



Monthly Aerial Report – August 2013

During August 2013, the Tsavo Trust's (TT) Super Cub aircraft, 5Y ACE, covered a total of 2,538 miles over 34.5 hours of flight covering many parts of the Tsavo Conservation Area (TCA). The average speed of reconnaissance was 74 miles per hour. There were 4 reconnaissance flights that spanned over 4 hours each.

In collaboration with KWS, Tsavo Trust carries out many other conservation initiatives. The photo below shows a captured bush meat poacher with several fresh Dikdik carcasses on the border of TWNP Triangle on 29th August 2013.



Main areas covered within the TCA in August include:

Tsavo East NP – 7 flights that covered Galana River, Athi River, Voi River, Aruba, Satao, Yatta Central, Hand grenade valley, Masobo, Jimetunda, Kiasa, Sangayaya, Emusaya, Durusikale, Balguda, Bachuma, Maungu, Lugards, Tambanguji, Dika, Dakota (TENP Southern boundary), Sala Hill, Kulalu Ranch/TENP boundary, east Manyani, Mudanda, Irima, Ndii, Voi, Waduruma, Mbololo lugga, TE IPZ, Sobo, Ngiluni, parts of Galana Ranch (Lalli Hills, Danisa, Kisiki cha Mzungu, Bombi, Shaka Hola) 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, Kyulu area, Ngulia East, Kinyek and Athi River.

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. On all flights the Tsavo Triangle is covered during to and fro transit to other areas due to the TT airstrip location on the Triangle's northern border.

Illegal Activities:

Elephant poaching remains a threat within the wider TCA, especially with the ongoing encroachment of cattle into the parks and illegal herders moving back into the Taita Ranches. For operational security reasons, Tsavo Trust cannot comment on the details of poaching incidents. We report directly to KWS any poaching related activity we observe, for onward follow-up by KWS.

Freshly poached elephant carcass with ivory still intact, found from the air on 7th August 2013 in TENP. KWS ground follow up recovered the ivory and confirmed cause of death was a poacher's poisoned arrow.



Ivory found during aerial reconnaissance on 24th August 2013 and later recovered by joint KWS/TT ground follow up.



Bush meat: The illegal bush meat trade, both subsistence and commercial, is a very real threat and challenge to the TCA. A good example of was on 29/8/13 when a joint KWS/TT ambush leads to the arrest of a bush meat poacher with 7 Dikdik (see photo above). A slaughtered adult Dikdik sells locally for just Ksh 50 (approximately US\$ 0.60).

Livestock: Although the eviction of illegal livestock out of the Taita Ranches in recent months had some very positive effects on the area from a reduction in poaching perspective as well as the illegal encroachment of livestock entering the Parks, unfortunately much of this livestock and many of the herders with ill intent have returned. This places huge pressure on the local communities as well as on the National Park authorities.

Charcoal burning and logging is also persistent in many locations along boundaries that have small-scale farmlands abutting the Park.

Other notable remarks/observations in August include:

1. Several of the large “Tuskiers” were observed in August and all locations and information recorded in the TT database maintained by TT “Large Elephant Monitoring Project”. See photo below of an exceptionally large bull.
2. Recovery of 4 elephant tusks, 1 from a poached large bull elephant (6/8/13 – both tusks weighed 73kg) and the other from an old natural death (25/8/13).
3. Assistance to KWS in aerial reconnaissance of rhino holding areas in both TENP and TWNP.
4. Assistance to KWS in searching for collared elephants in TENP on 15/8/13 and 17/8/13.

5. Located an orphaned baby elephant on 2/8/13 in TENP near Mudanda Rock and initiated this elephant's subsequent rescue.
6. 14 Hirola on 17/8/13 near Satao.
7. Predators (excluding spotted hyena who are regularly seen) and other unusual wildlife sightings: 2 leopard, 1 honey badger, 3 wild dog, a total of 4 lioness and 5 lion. All these sighting are GPS'd and references given to relevant KWS Research Departments accordingly for their records.
8. Highlighted the pollution effects on Athi/Galana Rivers, see photo below, at confluence of Athi and Galana.

Photo showing a bull elephant carrying exceptionally large tusks, coded as SA1 and was seen on 6th August 2013.



Tsavo also has some very impressive female elephant that carry very long tusks such as this female below coded as F_VO1 seen on 24th August 2013



This photo shows the confluence between the brown (natural coloured) Tsavo River and the green (polluted) Athi River and clearly portrays the serious algal bloom in the Athi and Galana Rivers as a result of pollution upstream. Taken on 24th August 2013.



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