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MEP FEBRUARY 2019 REPORT

One of two resident rolled-up hedgehogs spotted on MEP HQ property this month.

General

In February, the Mara has seen an abnormal amount of rain for a normally very dry time of the year. The Mara is very green, and the wildlife is enjoying the unexpected extra rain. The MEP Board of Trustees held a meeting on February 12 and reviewed the fourth quarter of 2018 and discussed the upcoming objectives for 2019.

SECURITY & ANTI-POACHING

Three suspects were arrested by Kenya Wildlife Service near Nairobi in the Kitengela area with 12 kg of ivory. This operation was possible through the intelligence MEP gathered. TANAPA also following MEP intelligence arrested one suspect with an illegal firearm which was suspected to be used to poach wildlife in the Serengeti. The SWT Mau De-Snaring Unit continues to remove snares used for bushmeat poaching in the Mau Forest and recently, there has also been an increase in drop spears targeting elephants that have been found and removed.

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A small trap found inside the Mau Forest meant for targeting birds.

One of three drop spears recovered on Feb. 6 in the Mau Forest that are used for targeting elephants.

Human-Wildlife Conflict Incidents:
MEP rangers were busy in February especially in the Lemek area. The Enkutoto ranger team operating in Lemek responded to seven conflict incidents during the reporting period, and rangers continued to fill in the MEP HEC forms and mitigation forms and turn them in at HQ at the end of the month for data to be entered into MEP's Earth Ranger. There were two elephant treatments in February, one incident where MEP's patrol team assisted KWS Vet Dr. Limo in the treatment. It was an elephant with a foot injury that was sustained after breaking through fences in the Endoinyio Erinka area. We're happy to report the treatment went well and the Pardamont Conservancy rangers continued to monitor this elephant after the treatment, and it was healing well.

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Dr. Limo working on the injured elephant on Feb. 19.

A MEP ranger unit responding to human-elephant conflict on Feb. 15 using their patrol vehicle and firecrackers to move the elephants out of farms and into safety

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No	DATE	REGION	Property Damage	Crops Lost	Details	Action
1	2-Feb-19	Kilepa Mau	Kraal	Maize	Wildlife in farms	Car & firecrackers
2	4-Feb-19	Olpusimoru	Crops	Maize	Wildlife in farms	Car & firecrackers
3	7-Feb-19	Kawai	Crops	Maize	Wildlife in farms	Car & firecrackers
4	9-Feb-19	Olaro	None	None	Wildlife near settlement area	Car & firecrackers
5	11-Feb-19	Olpusimoru	Crops	Maize	Wildlife in farms	Car & firecrackers
6	13-Feb-19	Olpusimoru	Crops	Maize	Wildlife in farms	Car & firecrackers
7	15-Feb-19	Kawai	Crops	Maize	Wildlife in farms	Car & firecrackers
8	17-Feb-19	Lemek	Fence	None	Wildlife in settlement area	Motorbike
9	20-Feb-19	Ngosuani	Fence	None	Wildlife near settlement area	Car & firecrackers
10	21-Feb-19	Rekero	Fence	None	Wildlife in settlement area	Motorbike
11	22-Feb-19	Ngosuani	Fence	None	Wildlife in settlement area	Blanks
12	24-Feb-19	Rekero	Fence	None	Wildlife in settlement area	Motorbike
13	25-Feb-19	Ngosuani	Fence	None	Wildlife near settlement area	Blanks
14	26-Feb-19	Olaro	Fence	None	Wildlife near settlement area	Car & firecrackers
15	28-Feb-19	Loita	Kraal	Tomatoes	Wildlife in farms	Car & firecrackers

Ranger & Vehicle Tracking:

In February, MEP rangers managed to cover a distance of 980 km on foot; 12,841 km by car and 3,780 km on motorbike. The Enkutoto ranger team covered the largest distance on foot this month at 206 km which was a result of the high level of conflict they were responding to.

MEP rangers on patrol in February taking photos and monitoring elephants.

COMMUNICATIONS & FUNDRAISING

We started February off with an exciting launch by Reuters and Narok County Government of a five-part online series about the Maasai Mara, Kenya. In the *Meet the Experts* section, MEP CEO Marc Goss is featured talking about the importance of protecting elephants to conserving the great Mara ecosystem. In the *Conflict* section, MEP Tracking manager Wilson Sairowua, in featured talking about his experience of growing up in the Mara and the role of MEP and its rangers. In February, MEP Trustee Brian Kearney-Grieve and Communications Director Claire Bolles met with Tyler Davis and Steve Mitchell from Angama Foundation and we are delighted to announce that in 2019 they are supporting the protection of an elephant for three years in the Mara. Additionally, the Greatest Maasai Mara photography competition continues to be an excellent source of exposure and fundraising for MEP. In February, Adam Bannister from Angama Foundation, released a two-part video introduction of MEP featuring Wilson Sairowua that highlights why it's important to support the conservation organizations in this competition. The entries for February were simply amazing and we thank Angama, Adam and every person who chose MEP as a beneficiary.

A February photo entry benefitting MEP from Romit Shah.

We received $72,800 from individual donors in February. Thank you to these individual donors for supporting MEP's mission, their contribution will go directly to our mission of protecting elephants in the Mara. There were two Facebook fundraisers during the month of February, thank you to Agnes and Ana for raising over $169 for MEP on Facebook! MEP received $1,430 in donations from individuals through PayPal. We thank you and all our other donors for their generous support of our work.

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In February, we were excited to announce that the Indianapolis Zoo supported MEP with a grant for the two-year protection of an elephant in the Mau Forest. We are thrilled to announce this partnership in 2019 and believe that when a boots on the ground conservation organization is working with a funder who believes in the same mission, an impact can be made to all wildlife and the wild places they call home. For the second year in a row, MEP presented at Crooked Creek Elementary School in Indianapolis, IN, USA as their Global Marketplace will again support MEP. We were also happy to participate in the kick off of Twende Porini or 'Let's Go Wild,' Asilia Africa's flagship yearly environmental and community program in the Mara where a group of children from local communities in the Mara area surrounding Asilia's camps are selected to participate in a four-day conservation camp at one of their properties. On February 25, MEP Administrator Elvis Saaytoi along with Communications Director Claire Bolles visited Rekero Primary School to judge the three performance pieces, one from the elephant group, lion group and cheetah group and select the four children, two boys and two girls, that will participate in Twende Porini.

The Rekero Primary School group with the judging panel for Twende Porini.

On January 26, His Divine Holiness Acharya Swamishree Purushottampriyadasji Maharaj, the spiritual leader of Shree Swaminarayan Gadi Sansthan, a worldwide center for spiritual, cultural and social welfare visited MEP HQ. A member of His Divine Holiness team presented a donation of over $1,000 to MEP in February and we thank them for always being a supporter of MEP every year.

MEP CEO Marc Goss accepting the donation from a member of His Divine Holiness' team.

Finally, on the last day of February, it was announced that MEP's very own Trustee Beatrice Karanja was appointed to the judging panel of the annual TUSK Conservation Awards. This is a very prestigious appointment and we congratulate her on this amazing acknowledgment of her over 20 years of service in conservation.

RESEARCH

Director's Update:

We had a busy month at MEP in February. Firstly, we hosted Dr. Michelle Henley at the beginning of the month for three days. Michelle is the founder of Elephants Alive, http://elephantsalive.org, based in South Africa. She has over twenty years' experience tracking elephants with satellite collars and has done a great deal of research on elephant foraging dynamics and we have a lot to learn from Michelle's expertise. Michelle presented her research at MEP and gave a field demonstration of the long-term individual identification data collection procedures used by Elephants Alive. MEP is hoping to form a scientific partnership with Elephants Alive and collaborate on a number of topics.

Michelle, Marc Goss and Jake Wall.

At the end of the month, I hosted two staff from Save the Elephants in Sambru (Benjamin Loloju & Nelson Mwangi) and Anka Bedetti from Elephants Alive South Africa for a three-day course on advanced geodata analysis using the python programming language. The material was a small part of a larger course on geodata science that I am developing and hope to offer through MEP more widely in future. The course will range from introductory GIS material up to more advanced analyses such as remote sensing using Google Earth Engine.

In February, we focused on developing data collection workflows for the type of data important for understanding not only collared elephant movement and conflict patterns, but for measuring the landscape and environment in which they live. At the center is the Earth Ranger software we are using for data collection and storage and we are tailoring the software to meet MEP's expanding data and analysis needs.

In February we also upgraded the MEP internet connection to a dedicated Safaricom microwave connection and unlimited data transfers to help support our growing data needs.

The equipment being installed on the MEP office roof.

Tracking Manager's Update:

Ivy was very busy this month and MEP rangers had to respond to her crop raiding a few times in February. Lempiris' collar stopped reporting on the 18th of February, but fortunately, he was sighted by rangers on the 10th of March and is confirmed to be in good health. We have submitted a request to replace his collar in March. MEP rangers responded to Caroline this month when she was breaking through fences in communities bordering the conservancy.

Collared elephant Ivy spotted in the Mara with her calf. They've clearly been enjoying the rain fall in February.

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Collared elephant Kegol spotted while MEP rangers were out on patrol.