

AERIAL & GROUND OPERATIONS (“Big Tusker Project”) SUMMARY:

Activity	Hours Flown	Miles Covered
<i>Aerial Reconnaissance</i>	58 Average 73 mph of low level flight	4,242 Flights carried out jointly with KWS staff
	No. Observed	
<i>Big “Tuskers”</i>	9 Tuskers - 7 bulls (3 Super Tuskers & 4 emerging Tuskers) & 2 cows	
	No. Recovered	
<i>Ivory recovered</i>	4 elephant tusks (17 for year to date - largest 53.5 & 52.5kg)	
<i>Elephant carcasses</i>	Fresh (less than 3 weeks old)	Recent (less than 3 months old)
	2 (c of d: 1 hit by train, 1 hit by truck)	1 (c of d: 1 unconfirmed)
<i>Carcasses/hours flown</i>	1 every 19 hours of flight	
<i>Poacher camps/hides</i>	Fresh - 2	Recent - Nil
<i>Arrests</i>	10 - by KWS / TT – (10 livestock – 22 for year to date)	
<i>Snares/traps recovered</i>	108 (by Tembo Teams – 228 for year to date)	
<i>Response/support to KWS - armed incidents</i>	3 (TENP poaching gang, TW gun shots, TE gun shots – 5 for year to date)	
<i>Other Illegal activities</i>	107 cattle bomas (40,000 plus cows, 26,000 shoats, 487 + people seen, 500 camels, 100 donkeys, 14 dogs)	
<i>Written reports to KWS</i>	43 (daily email reports, various communications & 1 monthly report)	
<i>General & significant notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th, 19th & 23rd March 17 – TT aircraft flew as back-up support to KWS armed situations • Number of elephant carcasses found – significantly down • Livestock incursions into the Tsavo Parks are incredibly high and on the increase • Aerial & ground support pertaining to rhino security ongoing through partnership with KWS / ZSL rhino program. 8 rhino specific recce flights carried out with KWS • 14th & 23rd March – TT rescued 2 orphaned baby elephants and delivered to DSWT 	

Tsavo Trust does not only focus on elephant conservation but also works closely in support of KWS concerning black rhino conservation through a partnership with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL). Photo below shows 2 TWNP rhino in prime condition on 20th March 2017.



Big Tusker Project - aerial and ground mobile teams:

The Tsavo Trust's Big Tusker Project (BTP) recorded the following details in the BTP database:

- Total of 9 different individual Tusker's were observed from ground and air coverage. Observations of Tuskers this month was unusually very low despite aerial and ground consistent coverage.
- New emerging Tusker coded as RO1 identified on 18th March 2017
- 3 bull Super Tuskers – 7 different sightings
- 4 emerging Tuskers – 5 sightings
- 2 iconic cow Tuskers – 7 sightings
- **Total sightings – 19**
- **Weather conditions:** Hot and desperately dry.
- **Elephant mortality:** Carcasses found were significantly down which is a big positive, and of the 3 found none were poached. However worryingly armed elephant poaching gangs have been encountered but have been successfully dealt with.
- **Rhino security:** 8 rhino specific aerial reces took place with KWS / TT aircraft in TWNP and TENP. TT - Tembo 3 team continued in support to KWS in ground operations in the TW IPZ. Continued strong and valuable 3 way partnership between KWS / ZSL & TT continues with specific focus on rhino protection in TWNP.

Table 1: Shows "Tusker" code, number of times observed during month and brief remarks.

Tusker Code	No. Times Seen / Month	Remarks
BULLS		
LU1	3	Crosses SGR regularly. Frequents an unsafe area!
WS1	3	Back to normal location
IL1	1	Normal location, but a worrying location at times
MU1	1	Moved to a worrying boundary location following rain there
KM2	2	Back to normal area
MZ1	1	Same original location. Not seen in 8 months!
RO1	1	New emerging bull not seen before. Broken off right tusk
COWS		
F VPL	3	Back to normal location. Looking very old and thin
F MU1	4	Back to normal area. Looking very old and thin
TOTAL	7 bulls, 2 cows: 19 different sightings	
<i>Close working relationship between KWS and Tsavo Trust (aerial and ground units combined) is without doubt adding to elephant security and safety of the big Tuskers and other elephants within the TCA through meaningful collaboration alongside KWS Security and Research & Monitoring Departments.</i>		



Photo shows newly identified emerging Tusker coded as RO1 on 18th March 2017.

Although his right tusk is broken off, his left impressive tusk shows clearly that he carries the Tusker gene pool and given the chance to survive longer, in time he will join the Super Tusker elite.

Areas Covered: Table 2: Shows the main areas covered within the TCA for this month:

TSAVO EAST NP	TSAVO WEST NP	RANCHES & DISPERSAL AREAS
<p>Northern Area – Yatta Plateau, Durusikale, Garasamuke, Emusaya, Golf Charlie, Koitu, Sobo, Sangayaya, Dabaduke, Mufupa ya Ndovu, Ithumba, Tiva River, Roka, Ithumba</p> <p>Southern Area – Voi, Ndololo, Kanderi, Wagalla, Ndara Plains, Buchuma, Maungu, Murondo, Dakota, Voi River, Dika Plains, Satao, power lines, Aruba, Mukuaju, Dika, Konu Moja, Dida Harea, Balguda, Sala, Lali, Sobo, TENP boundary, Koitu, Galana River</p> <p>Central Area – TE R/S, IPZ, Manyani east, Punda Milia, Hatulo Bisani, Lugards, Mbololo lugga, Balguda, Irima, Mudanda, Maka Hill, Man-eaters, Triangle, Mtito Lugga, Zero Delta, Voi north & east, Galana River, Tsavo River and Yatta Central, SGR</p>	<p>Northern Sector – IPZ, Mangaleta, Kamboyo, Kisimeka, Chyulu south, Mtito lugga, Mungai Hill, Finch Hattons, Mzima Springs, Shetani volcano, Severin, Kilaguni, Ndawe, Tsavo River</p> <p>Southern Sector – Lake Jipe, Toloa, Kanjaro, TZ border</p> <p>Central Sector – IPZ, Rhino Valley, NRS, Tsavo River, Kinyek, Maji ya Chumvi (north & south), Ziwani, Lesoito, Kyulu, Manda, Kishushe, Murka, Mombasa Highway, Man Easters, Kenani, Kanga, Manyani north and west, SGR line</p>	<p>TENP border – Ngiluni/Kamunyu, Kulalu, Derea, Murondo, Magram/Dakota Ranch, Ngutuni, Galana Ranch</p> <p>TWNP border – Ziwani, Rombo and Lualenyi</p> <p>Chyulu Hills NP - Nil</p> <p>Taita Ranches – Nil</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The locations mentioned above is only an indicator of flight paths taken, many other areas in between are also covered and in so doing providing “eyes in the skies” over Tsavo and directional guidance to ground units. • All flight paths are logged and recorded with all relevant real time observations relayed to KWS on a daily basis for their records as well as necessary rapid reaction. 		

Map below shows flight paths for March 2017 where 58 hours were flown in support to KWS for anti-poaching, wildlife monitoring and aerial census operations covering 4,242 miles over the Tsavo’s.



Field Mobile Units:

All Tsavo Trust mobile field units work with and in support of KWS on a daily basis. *Tembo 1 & 3 teams* are anti-poaching focused *Tembo 2 team* is monitoring and research dedicated.

Anti-poaching teams:

Table 7: Shows outcomes from anti-poaching activities from Tembo 1 & 3 teams:

Anti-poaching teams	No. Field days	No. Arrest	No. Ivory recvd.	No. Snare recvd.	Bushmeat recvd.	Poachers equip. recvd.	No. Poacher camps	Vehicle mileage km
Tembo 1	21	Nil	Nil	83	100kg eland, & dikdik	2 bicycles, cooking equip	2	2,605
Tembo 3 Kamungi	31	Nil	4	25	13 dikdik	-	-	3,169
Others Chui team	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTALS	52	Nil	4	108	As above	As above	2	5,774
Total 2017	159	7	13	228	-	-	16	16,803



Photo shows the Tembo 1 team having rescued an orphaned baby elephant in TENP on 23rd March 2017. This calf was taken to DSWT in Voi and later flown to Nairobi.

Tsavo was desperately dry in March and this was 1 of 2 elephant calves rescued by KWS / TT in March.

Monitoring teams:

Table 8: Shows activities carried out by Tembo 2 team:

Monitoring team	No. Field days	Activities	Endangered species records / sightings	Operating locations	Vehicle mileage km
Tembo 2	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tusker monitoring • Endangered species – database records • Road and SGR kill surveys • Camera trap surveys • Fixed point photos • Predator monitoring 	Tuskers – 6 sightings Hirola – 8 sightings Grevy's Zebra – 1 sighting Predators – too many to mention	TENP, Voi River, Satao, Buchuma, Ndara, Aruba, Manyani, KMC, Lugards, Galana River, Msa Rd., Dida Harea	2,501
TOTALS	16	As above	As above	As above	2,501
Total 2017	50	-	-	-	7,556

Other Tsavo Trust Activities in brief:

Community Program: KAMUNGI CONSERVANCY:

Ongoing partnership and stewardship development between Tsavo Trust and Kamungi Conservancy (bordering northern boundary of TENP – Triangle) have continued in varying ways:

- Water bore hole drilled and solar pump equipment and configuration being sought.
- Human Elephant Conflict (HEC) – Elephant & Bees Project with kind support and advice from Save The Elephants / Disney / WCS and Dr. Lucy King (who pioneered this concept) has been implemented on 3 different local community farms as a trial for more to come. Most beehives have been colonized by bees and in time will provide honey and further income to Kamungi residents.
- KWCA Training Workshop for Conservancy Managers – 2 members from Kamungi Conservancy attended a 2-day training workshop in Nairobi in late February 2017.



Photo shows one of the recently set up “elephants and bees” project fences within Kamungi Conservancy.

This method is proven and effective tool in mitigating Human Elephant Conflict (pioneered by Dr. Lucy King / STE) small-scale farm lands, but also as a welcomed revenue earner through honey sales.

Leopard Cub Release:

- Dotty the female leopard is nearly 11 months old and continues her slow rehabilitation process into the wild within TENP. During her daily walks she has made several kills on her own accord including dikdik, hyrax and francolin. This is a joint KWS / TT / IFAW project and so far has progressed well.



Photo shows “Dotty” out on her daily walks in TENP with one of her dedicated keepers.

Unusual Photo of the Month:

Photo below shows a Melanistic serval cat in Mukuaju area of TENP on 23rd March 2017 (courtesy of Kyalo Kimaile who heads Tsavo Trust research and monitoring units).



With sincere thanks and appreciation to the Kenya Wildlife Service, Save The Elephants/Wildlife Conservation Network Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF), US Fish & Wildlife Service, The Oak Foundation, Zoological Society of London (ZSL), Stuart Herd, Nick Southgate, James Robertson, International Foundation for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Tusk Trust UK & USA, The Woodtiger Fund, , Ndovu Trust (UK), US State Dept., Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, International Elephant Foundation (IEF), Wines of the World Ltd, Africa Spirits Ltd, Mike Kirkland/Torben Rune, Satao Camp (Tsavo East) & Southern Cross Safaris (Msa), Tropical Ice Ltd, Salama Fikira, Origins Safaris, The Art of BAS & Oak Furniture Ltd (UK), Geri Bauer, Kathy Snowden, Simon Herd, Saving the Survivors, Karen Laurence-Rowe, Anadarko Kenya Co., Askari Project – Australia, Chris Acreman, Paul & James Wilson, Enable Green Energy, Eaton Electric, Alex Hunter – InsidersAfrica, Michael Cheffings, Pembroke House School and numerous other individual supporters.

Report compiled by Richard Moller – Chief Executive Officer, Tsavo Trust
All photographs ©Richard Moller / Tsavo Trust 2017