

*Improving Protection for Nigeria's Largest Elephant Population in  
Yankari Game Reserve*

**INTERIM REPORT**

to the

**INTERNATIONAL ELEPHANT FOUNDATION**

from the

**WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

July 2010

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**Grant Amount:** \$5,000  
**Grant Period:** January 1, 2010 to January 1, 2011  
**Reporting Period:** January 1, 2010 to June 30, 2010

**GOAL:** *To improve the long-term conservation of elephants in Yankari Game Reserve by improving the capacity of the Bauchi State Government to reduce elephant poaching, and take appropriate management actions to protect the Reserve and its wildlife.*

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Reduce levels of poaching in Yankari Game Reserve by increasing the frequency, duration, coverage, and efficacy of anti-poaching patrols.
2. Establish a ranger-based Cybertracker monitoring system to enable the Bauchi State Government to make sound management decisions for the Reserve.
3. Survey levels of elephant-human conflict in the Gaji River Valley area.

**PROGRESS**

**Objective 1: Reduce levels of poaching in Yankari Game Reserve by increasing the frequency, duration, coverage, and efficacy of anti-poaching patrols.**

*Activity 1.1 Provide field equipment to 40 rangers.*

Ten four-man tents were supplied to the General Manager of Yankari Game Reserve (purchased with funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). These tents (see photo below) have allowed rangers to camp inside the Reserve whilst on patrol, rather than being based at inaccessible ranger posts on the edge of the Reserve. This has meant that a greater proportion of the Reserve has been patrolled than has been the case recently. Figure 1 shows the coverage of overnight patrols in the reserve from January to July 2010; it does not include day-patrols by rangers not equipped with CyberTrackers.



**Photo 1:** Tents being handed over to the General Manager of Yankari Game Reserve, Stephen Haruna (on left).

*Activity 1.2 Payment of field allowances.*

Each ranger was paid a camping allowance of 500 *naira* per night (\$3) whilst on patrol, which has improved ranger morale and motivation. In addition to the camping allowance, food rations were also provided at the rate of 500 *naira* per person per day (\$3 per person per day).

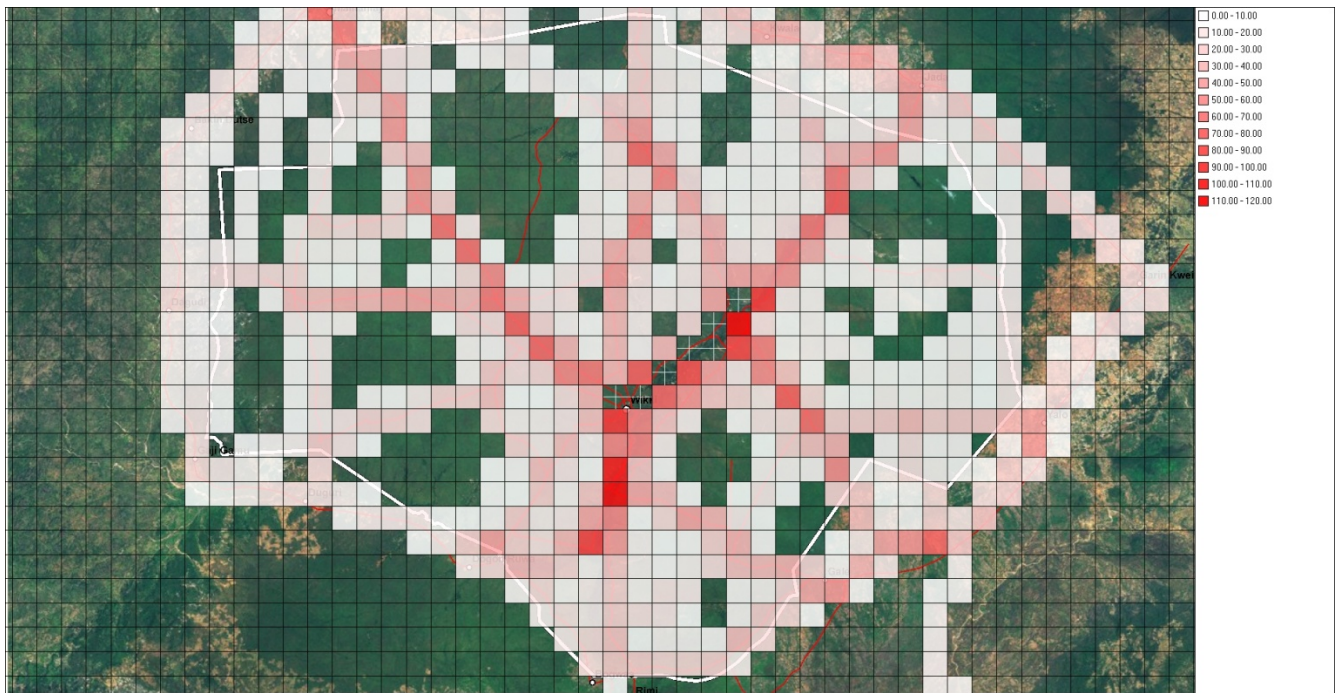
*Activity 1.3 Increase the number and coverage of patrols.*

Overnight foot patrols by teams of rangers were organised from the central Wikki Camp, most of which lasted for three days. A total patrol distance of 8,800 km was recorded during the period from January to July 2010 (see Table 1 below), and a total of 69 arrests were made (see Appendix 1).

**Table 1:** Patrol Effort from January to July 2010.

Date	Sighting count	Distance covered (kilometers)	Time taken (hours)
January 2010	641	1,038.2	240.7
February 2010	814	1,217.6	264.1
March 2010	774	1,227.4	278.5
April 2010	385	1,242.4	182.1
May 2010	1,038	2,086.7	316.0
June 2010	724	1,529.5	246.8
July 2010 (through the 11th)	328	458.5	77.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,704</b>	<b>8,800.2</b>	<b>1,605.6</b>

The remaining rangers, based at 16 patrol posts on the periphery of the game reserve, were engaged in daily patrols within their respective beats during the project period.



**Figure 1:** Patrol effort in kilometres, January–July 2010.

**Objective 2: Establish a ranger-based CyberTracker monitoring system to enable the Bauchi State Government to make sound management decisions for Yankari Game Reserve.**

*Activity 2.1 Train 12 senior rangers in data collection and analysis, including the use of CyberTracker and patrol reports.*

Training for 40-50 senior rangers in CyberTracker use and standard data collection methods was provided by Dr. Richard Bergl of the North Carolina Zoo. Additional training on downloading data from the CyberTrackers, data analysis and production of reports was provided to a smaller number of senior staff.

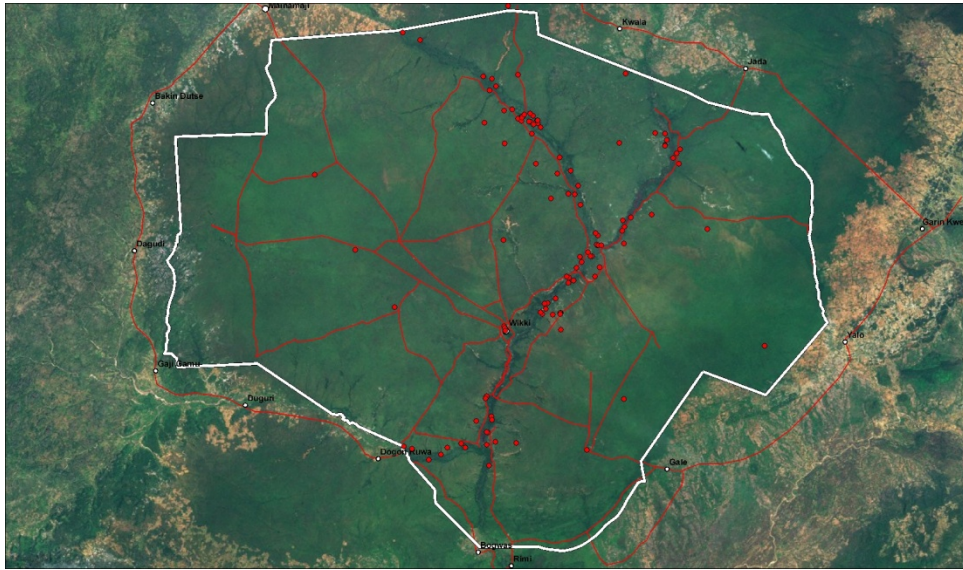


**Photo 2:** Rangers practicing with the CyberTrackers in the field.

*Activity 2.2 Purchase three CyberTracker units to facilitate the ranger-based monitoring system.*

Three ruggedized Recon Cybertracker units, and a desktop computer for downloading data, were purchased with funds from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Once the Cybertracker units were shown to be functioning well, an additional unit was purchased with funds from a

supplementary grant from Sea World and Busch Gardens. The four Cybertracker units are all based at Wikki Camp in the centre of the Reserve, where Reserve headquarters are located, so that they can be downloaded at the end of each patrol and recharged.



**Figure 2:** Illegal human activity (red dots) recorded January–July 2010 in Yankari Game Reserve.

### **Objective 3: Survey levels of elephant-human conflict in the Gaji River Valley area.**

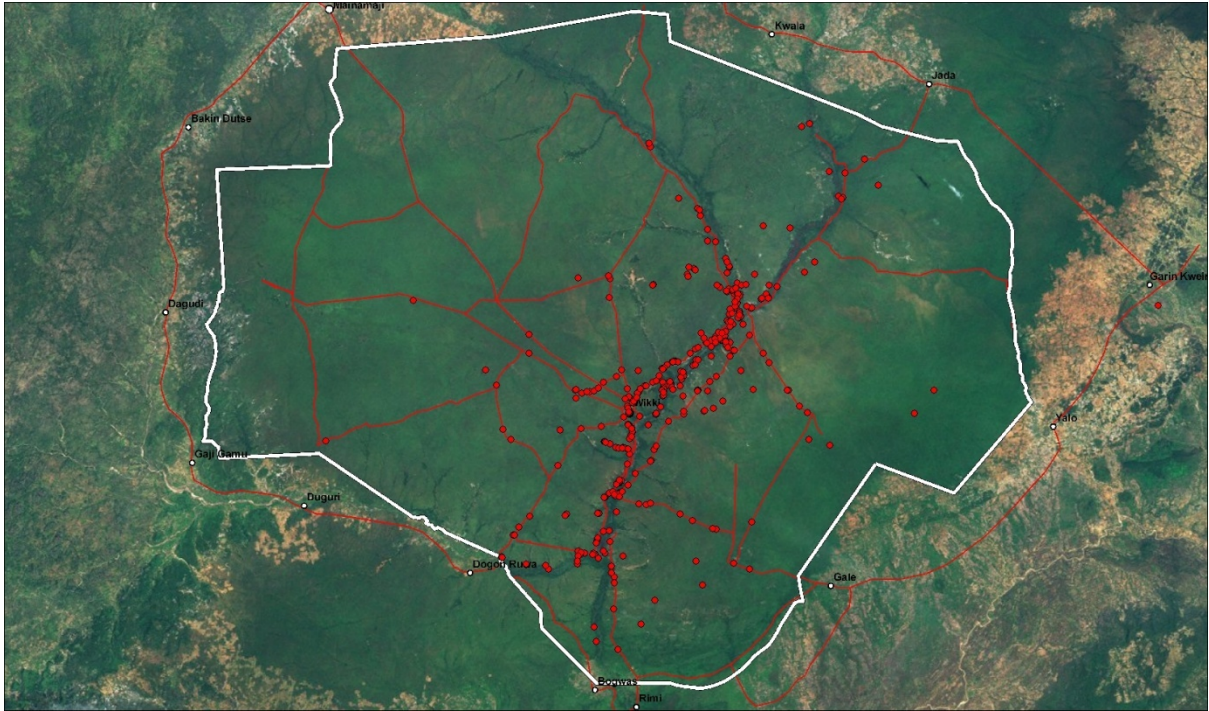
#### *Activity 3.1 Conduct human-elephant conflict study.*

Human-elephant conflict has been a major problem for the management of Yankari Game Reserve in 2010. However the General Manager decided against the idea of a formal study since it is currently such a sensitive issue. He did not want local expectations to be raised since there are no funds available for compensation to farmers whose crops are destroyed by elephants. Whenever elephants stray outside the Reserve, the current strategy is to send rangers to chase the animals back inside the boundaries of the Reserve.

#### *Activity 3.2 Identify mitigation solutions and propose at least one possible solution.*

This activity has not yet begun. The Reserve's General Manager has had some discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture about the possibility of planting pepper as a buffer crop around the Reserve as well as encouraging the use of bee-keeping, to discourage marauding elephants.





**Figure 3:** Elephant evidence (red dot clusters) recorded January – July 2010 in Yankari Game Reserve.

**CONCLUSION:**

The Wildlife Conservation Society is grateful to the International Elephant Foundation for its support of this important conservation project. The timeline submitted with the original proposal remains on target, and we look forward to reporting on the next six months' activities in the final report.