



Monthly Aerial Report – June 2013

June 2013 saw the Tsavo Trust's (TT) Super Cub aircraft cover a total of 2,302 miles over 29 hours of flight covering many parts of the Tsavo Conservation Area (TCA). The average speed of reconnaissance was 79.3 miles per hour. The longest reconnaissance flight took place on 25th June spanning just over 4 hours.

One of the large bull elephant the Tsavo Trust is regularly monitoring; this one is code named SA1



Main areas covered within the TCA in June include:

Tsavo East NP – 6 flights that covered Galana River, Athi River, Voi River, Aruba, Satao, Yatta North, Tharakana, Gazi, Balguda, Aruba, Bachuma, Maungu, Lugards, Thambanguji, Dika, Dakota (TENP Southern boundary), Ashaka, Manyani, Voi, Ngiluni, Kulafumbi, Kamunyu and the Tsavo Triangle.

Tsavo West NP – 4 flights that covered TW Intensive Protection Zone (IPZ), TW Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary, Mombasa Highway between Mtito Andei and Tsavo River bridge, TW

Triangle, Tsavo River, TW Maji ya Chumvi lugga, Mtito Lugga, Rhino Valley (Ngulia), Mzima Springs, Mzima pipeline, Kyulu area, Ngulia East, Kinyek, Ziwani, Lake Jipe, Maktau, Murka, Mungai Hill and Kamboyo.

Many other locations and areas are covered during reconnaissance flights and the above names are general locations and an indicator of the flight path covered

Elephant ivory observed by the Tsavo Trust aircraft during joint reconnaissance flights with KWS staff over the TCA, later recovered by ground team on 24th June 2013.



Notable remarks/observations in June include:

1. On 25/6/13, a group 15 of the very rare Grevy's zebra was observed near Bachuma area just outside TENP. Encouragingly there were 3 young foals in the group. There are believed to be less than 2,000 Grevy's zebra remaining on earth (95% in northern Kenya). TENP was the recipient of an inbound translocation of Grevy's zebra from northeastern Kenya in the late 1970's. It is positive to see the population still exists and is still viable.
2. On 5th June, a herd of 15 critically endangered Hirola was observed in the Dika area of TENP, again encouragingly with 4 calves.
3. Recovery of 1 elephant tusk from an old carcass, probably having died naturally, observed during an aerial reconnaissance flight on 24th June.
4. Tsavo Trust aircraft used to support the TCA KWS Vet Unit by assisting in locating a snared elephant on 22nd June.

Brief on Tsavo Trust's (TT aerial unit) first 6 months' notes:

- Aerial reconnaissance flights commenced in February 2013. Since then a total of 13,623 miles have been flown over 179.2 hours of flight that averaged 76 mph.
- Flights have focused on keeping “an eye in the sky” on Tsavo’s magnificent large bull elephants carrying massive ivory. At the same time this aerial coverage provides KWS with a vital platform to cover the huge TCA - much of it being roadless, aerial cover is fundamental.
- Many flights have been specific to providing support to KWS’s rhino program in TENP and TWNP.
- The TT aircraft took part in the KWS Amboseli/West Kilimanjaro Large Mammal Aerial Census in April 2013.
- 12 elephant tusks have been recovered as a result of TT’s aerial coverage, thus depriving poachers of this booty.
- Several elephant carcasses (both poached and natural) have been located and recorded for ground action and research data.
- Several poachers’ hideouts, blinds and camps have been located for ground follow up and further action.
- Poachers, charcoal burners and loggers have been apprehended as a result of the TT aerial observations and rapid dissemination of information to relevant KWS Officers.
- Valuable information regarding endangered species locations (Hirola, Grevy’s zebra, cheetah, wild dog, rhino and more) has been relayed to the TENP and TWNP relevant Research Officers.
- KWS has nominated Richard Moller, Chief Conservation Officer of the Tsavo Trust to sit on the TCA Elephant Management Committee.

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Report compiled by Richard Moller – Chief Conservation Officer, Tsavo Trust

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