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MEP May 2018 Report

Elephant carcass in Ngrumani Loita suspected to have been poached.

General:
The rains have slowed down toward the end of this month but the whole area is lush from Mosiro in the southern Rift to the Mau Forest where heavy rains have continued on a near daily basis. The Mara River has been up and down sometimes going over the main bridge at Mararienta.

Mara Elephant Project has been working closely with Olarro Conservancy and the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (DSWT) Mara Mobile Vet Unit to treat 12 injured elephants this month in a high human-elephant conflict (HEC) area. There are a number of farms and settlements surrounding the Olarro Conservancy that have been experiencing HEC but have not been reporting it. This prompted MEP to move our rapid response unit into this area, so we had a permanent presence to resolve the conflict. The rangers mandate was to build better relationships with the community, follow the large elephant herds to track their movements, identify injured elephants for treatment, respond to conflict, and collect intelligence on suspects. On the 25th we found our collared elephant Limo had been shot presumably by poachers. Dr. Limo indicated that the age of the wound was less than 10 days old which helped the rapid response unit trace back Limo's tracks on the Save The

Elephants tracking app back to a farm that had been raided by elephants. While they were investigating the attack, the community exposed a suspect for attacking Limo and his herd. He was arrested and taken to Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) HQ in Ewaso Ngiro. The rapid response unit will continue to be based in this area until the attacks have stopped, and all conflict is being properly reported by the community and the conflict season is over.

Injured collared elephant Limo being treated by DSWT/KWS Vet Dr. Limo.

The DSWT Mau Team has re-deployed to the Mau Forest after their graduation ceremony on the 11th at the Emitik Forest station. We are thrilled that there was a good turnout from the community, over 500 people, and the Narok County Government, KWS, police and local administration were all present as well to witness the new ranger team graduating. The new Land Cruiser donated by DSWT and the two new rangers from KWS allows the team to now be fully operational.

Communications Report:
In May, as this report has highlighted, there was a high level of human-elephant conflict happening around the Olarro Conservancy. This led to many joint operations all month between Mara Elephant Project, David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (DSWT)/Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Mara Mobile Vet Unit and Olarro Conservancy. These treatments and human-elephant conflict mitigation techniques are always a great way for our supporters to engage directly with MEP's day-to-day operations, which provided a lot of good video, photos and stories from the field.

Thus, it's been a busy May for MEP's website, social media channels, newsletters and blogs. We were featured on The Dodo's Facebook page with MEP tagged for an elephant treatment video and that post alone received 1 million views, 3,160 shares and 25,000 likes. We were also featured on their blog. Thank you to Angela Sheldrick from the David

Sheldrick Wildlife Trust who handled that contact and procured our organizations being featured on The Dodo. Through incorporating our partners, KWS, DSWT and Olarro Consevancy we have been able to be linked into many of their social media channels and gained more exposure in May. Elephant Aware shared several great videos of one of our large collared elephants enjoying a down pour in the Mara. Thank you to all of our partners for supporting MEP by tagging us in their social media posts.

MEP was featured in Wired UK this month with an interview with C.E.O. Marc Goss highlighting the technology MEP is using to combat poaching and human-elephant conflict. Robinson Helicopter Company also featured MEP in their spring newsletter which goes out to all of their buyers, sellers and customers worldwide.

MEP released our Annual Report, posted on our website, and sent an email out to supporters. We had many people respond to the email to show their support for the accomplishments MEP had in 2017. We have also updated our Privacy Policy, website and sent an email to all individuals on MEP's mailing list to ensure we are compliant with the EU's new General Data Protection Regulation which came into effect on May 25.

The Greatest Maasai Mara Photography Competition by the Angama Foundation continues to be a fun way to engage new supporters for MEP. We've had some great entries in May benefitting our organization and thank everyone for their participation. MEP also celebrated Africa Day with a blog and social media posts tying into the theme of combatting corruption. We featured our partners the Narok County Government and Kenya Wildlife Service in that blog and it was well received on our social media channels.

Fundraising Report:
MEP is thrilled to announce that one of our intelligence rangers won $3,000 and was awarded the 2018 Ranger Award from the Paradise International Foundation. He'll be featured in their brochure and was proud to receive this award in its inaugural year.

MEP received $55,000 from several generous donors and a donation of $26,000 to cover the lifespan of a collared elephant. We thank everyone for their continued and among other things the funds will be used to purchase new equipment for the rangers and to acquire a new drone which will be used to run tests on spraying crops with chili powder as a means of preventing crop raiding by elephants. In May MEP received $286.97 from Facebook fundraisers and Brooke Isbell is currently running a fundraiser for her birthday that has already hit her goal of $200.

The Mara Elephant Project visitor experience is coming into busy season and we have many people coming from all over the world to visit MEP HQ. We've also signed up a total of 17 camps and travel companies and have well over 12 visits scheduled for the next two months. We anticipate this to be a great new way for people to get to know MEP and possibly generate a new database of supporters.

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Research:

MEP is thrilled to announce that Dr. Jake Wall has accepted the position of Director of Research at MEP starting in January 2019. He will be responsible for: developing and maintaining MEP's core research strategy; developing research partnerships with other organizations, academics and universities; liaising with key conservation partners such as KWS, Save the Elephants, Mara Predator Programme, DSWT and other relevant partners on research priorities; and exploring research/conservation funding options and assist the C.E.O. in funding applications.

The results of the research will be used to develop reports and position papers to influence and guide management of the ecosystem. All outputs will be shared with MEP's target audiences and key partners aimed at raising awareness, facilitating more immediate input and action, informing and influencing policy and practice and developing closer working relationships with key partners.

Dr. Wall is an architect of DAS, and elephant tracking system to track elephants in real-time to help protect them against ivory poaching and to study their movement patterns and conservation in the context of the rapid expansion of the human-footprint across Africa. He is currently Geospatial Scientific Advisor to Save the Elephants and working with Vulcan to incorporate other real-time data such as vehicle tracking into the tracking system. We are all thrilled at MEP to have such a high caliber scientist join our organization.

Mr. Nathan Hahn has arrived at MEP for two months to start his data collection for his PhD with Colorado State University in George Wittmeyer's lab. Nathan will be focusing on HEC mitigation characterization and we are happy to have him on board. Nathan partnered with MEP to conduct a number of drone training packages for Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI) and Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) while he worked for RESOLVE.

Henrik Rasmussen, the managing director of Savannah Tracking, has deployed five collar-activated alarm systems around farms in high conflict areas. These alarm systems are solar powered and trigger to make a loud alarm sound when the VHF beacon in the elephant collar gets near. This not only alarms the elephants to hopefully leave the area but also alerts the community who might be asleep. Henrik along with MEP ranger units will be testing the effectiveness in the Munyas and Ngoswani areas with known MEP crop raiding collared elephants, Olchoda and Ivy.

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Collar-activated alarm system.

Security:
On the 30th we received a report from the KWS in Mosri in the Rift Valley near Suswa that one elephant has been poached and the tusks taken by poachers.

Incidents Sit REP

Ivory recovered and arrest: 27/05/18.	Three suspects arrested at Nairagie enkare by KWS rangers on MEP intel, in possession of 4 kg of ivory. Suspect taken to Narok police station and booked.
Dead elephant on: 19/05/2018.	Carcass was found in Naboisho Conservancy; the carcass was reported by Naboisho Conservancy rangers to KWS and MEP rangers. The cause of death considered as unknown.
Dead elephant on: 21/05/2018.	A bull elephant was found dead in Naboisho Conservancy; the carcass was reported by Naboisho Conservancy rangers to KWS rangers and to MEP rangers. The cause of death considered as unknown.
Dead Elephant on 26/05/18	A female elephant was found dead in Ngurumani. The ivory was hacked out by poachers but the cause of death was unclear as it had already decomposed.

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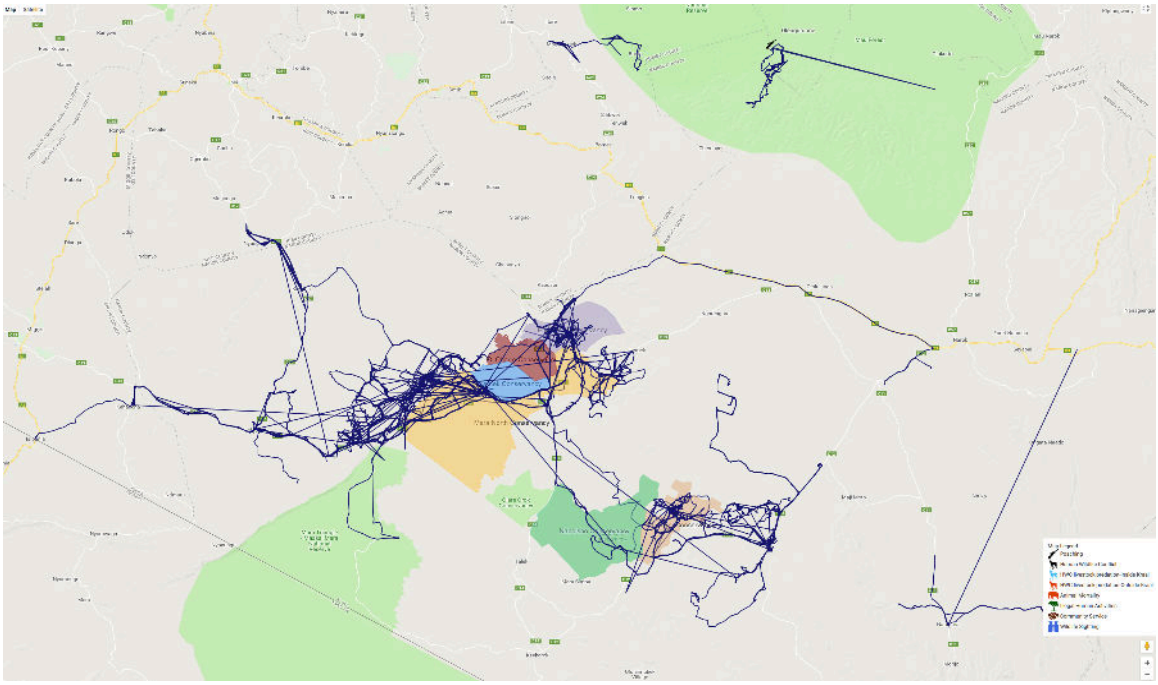
Patrol Details:



May MEP ranger patrol tracks.

Recording Patrols:
In March, MEP rangers covered a distance of 816 km by foot; 10,541 km by car and 5,795 km on motorbike. Distance coverage this month increased compared to last month because of the increase in HEC and the increase in operations into the Olarro Conservancy. The Mau Forest unit had less patrol kilometers because of their ranger training at MEP HQ.

Wildlife Sightings:
In this period rangers recorded 692 elephants. The newly stationed Olarro Conservancy ranger unit recorded the most sightings, 460 elephants, this month and sent good photographic evidence of the herds. There is a definite increase in elephant sightings this month due to the increased distance covered by MEP ranger units.

Human Wildlife Conflict:
MEP rangers are filling out the MEP HEC and HEC mitigation hard copy forms and bringing them to HQ at the end of the month so that the data can be entered into DAS. This month we experienced an increase of HEC and as crops continue to ripen we expect increased conflict in all sectors. The main areas of conflict in May were Ngoswani in Lemek Conservancy and the Olarro Conservancy area in Siana.

MEP rangers installed two flashing light fences in Lemek and also worked with Henrik to install the new boma beacons mentioned earlier in this report.

HEC Sit Rep:

	DATE	REGION	Damage	Crop	mitigation action
1	5/1/18	kawai	None	Maize	by use of car& firecrackers

2	5/4/18	Siana	None	None	Chivi elephants out of settlement area
3	5/5/18	Mara rianda	None	None	Chivi elephants with Helicopter
4	5/9/18	Munyas	fence	Maize	Motorbike & firecrackers
5	5/9/18	Ngosuani	fence	Maize	Motorbike, drums, lights and firecrackers
6	5/10/18	Naibosho	Fence	None	Chivy elephants out of fenced area with Heli
7	5/13/18	munyas	fence	Maize	Motorbike & firecrackers
8	5/14/18	Olopikidongoe	fence	Maize	Car, drums, firecrackers, and lights
9	5/15/18	kawai	fence	Maize	Car& firecrackers
10	5/15/18	Ngosuani	fence	Maize	Motorbike & firecrackers
11	5/16/18	Lemek	fence	Maize	Car, drums, lights and firecrackers
12	5/17/18	Kawai	None	None	Car& firecrackers
13	5/17/18	Lemek	fence	Maize	Motorbike & firecrackers
14	5/18/18	munyas	None	None	Motorbike & firecrackers
15	5/18/18	Lemek	fence	Maize	Motorbike & firecrackers
16	5/18/18	Olaro	None	None	Car& firecrackers
17	5/20/18	Lemek	fence	Maize	Motorbike & firecrackers
18	5/21/18	Nkineji	None	Tomato	Car& firecrackers
19	5/23/18	Lemek	fence	Maize	Motorbike & firecrackers

Poaching:

The KWS arrested three suspects in Narok with 4 kg of ivory based on MEP intelligence.

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Two elephant carcasses were reported in Naboisho Conservancy and the cause of death was unknown due to the decomposition of the carcasses.

Helicopter:

Date	Hours	Mission
1/5/18	2	Treating elephants in Olarro
4/5/18	1	Push elephants out of settlement in Ollaro
5/5/18	0.5	To Richards camp to meet HNI and olerai
6/5/18	0.5	Check Ivy near Ngoswani
8/5/18	2	Treating injured elephants in Olkinyei and Ollaro
10/5/18	1	Treating injured elephants in Ollaro and HEC Mitigation
11/5/18	2	To ranger parade in Mau and Lewa-Willie Roberts Memorial
13/5/18	1	To Nairobi
30/5/18	1	Return Mara
	11	