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**HORSE PATROL TEAM
UPDATE**

July to December 2015



Mounted Horse Patrol Anti-Poaching Unit for Mount Kenya

Names of Investigators, Affiliation & Contact Info

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Short and Long Term Goals of Horse Patrol Team

The overarching goal of the Horse Patrol Team (HPT) is:

To enhance the capacity of law enforcement personnel to decrease the level of poaching and other illegal activities mainly but not limited to the high altitude areas of the northern section of Mount Kenya's Protected Area Ecosystem.

Along with law enforcement, the short-term objectives are:

- To decrease the prevalence of illegal activity, in particular elephant and bush meat poaching in the northern areas of Mt Kenya National Reserve **e.g. destroying snares, arrests.**
- To work collaboratively with the Kenya Wildlife Service to extend the area of surveillance into Meru and Sirimon which have seen a marked increase in habitat and wildlife destruction in high altitude zones **e.g. GPS training, installation of satellite camps to cover greater distances.**
- To increase awareness and conservation education within the communities living in and around Mt Kenya Park **e.g. HPT visual presence is distinct with surrounding community.**
- To improve the links with wildlife NGO to reduce response times for illegal incidents, improve intelligence gathering and information sharing **e.g. engaging local scouts, local community conservation sensitisation.**

Conservation Needs

The Mount Kenya Trust HPT is an anti-poaching team that patrol the Northern region of Mount Kenya National Park and Reserve.

MKT works to protect and conserve the forested expanse around Africa's second highest mountain – Mount Kenya. The forest is under intense pressure from poaching for ivory, hides

and bushmeat, indigenous tree logging, overgrazing, charcoal production, forest fires and marijuana production. The afro-montane forests, vast bamboo stands and moorlands host incredible biodiversity including IUCN species African elephant and mountain bongo, along with 81 endemic plant species. The forest is the largest contiguous forest remaining in Kenya and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The importance of the mountain to Kenya's water provision and ecological stability cannot be understated. Preservation is critical not only for wildlife but for the millions of Kenyans who depend on water from the Tana (Kenya's longest and largest river) and Ewaso Ng'iro river basins – both supplied by Mount Kenya. This also incorporates over 65% of Kenya's hydropower.

Summary of Goals and Objectives

- Improved collaboration with the main state agencies KWS and KFS on law enforcement
- More effective GPS data and analysis of performance
- Better intelligence gathering
- Better targeted coverage of patrols
- Improved responses to disasters especially perennial fires
- Improved awareness and sensitisation amongst general public

Actions taken

The Trust employ five men who make up the HPT based at Kisima Farm, Timau.

- Gelvas Mwiti Limberia (33)
- Joseph Muchubu Mukiyama (30)
- Pius Mutuma Mungira (24)
- Martin Muriungi Murugu (37)
- Gabriel Mithika (age)

The men work with 10 Ethiopian horses:

- Addis Ababa (Light bay)
- Amani (Dark bay with a slightly greying face)
- Blue (Steel grey flecked with white and brown, white face)
- Doreen (Chesnut mare with white blaze)
- Il Ngwesi (Light bay with small white star on forehead)
- Jack (Light bay with white smudge over nose and upper lip)
- Nyota (Grey)
- Punch (Chesnut gelding with white star and sock on right hind leg)
- Rafiki (Light bay with ear slits)
- Zawadi (Light bay with star on forehead)

In October 2015, Ms Cielle Vaughan, an experienced horse rider, volunteered at the HPT base. Here is an extract from her time with the team:

I was extremely impressed with the quality of care for the HPT horses. It is obvious that all the team members have a great respect for these animals. Grooming methods are very efficient and sometimes grooming can go on for a long time just to ensure that they are looking spotless! Their feed is of good quality and quantity and proper methods of preparation such as boiling the barley is carried out. I was also impressed that the majority of the team have at least a basic knowledge of inoculations and farriery and having witnessed the horses having their hooves

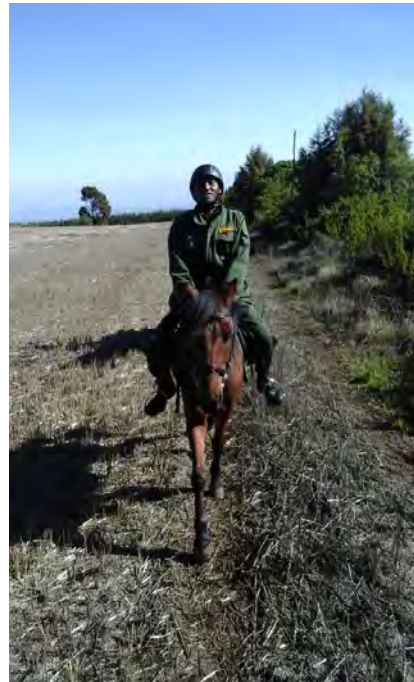
trimmed by different team members I know they are in safe hands. As well as the men respecting the horses, the horses also respect the men and it is obvious that they have formed a special bond with the team.

Summary of Progress

Gabriel's Riding Progress

Several of the team members had barely seen a horse before, let alone ridden one before they joined the Trust. Ms Vaughan worked with the HPT to develop the team riding abilities and capacity to patrol out in the field. She taught newest team member Gabriel, who is currently helping out with general daily jobs, how to ride. She says:

'When he first came to the Trust he had never ridden a horse before but he can now trot and canter. We have done weaving exercises in walk and trot to improve his steering as it is important to be able to change direction sharply at a fast pace in order to navigate the difficult terrain. I have taken him out on two short patrols now because I felt it was important for him to experience the kind of skills he will need in the field so I could teach him as we went along and point out those he should work on specifically back at the base. With more and more practice, I'm confident that he will prove an essential part of this team.'



Brand New Land Rover Defender donated to the Northern Sector teams

A brand new Land Rover Defender was donated to the Trust from the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust to assist our three Northern sector teams – the HPT, the Elephant Corridor fencers and the Marania Wildlife Guards. All three teams will benefit enormously from the dedicated vehicle, with our ability to respond to emergency situations such as arrests hampered by a lack of vehicle capacity. It has already proven its worth with increased arrests in the Northern area delivery of hay and equipment for the HPT team and improved management oversight and training.



Blog

The new HPT blog for has been set up and is regularly updated on stories, horse profiles (example below), events and ranger information. The HPT recently helped out at a local children horse show event and will also participate in the MKT annual fundraising 10to4 Mountain Bike Race. Keep an eye on the blog for further news.



AMANI

Description – Dark bay with a slightly greying face.

Amani means peace in Swahili and our Amani lives up to this namesake whole heartedly. He is the oldest (and probably wisest) member of the herd. He is a very quiet and no nonsense ride! As well as knowing exactly what he's doing, Amani is just as happy to plod along gently and just go with the flow. Although he enjoys a comfortable walk he is perfectly capable of picking up the pace when required to. When he first came to us he suffered from terrible eye infections but responded to treatment right away. He is now a happy and healthy horse, although he still hates injections!

Donations to the Trust

In November, we received a donation of horse blankets, numnahs, bits, riding hats, jodhpurs and medical equipment from a supporter in Germany. These items will be extremely useful to the team as due to regular use and harsh weather, the HPT equipment gets worn down quickly.

Stop Press!

The HPT are attracting more and more media attention locally and internationally with many requests from newspapers and film crews from across the world. This half report features from the Laikipia Times, a Kenyan conservation newspaper, that reports on news stories around the area.

An extract is shown below:

'Mr. Gelvas Mwiti, who is part of the horse patrol team, says since potato farming was allowed at the Mount Kenya forest, planting of snares to trap wild animals has been on the increase. He adds that poachers use wire snares to entrap the big game like Zebras with snares made out of rope twigs to entrap the smaller game. At the other extreme very large twisted metal and rope snares are even used to trap and kill elephants for ivory. Gelvas says that the meat is then usually transported to nearest trading centers like Timau and Ngushisi for sale.'

To read the full story, go to the blog.



Conservation Outcomes

July saw lots of clearing of snares due to presence of community members who are permitted into the Reserve under the Kenya Forest Service Plantation Establishment Livelihood Improvement Scheme. This system allows participants, typically very poor community members, to farm within the Reserve boundaries for several years under the condition they nurture tree seedlings alongside the crops. However, often with access into the Reserve, these individuals participate in illegal activities such as snaring and poaching.

August involved many reports of unpermitted livestock in the area. The HPT hosted Kenya Wildlife Service Senior warden Simon Gitau to discuss issues of illegal wildlife incursions due to hot, dry weather. A training workshop at the HPT base was held for all MKT teams to discuss data and evidence collection.

Sept saw desnaring work with Kisima farm where trespassers entered the farm across the A2 road to set snares with one entrapped Kisima horse. Incidents of littering by pastoralist herders who moved into the mountain from the Northern rangelands to find good grazing for livestock were discovered along with illegal honey collection.

Oct and Nov involved further desnaring work with one zebra caught in snare and released. More illegal honey harvesting was discovered along with three illegal camps constructed by livestock herders.

List major findings and accomplishments to date

Restructure in data collection

The HPT is now using a data collection method know as Spatial Monitoring And Reporting Tool (SMART). This is a collaborative tool that has been developed by a number of UK conservation organisations.

SMART makes it possible to collect, store, communicate and evaluate data on wildlife data, patrol efforts (e.g. time spent on patrols, areas visited and distances covered), patrol effectiveness (e.g. snares removed, arrests made) and threat-levels within a protected area (e.g. hotspots of illegal activity). At present SMART is being implemented in more than 120 conservation areas in 27 countries and is one tool for law enforcement monitoring and management.

Currently the data collected by HPT is manually hand written using the Kenya Wildlife Service MIKE and MIST systems. The process is currently as follows: a team member will mark a GPS waypoint, write down the coordinates, time, date, observation (such as snare), location and other remarks; then submit to MKT head office for analysis.

SMART however is a new approach using GPS enabled smartphones. Using an app known as 'Cybertracker', the team can turn on the device and mark GPS positions of illegal activity. All the data is collated onto one map and allows us to see the spatial variation of the waypoints, including an automatic, streamlined data entry system.

One of the most important benefits of SMART is that it tracks the patrol routes. Being able to see our patrol routes plotted onto a map enables us to see the extent of the area covered and to analyse areas that need to be covered, together with the waypoints allowing us to see where the most illegal activity is occurring and consequently carry out more patrols in that area. From Figure 1 and 2, the team generally patrol a widespread area. There is little overlap of patrol routes within the Northern area.



Figure 1: Mount Kenya Reserve with HPT routes marked on.



Figure 2: A close up of the HPT patrols.



SMART training and team building with all MKT teams in the Ngare Ndare Forest in December 2015

The next step to improve patrols would be to patrol the areas *within* the marked routes - in order to protect as much of the area as possible. In general though the patrolling of this small area has been very successful as we have seen a significant decrease in poaching activity. Spatial data such as this collected by SMART will aid the teams in their patrol planning.

Future Improvements

Although we have seen a huge decrease over the years in illegal activity within HPT general patrol area, poaching and illegal activity continues further afield in other parts of the Reserve. The team have cleared and have good patrol routes around their base. Poaching, snaring and illegal activities have seen a dramatic reduction. Mobile camps are the next structural developments required so that the team would not have to return to the base every night. This would enable the team to patrol much further afield and cover more ground during the daytime.

Another option would be to increase the number of HPT team members (as we have extra horses) and have a number of bases at various points within/around the conservancy. If each team patrolled a similar amount of ground in different areas of the conservancy, this would greatly increase our control over poaching and illegal activity.

Climb for satellite camps

A team of climbers are training for a 'Mount Kenya three peak challenge' in 2016 and are hoping to raise funds for two satellite camps. The cost is an estimated **USD\$3050** per stable unit with additional costs for tents and sleeping bags.

Financial report

Funds received by IEF for 2015 amounted to **KES863590.35**. This donation was used in accordance with the budget breakdown below.

Horse Patrol Team January - December 2015		
PARTICULARS	2015	BUDGETARY NOTES
Direct Inputs - IEF		
Horse Feed (for 10 Ethiopian ponies)	207,270	
Veterinary costs	4,930	Minimal due to donations from local vet.
Housing repairs	58,000	Installation of solar water
Horse equipment	82,751	
Uniform and Equipment	186,573	Boots, GPS, phone for SMART, mattresses
Medical	36,790	
Transport costs for fuel and vehicle maintenance	282,732	
Total	859,046	
Salaries & Operational Costs		
Training of horse and horsemen	84,859	
Salaries	1,412,160	
Rations and allowances	457,136	
Insurance	54,266	
Telephone	9,600	
Operational Costs (15%)	494,318	
Northern Sector Supervisor Salary	237,996	Salary divided between three N. teams
Total	3,609,381	

Appendix 1: Photography summary



Dead mountain reedbuck



Zebra caught in a snare



HPT on patrol in the northern moorlands.



HPT writing down incidents and GPS locations.



Sheep illegally grazing



Illegal honey collection



Illegal boma found in the forest



Snare found in the forest



Trap with blood found in the forest