made to immobilize and treat the elephant. Due to the thick bush the darting was done on foot with aerial support from the DSWT light aircraft.

ANAESTHESIA AND TREATMENT

The elephant was darted with 18mg Etorphine 18mg topped up with water in a 3 ml dan - inject dart. The elephant went down on lateral recumbence after 18 minutes. The trunk was maintained patent using a piece of stick placed across the nostril entrance. The temperature was high so plenty of water was doused on the elephant to keep the body temperature low whilst the ears were used as blindfold.

On physical examination the elephant had an approximately 8 inch deep wound (1-2 weeks old) on the left forelimb. The wound was septic and the tissue necrotic; likely to have been caused by an arrow. The dead tissue was debrided and removed then thoroughly cleaned using clean water and Hydrogen Peroxide. It was lavaged using tincture of Iodine and then topical antibiotic cream and green clay applied into the wound to facilitate healing and avoid infection. The elephant was injected with 100ml Betamox, 1200 mg Clindamycin (Dalacin C) and 100ml Dexamethasone at different sites intramuscularly. The entire operation lasted about 40 minutes

PROGNOSIS

A good prognosis has been given to this elephant whilst the DSWT aircrafts and ground units will continue to monitor the bull and report on its progress.



CASE 7: MAY 16th 2015**NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK****INJURED HYENA**

Species
Age

Spotted Hyena
Adult

Sex

Male

**INTRODUCTION**

A snared hyena had been seen by tourists within Nairobi National Park who reported it immediately to the KWS and the DSWT.

The hyena proved extremely difficult to relocate, and a team of KWS and DSWT Rangers searched for days after receiving the first report including an attempt by one of the KWS Nairobi vets to treat it.

The poor animal was inflicted with a horrendous snare injury cutting into its mouth and head. Everyone in the Park, tourists and staff alike were desperately searching for the hyena

ANAESTHESIA AND TREATMENT

Finally a week later as the day's light was fading KWS Vet Dr Odian'ga managed to locate and dart the hyena in order to remove the snare and treat the injuries. Unfortunately the damage the snare had caused was too severe leaving the hyena emaciated during the period he remained elusive, leaving him unable to eat or drink for many days, so sadly the hyena passed away peacefully whilst under anaesthetic.



CASE 8: MAY 22nd 2015**NGURUMAN ESCARPMENT****INJURED ELEPHANT**

Species
Age

Elephant
Adult

Sex

Male

**INTRODUCTION**

The solitary bull was reported to have had a history of aggression and conflict with the community having killed livestock in the past. The wounds were highly suspected to have been spear/arrow-inflicted. There are also quite a number of elephants in the area so it could be this bull might have had a serious fight from another elephant in a herd.

A KWS veterinary team was dispatched from the KWS Nairobi HQ on a chartered plane through the Sky Vet program and arrived at the Nguruman airstrip to be met by the local KWS who had been monitoring him.

The bull was in good body condition and was wallowing in a muddy pool. There was plenty of food and water within area which was thick bush with acacia trees. The elephant got up and was observed to be limping with traumatic wounds seen on the right forelimb. The wounds were penetrative and oozing pus

ANAESTHESIA AND TREATMENT

Chemical immobilization was done using 18mg, Etorphine Hcl (0.98%) (M99®) (Novartis South Africa (Pty) Ltd) topped up with sterile water for injection in a 3 ml Dart. Darting was done on foot using a Dan inject darting system. Effective anaesthesia was within 10 minutes with a left lateral recumbence.

Two traumatic penetrating wounds were confirmed immediately above the carpal joint. One wound was of clinical significance as it was deep and penetrating the whole thickness of the skin and the other one was superficial. The deep wound was probed for presence of an arrow/spearhead yet no foreign body was recovered. Both wounds were thoroughly cleaned with plenty of water then debridement was done to facilitate healing Lugol's Iodine was used to decontaminate the wound and green clay was applied to enhance wound healing. Oxytetracycline antibiotic spray was topically applied to

control flies that would be attracted to the wound. Parenteral treatment was done using Intramuscular injection of 15000mg Amoxicillin trihydrate (Betamox®), 1200mg clindamycin and 40mg of colvasone.

PROGNOSIS

A favourable prognosis has been given to this elephant as there was not joint involvement. Plenty of food and water would also enhance his chances of survival. The local rangers and KWS will continue to monitor the bull and report progress



CASE 9: MAY 25th 2015**NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK****INJURED LIONESS**

Species
Age

Lion
Adult

Sex

Female

**INTRODUCTION**

On the 25th of May a collared lioness was observed with bite wounds to the head and neck region and the collar was also of concern as it was considerably interfering with the healing process.

The lioness was identified as Nelly and over time she had clearly outgrown her collar. She is fairly robust lioness with three cubs of about eight months old and was possibly injured in a territorial fight.

ANAESTHESIA AND TREATMENT

KWS Vet Dr. Fred Olian'ga immobilized Nelly effectively using a dart gun from a vehicle. The collar was removed and handed over to the KWS Carnivore Liaison Office as the wound would not be able to heal with it in place.

Dr. Olian'ga shaved the affected area and cleaned the wounds with water, iodine, then administered antibiotics finally applying the green clay to help facilitate rapid healing.

PROGNOSIS

The anaesthetic was reversed and Nelly was up within 15 minutes to re-join her cubs. Nelly has been given an extremely positive prognosis and will recover fully.

