Protecting elephants to conserve the greater Mara ecosystem
www.maraelephantproject.org

MEP December 2018 Report

MEP Collared bull elephant Kegol spotted by rangers on December 23.

General:
In December we had the single largest ivory recovery and arrest of 2018 on the 23rd of December. Two suspects were arrested in the Loita area by Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and MEP rangers in possession of two large tusks and were taken to Narok Police Station. This is a great success to close out 2018.

On December 22nd, we hosted a staff party at KWS, and it was a good chance for everyone to catch up and enjoy some *Nyama Choma* together. This month we have also started looking back at some of the achievements in 2018. This is in preparation for the 2018 annual report, which we plan to publish as soon as the annual audit with our new auditors is completed which starts on 10th January 2019. In short, we have been very fortunate to strategically increase our areas of operation to include a permanent presence in the Mau and a seasonal presence in the Loita area.

Communications and Fundraising:
MEP kicked off December by highlighting an amazing collaboration with Seedballs Kenya to distribute one million seed balls in the Mara in just one day. Funded by Diamond Trust Bank, on November 28, the MEP team along with the Seedballs Kenya team showed up to

distribute one million seed balls along with the community's help. We were delighted to find the community all showed up in their traditional Maasai colorful attire and were energetic and ready to make this happen. The energy was electric as the activity began with harmony and togetherness among the over 100 participants.

One million seed balls were distributed on the ground and in the air in the Mara.

MEP was also pleased to attend the award ceremony thrown by the Angama Foundation for the Greatest Maasai Mara photography competition. We were presented with a check for $3,920 from the Angama Foundation, as one of five beneficiaries of the competition and we had 140 entries, the most of any organization.

MEP C.E.O. Marc Goss accepting the check from the Angama Foundation on December 6.

Facebook donors continue to support MEP as three people celebrated their birthdays in December by hosting a Facebook Fundraiser. Thank you to Katy, Brian and Cajza all for celebrating your birthdays by supporting MEP with almost $390 worth of donations. Thank you to everyone who donated to MEP directly in December where over $17,800 was raised.

MEP received a $1,500 donation from SAWA who gives 10% of their yearly proceeds back to MEP. We also received $3,000 from Asilia Giving and we've been approved for a grant in 2019 by Eden Wildlife Trust. We also would like to thank Endangered Species Chocolate for their consideration of MEP as a 2018 Give Back Partner. Though we were not selected, their two selected partners, the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International and National Forest Foundation are both very deserving organizations.

Finally, Mara Elephant Project through our 501(c)3 the Sidekick Foundation, Inc. is now set up to receive stock donations. Please email claire@maraelephantproject.org for more information or check out the donate page. We received our first stock donation in December and look forward to this new donating opportunity in 2019.

Tracking:
During an aerial patrol in the Loita area, we very coincidentally located Amare with her collar still on. This was good news as we can now discontinue our search for it at the bottom of a small lake; however, it does mean that the collar failed and will need to be replaced. In January we will check by air if the VHF beacon still works. World Wildlife Fund collared elephant "Alina" dropped her collar by the Kenya – Tanzania border near the Sand River and we collected it and took it back to the MEP HQ on the 27th.

Elephants
We had many good sightings in December of MEP collared elephants including Lempiris, Hangzhou, Fred, Namunyak, Amare, Ivy, Hugo and Kegol. We also received an immobility alert from Alina's collar on December 27 and responded to find that unfortunately, the collar had dropped, but thankfully Alina was safe.

MEP collared elephant Hangzhou spotted with a herd of over 40 elephants on December 3.

Protecting elephants to conserve the greater Mara ecosystem
www.maraelephantproject.org

Alina's collared found after receiving an immobility alert on December 27.

Vehicles
MEP rangers travelled 10,819 km in patrol vehicles and 8,154 km on motorbike in December.

Rangers
Overall, in December, MEP rangers spent 1,155 hours on patrol and sighted 620 elephants.

MEP collared elephant Fred spotted on December 23.

Helicopter
On December 4, the helicopter was used to push collared elephant Ivy's herd from community land into the safety of the conservancy. The MEP Karen Blixen Camp Ree Park Safari helicopter also contributed aerial support to our partner KWS Vet Dr. Limo with the DSWT Mara Mobile Vet Unit for elephant treatments.

Protecting elephants to conserve the greater Mara ecosystem
www.maraelephantproject.org

KWS Vet Dr. Limo treating an elephant on December 9.

An elephant treatment in Olarro Conservancy where MEP provided aerial support.

Security:
All rangers were briefed to be extra vigilant during the holiday season. The large arrest on the 23rd follows the trend that illegal activities increase during this time of year.

Anti-Poaching:
On December 23, MEP rangers along with our government partners Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and Narok County Government arrested two poachers and seized 69 kg of ivory. MEP intelligence got a lead that these two large tusks were going to be transported to market.

They alerted the Naroosura ranger unit who intercepted them after leaving Loita on their way to Naroosura where the arrest was promptly made by KWS.

Two suspects arrested and 69 kg of ivory seized on December 23.

A total of 18 snares were removed and confiscated in December all by the DSWT Mau De-Snaring Unit. The Mau Forest unit also uncovered a charcoal operation and destroyed three kilns, confiscated seven sacks of charcoal and destroyed two poacher houses. The Munyas team had similar success when they came across a charcoal operation and destroyed two kilns and five sacks of charcoal.

12 snares removed on December 26 by the Mau team.

The MEP Munyas patrol team destroying a kiln at an illegal charcoal production site on December 13.

Human-Wildlife Conflict:

MEP rangers along with our embedded government rangers from KWS and NCG responded to 16 incidents of human-elephant conflict in December. None of these responses were out of the ordinary as most were moving elephants out of farms, settlements or away from community areas. In most cases MEP rangers were able to use their vehicles and firecrackers to move the elephants to safety; however, the helicopter was needed for three more pressing incidents. The Oloisukut area was the most active HEC hotspot in December as the area was dry and elephants were moving into community land on their way to get water at the Mara River. Oloisukut Conservancy bordering the Tarakwet area, where crops were ripe, was elephants favorite hiding spot during the day to then crop raid at night. On December 4, a group of 20 elephants were successfully chased away from the Oloosokon area by the Oloisukut patrol team and the same ranger unit responded all night through December 5 with elephant crop raiding in Tarakwet. Additionally, the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust MEP Mau De-Snaring Unit continues to mitigate human-elephant conflict with the communities surrounding the Mau Forest as elephants are coming out of the forest at night to raid maize farms.

The Oloisukut patrol team worked through the night to chase elephants out of farms.

A MEP patrol team pushed a large herd of elephants out of farms on Dec. 31.