



## **BI- ANNUAL REPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL ELEPHANT FOUNDATION – FY 2022**

Project: Support of anti- poaching teams 9-1 & 9-2 of Northern Rangelands Trust Conservancies, Kenya.

Period: 1January to 30 June 2022

Name of investigators: Ian Craig, Director of Conservation

Project starting date: 1 January 2022; Anticipated Completion Date: 31 December 2022

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## 1. Executive Summary

The continued support by the International Elephant Foundation to the Northern Rangelands Trust's 9-1 and 9-2 mobile anti-poaching teams has created a significant impact in the reduction of elephant poaching, livestock theft, road banditry and general insecurity over the years across the Ewaso ecosystem which lies in central-northern Kenya comprising of parts of Laikipia, Samburu and Isiolo counties.

This bi-annual report to the International Elephant Foundation focuses on activities of the NRT 9-1 and 9-2 mobile teams as a representation of how the financial support awarded by the Foundation directly translates to effective ongoing activities on the ground. This report provides an overview of the team's activities towards elephant protection, general insecurity including training and outlines specific incidences that the teams attended to during the period between January and June 2022.

The support by International Elephant Foundation continues to help the delivery of enhanced security for wildlife and people through the continued operation of the NRT 9—1 and 9-2 mobile anti-poaching teams. The team's efforts address escalating insecurities in the region and enhances NRT's Community Policing Initiative through which security of wildlife, people and their property are ensured. Of particular note are the key conservation outcomes that are achieved by the initiative. These include a continued reduction in the illegal killing of elephants, whilst other outcomes include the illegal killing of other wildlife, including the critically endangered black rhinos; improving the security network communication platform; and establishing and supporting other security teams that provide security for wildlife, communities and tourism.

The ethnic diversity within the NRT 9-1 and 9-2 teams has proven to be one of their greatest strengths. Each community from the conservancies they cover is represented in the team and they work together under an independent and experienced leadership. These teams work closely with the local communities seeking information and local support in a manner that is not normally possible through the conventional law enforcement efforts.

These specialized teams have successfully supplemented the National Police Service (NPS) efforts to curb livestock theft, road banditry and general insecurity across the landscape through intensified and well-coordinated patrol efforts.

The NRT 9-1 and 9-2 team's elephant protection and monitoring efforts are guided by data collected from collared elephants and this ensures their presence within areas with a high concentration of elephant population.

The team also conducts conservation awareness sessions during their patrols and interaction with the community members and because of this, community members now appreciate the importance of wildlife living amongst them. Information on elephant movement to the community members has helped to reduce cases of human elephant conflict.

This reporting period and the last two quarters of the previous year received depressed rains which had insignificant impact on the availability of water, pasture and browse for livestock and wildlife. The failed rains negatively impacted on community livelihood and this exacerbated incidents of insecurity and resource-based conflict. The failed rains also resulted in the

convergence of livestock and wildlife at the available water points and therefore creating a potential risk of Human Elephant Conflict (HEC). This has seen the number of elephants killed as a result of (HEC) rise when herders kill elephants in defense during an encounter.

Ranger's training is an essential component of effective security operations. During this reporting period select members of the teams went through a basic bush medics course. The trained rangers are now able to save lives and equally ensure casualty recovery while out on field operations. Through the acquired skills, the rangers are also able to assist local community members during the rescue of accident and human wildlife conflict victims.

In order to incorporate evolving technology and improve surveillance of potential poaching threats, select members of the teams were trained and acquired licenses to operate drones.

The use of new technology specifically drones is essential for immediate and effective communication. The deployment of drones enables a wider level of remote surveillance ahead of the teams on any follow up on insecurity incidents. Drones are cheaper and easily deployable and help to collect vast amounts of quality imaging data which helps to guide security patrols and deployment.

The deployment of drones to assist security patrols and especially the monitoring of the black rhinos in Sera Community Conservancy is essential to ensure adequate protection of the endangered species.

Through such training, the rangers can continually learn new skills which help them to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

## 2. Conservation Needs:

The Ewaso ecosystem, which lies in central-northern Kenya comprising of parts of Laikipia, Samburu and Isiolo counties has the second largest concentration of elephants in Kenya (7,475 elephants according to the KWS aerial census carried out in 2021, up from 7,347 elephants counted in 2017) and hosts one of the highest densities and diversity of wildlife almost entirely outside the network of government protected areas.

This landscape also has a high prevalence of illegal firearms, active network of poachers, and a long history of ethnic conflict, cattle-rustling, and road banditry (including tourist attacks). This generalized insecurity means that wildlife poaching can thrive, and this may equally affect stability and investment.

Before the establishment of the mobile anti-poaching teams in the year 2010, elephant poaching for ivory, livestock theft and road banditry was rife, and this affected the security of both wildlife and people living in this region. The need to address poaching and insecurity incidences led to the establishment of the specialized anti-poaching teams which are highly trained and equipped.

The fate of wildlife in this landscape lies largely on the ability of the local communities through community conservancies to protect, conserve and benefit from the wildlife in their land.

Community members are now recognizing the benefits of conservation through improved land management, wildlife conservation leverage through tourism revenue and employment, increased security for people and enterprise development opportunities. However, if the poaching and insecurity is not checked, then this could have a knock-on effect to tourism and wider security, destabilizing conservancies and weakening them as potential drivers of economic, environmental, and social change in the region.

The NRT 9-1 and 9-2 mobile anti-poaching teams contribute to the conservation leverage through their efforts to curb poaching and general insecurity. The team's interaction with community members during patrols and conservation awareness sessions increase appreciation of conservation benefits.

Increased wildlife numbers help to boost tourism revenue which contributes to employment and implementation of community livelihood improvement projects. Conservancy land management through grazing and settlement planning and provision of elephant's movement information by the mobile teams have also helped to reduce human wildlife conflict.

### 3. Summary of Goals and Objectives:

**Goal:** To improve security of wildlife and people in northern Kenya.

**Objective(s):** To reduce killing of elephant and other insecurity incidences in northern Kenya's Ewaso Nyiro eco-system.

#### **Output:**

- Reduced elephant poaching
- Reduced incidences of road banditry
- Reduced livestock theft
- Improved security for people and wildlife

#### **Activities:**

- Support to anti-poaching teams' salaries, rations, and insurance cover
- Support to anti-poaching teams' operational allowances
- Support to motor vehicle running expenses (fuel and maintenance) enabling a rapid response to all security incidents

### 4. Summary of Progress:

The NRT 9-1 and 9-2 mobile anti-poaching teams continued presence and joint patrols with conservancy and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) rangers along the Ewaso ecosystem during this reporting period has significantly helped to address incidences of human wildlife conflict, livestock theft, road banditry and general insecurity.

During this reporting period, the patrol area under the team's coverage was significantly impacted on by the prevailing drought following the failure of the expected rains and therefore insufficient pasture and water for wildlife and livestock. The failed rains negatively impacted on community livelihood and this exacerbated incidents of insecurity and resource-based conflict. Livestock keeping and trading is the main economic mainstay of the community and therefore the failed rains have had some economic ramification on the community. Livestock from far flung areas migrated in search of pasture and water in the process encountered raiders who stole some livestock resulting to an upsurge of livestock theft cases during this reporting period. The failed rains also resulted in the convergence of livestock and wildlife at the available water points and therefore creating a potential risk of Human Elephant Conflict (HEC). This has seen the number of elephants killed as a result of (HEC) rise when herders kill elephants in defense during an encounter.

The increased cases of insecurity, some attributed to political and environmental factors scaled down anti-poaching operations and patrol efforts by conservancy rangers and NRT anti-poaching teams. During this reporting period, six conservancy patrol bases within the critical elephant dispersal areas had to halt some of their operations because of political and resource based ethnic conflict which prompted the government security agencies to declare a dusk to dawn curfew within the area. These included, Songa headquarters in Songa Community Conservancy, Jaldesa headquarters in Jaldesa Community Conservancy, Koya in Melako Community Conservancy, all in Marsabit County. The other areas were Babala and Ntorobo outposts in



Biliqo-Bulesa Community Conservancy and Boji Dera outpost in Nakuprat-Gotu Community Conservancy, all in Isiolo County. The government agencies security operation in the area affected movement into the usual dry season convergence area for community livestock.

Despite the government security agencies presence, and reduced patrols because of the underlying conditions, the NRT 9-1 and 9-2 teams were able to carry out their activities in a well-coordinated manner as evidenced by the following actions: -

#### **Deployments:**

During the period between January and June 2022, the teams carried out routine security and anti-poaching patrols within Biliqo-Bulesa Conservancy, Kalama Conservancy, Sera Conservancy, Leparua Conservancy, Nakuprat-Gotu Conservancy, Nasuulu Conservancy Buffalo Springs, Shaba, Kom and Losesia areas.

The highlight of the teams' patrol during the month of January was the destruction of two illegal charcoal burning kilns around Lenturoto area of Leparua Conservancy and the recovery of an elephant trophy around Soit Olmoti area of Sera Conservancy and eventual handing over to KWS. The team during this month equally attended to three livestock theft cases, three elephant carcass cases, one road banditry case and one human wildlife conflict case. All the elephant carcasses had their trophies intact which were then retrieved and handed over to Kenya Wildlife Service.

In the month of February, the highlight of the teams' patrols was the arrest of a livestock theft suspect and the rescue of an abandoned elephant calf. The livestock theft suspect was handed over to the police while the rescued calf was handed over to Reteti Elephant Sanctuary. During this month the team equally attended to one elephant rescue case where two adult elephants had been stuck in the mud for three days, one human wildlife conflict case and five livestock theft cases.

During the month of March and April, the team attended to five and two livestock theft cases respectively. The cows recovered in one of the April livestock theft incidents was handed back to the owners in Nadung'oru area of Lekurruki Conservancy.

The highlight of the teams' deployment during the month of May was the recovery of an elephant trophy around Lekilash area of Sera Conservancy and eventual handing over to KWS and attending to two livestock theft cases.

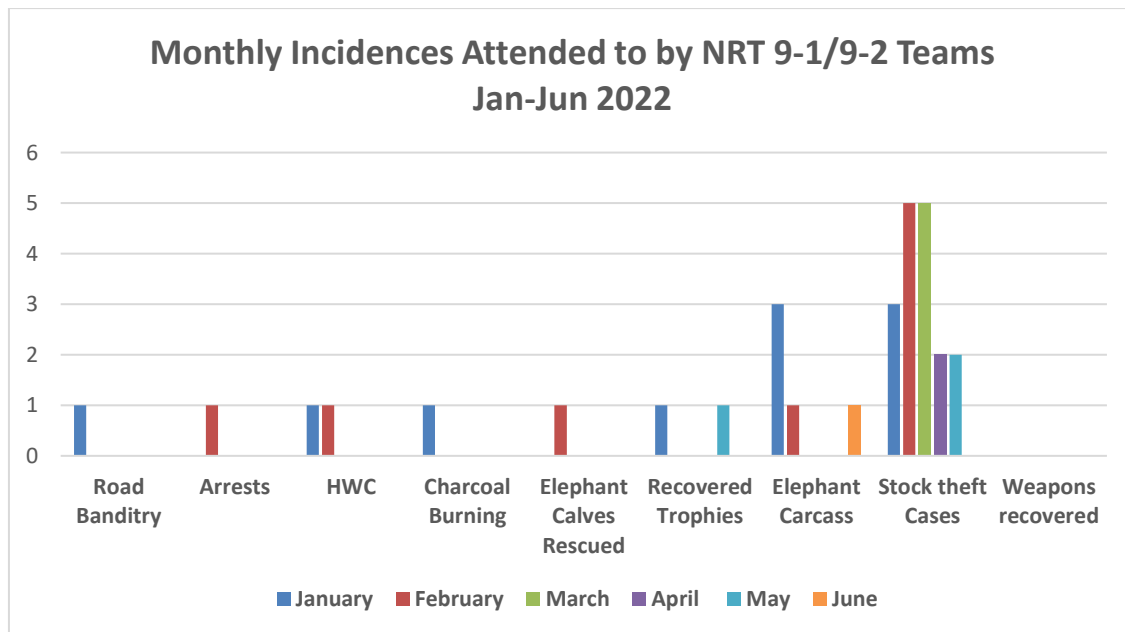
In the month of June, the team attended to an incident where an elephant carcass was found with one of the tusks missing. After three days tracking operation, a suspect was arrested with one of the missing tusks and handed over to Archer's post police station and charged for illegal possession of government trophy. The case is ongoing at Maralal law Courts and suspect in custody.

### Arrests made:

There were two arrests made during this reporting period. A livestock theft suspect was arrested and handed over to Waso police post while a suspect found with one elephant tusk was arrested and handed over to Archer’s post police station.

### Road banditry:

The continued presence and effective patrols by the NRT 9-1 and 9-2 teams has helped to thwart road banditry incidences in an area that was previously prone to such incidents. However, in the month of January, an NRT vehicle which was heading to Biliqo-Bulesa Conservancy from Isiolo was attacked by unknown assailants and two people travelling in the vehicle were injured during the incident.



### Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE)

NRT conservancies have participated in the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) program with consistent data collection since 2008. The MIKE program was established in 2002 under CITES and the Laikipia-Samburu MIKE site is one of the four sites that have contributed information on Kenya’s status on elephant deaths. MIKE evaluates relative poaching levels based on the Proportion of Illegally Elephants (PIKE), which is calculated as the number of illegally killed elephants (poaching + conflict) found divided by the total number of elephant carcasses encountered by patrols or other means.

Data from NRT member conservancies are collected and shared with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and field data is harmonized for Laikipia-Samburu MIKE site every three months. The trend of PIKE has changed over time, with reduction of illegally killed elephants (especially trophy poaching) since 2012.

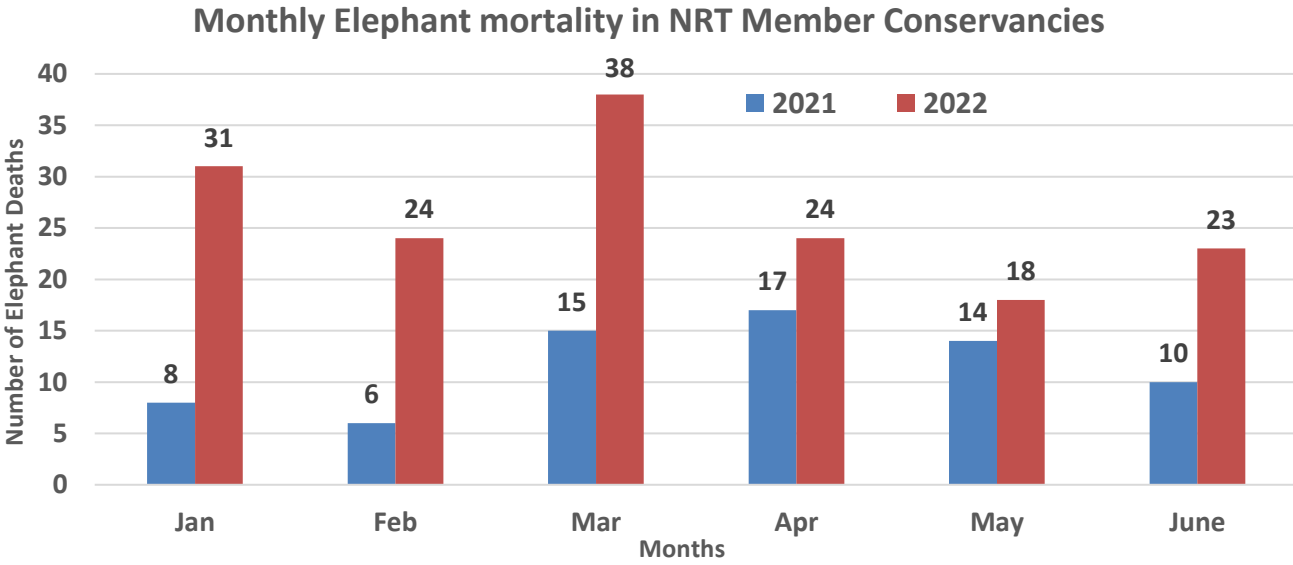
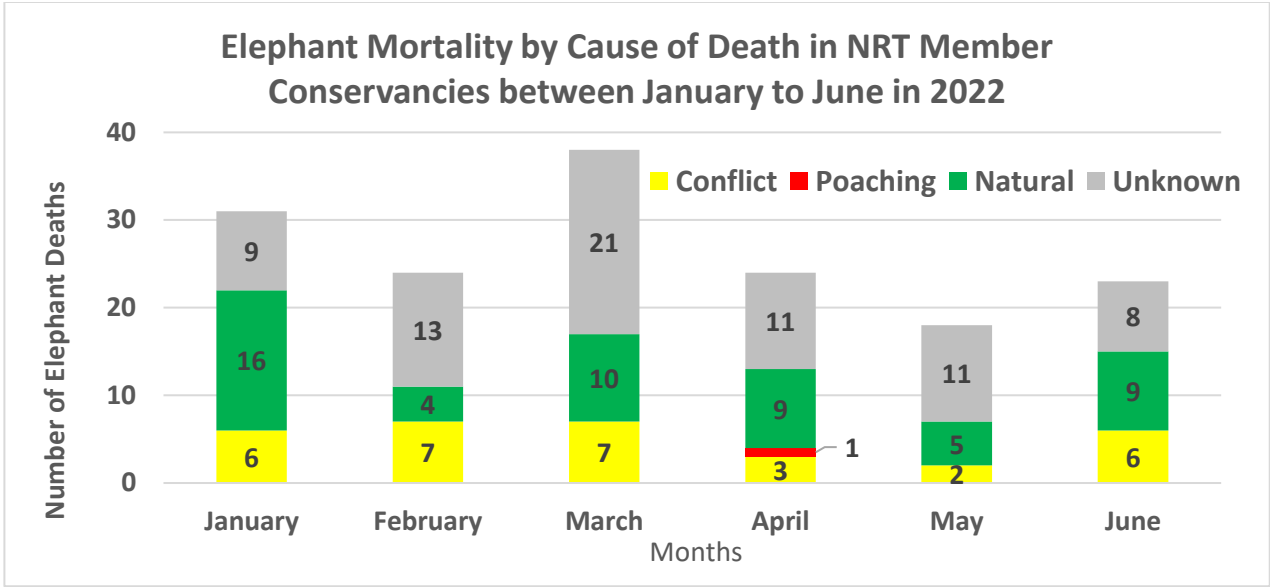


Trophy poaching in the NRT landscape peaked in 2012 with more than 100 elephants being killed for ivory across Laikipia, Isiolo and Samburu in one year. However, with the establishment of the NRT mobile security anti-poaching teams to support the highly motivated conservancy rangers, poaching was brought down to manageable levels. This has seen the Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE) going down from 35 in 2020, 34 in 2021 and 23 in 2022 over the same reporting period. However, the killing of elephants in Human Elephant Conflict (HEC) has increased over the years making conflict killing one of the highest causes of elephant deaths across the NRT landscape. The continued presence and effective patrols by the NRT 9-1 and 9-2 teams has helped to thwart road banditry incidences in an area that was previously prone to such incidents. However, in the month of January, an NRT vehicle which was heading to Biliqo-Bulesa Conservancy from Isiolo was attacked by unknown assailants and two people travelling in the vehicle were injured during the incident.

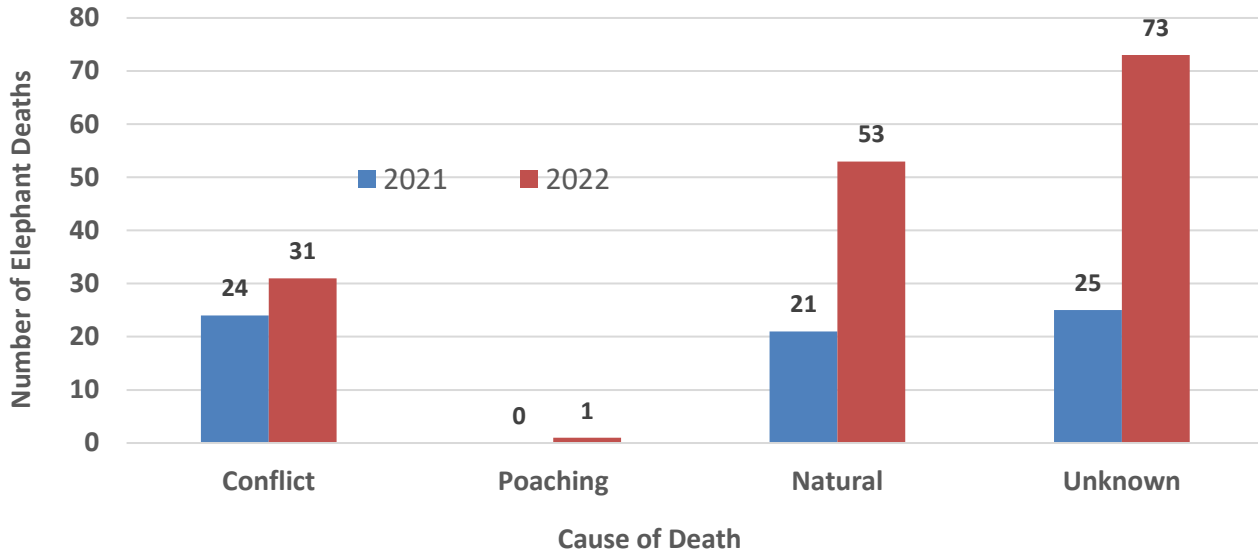
### Elephant mortality:

1. The total number of elephant deaths in NRT Conservancies during this reporting period (Jan to June 2022) was 20. down from 34 during a similar period last year.
2. It is noted that deaths by unknown causes (n=73) were the highest followed by human natural causes(n=53) and elephant conflict (n=31). Only one case of poaching was reported during the reporting period.
3. The PIKE (Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants) for NRT Conservancies (Laikipia, Meru, Isiolo, Samburu and Marsabit Counties) during the period between January and June 2022 was 20.5%, down from 34% in the same period for the year 2021. The January to June 2022 figures are based on non-harmonized data which might change slightly after the harmonization of data by Kenya Wildlife Service.

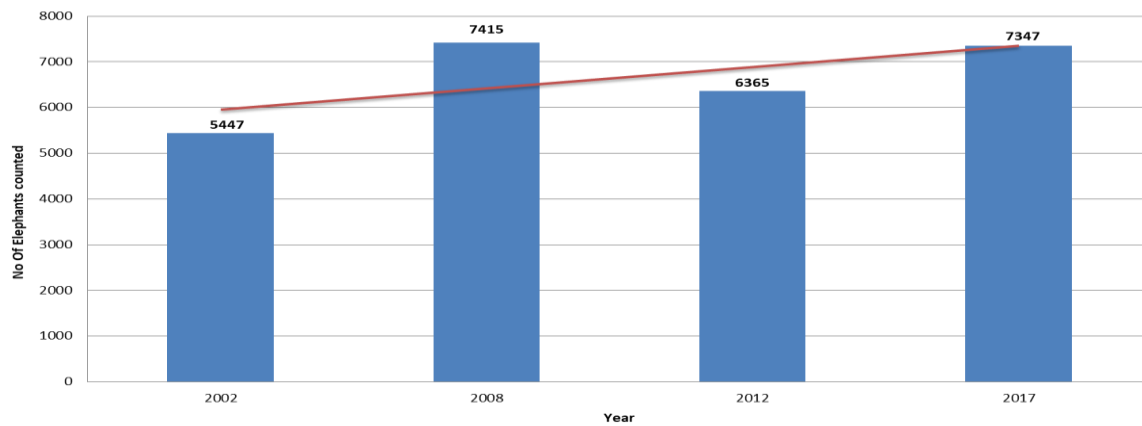
The results and trends are outlined in the table and charts below and demonstrate a progressive declining trend over time.



### Elephant Mortality by Cause of Death in NRT Member Conservancies between January and June in 2021 and 2022



### Elephant Population Trends in Laikipia Samburu and Marsabit Ecosystem based on Total Count from Aerial Census

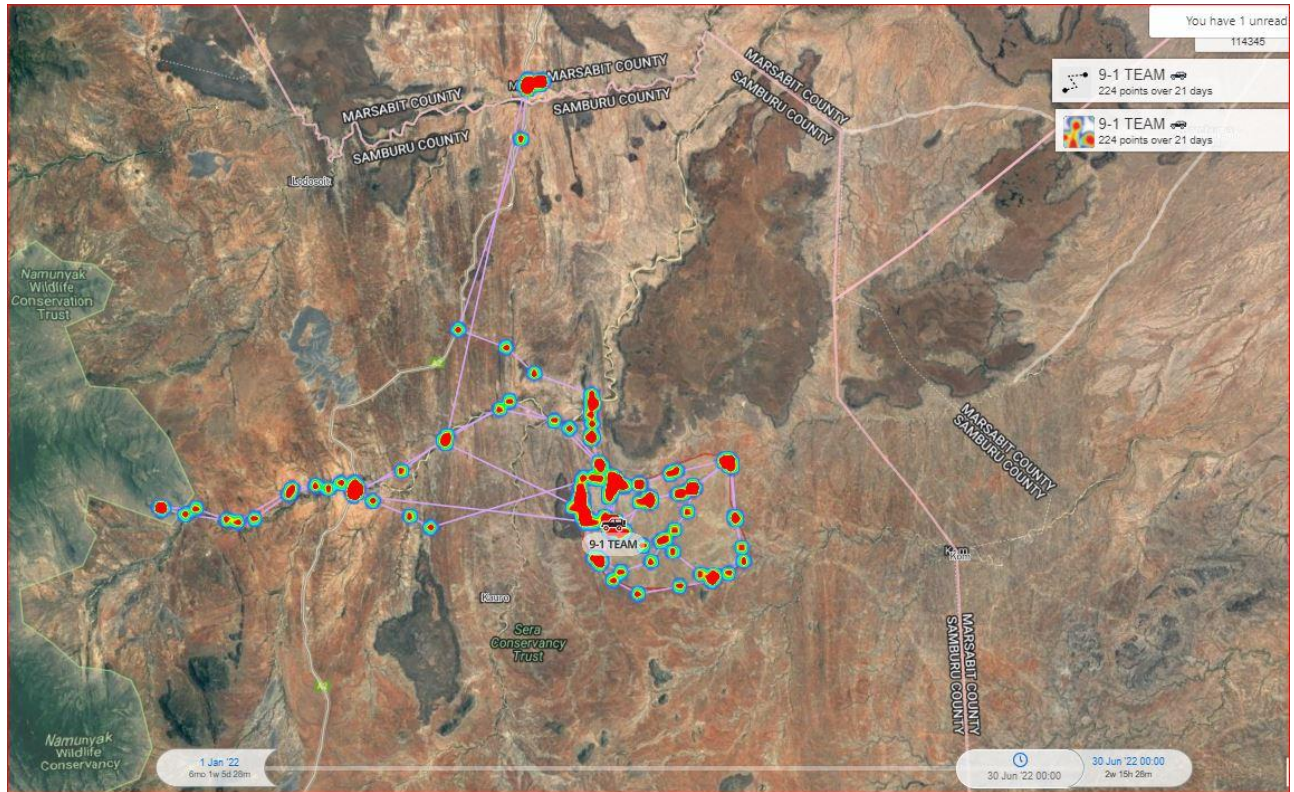


## Elephants Movement

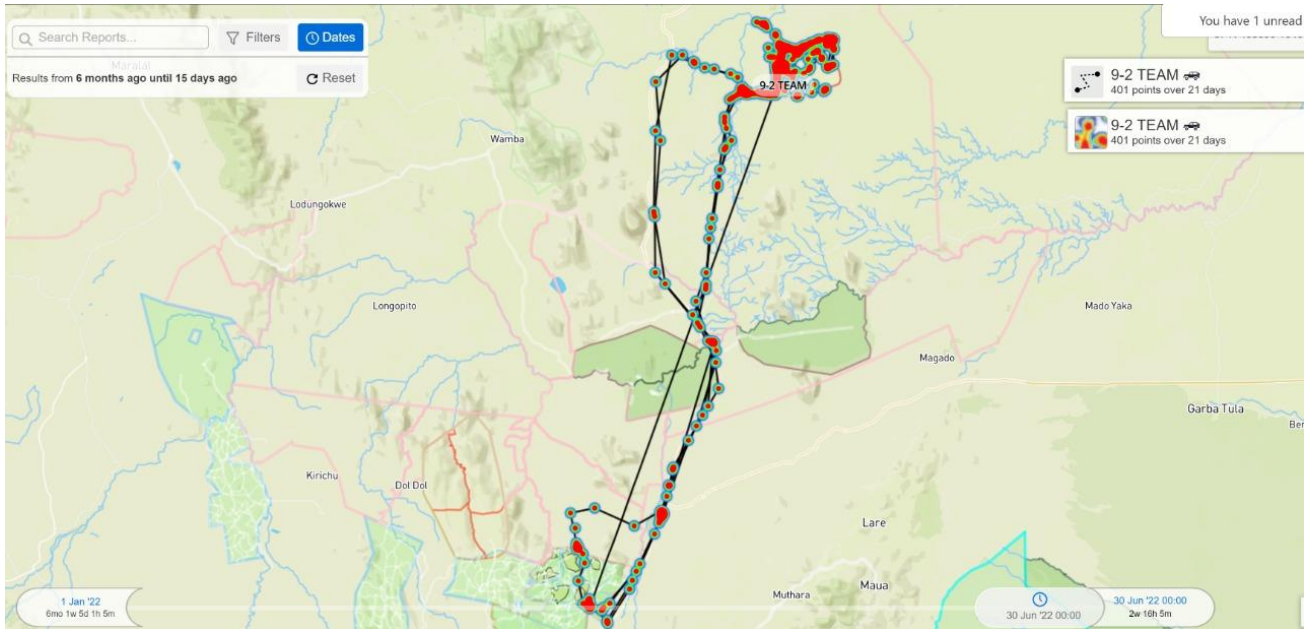
In the year 2021, a total of 44 elephants were being tracked and monitored through Earth Ranger (ER) which helps in strategic deployment of teams to enhance elephant protection.

In February 2022, another 20 elephants were successfully collared on the Kenya-Ugandan border region to mitigate human elephant conflict. The collaring will be crucial in understanding, through research, cross-boundary movements to address an incessant concern of continued crop raiding by elephants. Crop raiding is a key trigger of conflict between wildlife and local communities in West-Pokot, South Turkana, Marakwet and the Kidepo Valley National Park in Uganda.

The joint exercise (conducted by conservation organizations in Kenya and Uganda) led by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and the Uganda Wildlife Authority with technical support from the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), Uganda Conservation Foundation, Save the Elephants (STE) and Wildlife Research and Training Institute, will be further helpful in monitoring elephant behavior along the border-corridor to mitigate on potential incidents of wildlife poaching. The new collars will help to understand the movement behavior of Kidepo elephants and determine whether further connectivity still exists with the additional knowledge supplemented by Uganda.



9-1 Team Patrol Map January to June 2022



9-2 Team Patrol Map January to June 202

### **Community conservation awareness:**

NRT's close working relationship with community conservancies has had a significant impact on conservation awareness creation amongst the community members. Community members now appreciate the importance of wildlife living amongst them and subsequently there has been improved information flow through the provision of information to conservancy rangers, the NRT 9-1 and 9-2 mobile teams and other government security agencies which has led to successful recoveries of livestock, weapons and equally helped to reduce poaching incidents.

The teams' interaction with community members during their routine patrols helps to create conservation awareness through information sharing on the importance of wildlife living amongst them.

Community run projects like the Reteti Elephant Sanctuary and the Sera Rhino Sanctuary have also helped in enhancing conservation awareness as evidenced by cases of elephant calves rescued through information provided by community members.

Conservation leverage through community tourism income which goes towards supporting conservation and improving community livelihood has also helped to enhance conservation awareness because community members are now able to link their improved livelihood to tourism income which is supported by improved security and increasing wildlife numbers.

Conservancy grazing committees have helped the community members to plan their grazing, realign their settlement and improve their rangeland to ensure human wildlife conflict is addressed and there is sufficient pasture for livestock and wildlife.

Community and school visits to successful community run projects like Reteti Elephant Sanctuary and Sera Rhino Sanctuary have also helped to enhance community conservation awareness.

Conservation and rangeland rehabilitation efforts by some community conservancies are now earning the conservancies carbon funds which will go a long way in ensuring conservancy sustainability.

### **Conservation Outcomes:**

- Effective security patrols and rapid response from the anti-poaching teams reducing elephant poaching in the region
- NRT 9-1 and 9-2 mobile teams' interaction with community members during patrols and the sharing of elephant movement and conservation awareness information has increased community awareness on wildlife conservation within and around community conservancies
- Improved information gathering and sharing on poachers and criminals by the community conservancies, KWS and the National Police Service
- Enhanced working relationship between the rapid response teams and government agencies; KWS and the National Police Service
- Conservation leverage through community tourism income that is ploughed back to conservation and community livelihood improvement
- Payment of carbon funds to some community conservancies in reward to their conservation and rangeland rehabilitation efforts



### Major Findings and Accomplishments:

- Maintained zero poaching of elephants and rhinos in NRT Conservancies in last six (6) months
- Increased community engagement and conservation awareness creation has contributed towards combating elephant poaching, livestock theft and road banditry through the sharing of information with conservancy rangers, NRT mobile anti-poaching teams and relevant government security agencies
- Effective deployment of rapid response teams to potential poaching hotspots has been enhanced by continued use of GSM – GPS technology in monitoring and tracking movement of elephants in the Ewaso ecosystem
- Aerial support provided to the teams during response to anti-poaching, livestock theft and general insecurity has helped in successful recoveries and combating poaching.
- Deployment of the canine unit currently based out of Sera Rhino Sanctuary to support the mobile teams in anti-poaching and rescue operations.
- The training and licensing of select rangers on drone operations to enhance anti-poaching surveillance

### Constraints:

The increased cases of insecurity, some attributed to political and environmental factors scaled down anti-poaching operations and patrol efforts by conservancy rangers and NRT anti-poaching teams. During this reporting period, six conservancy patrol bases within the critical elephant dispersal areas had to halt some of their operations because of political and resource based ethnic conflict which prompted the government security agencies to declare a dusk to dawn curfew within the area. These included, Songa headquarters in Songa Community Conservancy, Jaldesa headquarters in Jaldesa Community Conservancy, Koya in Melako Community Conservancy, all in Marsabit County. The other areas were Babala and Ntorobo outposts in Biliqo-Bulesa Community Conservancy and Boji Dera outpost in Nakuprat-Gotu Community Conservancy, all in Isiolo County. The government agencies security operation in the area affected movement into the usual dry season convergence area for community livestock.

Some of the areas under the teams' coverage are not easily accessible because of the terrain and poor road network.

### Results and Impact:

The total number of elephant deaths in NRT Conservancies during this reporting period (Jan to June 2022) was 20 down from 34 during a similar period last year.

Zero poaching of elephant and rhinos within the NRT conservancies landscape during the reporting period.

Increased conservation awareness among community members and intensified patrols by the mobile teams have contributed to the prompt attention to elephant carcass cases and successful retrieval of tusks.

Improved wildlife numbers and thus conservation leverage through increased community tourism income which is ploughed back to improve community livelihood projects

### Next step for the project:

- To continue to enhance the security for wildlife and people through effective collaboration with community conservancies, KWS rangers and other relevant security agencies
- To enhance conservation leverage through tourism so that community tourism income can be ploughed back to support conservation, livelihood projects and conservancy sustainability

### Human interest Story:

#### **Abandoned Baby Elephant Found Drowning in Muddy Well Rescued.**

Life can feel terribly unfair when you are a two-month-old baby elephant, and you find yourself stuck in a well with no familiar face in sight. Fortunately, for this particular elephant calf, help was at hand. On 18<sup>th</sup> of May, community members in the newly established Cherab Community Conservancy in Merti Sub County successfully rescued the baby elephant who was trapped in a shallow well in Raku Bula. The nearly two-month-old male calf was in critical condition and the community reported that the family was nowhere to be seen. After the rescue, community members watched over the calf until a Tropic Air helicopter airlifted him to the Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage in Nairobi after the Kenya Wildlife Service approved the trip. The rescue mission was made possible by combined efforts of community members as well as the NRT team at the Joint Communications Centre, who coordinated this rescue with the relevant authorities.

This gesture demonstrates the appreciation and care communities' members have towards wildlife living amongst them.

See a link to the media story. <https://www.newsweek.com/abandoned-baby-elephant-drowning-muddy-well-rescued-kenya-1708156>

### Organization Associated with the Project.

- Kenya Wildlife Service - protection of elephant and other wildlife species
- National Police Service - arrest and prosecution of crime suspects
- Lewa Wildlife Conservancy - anti-poaching operation support
- Save The Elephants - elephant monitoring information
- NRT partner community conservancies

### List of Associated social media and Websites

The following social media frameworks and websites have been used to ensure communication and awareness about the program:

- [www.nrt-kenya.org](http://www.nrt-kenya.org)
- [www.retetielephants.org](http://www.retetielephants.org)
- Northern Rangelands Trust Facebook page
- Reteti Elephant Sanctuary Facebook page
- @NRT\_Kenya (Twitter handle)
- @RetetiElephants (Twitter handle)
- nrt\_kenya (Instagram page)

**Annex:**

- Annex 1: Financial Report
- Annex 2: Photos (These will be sent through Google We Transfer)
- Annex 3: Video Clip (This will be sent through Google We Transfer)

<b>Northern Rangeland Trust</b>			
<b>Support of anti-poaching teams</b>			
<b>January 2022 - June 2022</b>			
<b>Rate</b>			
	<i>USD</i>		
<b>Income</b>			
Income from IEF	10,000.00	-	10,000.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>10,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,000.00</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Previous Period</b>	<b>Current Period</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
Staff costs		3,614.46	<b>3,614.46</b>
Administration costs		2,868.33	<b>2,868.33</b>
Communication		131.65	<b>131.65</b>
Vehicle running costs		2,665.17	<b>2,665.17</b>
			<b>-</b>
Total Expenditure	-	<b>9,279.62</b>	<b>9,279.62</b>
<b>Balance</b>			<b>720.38</b>