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**Horse Patrol
Team
FINAL Report**

**July to December
2019**

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Budget

Total Project Budget: \$32,314

Total Requested from IEF: \$15,004

Project Start Date: January 2019

Project End Date: December 2019

Is any part of the Project underway? Yes the project has been underway since 2012 with IEF support since 2014.

1. Conservation Needs

Mount Kenya Trust (MKT) was established in 1999, due to growing concern for the forested expanse surrounding Africa's second highest mountain. Extensive poaching of wildlife, logging of indigenous tree species, overgrazing and large scale growing of marijuana were destroying the region.

MKT Vision

The Integrity of the Mt Kenya ecosystem for the welfare of all who depend on it.

MKT Mission

To drive collaborative action for the sustainable management of Mt Kenya's biodiversity and natural resources through partnership with government, communities and civil society.

MKT Values

The organization has earned the trust of its partners through its integrity and the dedicated work of its field teams and management. Upholding these values is important to the organization and it believes its small size and clearly defined focus area will help it to maintain its critical relationships with key stakeholders

MKT Horse Patrol Team

ST Benefits and outputs To decrease the prevalence of illegal activity, in particular elephant and bush meat poaching in the northern areas of Mt Kenya National Reserve; To work collaboratively with the Kenya Wildlife Service to extend the area of surveillance into Meru and Sirimon; To increase awareness and conservation education within the communities living in and around Mt Kenya Park; To improve the links with wildlife NGO to reduce response times for illegal incidents, improve intelligence gathering and information sharing.

LT Conservation of Elephants

In the past decade, Maisels et al. (2013) suggests there has been a reduction of around 30 per cent in forest elephant rangeland. The HPT continue to assist in habitat protection, data collection, monitoring and deterrence of human-elephant conflict and implementation of mitigation measures. This has been highlighted in the Wildlife Conservation Society research conducted by Vanleeuwe in 2016, revealing stable elephant populations on the mountain.

3 & 4. Goals and objectives

The Mount Kenya Trust (MKT) anti-poaching Horse Patrol Team, operational since 2012, was set up to *enhance the capacity of law enforcement personnel to decrease the level of poaching (especially elephants) and other illegal activities mainly but not limited to the North western section of Mount Kenya.*

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

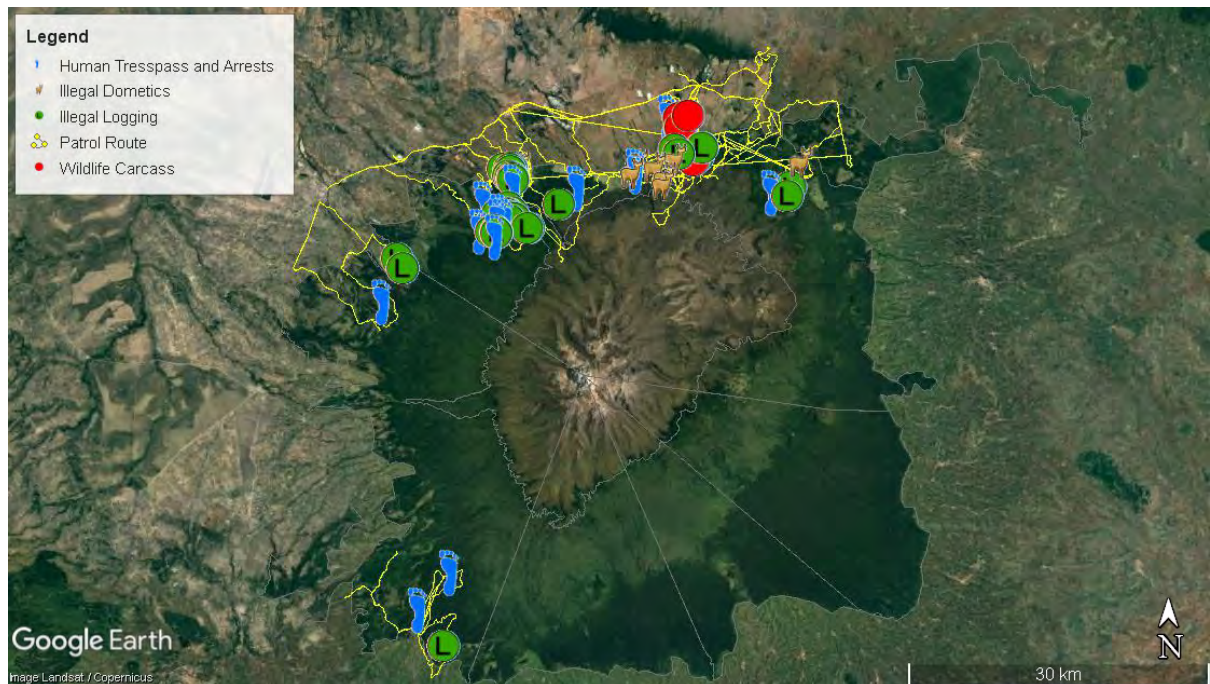
- To decrease the prevalence of illegal activity, in particular elephant and bush meat poaching in the northern areas of Mt Kenya National Reserve **e.g. destroying snares, arrests.**
- To work collaboratively with the Kenya Wildlife Service to extend the area of surveillance into Muchene and Sirimon 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.**

The HPT is one of the few mounted community ranger teams in Kenya. The team attract much interest from national and international media along with equestrians, attracted to the HPT's unique work to further enhance conservation efforts. The uniqueness of the team has also brought increased attention to the region as a whole and to the members of the team in particular.

5. Activities that differ from original proposal

None.

6. Conservation outcome for elephants and other wildlife – major findings and accomplishments to date



Map 1 to show HPT patrol findings from January to November 2019.

January - They evicted over 350 domestic animals inside the Reserve including cows, goats and sheep. Six snares were found (four cable and two string) and six incidents of logging, mainly for fence posts and charcoal production. One abandoned illegal shelter was discovered with seven meat drying racks, suspected to have been used by cattle grazers. Four verbal warnings were made to individuals found inside the Reserve without a permit.

February - In mid-February, fires broke out on the northeastern slopes of Mt Kenya, around the Chogoria area. Fires on Mount Kenya are a regular occurrence at this time of year, but the size, number, and severity varies depending on weather conditions. Some years, very little of the mountain burns, while other years there are large fires.

Private institutions mobilised resources from the first day of the fire to help the KWS, KFS and the local communities in tackling the fire. Helicopters were on the mountain each day, dropping people and dousing the area with water and planes have been used for surveillance and planning. Rations, equipment, vehicles and logistical support have been provided, along with thousands more donors, donating anything from 30KSh to more. Over 200 community members are volunteering to fight the fires, being ferried up to the sites at 6AM.

The Horse Patrol Team (HPT) encountered several hundred illegal livestock in the National Reserve and evicted the majority of them.

March - All teams were called upon to put out wildfires in Chogoria and Chuka. Huge fires tore through the northern moorlands from the end of February and most of March. Our teams worked tirelessly with the Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service and Tropic Air for weeks to control the blaze. Extensive damage was done to the moorlands but fires were prevented from entering the forest.

HPT evicted almost 300 illegal domestic livestock including cows, sheep and goat, that moved to the mountain due to the current drought conditions. Honey harvesting was also recorded, a dangerous activity at this extremely dry time of the year.

April - The team destroyed 20 active wire snares and found three snared suni carcasses. IPT, HPT and MWG were called on again to battle fires on the mountain, burning in the

Kiambogo, Sirimon and Karuri area. Some members of our fire-fighting had a narrow escape from fire when the wind changed direction. They were rescued by the Tropic Air helicopter just in time. Tropic Air helicopters were deployed for over 60 hours in April to help battle fires.

May - Five snares were recovered by the team, along with over 100 illegal domestic animals inside the Reserve. An area of 50 hectares was set alight (due to arson) and quick mobilisation of the MKT teams and the community ensured it was put off within 24-hours.

June - They found staggering 27 active charcoal kilns, 15 already harvested kilns, and 50 bags of charcoal confiscated. Another 40 fence posts, 1 timber site, and 20 planks were discovered thanks to a tip-off from an informer. Two wire snares and one pit trap for larger animals such as elephants or buffalo was destroyed. All teams participated in the World Environmental Day activities – planting trees or clearing litter from the forest.

July - The team split into two, some joining forces with MWG for a mobile patrol at Mawingu, combing Ontulili and Kangaita area.

August - Focused their patrols in the areas around their camp. The team was split into two with some joining MWG in camping patrol at Sirimon, combing the Kangaita area. The team also joined KFS Muecheene in cattle eviction from the Reserve. A total of 80 domestic animals were removed, along with 6 snares while 8 illegal logging sites discovered. HPT destroyed 8 charcoal kilns and confiscated 3 fenceposts. A total of 4 arrests were made, all for illegal logging.

September - The team was split into two, joining their teammates on camping patrols in Kangaita, then Ragati. The team also joined KFS Muecheene to evict livestock. One wire snare, two string and three cable snares were deactivated. Five charcoal kilns were destroyed and 3 bags along with 5 firewood bundles confiscated. A total of 26 fence posts at 2 sites were recovered and 8 tree stumps.

October - Late in the month the team was split into two; some joining MWG on mobile patrols in the Kangaita and Ragati areas. They also helped to plant seedlings at our rehabilitation site in Marania. The team found illegal honey harvesting, 8 wire and 2 string snares, arrested one person for bushmeat poaching, and discovered an elephant carcass: cause of death unknown.

November - HPT evicted 85 domestic animals and discovered 2 logging incidents. A total of 4 tree stumps and 10 charcoal bags were found and destroyed, along with 1 charcoal kiln.

7. No. communities and wildlife impacted by project

The area is referred to as the “Mountain Conservation Area or CA” in Kenya’s National Elephant Action Plan and englobes the second largest elephant range, only slightly smaller than Kenya’s largest elephant range in the Tsavo CA.

In 2016 the elephant population in the Mountain CA was estimated at ~ 13,000 elephants of Kenya’s total population of around 30,000 elephants (Thouless et al., 2016). The Aberdares and Mt Kenya house Kenya’s highest elephant population densities and they flank Kenya’s most densely populated rural areas, with mostly small-scale farmers and some largescale horticulture and vegetable farms. Human density drops off steeply with distance from the mountains.

A large part of what the HPT do is to engage with the community to educate them on the need to conserve our forests as our provider of the most vital of ecosystems service but also to educate them and the magistrates they work with about the seriousness of logging and

poaching as economic crimes and the heavy penalties and sentences this illegal activity now carries.

They are changing mind sets, not only for the community but from the communities where the rangers come from with informers who provide information that leads to arrests are rewarded and illegal activity is taken more seriously if the same offenders are found after verbal warnings. Over time we have seen not just more information being given to the team as Trust has been built with the communities, we are seeing wounded and orphaned animals being brought to the team and advice being sought by other teams.

8. Problems during grant period

A lot of rain was experienced in the October-December wet season which made logistics and patrols more difficult. However, the team continued with their work.

Management issues within the team are being monitored by the Northern Area Sector Supervisor along with the Programmes Officer. Rangers are being switched around teams to keep the dynamics flexible, as well as undertaking camping patrols and trainings amongst other team members.

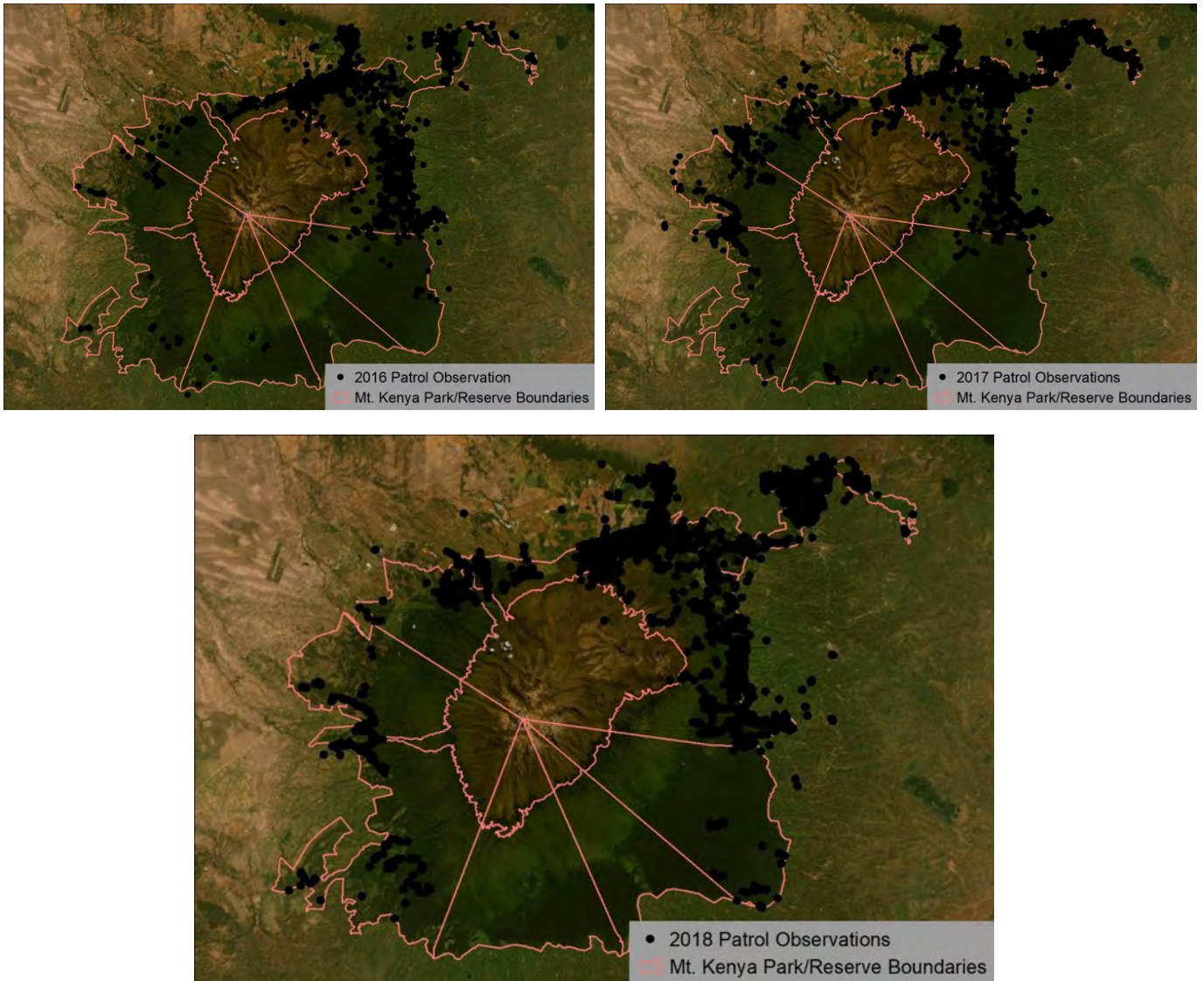
9. Project success

HPT conducted almost 250 daytime patrols with over 4,000 kilometers covered on foot, vehicle and horseback. They logged over 1,000 hours of patrol time and conducted two night time patrols. A total of 12 people were found inside the forest along with 6 indirect signs such as machete cuts or footprints. Over 1,400 domestic animals (cows, sheep and goats) along with 57 snares and one illegal camp was removed or evicted.

Land clearing for *bhang* and honey harvesting was also found by the team. Illegal logging incidents were as follows: 92 fence posts and 14 stumps, 20 planks, 5 firewood bundles, 67 kilns and 73 bags of charcoal. Cable, string and wire snares were found along with one pit trap for elephants. HPT made five arrests and gave four verbal warnings. Six carcasses for bushmeat were found.

The team were involved in a one-week fire-fighting training course by a South African Company known as 'Working on Fires' in December. Working on Fire provides management and firefighting training courses that enable governments, forestry operators and commercial landowners to protect, prevent and manage wildland and structural fires. Courses focus on instilling operational principles through theoretical and practical integration during the training. The Elite Firefighting teams (6 teams of 10 pax.) have been trained to cover both Mt Kenya and the Aberdares and are comprised of MKT (30), KWS (6), KFS (6) and well-known community members (6).

This year, the team have conducted many camping patrols alongside other MKT ranger teams, KWS and KFS. Camping patrols are essential on the mountain to reach areas that are not under surveillance or are known hotspot areas for illegal activities. Through monthly meetings with team heads, KWS and KFS, MKT assess areas to send teams for up to a week at a time to comb areas outside of their patrol base reach. This has been critical in our efforts to expand ranger patrols around the entire mountain boundary.



Map 2-4: Maps to show patrol coverage over three-year period. Note in 2016 almost all patrols were focused on the northern boundaries of the mountain. Through better management and more camping patrols, we have been able to spread our patrols down into the west and south east and west through 2017 and 2018.

10. Next step and implications for future conservation actions

Currently the team usually return to the Kisima stables but are now expanding their patrols to the north-east and northern regions including Muccheene and Solo Camps.

We have been offered two new ponies to join our team and will expand the team with two new rangers. This would include an expansion of the stable block, and by the 2020, a division of the HPT into two smaller 5-man ranger teams that can move from Kisima to the new satellite camps and possibly even relocate two rangers into the Ragati Conservancy new base in the long term.

Patrols can be undertaken with or without KWS rangers present depending on work plan and decisions made by the Senior KWS warden and MKT management. All arrests are made within the legal mandate of KWS with the Northern Sector Supervisor (NS) being an ex-police employee and ensuring all correct procedures are followed. The team has a legal obligation to report suspicious incidents or person and all illegal activities found to MKT head

office and KWS via the NS supervisor. The justification is based on the understanding that KWS does not have sufficient man power to effectively monitor the large expanse of the mountain area (around 2,100km²).

11. Human interest story

12. Summary of progress and results (500 words)

Six men and nine horses are based at Kisima Farm, Timau. The team conduct horseback patrols often using intelligence driven reports on illegal activities to map their routes around the base. Currently the team usually return to the Kisima stables but are now expanding their patrols to the north-east and northern regions including Muchene and Solo Camps.

13. All organisations associated with project

Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, Kisima Farm, North Kenya Vet Surgery.

14. Financial report

Budget Item	Budget IEF	Actuals 2019	Actuals 2019	Actuals
	IEF (\$)	KSH	USD	IEF (\$)
Project Personnel				
Salaries <i>\$150 x 6 x 12</i>	1,600	1,103,916	10,718	2,000
Northern Sector Supervisor <i>(\$450*12months)/3 Northern Teams</i>	-	180,000	-	-
Programme Officer <i>\$1000/month*12*0.20</i>	1,000	100,000	971	971
Medical <i>\$400/year</i>	400	76,629	744	400
Insurance <i>\$109/year*6</i>	654	65,400	635	635
Meals				
Rations <i>\$30/month x 6 x 12 = \$2160</i> <i>\$30/month Northern Sec Supervisor x 4 = \$120</i>	2,280	501,881	4,873	2,280
Horse Feed for 10 Ethiopian ponies <i>15 bales/month @ \$3/bale = \$45 x 12 = \$540</i> <i>Oats 480kg @ \$0.4/kg = \$192 x 6 = \$1152</i> <i>Barley 300kgs @ \$0.4/kg = \$120 x 6 = \$720</i>	2,412	155,610	1,511	1,511
Equipment				
Uniform and Team Equipment <i>\$100/year*6</i> <i>\$500/year misc (camera, USB, batteries)</i>	900	216,193	2,099	2,099
Horse equipment <i>(Saddles & tack)</i>	800	-	-	-
Services				

Veterinary costs \$1000/year	1,000	45,780	444	444
Training of horse and horsemen \$600/year	600	8,161	79	79
Transport costs for fuel and vehicle maintenance 450km@\$0.52/km x12	2,808	284,387	2,761	2,761
Misc				
General housing & stable repairs \$1000/year	550	210,891	2,047	2,047
Operational Costs - Admin, Accounting, Telephone, Reporting & Monitoring @ 15%	-	150,000	1,456	-
Total	15,004		28,338	15,228

15. Images

Sent via we-transfer to Sarah and Debbie.



Charcoal kilns



On patrol with the MWG.



De-snaring fence lines



Planting trees in Marania with the community and school children.



Thick moorland heather on patrol with the ponies.



Equine dentist!



Logging incidents



Fence-breaking elephant in the corridor.



A family herd



On the mountain fire fighting.

16. Video Clip

Forest fires:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVSN2MKZhQc>

10to4:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrJXirpgGKw>

17. Conference publications

Enock Ochieng, MKT Programmes Officer, represented MKT at the 16th International Elephant Foundation Conference and Research Symposium in South Africa, presenting the Trust's ranger team activities and elephant research projects, including mitigation of human-elephant conflict.

18. Media coverage

19. Online resources

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