MEP April 2024 Report

MEP employees, Tor and Meshack, are training hard to run the 25th Lewa Safari Marathon taking place in Lewa Wildlife Conservancy on June 29. They'll be representing MEP and raising money for our community rangers.

GENERAL

The Mara has lost a giant. Bull elephant Kegol tracked continuously since 2015, has died after succumbing to his injuries suffered during a fight with another male. Estimated to be in his 50s, Kegol was classified as a tusker with tusks weighing 110lbs and 108lbs. Collared at the height of the poaching crisis in the Mara, Kegol's movements were tracked 24/7 by the Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), and MEP to protect him. While known to crop raid, Kegol was most often found in Mara North Conservancy near MEP headquarters alongside fellow tusker Fred.

"Sadly, we lost one of the biggest bulls, but it's also important to remember the success of saving such a giant," says MEP Special Projects Manager Wilson Sairowua. "Tracking him alongside our partners for almost 10 years increased his safety so that he could die naturally."

Kegol's tusks were collected by KWS, and his remains were left at his place of death to complete the circle of life. "I remember when I was the tracking manager, Kegol was the first elephant that I used the app to track," says Sairowua. "The plains of the Mara will not be the same without this big giant roaming around."

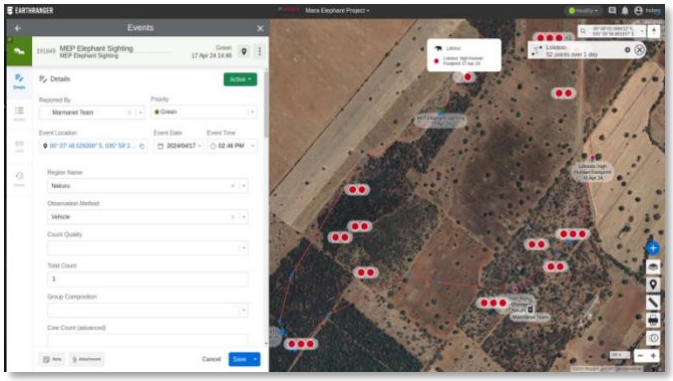
SECURITY, ANTI-POACHING & CONFLICT

The MEP command center located at our Mara headquarters acts as the brain for our body of operations. It's in this room that rangers use EarthRanger to monitor all of our assets including vehicles, patrol teams, and elephant movements, in real-time and plan patrol targets, identify

P.O. BOX 2606 · NAIROBI · 00502 · KENYA · TEL: +254707280033 · +254742016702
USA Office: 4000 W. 106TH STREET · SUITE 125-238 · CARMEL · INDIANA · 46032 · USA · 317-344-2863
E-MAIL: info@maraelephantproject.org · www.maraelephantproject.org

areas at risk, and strategize for maximum impact. MEP's operations team collaborates daily with our research department to analyze the data to identify trends and partnership opportunities that inform management decisions.

Forests are important elephant habitats that are threatened by illegal logging and charcoal production. In April, the MEP "Golf" ranger team alongside government partners arrested two habitat destruction suspects and seized five bags of charcoal during an ambush operation at night. MEP rangers are deployed to protect the forest and wildlife that call it home.



How do tracking collars enable WRTI, KWS, and MEP to respond in real-time? On April 17, the MEP command center received an alert that collared elephant Lolotoo had stopped moving, and even more concerning, his movement in EarthRanger showed that he was navigating a heavily populated area.

They immediately deployed the nearest ranger team to find Lolotoo and assess the situation. Luckily, when the rangers arrived, he was in good health and the collar was in good condition. While a happy ending, the collar alerts can also signal an elephant in need of vet intervention or one that needs to be moved out of an area where they aren't safe. The team has stayed to monitor him and encourage him to not traverse into the community area.

P.O. BOX 2606 · NAIROBI · 00502 · KENYA · TEL: +254707280033 · +254742016702
USA Office: 4000 W. 106TH STREET · SUITE 125-238 · CARMEL · INDIANA · 46032 · USA · 317-344-2863
E-MAIL: info@maraelephantproject.org · www.maraelephantproject.org

MEP rangers and researchers use Garmin products daily in the field. These tools are used to take down coordinates, navigate the bush, report incidents, and mark wildlife corridors. The data is contributed to MEP's EarthRanger system to create visual outputs that help management and partners make data-driven decisions. Recently, Spejde Sport donated six Garmin watches, two Montana 700 GPS, and six inReach devices to support MEP rangers and researchers' work in the field.

In April, MEP offered an EarthRanger mobile refresher training course for rangers to demonstrate new functionality and run practice scenarios ensuring they are comfortable with the app and trained to use it to its full potential.

Overall, in April, MEP rangers alongside government partners arrested 12 habitat destruction suspects, confiscated two pieces of timber, and 303 posts, destroyed 12 charcoal kilns, and mitigated 23 conflict incidents. In April, MEP rangers covered a distance of 1,235 km on foot and 3,283 km by car in the GME.

HELICOPTER

In April, the MEP helicopter monitored collared elephants Audrey and Indy together in a herd of over 50 individuals. Also, Collared elephant Tino seems to be adapting very well to his new home in Tsavo after being translocated from the Tana River area in late January. MEP CEO Marc Goss conducted an aerial monitoring flight to note Tino's health and ensure his collar was in good condition. Based on his tracked movements, he's spending time in the open savanna

P.O. BOX 2606 · NAIROBI · 00502 · KENYA · TEL: +254707280033 · +254742016702
USA Office: 4000 W. 106TH STREET · SUITE 125-238 · CARMEL · INDIANA · 46032 · USA · 317-344-2863
E-MAIL: info@maraelephantproject.org · www.maraelephantproject.org

in a protected area. Their collar data enables WRTI, KWS, and MEP to monitor their real-time movements across the landscapes they both inhabit.

DRONES FOR CONSERVATION
Special Projects Manager's Update

The high rainfall during April meant ranger teams were unable to access areas easily and drones, especially responding to conflict incidents, have been a key tool. Drones were deployed to respond to conflict in Lemek, Ol-Kinyei, some parts of the Olarro area, and HQ responded to different cases of elephants in settlements near Mara North Conservancy and a few cases in the Pardamat Conservation area. We also provided aerial support to the Pardamat Conservation area after two of their rangers drowned in a river.

The "Golf" ranger team in Transmara made several visits to collared Elephant Fitz in Nyakweri Forest. The herd of 70 has been trying to raid crops at night, but they responded to move them back to the forest using a thermal drone. On various occasions, the team also visited collared elephant Fred in Oloisukut Conservancy.

The "Lima" ranger team in Mosiro has been actively monitoring a large herd of elephants in the Rift Valley. Mosiro has been experiencing a herd of elephants migrating to Shompole through the Rift Valley. In most cases, elephants raided the irrigation farms along the Ewuaso Ngiro River. However, the team successfully moved the herd out of the farms.

The Sheldrick Wildlife Trust Mau De-Snaring Unit has been monitoring the forest, primarily focusing on observing people's movement within the forest and detecting any illegal activities. This recently led to the discovery of charcoal burning, and the team successfully destroyed the kilns after reconnaissance in the air. The "Charlie" team responded to cases of elephants raiding crops at Olmariko Forest.

The Loita ranger teams, with less conflict in the region, have been monitoring the Loita Forest for habitat destruction, a useful tool to monitor areas not easily accessed on foot. We deployed the Mavic 3T in Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary to monitor collared elephant Gina and we successfully found her with a herd of five individuals.

Gina and her herd of five individuals in the Mwaluganje area.

P.O. BOX 2606 · NAIROBI · 00502 · KENYA · TEL: +254707280033 · +254742016702
USA Office: 4000 W. 106TH STREET · SUITE 125-238 · CARMEL · INDIANA · 46032 · USA · 317-344-2863
E-MAIL: info@maraelephantproject.org · www.maraelephantproject.org

COMMUNICATIONS & FUNDRAISING

MEP joined tourism and conservation partners and over 30 community members on #EarthDay to collect and recycle trash in Aitong Center. The theme this year is plastic eradication and MEP staff from all departments volunteered to collect and sort the trash for recycling, which included many plastics. To encourage recycling, MEP donated four AV gas drums that will be repurposed by the community for environment-friendly trash collection.

"We are happy to have partnered with MEP this Earth Day together with the community and rangers from Lemek Conservancy to collect the trash. The teamwork, and togetherness I have witnessed today is a good gesture and we need to continue in this spirit to make Mara plastic free." Alex Walker Serian Camp Staff Member John Kibelekenya

MEP's CEO Marc Goss visited Natural State on April 23 alongside Trustees Beatrice Karanja and Kevin Rodrigues. They spent time with their staff seeing their research work firsthand and discussed strategic cooperation to enhance research initiatives and have a greater community impact.

MEP partners with organizations protecting all animals, no matter their size. In April, Karen Blixen Camp Trust held its Mara North Conservancy Dog Project clinic in Mararianta Village to vaccinate and spay/neuter over 3,000 dogs. The clinic aims to control the population of domestic dogs and protect wildlife and the communities against diseases transferred from them. MEP staff joined the MNC Dog Project and volunteered alongside their team giving them a unique perspective on conservation.

MEP is thrilled to showcase our first-ever photography exhibition at our headquarters in the Mara featuring MEP Image Ambassador Jeffrey Wu. The award-winning wildlife photographer has graciously donated these prints so 100% of the proceeds from the sale support MEP's work to

P.O. BOX 2606 · NAIROBI · 00502 · KENYA · TEL: +254707280033 · +254742016702
USA Office: 4000 W. 106TH STREET · SUITE 125-238 · CARMEL · INDIANA · 46032 · USA · 317-344-2863
E-MAIL: info@maraelephantproject.org · www.maraelephantproject.org

protect elephants and their habitats. Prints are available for sale and can ship internationally. To find out more about the selection of prints and prices email info@maraelephantproject.org.

"Only when you show how cute the elephant calf is, how beautiful the habitat and the wildlife is, and how they naturally live together, people realize and therefore appreciate the value of nature and wildlife." Mara Elephant Project Image Ambassador Jeffrey Wu

Mara Elephant Project Trust in Kenya received $1,014 in donations in April. Thank you to Kampur Travel Diaries for your continued support of the education program at MEP. Mara Elephant Project USA received $231,358.67 in support of MEP's efforts. Thank you to Lori Price for continuing to support the Loita rangers, the Niraj Bhatia Foundation for their first-time support, Richard Schechter, Sheila Swigert, Nancy Munn, Eugene Croisant, Catherine Balton, Ginni Keith, Joan Denton, Invale Foundation, Joan Ballitch, Barbara Podowski, Patricia Rich, Karen Werner-Petak & Steven M Petak, D Nejad, The Ramakrishnan Family Fund, John and Erica Dillow, William Radinson, Sharon Miles, Sandra Atlas Bass, Mary Nelson, Fran Neel, Raoul Chacon, Linda Bateman, Linda Huber, John Roche, Janet Silverstein, Perry Foundation, Betsy Maiale, William Chambers, Virginia Perez, Mariana Laufer, Richard Friedberg, Mary Vero, Linda Hess, Sylvia Stevens-Buczek, Darlene Barger and Julie Sandberg. Finally, a special thanks to Fran and Lorne Duthie and everyone at Elephanatics for their continued support of the Fran Duthie African Elephant Conservation Scholarship.

RESEARCH & CONSERVATION

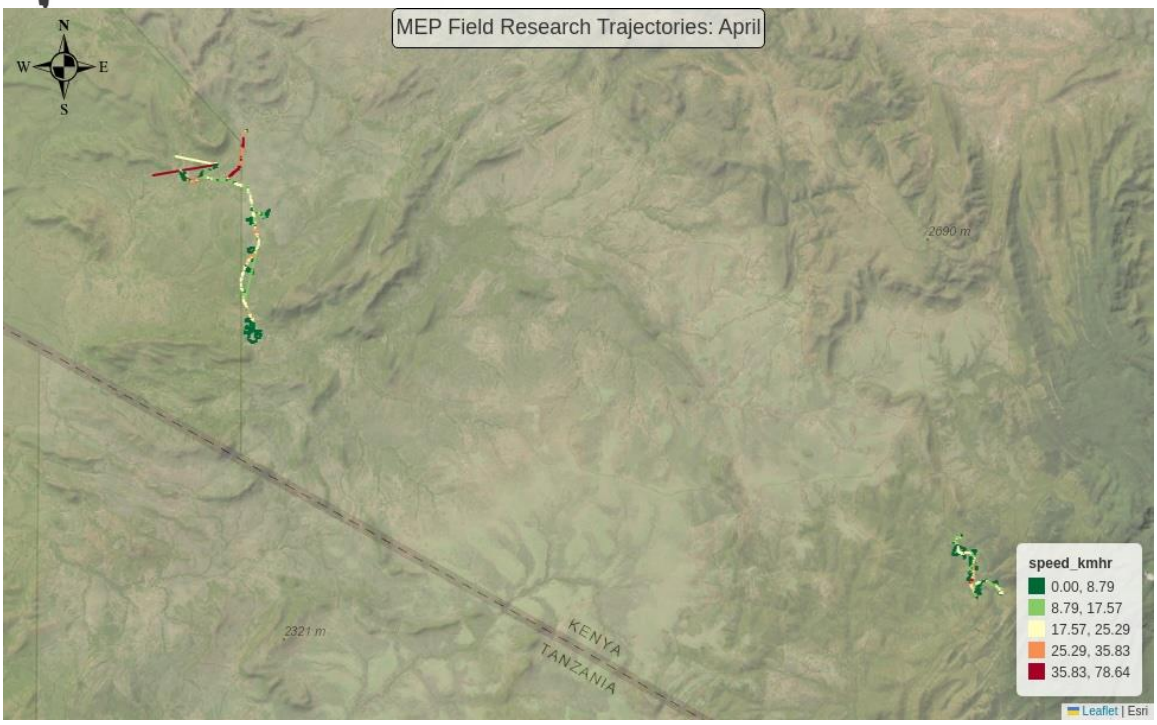
Director's Update

In April, Dr. Jake Wall attended the annual transboundary Mara-Serengeti management meeting hosted by the Greater Serengeti Conservation Society at the Serena Hotel. The objective of the meeting was to compile and update scientific summaries that were then presented to managers from both Tanzania and Kenya. The meeting was well attended and we were honored that Governor Patrick Ol Ntutu launched the 'Greater Maasai Mara Monitoring Framework' which has been a collaborative effort for the last two years among various contributors including MEP.

The Governor of Narok – Patrick Ole Ntutu – officially launched the greater Mara Monitoring Framework at the annual transboundary Mara- Serengeti management meeting in April

The GMMF has now been officially adopted as a means to monitor the health of the ecosystem and as well as to assess progress with the Greater Mara Ecosystem Management Plan. The GMMF is a key tool that will be used to assess the extent and health of elephant habitats as well as many other ecosystem health indicators spanning environmental, human-wildlife interface, and socio-economic categories. Work on the GMMF is ongoing as there are still many indicators for which data is needed as well as analytical processing.

P.O. BOX 2606 · NAIROBI · 00502 · KENYA · TEL: +254707280033 · +254742016702
USA Office: 4000 W. 106TH STREET · SUITE 125-238 · CARMEL · INDIANA · 46032 · USA · 317-344-2863
E-MAIL: info@maraelephantproject.org · www.maraelephantproject.org



Movements 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 209 km of fences and 0 LCC points in April.

MEP Co-Existence Farm

General Update

There was high rainfall throughout the country in the month of April causing difficulty in implementing some projects due to too much water. The river almost flooded four times in the month with water filling to the brim.

In April, we held an Earth Day celebration with 100 learners from Enkipai Primary School where we all collected litter and discussed the impact of plastic on our planet. The little green guardians, collected up litter and learned how to make a big difference for our planet. After collecting bags full of trash, the students participated in interactive workshops that tackled the mighty foe - plastic! They learned about the harmful effects of plastic pollution on our environment and explored ways to reduce their plastic footprint. These young change-makers are now armed with the knowledge and motivation to make a difference, one step at a time.

P.O. BOX 2606 · NAIROBI · 00502 · KENYA · TEL: +254707280033 · +254742016702
USA Office: 4000 W. 106TH STREET · SUITE 125-238 · CARMEL · INDIANA · 46032 · USA · 317-344-2863
E-MAIL: info@maraelephantproject.org · www.maraelephantproject.org

The Coexistence Farm Leader Abigael Partet visited the 20-acre Maasai Mara University Botanical Garden which consists of a medicinal garden, tree nursery, water treatment plant, and fruit trees. Most of the plants are indigenous and they are used to teach both the community and the natural resource classes in the university. During the meeting, she discussed partnership opportunities with the Resource Department Head Mr. Omuse.

Maasai Mara University Botanical Garden visit.

Co-Existence Farm SITREP: *April 2024 (No data recorded because of the heavy rainfall)*

Climate Report

Table 2: 1 MEP's Experimental Farm Rainfall Recording April 2024

Date	Rain gauge 2 (200m2)
2024_04_06	2
2024_04_08	4
2024_04_09	14
2024_04_11	5
2024_04_12	2.5
2024_04_15	5.1
2024_04_16	2
2024_04_17	4.5
2024_04_22	10.5
2024_04_23	12
2024_04_24	5.1
2024_04_25	2.7
2024_04_27	12
2024_04_29	7

P.O. BOX 2606 · NAIROBI · 00502 · KENYA · TEL: +254707280033 · +254742016702
USA Office: 4000 W. 106TH STREET · SUITE 125-238 · CARMEL · INDIANA · 46032 · USA · 317-344-2863
E-MAIL: info@maraelephantproject.org · www.maraelephantproject.org

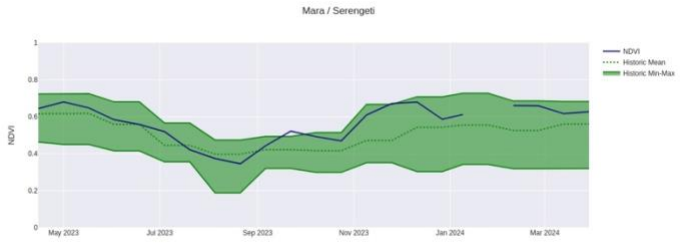
Tracking Manager Report

Collared elephants; Fred, Fitz, Matali, Kiambi, and Polaris were all monitored by MEP rangers in the month of April.

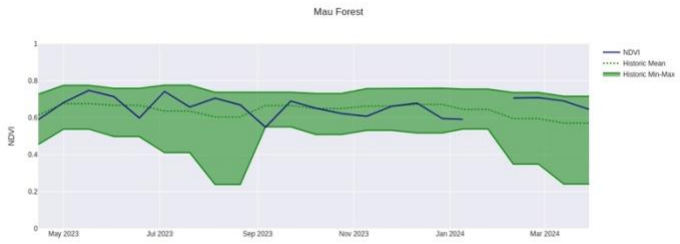
ENVIRONMENT: NDVI

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.

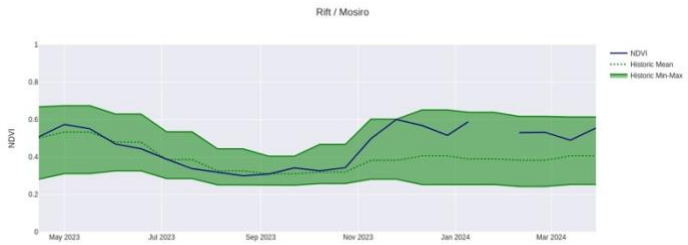
Greater Mara Ecosystem (GME)



Mau Forest

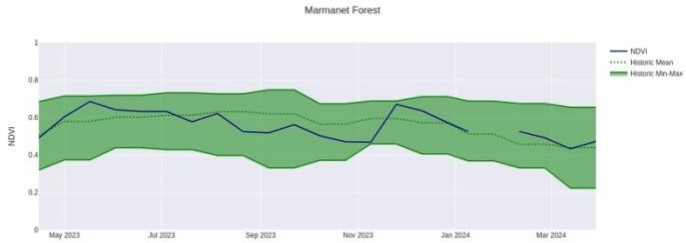


Rift Valley / Mosiro

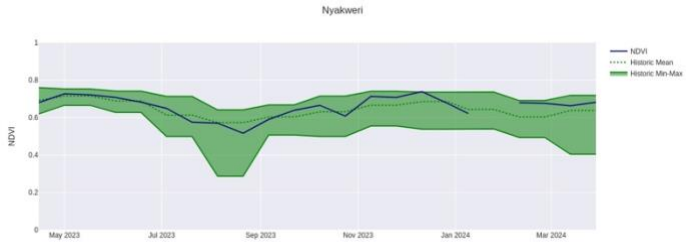


P.O. BOX 2606 · NAIROBI · 00502 · KENYA · TEL: +254707280033 · +254742016702
USA Office: 4000 W. 106TH STREET · SUITE 125-238 · CARMEL · INDIANA · 46032 · USA · 317-344-2863
E-MAIL: info@maraelephantproject.org · www.maraelephantproject.org

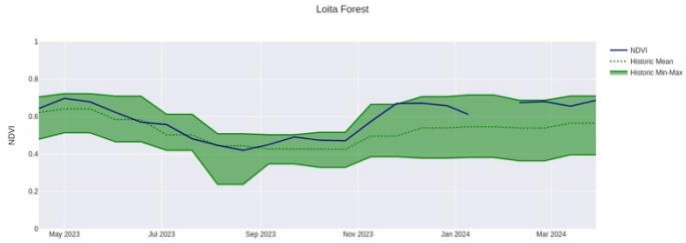
Marmanet Forest



Nyakweri Forest



Loita Forest



P.O. BOX 2606 · NAIROBI · 00502 · KENYA · TEL: +254707280033 · +254742016702
USA Office: 4000 W. 106TH STREET · SUITE 125-238 · CARMEL · INDIANA · 46032 · USA · 317-344-2863
E-MAIL: info@maraelephantproject.org · www.maraelephantproject.org