

# Kasigau Corridor

## Aerial Surveillance Report

### Quarterly Report

March 2017 to May 2017

By Keith Hellyer



### Summary

The Kasigau Wildlife Corridor is located between Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks and covers 200 square kilometers. The 14 group ranches that collectively make up this corridor provide an important habitat and dispersal area for wildlife between these two protected areas. There are approximately 11,000 elephants in the Tsavo ecosystem and roughly 2,000 of them that rely on the corridor as part of their movements in search for water between the two national parks.

Aerial surveillance is one of the most effective means of reducing wildlife crime, and is needed now more than ever in an effort to curb elephant poaching. Our daily aerial patrols are a vital tool in the effective prevention of elephant poaching, whilst increasing security overall and providing essential data needed to protect such expansive areas of land. Furthermore, aerial support also helps in identifying other illegal activities from the air, such as illegal charcoal burning, trespassing, illegal grazers and logging, which poses a great threat to the Kasigau Corridor and the future of the environment.



### This Quarter

The months from March to May brought relief with the arrival of some much-needed rain to the project. It was not a lot, but enough to fill many of the dams and green up the entire region. The southern ranches such as Wushumbu, Koranze and Mbale were the wettest by far, with dams bursting their banks and a tree canopy so thick and green it was extremely difficult to spot anything beneath it.

#### Flight data

Total hours flown	167.6
Approx Distance covered	15,517 km

### Elephant Movements

Elephants within the corridor immediately migrated south to the southern ranches with the arrival of heavy rains along the Tanzanian border. This seemed to be a big attraction for STE collared elephants to lure them from Tsavo East, across the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and Mombasa highway moving into the project area and further south. Similar to July 2016, herds of over 200+ were staying on Koranze ranch. Koranze is an area where charcoal production, mining and cattle grazing are abundant. The aerial surveillance team was monitoring the movement of elephants out of the project area into Koranze and we were able to advise the Kenya Wildlife Service to place a camp in that area as soon as elephants started to appear at the Koranze dams.



(Herding problem elephant back into TENP)

In early May, a female elephant and her calf were hanging around near the Wildlife Works Headquarters in Maungu and raiding homesteads in the community both at day and night. For two weeks, there was no luck pushing her with flash bangers, vehicles and aircraft and it was getting to be a dangerous situation for both people and the elephants. Thankfully on the last attempt, both KWS and Wildlife Works rangers, vehicles, gyrocopter and KWS helicopter were able to spot her push her through Maungu town, across the Mombasa highway and through the underpass under the SGR back into Tsavo East.

The gyrocopter was also used to locate an injured elephant on the Koranze and Wushumbu ranch borders in order to allow KWS veterinary teams to investigate and respond. Unfortunately, the elephant had inoperable leg fracture, likely from a mining shaft and was euthanized by the Kenya Wildlife Service.

#### Collared Elephants (see Appendix 1 for full list of sightings)



(Rukinga and KWS collared bull together)

##### Rukinga:

After being in Tsavo East National Park since November 2016, Rukinga was able to cross the highway and back into the Kasigau Corridor protect area in March. Rukinga quickly found the KWS collared bull with whom he had frequently spent time prior to his crossing north. It was amazing to see him briefly reunited with the KWS bull, which had stayed on the ranches whilst Rukinga was in Tsavo East. The KWS bull and Rukinga were seen the day after Rukinga's crossing, some 24km from the Mombasa highway. As the rains continued on the southern ranches, Rukinga moved south very quickly and spent his time with the larger herds on Wushumbu and Koranze, touching on Mbale from time to time.

##### Taita:

There was one good sighting of Taita that took place while she was on Wushumbu ranch with her core family group in mid-April. With almost every other elephant on Koranze at the time, she seemed to be taking her time moving down to join the larger herds on the Tanzanian border. Her location once on Koranze was difficult to photograph or even properly confirm ID. She would either be mixed within a large concentrations of elephants or be in a densely vegetated valley where visual of her collar or family was very difficult. So marking of elephant herds on the entire ranch was only regular recordings on Koranze and her potential location.

The gyrocopter has been key in being able to check in on the collared elephants- seeing their general location and the security, their condition, their social patterns and potential threats.



(Rukinga in mixed herd)

### Elephant Deaths (see Appendix 2 for full details)

There was only one recorded poaching case within the project area this quarter, killed by poison arrow. The carcass was found on Rukinga and the tusks were recovered. Bordering the project area on Mkuki Ranch, an elephant was found dead with the cause of death presumed to be natural. The tusks had been removed but it was deemed to be opportunistic harvesting of Ivory from cattle herders or charcoal burners. The third elephant loss came about due to a sub adult female being euthanized by KWS because of a fracture of rear right leg. The cause of fracture was unknown but presumed to be from a gem stone mining trench.

### Other Wildlife

With the rains being focused on the southern ranches, the majority of the wildlife also moved south. However, adequate grazing on Taita ranch kept large herds of Common zebra and the majority of the Grevy zebras concentrated on the open areas north of Kivuko. A group of 4 Grevy zebra were seen in Tsavo East just outside of Maungu town. It will be interesting to see the effects of the SGR on the Grevy movements between the park and the ranches. Towards the end of May Grevy Zebra were seen as far south as Dawida ranch in small pockets or lone individuals.



(Grevy zebra from the air)

There have been consistent sighting of 2 female lions with 4 cubs on Rukinga ranch throughout this quarter. Cheetah sightings on Rukinga were also the most regular and there were scattered sightings of other individuals on Taita and Kambanga.

A large number of melanistic servals cats were seen on Rukinga and Taita ranch. A special focus on recording these sightings is being done to gather information on why so many are being seen over the Taita ranches.

### Other Poaching incidents and charcoal arrests

Charcoal data	
Charcoal kilns	93
Log piles	292
Poles	27
Charcoal bags	21*
	*recovered- others seen but removed
Arrests made	Six charcoal burners arrested



(Charcoal burners fleeing the scene)



**Arrests Made**

12.03.2017

One poacher arrested on Mgeno ranch in possession of bush meat (3kgs) and was taken to Voi station.

13.04.2017

One charcoal burner arrested at Sagala ranch and booked into Voi station OB 31

24.04.2017

One charcoal burner arrested at Sagalla ranch and booked into Voi station OB 28

Two bush meat poachers arrested at Marasi and taken to Voi station OB 04

10.05.2017

One woman arrested at Maungu village in possession of game meat (Kudu) and taken to Voi station OB 26

See Appendix 3 for flight track information month by month.

Please review the Aerial Surveillance Annual Report for final thoughts and figures from total operations from May 2016 - June 2017. A big Thank you to Save the Elephants and all other committed supporters.



## Appendix 1

### Collared elephant sightings March - May 2017

Rukinga Date: 21.03.2017 – 9:48 AM	7 elephants total – including a Rukinga and KWS collared bull. Photo taken. Rukinga Ranch, Mpya dam. No cattle. Water nearby. Location: 37m 0476344 UTM 9579580
Rukinga Date: 01.04.2017 – 8:44 AM	14 elephants total. Washumbu ranch. No cattle. Water nearby. Location: 37m 0471019 UTM 9552634
Rukinga Date: 08.04.2017 – 7:56 AM	6 elephants total. Washumbu ranch. No cattle. Water nearby. Location: 37m 0474344 UTM 9563615
Rukinga Date: 19.04.2017 – 8:24 AM	200+ elephants inclusive of Rukinga. Photo taken. Koranze Ranch. Cattle nearby. Water nearby. Location: 37m 0461126 UTM 9535266
Rukinga Date: 09.05.2017	14 elephants. Koranze ranch. Cattle nearby. Water nearby. Location: 37m 0462408 UTM 9538618
Rukinga Date: 20.05.2017	3 bulls including Rukinga – 1km from 80+. Photo taken. Koranze Ranch. Cattle nearby. Water nearby. Location: 37m 0456657 UTM 9539507
Taita Date: Date: 19.04.2017 – 7:41 AM	Wushumbu ranch. Photo taken. No cattle. Water nearby. Location: 37m 0469630 UTM 9558499
KWS Bull Date: 21.03.2017 – 9:48 AM	7 elephants total – including a Rukinga and KWS collared bull. Photo taken. Rukinga Ranch, Mpya dam. No cattle. Water nearby. Location: 37m 0476344 UTM 9579580
KWS Bull Date: 08.04.2017 – 8:56 AM	20 elephants total. Rukinga ranch, Juliana dam. No cattle. Water nearby. Location: 37m 0473568 UTM 9588672
KWS Female 1 Date: 08.05.2017 8:39 AM	20 elephants total. Taita Ranch, tank number 8 forest. No cattle. Water nearby. Location: 37m 0492954 UTM 9570531
KWS Female 2 Date: 08.05.2017 8:10 AM	11 elephants total. Rukinga Ranch, Kongoni forest. No cattle. Water nearby. Location: 37m 0482335 UTM 9586766

## Appendix 2

Elephant deaths within & bordering project area March - May 2017

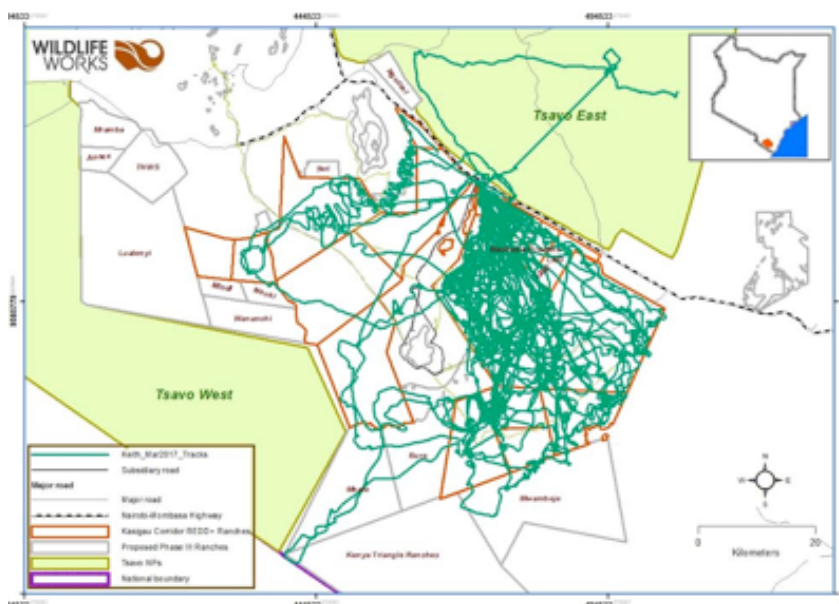
Date	Sex	Duration of death	Location	GPS location	Cause of death / Tusk status
7/4/17	Male 35-40 years old	Fresh to one week	Rukinga Ranch, Mnago area	37m0479376 UTM 9593957	Poisoned Arrow Tusks recovered, 48.95kgs
24/04/17	Female, sub adult	Fresh	Wushumbu Ranch, Matagresi area	37m0473691 utm 9561283	Euthanised by KWS Tusks recovered
24/04/17	Unknown, 15-20 years	One week	Mkuki Ranch, Choke Boundary outside project area	37m 0434179 utm 9590373	Unknown, presumed natural Tusks missing, presumed opportunistic removal.

Note: Not reported in last quarter report

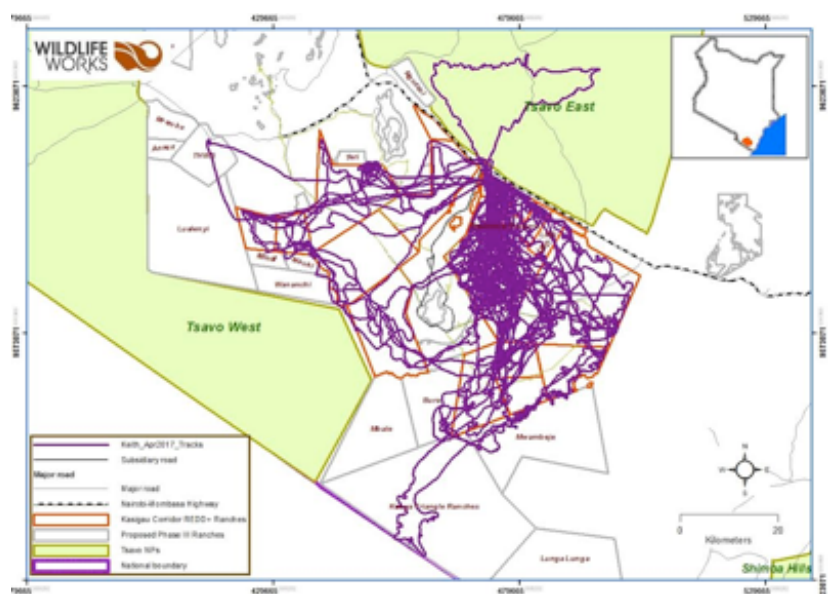
Taita Ranch -37m 0499956 utm 9579668 -Tank 6 forest, 0.5km from KWS camp.  
Cause of death: poison arrow -Tusks missing. Poached in 2016.

## Appendix 3

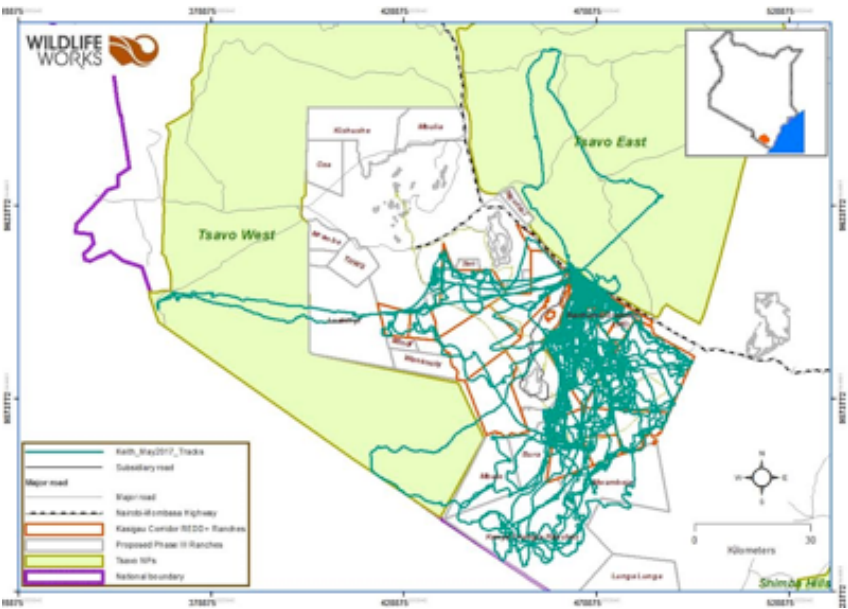
Flight tracks by month March - May 2017



(March 2017 Operations)



(April 2017 Operations)



(May 2017 Operations)