



Excerpts from our Monthly Reports and additional info on the Horse Patrol Team Progress since August 2011

1. PROJECT SET UP AND TRAINING

August 2011 – March 2012

In the period between August 2011 and March 2012 the Mount Kenya Trust Horse Patrol Team was set up and the new men and horses trained on Kisima Farm. The Ethiopian ponies were purchased an Ethiopian stock trader who transported them across the border in a lorry to Kisima Farm. Kisima Farm managers and stable staff played a large role in helping to purchase the Mount Kenya Trust ponies with a number other ponies and assisted with all the training and husbandry.



Left: The Ethiopian ponies just hours after their arrival from Ethiopia eagerly drinking water and in need of a good feed. Right: The Same ponies today. They are fit, healthy, working ponies that are very well cared for.

Arriving as wild, thin, dehydrated ponies from across the border they desperately needed to be habituated and fatten up before they could be broken in. In the first week of their arrival any wounds were treated and the ponies were inoculated, wormed and sprayed with insecticide. It was no easy task as they were unused to being handled and it took hours just to get a head collar on some individuals. Kisima Livestock Manager Sara Dyer, Head of Security and experienced horseman John Mugambi, head syce Mbataha and his team gave an enormous amount of time to making sure all the work was thoroughly carried out and recorded. Once the horses were all checked over, vaccinated and gained condition Martin, an experienced Kisima syce was charged with familiarizing our new

community recruits and a team of new KWS rangers with the horses. In September he began breaking the horses in and teaching the men to ride and take care of the ponies at a *boma* in an area of Kisima known as Kamiti. Progress was steady and impressive and by the time Martin was called back for his Kisima work we had 5 out of 7 ponies working well.



Above: Training on the Kisima Airstrip with experienced horses and trainer Adan Noor.

In October we brought in experienced horseman Adan Noor to take over from Martin for a month. The team was moved to the main Kisima stables so that training could be coupled with schooling in the Kisima ring and riding lessons for the new recruits on Kisima polo horses so that the men could get a feel of riding on experienced (larger) horses and work alongside the Kisima team. They learned how to groom, look after stables and clean tack. The training continued as the men began to longer rides and then patrolling in the Mount Kenya Elephant corridor so that they could get used to being around elephants until funding for building the team's own stables and accommodation block was found and construction began. The KWS contingent left to patrol on Mount Kenya while the community men continued their training with Amadiva Bojein who was seconded from the Kenya Police Force's Anti Stock Theft unit (ASTU) in November by KWS which neatly coincided with Adan's new contract back in Nairobi.



Left: Stable construction Right: The team accommodation block construction.

2. EXERPTS FROM THE MOUNT KENYA TRUST MONTHLY REPORTS & ADDITONAL NOTES

April 2012

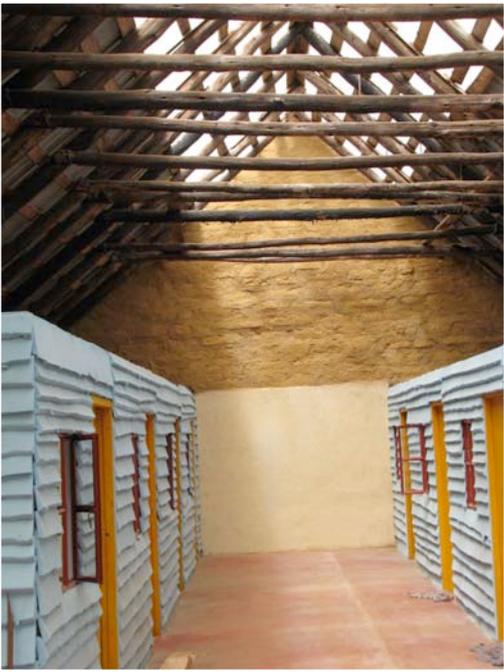
On the 20th of April, the Horse Patrol team relocated from the Kisima stables to the newly constructed MKT stables at the top of Kisima Farm on the edge of the National Reserve. The location is absolutely ideal for patrolling Mount Kenya's northern forests. Kisima Farm's Charlie Dyer managed all the construction and design of the new accommodation block for the team and the stables to suit the environment and take full advantage of an unused semi-constructed potato store that Kisima have been kind enough to contribute to the Trust. The presence of the potato store gave us several advantages over building from scratch. The skeleton of the building was already in place and its design allowed us to construct a warm environment for the men, as its steep roof beams were ideal for using a high ratio of clear roofing sheets to regular corrugated iron roofing, which hold the heat in the building like a greenhouse. The area is up at about 10,000 feet and experiences extreme cold at night and high winds during the day. When the men return from their patrols they are able to enjoy the warm building and shelter from the rain, wind and cold. Tusk Trust's funding enabled us to construct the individual rooms, the new roof, and the flooring, the shower and to install solar panels so the men can charge VHF radios and phones. There is still work to be done to complete the block and the stables including the installation of a stove, a hot water system, guttering and a water collection tank. The stable block and *boma* for the horses have been constructed from Kisima timber and include a hay store, 8 spacious stables and an enclosed *boma* area between the stables and men's accommodation block. The stables are only closed by sliding poles at this stage and proper stable doors will be added when more funding becomes available. With a little work the old *askari* house near the new stables will eventually become a tack room. It needs painting and minor renovations.

The team is already been actively engaged in patrols in the forest to help the horses become accustomed to their new conditions and surroundings. Pasture is plentiful in the area and Kisima and Marania Frams are able to provide additional feed on a regular basis. They need minimal additional food per day thanks to their breeding and plentiful grazing.

Even after only a month in the area, which began with relatively short patrols while the horses acclimatize, the team has already reported several illegal activities within the forest including presence of domestic dogs (used for hunting bushmeat), snares and traps. This month we have taken on Joseph, a new stable hand and groom so that the area is manned and taken care of while the rest of the team is out on patrol. Joseph cuts grass, mixes the food for the horses, cleans the stables and helps the rest of the team with tack cleaning and grooming on their return from the field. Eventually he will be a full riding member of the team.



Left: The first phase of construction of the accommodation block.



Right: Inside the new accommodation block; left: the new stables

May 2012

The Horse Patrol team has undertaken daily patrols under the stewardship of Mr. Amadiva Bojein (*the Horse Patrol Team leader seconded from the ASTU by KWS*) within the Forest Reserve and adjoining areas. Construction and maintenance work is still ongoing at the camp with significant improvements having been made since relocation in April. The last touches are being made to the stables and paddocks for grazing are also have just been completed. On the night of 11th/12th of May 2012 three horses broke through the stables and ran away. Two of the horses had blankets on, but all were found the following day in Eburi Farm in good condition. With the ongoing maintenance work it is hoped the doors to the stables will be fixed to avoid a repeat of a similar incident. The horses will continue to settle down as they spend more time in the area. It is not unusual for horses to try to escape after relocation.

In addition to the collection of snares both large (for elephants) and small (for bushmeat) the team helped make an arrest this month. On 15th May at 1030hrs, while patrolling the moorland area in Marania forest, the team came across several fresh and old charcoal kilns and managed to apprehend one suspect, David Mugambi Gikunda a charcoal burner from



Katheri – Meru and a resident of Ngusishi Market who confessed to have been engaged in the illegal business for several years since relocating from Katheri. He was found preparing bags of charcoal and he was arrested and taken together with a bag of charcoal, machete, spade and bark ropes as exhibits to Subuiga police station vide OB No: 15/15/5/2012 with offences of illegal burning of charcoal in reserve forest and malicious damage to environment.



Above: The Team in action in May

June 2012

The HPT began had a busy time during the June patrols and surveillance work on the fringes of the forest boundary. They arrested an illegal charcoal burner and destroyed several fresh charcoal kilns, and chased after poachers in the forest, which led to recovery of game meat and other items. They also destroyed several snares. The presence of the horse patrol team has allowed MKT to comb significantly wider interior parts of the National Reserve and unearth hideouts where illegal charcoal burning and poaching by people from Ngushishi and Maritati areas takes place (this was previously not possible with foot patrols). The men have begun to log daily game counts, as we believe their presence will result in sightings of more and more game in the coming months.

HPT members occasionally collaborate with the Trust's Marania Wildlife Guards and KWS rangers in the area for patrols in-order to cover the forest extensively. Samuel Gikunda, an experienced horse rider has now joined and strengthened the team. Samuel has a wealth of experience on horses having grown up in Marania and Kisima amongst horses. The team members and horses have now fully adapted to the operational area. Maurice Thure, the Trust's Northern Area supervisor checks in with the team on a daily basis and reports of incidences are given to our Project Officer. Kisima's Head of Security John Mugambi helps with any issues relating to the horses welfare and the Trust's Executive Officer and Field Co-ordinator visit the team at least once a week.



Left: Tacking up the horses before a patrol with brand new equipment and uniforms.

July 2012

Patrols by the HPT in July were confined to Marania forest and the surrounding areas, as well as Emburi and Mastermind areas. During routine surveillance on 5th of July, the team patrolled the deeper parts of the forest with the help of the Marania Wildlife Guards and came across several snares capable of trapping elephants and buffaloes. The presence of the HPT in the area has had a significant impact on the surrounding communities especially in Maritati and Ngusishi areas who are suspected to harbor a significant number of poachers within the Eastern part of Ontulili forest. In order to increase the value of these patrols the HPT is still needs more equipment for monitoring – the team lacks GPS receivers, cameras, binoculars and rucksacks to carry first aid kits, water bottles and other equipment that are vital during patrols.

Our Field Co-ordinator Humphrey Munene has been developing report sheets for the Team in line with the reporting done by our corridor fencers, the Marania Wildlife Guards and the Joint Wildlife Protection Team. Now that the team is fully functional we feel it is time to formalize reporting and train the men in line with reporting at a level that helps with regional and international data collection on poaching.

August 2012

Towards the tail end of July, a consultant horseman (Mr. Mohammed Adan Noor) was hired as a consultant for the 2nd time by the Trust to hold brief for the current HPT leader (Mr. Amadiva Bojein) who proceeded on a one-month annual leave. During the interim period, he made a number of recommendations regarding the present structure and work plan of the HPT.

The HPT made extensive patrols in the Marania forest area in August, including such areas as: Mlima Emburi, Mlima Dinga, Marania River and other interior parts of the Mount Kenya forest. Two horses' Rafiki and Amani fell ill during the course of the month and were promptly treated by the Kisima farm and both have recovered fully since. The presence of Mr. Adan provided a rare opportunity for further training of the community members of the team including fresh training for Joseph the stable hand and groom; team members underwent advanced lessons in horse riding and stable management as well as leadership skills on various aspects. The horses we schooled and an additional team member (Mr. Pius Mutuma) was also brought on board raising the number of men on the team to five. Given available horses, stable premises and personnel, the five Syce are considered adequate for both patrols and stable attendance while we wait for the KWS contingent to join the team.



ANNEX 1

Donors

1. The running costs for the HPT from January 2011- October 2012 were covered by IEF, Bevis Tetlow and Jim Butterfield both of Bermuda. This includes the cost of all staff, staff rations, horse feed, veterinary costs and supervision from our Northern Area Supervisor Maurice Thure.

2. Tusk Trust covered all the costs for the building of the staff housing block, the paddock and new boma between the stables and housing.

3. Local residents of the Nanyuki area covered the cost of construction of the stables and a portion of the riding equipment. *Special thanks to Fi Ansett, Patricia Craig, Dominique Thones, Anita Mills and Vicky Tate and friends.*

4. The bulk of the costs of new riding equipment were covered by a donor via the Born Free foundation.

5. The initial purchase of horses, training, livery at Kisima, the men's uniforms and tools and management operational costs for the running of the Horse Patrol Team and were covered by the George Drew Estate, Tusk Trust, the Mountain Club of Kenya and the Woodcock family.

6. Thanks to Sue Fusco and her company EA Chumaworks for donating the horses name plates for the stables.

None of this could have been possible with out the support of Kisima Farm on whose land the team is housed. All construction work was carried out with Kisima teams and discounted timber. Costs incurred anywhere else would have been infinitely higher without their assistance with the training and construction.

The team has been developed in consultation and the full blessing of the Kenya Wildlife Service who value our partnership in helping to conserve Mount Kenya's forests and wildlife.

We are grateful for all your contributions and hope you will continue supporting the Team and other efforts in 2013. A full proposal and budget are available on request.