

**INTERNATIONAL ELEPHANT FOUNDATION**  
**INTERIM REPORT**

**COVER PAGE**

<b>ORGANIZATION DETAILS</b>	
Name of organisation:	Mount Kenya Trust (MKT)
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Website:	<a href="https://mountkenyatrust.org/">https://mountkenyatrust.org/</a>
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<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	
Project title:	MOUNT KENYA HORSE PATROL TEAM
Location:	Mount Kenya National Park And Forest Reserve
Project Status:	Underway since 2012. IEF has supported the project since 2014
Project period:	From: 01/01/2022      To: 31/12/2022
Reporting period:	From: 01/01/2022      To: 30/06/2022
Project completion date:	31/12/2022

## 1. Project Abstract

The Mount Kenya Trust (MKT) collaborates with local people, governmental organizations, and development partners to protect Mount Kenya, the second-highest mountain in Africa. MKT was founded in 1999 as a result of growing concern for the expanse of forest that surrounds Mt. Kenya. The area was being destroyed by extensive wildlife poaching, logging of native tree species, overgrazing, and massive marijuana cultivation.

The Horse Patrol Team (HPT) is one of the numerous interconnected projects that have been developed by the Trust to safeguard the habitat and safe areas for these endangered mammals. HPT is one of Kenya's few mounted community ranger teams. The team receives a lot of attention from the national and international media, as well as equestrians, who are drawn to the HPT's distinctive work to strengthen conservation efforts. The team's uniqueness has also drawn more attention to the area as a whole and individual team members.

The anti-poaching HPT 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 Northwestern section of Mount Kenya. Successful conservation of elephants in Kenya should concentrate on broader biodiversity goals rather than just the animals themselves. Elephants' future is heavily influenced by two factors: poaching or hunting and human competition for or conversion of land.

To lessen poaching and forest destruction on the mountain, the Trust deploys four community ranger teams to collaborate closely with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and Kenya Forest Service (KFS), the government's wildlife agencies. They must contend with tough terrain, high altitudes, and difficult weather conditions every day to conserve Mt. Kenya's ecosystem. In order to assist KWS and KFS in preventing the illegal extraction of wildlife, timber, and charcoal from the forest and moorlands, they man their bases all year long and conduct extensive patrols.

The ranger teams remove traps and snares set for poaching and bushmeat, making arrests and apprehending those illegally in the forest logging hardwood or clear-cutting to grow marijuana. They are regularly involved in firefighting with the KWS, KFS and local communities – fires that can wipe out vast tracts of the forest if not controlled. Despite risking their lives when encountering poachers or injured wildlife, none of our men is armed. They sometimes request to be supported by armed KWS rangers.

## 2. Project Narrative

a. Describe the specific actions taken to achieve objects listed in the project proposal

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Action taken</u>
To decrease the prevalence of illegal activity, in particular, elephant and bushmeat poaching in the northern areas of Mt Kenya National Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting routine and camping patrols</li> <li>• Destroying snares and/ or traps</li> <li>• Arresting poachers/ loggers</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting joint patrols</li> <li>• Conducting camping patrols in hotspot areas</li> </ul>
To increase awareness and conservation education within the communities living in and around Mt Kenya Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitization</li> </ul>
To improve the links with wildlife NGOs to reduce response times for illegal incidents, improve intelligence gathering and information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging Community Forest Association scouts</li> <li>• Working closely with the local judicial team</li> </ul>

b. Describe any activities that differ from the original proposal and explain the reason for the change

None

c. Describe the conservation outcomes for elephants, other wildlife, habitat and human communities

Two elephant population surveys have been carried out on the mountain by Dr Hilde Vanleewee from the Wildlife Conservation Society. Due to thick forests, direct elephant counting on the mountain is challenging. The most commonly used indirect method to do this is by using dung transects. The same survey design was applied in 2016, then four years later, in early 2020.

Based on the aforementioned elephant surveys in 2016 and 2020, the elephant population on Mount Kenya remains stable with one of the highest densities of the population in the country. It is estimated to be between 1,419 - 2,558 elephants for the survey area. This is a non-significant reduction from the previous survey, conducted in 2016. The estimated percentage of the population of Mount Kenya and the Aberdares is 5% of the total population

There is, however, increasing threats since 2016. Currently, the greatest threat to elephants in the region is human-elephant conflict. In 2021, we recorded 10 elephant carcasses, 2 of which were electrocuted, 2 were poached due to missing tusks and the cause of death for the remaining 6 was unknown. In 2022, HPT has retrieved 90 snares targeting both small and big wildlife. Only through regular patrols and community engagement and sensitization can we reduce these incidences.

Elephants can continue to roam freely in the wild by safeguarding their habitat and protected areas, as well as by addressing human-elephant conflict, the bushmeat trade, and poaching. The team's presence in the region improves the ability of law enforcement officials to reduce poaching

(particularly of elephants) and other illegal activities. Through the capabilities it offers, the data gathered using SMART gives outputs on wildlife and security issues for managers of protected areas, allowing advances in anti-poaching efforts, overall law enforcement, and ranger effectiveness. Earth Ranger, a user-friendly online software program that integrates with SMART and uses real-time data to evaluate ranger patrols and findings, is also connected to SMART. This will combine historical and real-time data available within the protected area – wildlife, rangers, spatial information and other threats

People from the nearby communities also benefit as the rangers employed are from the surrounding communities. The project has supported a total of 7 rangers by paying for their salaries.

d. Describe how your goals were met and explain any goals that were not met.

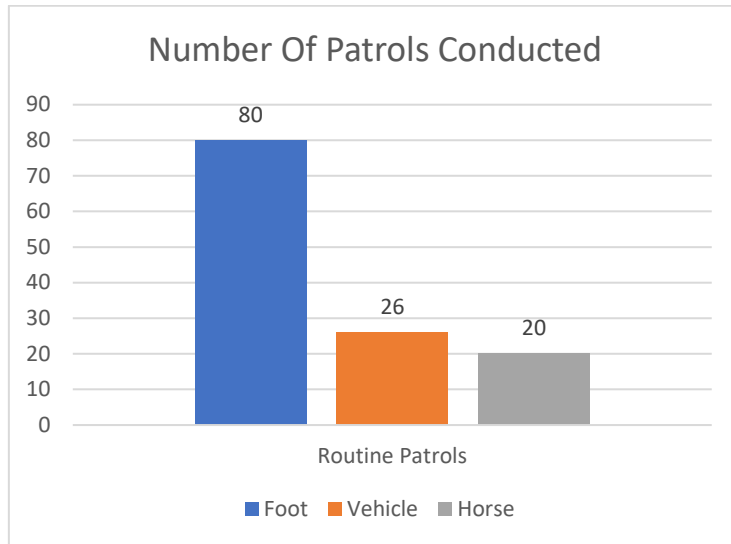
The Mount Kenya Trust (MKT) anti-poaching Horse Patrol Team was set up to enhance the capacity of law enforcement personnel to decrease the level of poaching (especially elephants) and other illegal activities mainly but not limited to the Northwestern section of Mount Kenya. Along with law enforcement, the goals/ objectives are to

1. Decrease the prevalence of illegal activity, in particular, elephant and bushmeat poaching in the northern areas of Mt Kenya National Reserve
2. Work collaboratively with the Kenya Wildlife Service to extend the area of surveillance into Meru and Sirimon
3. Increase awareness and conservation education within the communities living in and around Mt Kenya Park
4. Improve the links with wildlife NGOs to reduce response times for illegal incidents and improve intelligence gathering and information sharing

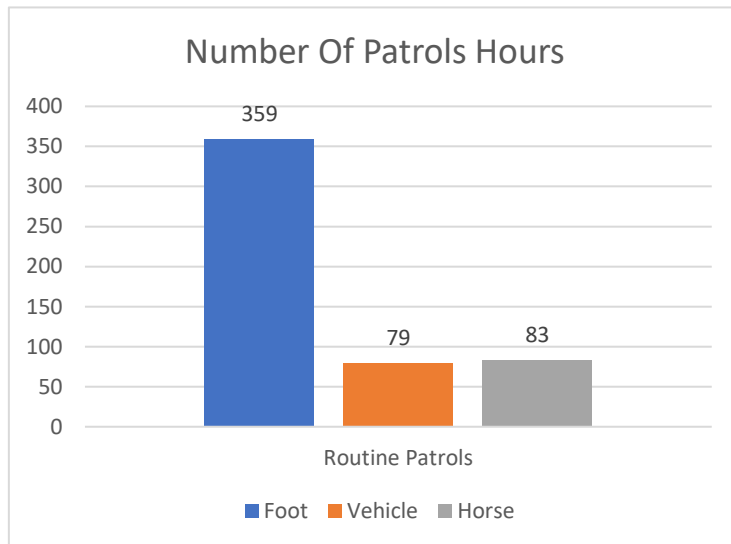
To meet these goals:

- The team conducted both routine and camping patrols. These were either foot, vehicle or horse patrols. At times, these were a result of intelligence reports on illegal activities.
- Of the patrols done, some were conducted jointly with either KWS rangers, KFS rangers or CFA (Community Forest Association) scouts.
- The team recorded the number of patrol hours, distance covered, and illegal activities found using the Spatial Monitoring And Reporting Tool (SMART).
- The team sensitized the community members that they encountered within the forest during the patrols, mostly before verbally warning them.

e. List major findings and accomplishments to date



*Image 1 shows the number of foot, vehicle and horse patrols between January to June 2022 by the HPT.*



*Image 2 shows the number of hours patrolled by the HPT on foot, vehicle and horse patrols between January to June 2022.*

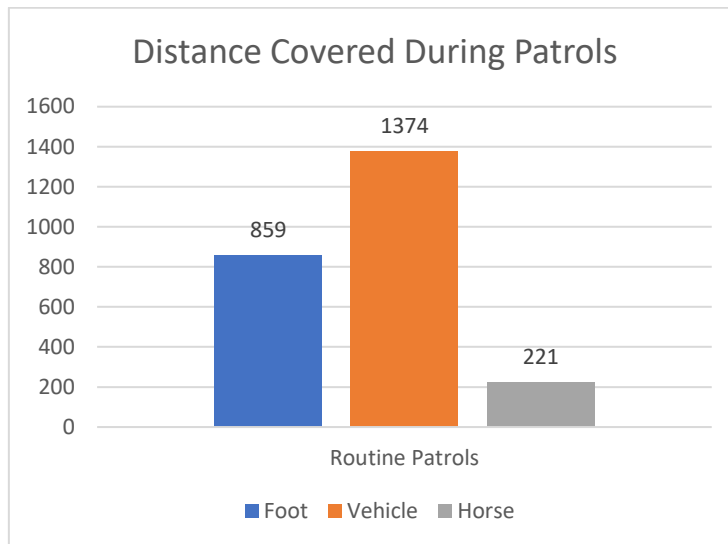


Image 3 shows the distance covered by the HPT team on foot, by vehicle and on horseback in kilometres between January to June 2022

**Patrol Findings**

**Human Activities**

Table 1: Summarized illegal human activities recorded

People		#Domestic Animals	#Snares	Logging	Illegal Shelters	#Wildlife Carcasses
Direct	Indirect					
41	24	1952	90	39	6	9

The wildlife carcasses found during the reporting period include bushbucks, duikers, a serval cat and an eland. 2 of the animals died as a result of predation, 3 died as a result of trapping and the cause of death for the remaining 4 was unknown.

**Categories of Snares and Traps Destroyed**

Table 2: Snares and Traps found and destroyed by patrol teams

#Cable Snare	#String Snare	#Wire Snare	#Cutting Tools
5	18	57	5

Other types of snares included woven traps set up for birds, rodents or monkeys. These were mostly found along the river during riparian patrol and were destroyed. The cutting tools were machetes and handsaws confiscated during the arrest of culprits who were logging. Cable snares are capable of snaring elephants and are often set for large mammals including elephants.

**Illegal Logging Findings**

Table 3: Illegal logging activities observed per team

#Firewood Bundles	#Timber Pieces	#Fence Posts	#Stumps	#Charcoal Kilns
7	11	5	22	17

Most of the charcoal kilns were already harvested and they were found within the charcoal burning hotspot of the Sirimon area. Some of the tree species targeted for logging included *Olea africana*, *Ocotea usambarensis* and *Podocarpus falcatus*.

**Domestic Animals Recorded**

Table 4: Categories of domestic animals observed

#Cow	#Sheep	#Dogs	#Goats
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787	1064	31	70
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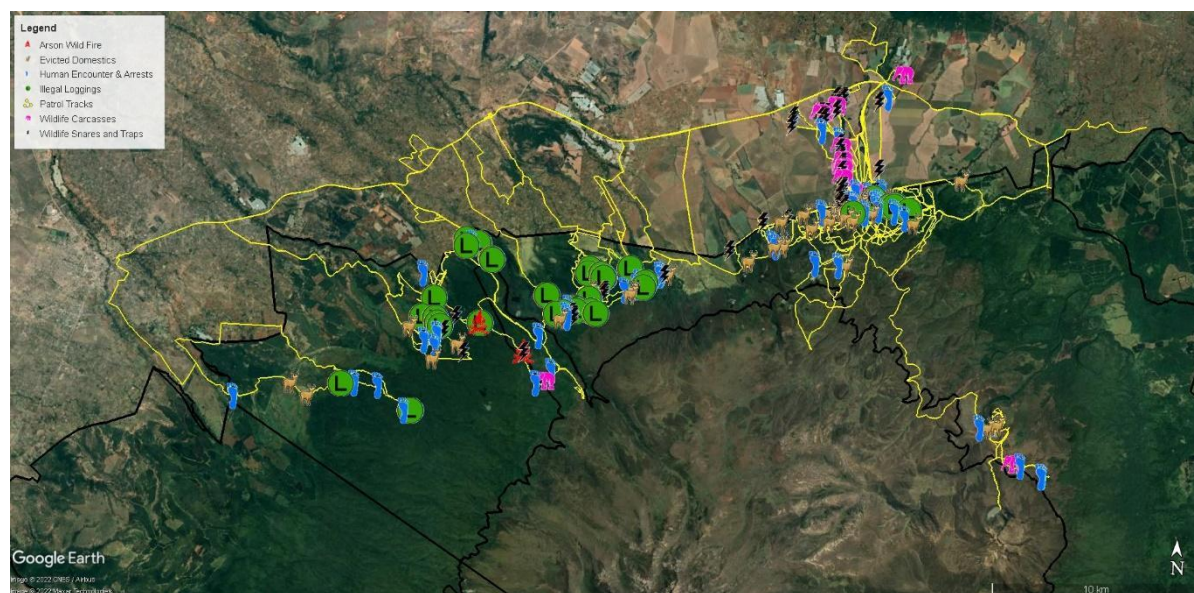
With the prolonged dry season, the teams are seeing an increase in the number of domestic animals, mostly belonging to the pastoral communities, in the forest every month. Some of the domestic animals were grazing illegally in the reserve and they were evicted. There is an increasing number of goats which are particularly damaging to the habitat. The number of cattle that are staying in the forest with pastoralists from outside of the region is unsustainable and the cause of disputes and fires that are detrimental to the elephant ranges.

**Action Taken People Direct Encounter**

*Table 5: Action taken on direct human encounters*

#People Arrested	#People Observed only	#People Unsuccessful Pursuit	#People Verbal Warning
3	1	11	26

The cases for the arrested suspects are still in court



*Map 1 to show HPT patrol findings from January to June 2022.*

f. Describe any problems discovered or that occurred during this grant period

*COVID 19 restrictions and disruptions*

With more community members out of work or risking social-economic destitution due to COVID19 restrictions or economic downturn, on-the-ground reports and patrols are finding more people inside the National Reserve and turning to illegal poaching or forest harvesting to make ends meet. This increases the risk of HEC as humans start to move into the elephant's safe habitat more frequently, along with other habitat destruction risks from cattle grazing, risk of forest fires and charcoal production. We have seen a large and widespread increase in illegal activities, including snaring, as described above. We are worried about this trend and our teams are doubling efforts to deter and arrest individuals found in the forest and deactivate and remove as many snares as possible.

*Reduction in funding*

The pandemic has affected the organisation with shifts in our operating dynamics and project future potentials. The largest impact, apart from the restrictions in the field, has been reductions in funding from partners and supporters who depend on events or tourism for their sources of income. In

particular, AFEW Giraffe Centre in Nairobi and the Tusk Marathon have both reduced or halted funding. Although we don't directly depend on tourism as an organization, many of our supporters do along with Trusts or partners that depend on investments.

### *Forest Fires and Drought*

It has been an extremely challenging fire season this year with particularly dry and hot conditions around the mountain. The first fires broke out in Ontulili Forest in early February. A team of 20 firefighters along with Community Forest Association members were quickly mobilised and were able to suppress the fire. On February 6, a 12-man MKT team spent two nights in the Aberdares to fight another small fire, with quick success.

In the early part of March, our team were fighting nonstop to control fires in the Aberdares and on Mount Kenya. Some were very likely started by careless illegal honey harvesters, charcoal producers and water abstractors in the Sirimon, Ontulli and Mbaru areas respectively. Subsequently, there was intense, frequent and much more deliberate activity in the Marania, Sirimon and Rutundu areas from the middle of March. It was clear and proven by assisting intelligence sources, that fires were being repeatedly and intentionally lit by gangs. The poaching gangs are reacting to the almost permanent presence of livestock from the north due to drought but also major political pressures from cattle barons.

Our rangers were working long days alongside KWS, KFS, CFA members, Kisima Farm personnel and the Rhino Ark team to control these fires. We were so proud to see how upbeat our team stayed when criminal activities continued to dog them after each fire was extinguished. We commend them for their hard work.

To address this, we have held several meetings with the respective stakeholders, that is, KFS, KWS, Rhino Ark, CFAs and local government authorities, to discuss some of the causes and possible solutions and preventative measures that can be taken.

Through some of our rangers that are part of the 60 elite firefighters that we have trained, we have trained a total of 140 community members from 6 forest stations that are prone to forest fires on basic firefighting. In the eventuality of a forest fire, this will ensure that we have a group of community members who know how to properly use the available equipment and know the appropriate techniques/ methods to use depending on the type of fire. Due to their proximity to the forests, it will also ensure there is a group that knows what it's doing that can quickly respond. This is very critical in containing a fire. The communities, however, do not have appropriate gear and this is something that we need to work towards. Funds permitting, we also hope to train more community members and offer refresher training for those that have already been trained.

With the funds raised by generous well-wishers during the fire period, we have created fire breaks and widened existing roads within the moorland in Chogoria, Themwe, Marania and Rutundu areas. We have covered a length of approximately 11.64Km. In future, this will be very vital in containing the fires, if they occur, and controlling the extent of destruction.

### *Vehicle maintenance*

Within the Northern sector, we have the HPT, MWG (Marania Wildlife Guards) and fencers all relying on one vehicle, a Land Rover. As with most of the newer models of Landrovers, once they develop mechanical problems you get stuck in a loop of constantly repairing and replacing parts. This is proving to be quite expensive and adding to the financial strain due to the reduction in funding and lack of unrestricted funding for vehicle maintenance. As the teams rely on the vehicle for both routine and camping patrols, fence repairs as well as responding to human-elephant conflicts, especially along the elephant corridor, we cannot afford to leave them without a vehicle. The optimal solution would be to purchase a new Landcruiser that is more hardy and appropriate for the terrain. But as we do not have funds for this at the moment, the medium-term solution is to replace the current



engine. Funding permitting we would replace it with an older, simpler model TD! engine as the newer Puma one is sensitive and has already been rebuilt once and still, has constant issues.

### 3. Evaluation

<i>Project objectives</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Output</i>
1. To decrease the prevalence of illegal activity, in particular, elephant and bush meat poaching in the northern areas of Mt Kenya National Reserve	How many patrol days were conducted?	Between January – June 2022, the team conducted a total of 126 patrols.
	How much distance was covered by patrols?	Through the patrols conducted between January – June 2022, the team covered a total of 2,454Km.
	How many snares and/ or traps were found and removed?	The team found and destroyed 90 different types of snares. If left undiscovered, these snares would have caught and even killed unsuspecting wildlife roaming the area.
	How many poachers were caught/ arrests made?	Between January – June 2022, 3 people were successfully arrested while 11 people managed to escape.
2. 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	How many patrol days were conducted jointly?	All camping patrols were joint patrols. Rangers from KWS and KFS also joined the team during some of their routine patrols.
	How much distance was covered by joint patrols	2,454Km were covered during the patrols

3. To increase awareness and conservation education within the communities living in and around Mt Kenya Park	How many humans were served and/or positively affected?	The project has supported a total of 7 rangers by paying for their salaries. The employed rangers come from the surrounding communities. Seeing how their own get to benefit from protecting and conserving the ecosystem incentivizes them to take better care of their environment and the resources that they have.
	How many education opportunities were offered?	During the routine and camping patrols, some of the people encountered in the forest were educated and given a verbal warning. During the riparian patrols, the team sensitized the community members that they met and adjacent farm owners on how to better manage the riparian habitat.
	How many kids/ adults were educated/ served?	26 people were verbally warned. More people were sensitized during patrols
4. To improve the links with wildlife NGO to reduce response times for illegal incidents, improve intelligence gathering and information sharing	Were there any joint patrols conducted with the different wildlife NGOs?	Joint patrols were conducted with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Water Resource Users Association (WRUA) scouts and Community Forest Association (CFA) scouts.
	Are there any initiatives taken to bring together the different stakeholders/ partners?	The Trust works with the judicial team to refresh the team on the relevant Acts and policies while teaching them how to effectively write up charge sheets against culprits to ensure that they incur the maximum penalty possible for the illegal activities carried out. The Trust also facilitates some of the judicial team's team building activities around the Mt. Kenya area. This is usually an opportunity to sensitize them on the issues being faced within the Mt. Kenya National Park and Forest Reserve with an aim of reinforcing the outcome on rulings made against arrests for these illegal activities as they will

		have a better understanding of the impact and the effort that goes into protecting the ecosystem.
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## 4. Conclusion

### *Next step*

The team will continue to conduct daily patrols either during their routine or camping patrols. Joint patrols with KWS and KFS will be carried out from the base with members from a number of the MKT teams or individual teams including the HPT. Patrols carried out with armed KWS rangers will be necessary until the area is more secure. We will make as many arrests as possible in the first six months of local patrols to deter habitat and wildlife destruction. Illegal activities will be reported to the senior staff for both KWS and KFS every month via our monthly reports.

During patrols, the team will record the number of patrol hours, distance covered and illegal activities found using the Spatial Monitoring And Reporting Tool. The SMART features will provide data outputs on wildlife and security issues for protected area managers. This will allow improvements in anti-poaching efforts, overall law enforcement and ranger effectiveness.

### *Human story*

Daniel Gitonga narrates this report's human story. Daniel Gitonga is the team head of the HPT. His narration is on some of the risks of being a community ranger.

### **DANGERS OF BEING A RANGER**

One of the most dangerous places to be as a community ranger is the National Park and Forest Reserve. Every day, we leave our bases not knowing what to expect. We never know who we will encounter and whether they will be armed or unarmed. We never know if we will encounter a poacher, logger, tourist or an innocent woman going about her day collecting firewood. We never know if the route selected or area chosen for the day's patrol has some sophisticatedly engineered snare or trap set for wildlife, and if any, we never know the location.

In an attempt to paint a picture of just how dangerous the work that we do is, I'll highlight two incidences. The first one was at a time this year when we were fighting fires on the mountain. I remember I was with my colleagues trying to put out the fire while preventing it from spreading to the unburnt section. All of a sudden, the direction of the wind changed and the fire started spreading at a very fast rate. One of my colleagues noticed this and alerted everyone to retreat. We all started to run away from the fire. Unaware of a smouldering tree that had started to fall due to the strong wind, one of my colleagues ran towards it. When he got close to it, the tree fell. He escaped narrowly with just a few minor injuries. As if putting the life of one of our rangers at risk was not enough, all our efforts in trying to prevent the fire from jumping over to the unburnt area proved to have been in vain. The smouldering tree fell on the unburnt area and started yet another fire. We were discouraged but knew that we had to keep pushing and trying.

The other incident was while I was on a routine patrol with the team. While doing the normal surveillance and looking out for any illegal activities within the forest, we saw 2 people walking while carrying something on their backs. The moment they sighted us they started running. We immediately suspected that they were poachers as whatever they were carrying was wrapped in a blanket, something that most poachers do. We immediately started to pursue them and got to this cliff that they had jumped over, it was approximately 15m high. Engrossed in the chase, one of our rangers jumped over the cliff oblivious of just how high it was. One of the poachers escaped while the other was at the base of the cliff injured. Unfortunately, my teammate who had jumped over the cliff was also injured. We had to support both of them out of the forest and took them to the hospital for treatment. Afterwards, the poacher was taken to the police station where he was arrested and, later on, arraigned in court.

These are just two of the many incidences we have encountered while on duty. While our work is filled with a lot of uncertainties and risks, we do it dedicatedly and wholeheartedly. We do it because we love what we do. We wake up every single day because we know the work that we do is more important and bigger than us. The nature that surrounds us has no advocates to speak for it or protect it. And so we have to act.

## 5. Financial snapshot

The financial snapshot below shows the project's status using the funds received from IEF. To date, Mount Kenya Trust has received \$8,250 which is the first portion of the total funds committed. The other half of the funds will be received by Mount Kenya Trust upon sharing the interim report.

Budget Item	Amount Reequsted from IEF Funding 35% of the total project costs	Interim Report (Jan - June 2022) - usd Actual
<b>Income received</b> 14/03/2022 (940,359.00KES) fx rate at 113.98		\$8,250
<b>Project Personnel</b>		
<b>Ranger team salaries</b> [\$205*7 rangers x 12 months]	6,037	3,018.00
<b>Northern Sector Supervisor</b> [\$376 * 12 months]	1,581	791.00
<b>Programme Officer</b> [\$1000 * 20% portion * 12 months]	841	421.00
<b>Airtime and data for project M&amp;E</b> [\$50 * 12 months]	212	106.00
<b>Medical</b> [\$51 * 7 rangers]	127	64.00
<b>WIBA</b> [\$87 x 7 rangers]	214	107.00
<b>Total Personnel costs</b>	<b>9,012.00</b>	<b>4,507.00</b>
<b>Meals</b>		
<b>Rations</b> [\$313 * (12 months ration packs + 7 camping patrol ration packs)]	2,085	1,042
<b>Horse Food</b> [15 bales/month @ \$3/bale = \$45x12=\$540 Oats 480kg @ \$0.4/kg = \$192 x 6 = \$1152 Barley 300kgs @ \$0.4/kg = \$120 x 6 = \$720]	846	423
<b>Total Meals costs</b>	<b>2,931</b>	<b>1,465</b>
<b>Equipments</b>		
<b>Uniform and team equipment</b> [\$100 x 7 rangers for 1 year of equipment/uniform needed]	245	123
Horse Equipment	-	\$0
<b>Total Equipments</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Services</b>		
<b>Veterinary costs</b> [\$30 * 12 months]	128	64
<b>Training of horse and horsemen</b>	140	70
<b>Transport costs for fuel and vehicle maintenance</b> [\$1988 appr. a year for motorbike and vehicle insurance, \$2,400 appr. a year for vehicle maintenance and repairs 320KM @ \$0.52/KM x 12 months]	2,239	1,120
<b>Enrich devices</b> [\$105 x 4 quarters]	148	74
<b>Total Services</b>	<b>2,655</b>	<b>1,328</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
<b>General housing &amp; stable repairs</b>	-	-
<b>Allowances</b> [\$10 x 44 days of additional work if need be over the year. For instance court hearings etc]	157	78
<b>Operational Costs - Admin, Accounting, Telephone, Reporting &amp; M</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>750</b>
<b>Total Miscellaneous</b>	<b>1,657</b>	<b>828</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,500</b>	<b>8,251</b>

<b>6. Deliverables</b>	
Images	Sent via Wetransfer
Video	Sent via Wetransfer
<b>7. Acknowledgements</b>	
Online resources	<a href="http://www.mountkenyatrust.org">www.mountkenyatrust.org</a>
	@mountkenyatrust on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter