

## MEP April 2023 Report



*Mara Elephant Project was joined by the community on Earth Day to clean up the Aitong town center. MEP researchers, rangers and support staff all showed their commitment to the planet and were joined by over 20 people from the community, mostly children, to collect the trash, sort it and recycle as much as possible.*

### GENERAL

The mountain bongo antelope is a critically endangered species (fewer than 100 individuals in Kenya) and a small group call the Mau Forest home alongside other wildlife like elephants. MEP's partner the Bongo Surveillance Project has found camera traps to be an effective method for collecting data on bongo locations, movements, population demographics and note any illegal activities. That's why on April 15, the MEP mobile ranger team was joined by Narok County rangers to install camera traps in an area of the forest where reports indicate around 10 bongo individuals reside. We'll use the footage captured to help increase protection for the bongo and other wildlife that reside inside the forest.



### SECURITY, ANTI-POACHING & CONFLICT

In early April, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) arrested two suspects in possession of two elephant tusks weighing 40 kg based on MEP intelligence. The KWS and MEP intel teams joined forces on this bust, and the suspects transporting the ivory via motorbike were evasive. Nevertheless, the joint team was successful, and this ivory didn't leave Kenyan shores.

In April, we partnered with KWS and the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (SWT) Mobile Vet Unit for a total of four elephant treatments. On April 21, the MEP mobile ranger team was deployed to the field to visually monitor collared elephant Polaris because of a low-speed alert we received.

When they found him, they discovered a suspected spear wound on his back that was most likely



causing him pain and slowing his movements. We immediately called in our partners to treat the bull, and his healing process was closely monitored by MEP rangers. The next day, collared elephant Kiambi also received treatment for suspected spear wounds and is being closely monitored as he heals. Earlier in the month, the MEP mobile team joined partners to assist in the treatment of a bull elephant that had an advanced leg infection, and another checkup treatment took place for a female previously treated in March.



In April, the MEP / SWT Mau De-Snaring Units deployed in the forest continued their efforts to deter illegal habitat destruction activities, increase protection for the wildlife that call it home and communities living nearby. The “Alpha” and “Charlie” ranger teams alongside Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and KWS removed snares, arrested illegal loggers and charcoal producers, confiscated illegal materials and destroyed kilns.



MEP community rangers continued their conflict mitigation efforts in April. The “Foxtrot” ranger team got reports of elephants invading farms and breaking fences. They rapidly responded and moved the elephants away from the farms and back into nearby conservancies.

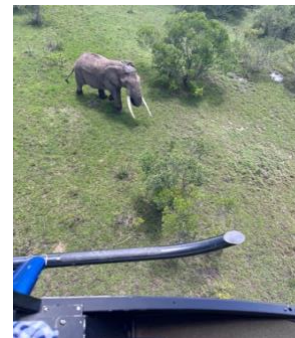


Overall, in April, MEP rangers removed 33 snares, and alongside government partners arrested one poaching suspect and confiscated 5 kg of bushmeat. There were nine habitat destruction suspects arrested and 28 kilns and nine charcoal sacks destroyed. They also confiscated 61 posts, 205 pieces of timber and mitigated six conflict incidents. In April, MEP rangers covered a distance of 1935.39 km on foot and patrolled 17,336.46 km by car in the GME. MEP ranger’s elephant monitoring efforts continued in April as well.



## HELICOPTER

In April, the MEP helicopter continued to be a vital tool for the organization to respond to elephants and people when they are in need. We got a call from a distressed farmer that MEP identified individual 1, affectionately known as “Edwin”, had broken through a fence and entered his farm. The large bull was causing destruction and a rapid response was needed to mitigate the escalating situation. We deployed the MEP helicopter and CEO Marc Goss successfully moved Edwin out of the farm and ushered him to safety.



Early in April, we responded to a report of a young man gored by a buffalo in Aitong that needed an emergency flight to the hospital. We immediately deployed the MEP helicopter and Marc took the patient to Tenwek hospital for treatment.



## COMMUNICATIONS & FUNDRAISING



In April, we had the pleasure of hosting the team from Elephant Cooperation at our headquarters. They have been supporting MEP since 2019 and most recently supported the drone training of MEP rangers and researchers to mitigate conflict and collect data. We're grateful for their continued support. Mara Elephant Project received \$47,485 in Kenya, which included a portion of the annual support from the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust for the Mau Forest ranger units. The Sidekick Foundation, Inc. d/b/a

Mara Elephant Project USA received \$136,610 in support of MEP's efforts. Thank you to John and Erica Dillow via the J.E. Fehsenfeld Family Foundation for their continued support, Margaretta Taylor, Peter & Maaïke Van Bommel, Peter Stewart, Patrick Kehoe, George Williams, Michael Romersa, the Wales Family Fund, Donna Barlow, Joseph Davison, Elizabeth Varriano Marston, John L Kreideweis, Daniel Rozinski, Sylvia Johnson, Helena Van Dierendonck, Charles Bradford, Susan Doyle, Deborah Fagas, Frieda Holt, Elizabeth Hyatt, Michael Johnson, Lillian Kraemer, John Roche, Patricia Schneider and the Explorations Company for their continued support and Fran and Andrea Duthie for supporting the their namesake scholarship. Thank you to all of the photographers who supported MEP in the Greatest Maasai Mara photo competition in April. *Right, an entry from Kim Norris.*



## RESEARCH & CONSERVATION

### Director's Update

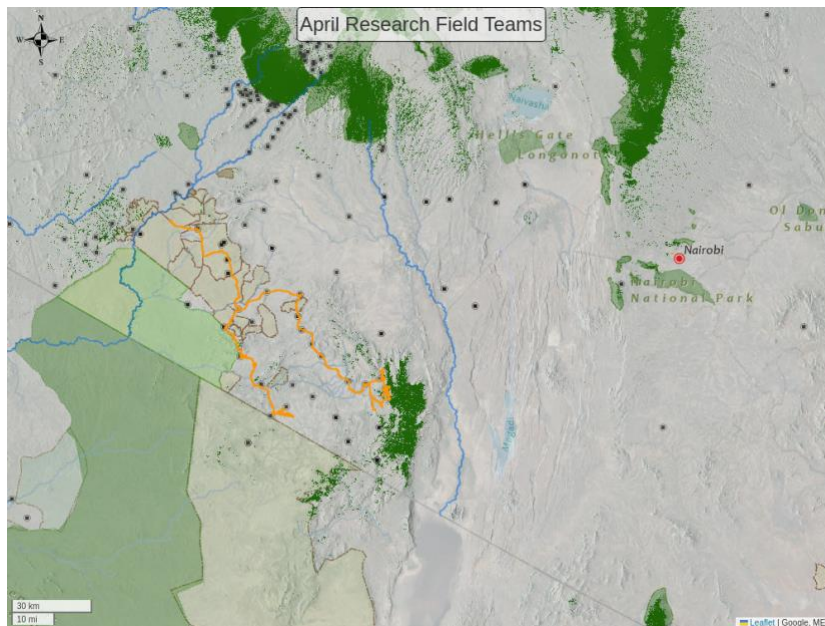
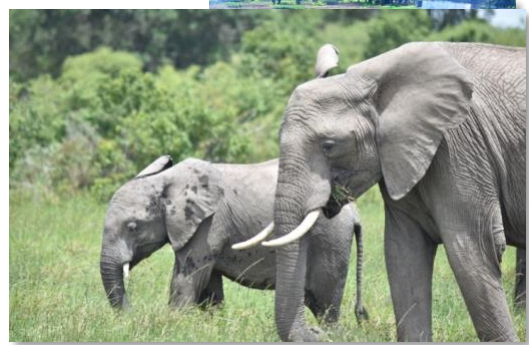
On April 17 and 18, I co-hosted (along with Holly Dublin and Cindy Obath) the second technical workshop for the Greater Mara Monitoring Framework (GMMF) project. The meeting was held at the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA) offices in Aitong. We had a large number of attendees and made good progress on the development of the GMMF. The GMMF and associated report were finalized in late April and will be distributed and presented at a meeting in Narok on May 30.



In April we have started to use a fixed-wing aircraft to perform some of the systematic monitoring of elephants and habitat. On April 29, I did a long patrol to the Rift Valley to monitor our collared elephants including Hannibal, Clara, Natasha, Audrey, Indy, Isiah, and Gwen.

The MEP long-term monitoring (LTM) team worked in the Maasai Mara National Reserve in April monitoring elephants to continue their individual identification work. They recently

collected data on a herd that they've yet to identify, further expanding the MEP database. They also continued their monitoring efforts closer to headquarters in Lemek.



Movements (orange tracks) of MEP's two field assistants during April. All of our field assistants are working on mapping fences, roads and landcover ground-truthing points using motorbikes and our TerraChart app. They recorded 34.64 km of fences and 21.6 LCC points in April.

## MEP Co-Existence Farm

### General Update

The rainfall this month started at the end of the month, and the Mara River, which runs along the farm, gave us a scare as it continued to rise. Given the rainfall, the major activity was weeding the farm, but the team worked hard and maintained a clean farm. There were very few re-planting activities and low predation since the rainfall ensured there was plenty of long green grass availability for the predators like hippos.





We were also very happy to carry out our first kitchen garden training that over 45 women attended and enjoyed. They asked a lot of questions and were able to understand the importance of the farm to conservation and the community.



### Experimental Farm SITREP: April 2023

Date Time	Plot ID	Type of crop	Detail
2023_04_09	5-3.2	Moringa	Moringa tree planted for the first time at the farm in the five plots
	5-9.2		
	8-13.1		
	2-5.2		
	7-6.2		
2023_04_09	3-4.1	Managu	Replanted for the 5th time after it was predated on by elephants
	4-8.1		
	6-12.1		
	8-15.1		
	11-10.1		
2023_04_15	S2-1-1.1	Maize/hive	Replanted after it did not germinate and was also predated on by birds
	S2-1-2.1	Maize/Chili/intercrop	
2023_04_09	3-6.1	Lemon Grass	Hippos predated partly on the lemon grass in this plot
2023_04_09	5-8.1	Cabbage	The plot was totally destroyed by eating and stepping on by hippos
	6-15.2		
2023_04_09	9-11.1	Spinach	All crops in the two plots were eaten by hippos
	8-16.1		
	4-4.1		
2023_04_15	S2-1-5.1	Maize/Chili/intercrop	Maize were eaten by cows
2023_04_23	1-4.1	Sweet Potato	Hippos predated on this plot of sweet potato
2023_04_30	11-6.1	Tomatoes	Cows passed and stepped on the tomatoes on this plot
2023_04_23	1-7.2	Canola	Canola crop in this two plots were replanted after they were predated on by hippos
	11-1.2		
2023_04_23	S2-1-2.1	Maize/Chili/intercrop	Chili was replanted after the previous one dried up

## Climate Report

Table 2: 1 MEP's Experimental Farm Rainfall Recording April 2023

Date Time	Precipitation	
	Rain gauge 1 (ml)	Rain gauge 2 (200m2)
2023_04_04	20	12.8
2023_04_12	23	17
2023_04_13	21	16
2023_04_22	7	4.6
2023_04_24	1.3	1.8
2023_04_25	6	4.6
2023_04_26	26	18
2023_04_29	16	12
2023_04_30	36	25

## Tracking Manager Report



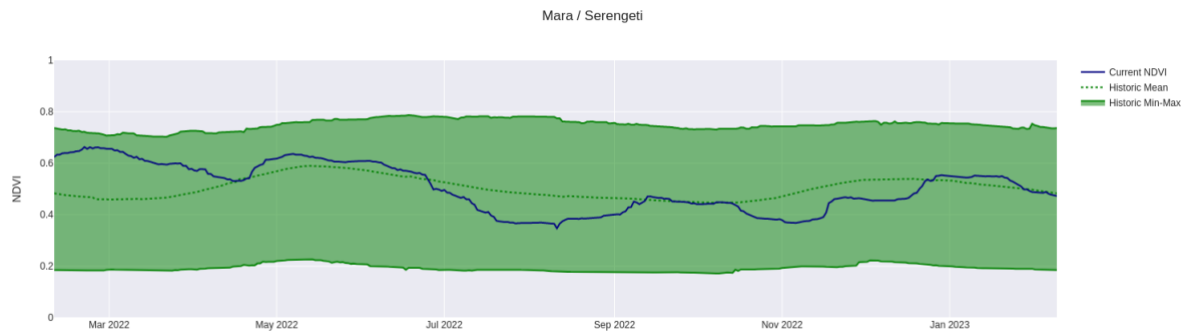
Collared elephants Fred, Polaris,  
Fitz and Ivy all monitored in April.



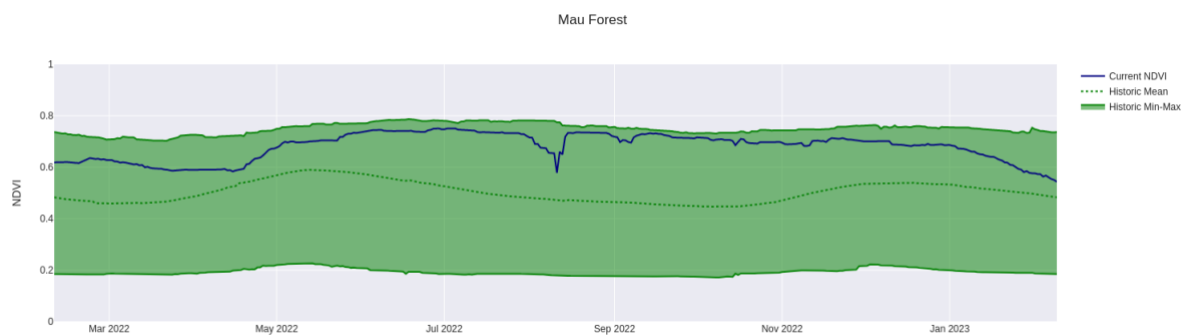
## ENVIRONMENT: NDVI

Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) is a measure of plant photosynthetic activity. Higher NDVI indicates the plant is greener. The blue trend line shows the current value while the green shaded area shows the min-max range of values centered around the green trend line from values measured back to February 2000.

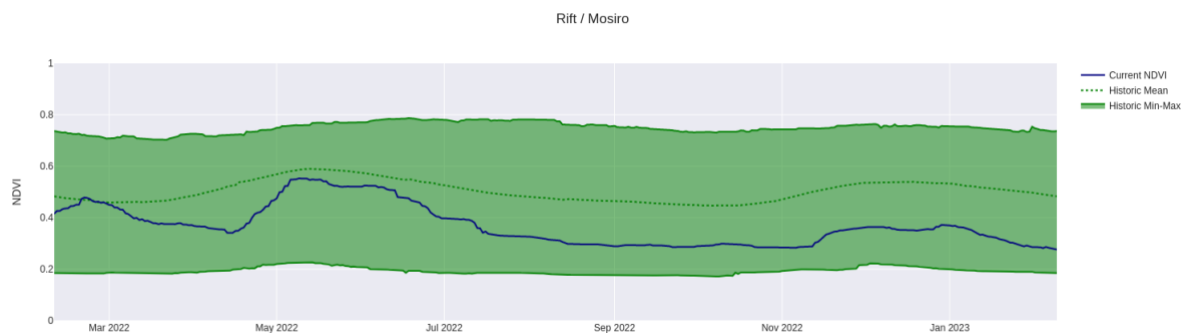
### Greater Mara Ecosystem (GME)



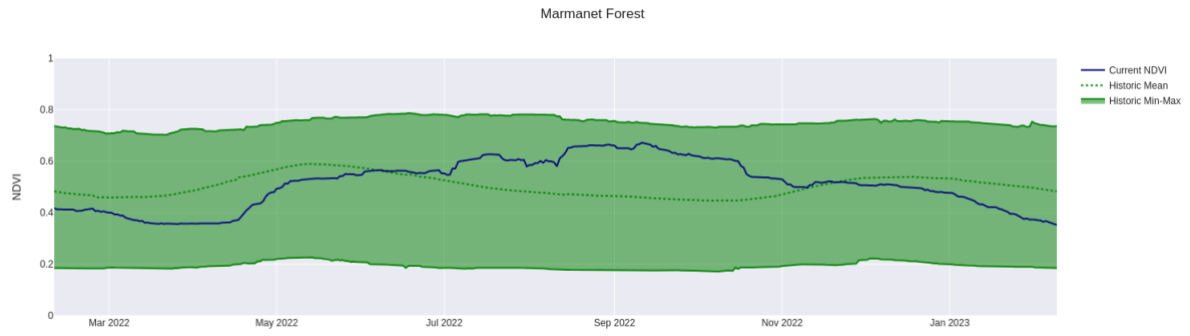
### Mau Forest



### Rift Valley / Mosiro



### Marmanet Forest



## Nyakweri Forest

