



Kasigau Corridor



Aerial Surveillance and Wildlife Quarterly Report

December - February 2018

REF: KE_WW_02

By Keith Hellyer



Overview:

Total hours flown: 184

5Y-CBU – 102

5Y-BRD – 82

Distance covered: 14,010km (see Appendix 1 for flight paths)

Summary:

The rains at the end of November and early December were welcomed with much relief after the long dry period last quarter. Dams located in the northern sectors of the project were all filled and the landscape developed a thick green canopy and a carpet of green undergrowth. This had a large influence on the elephants, which then concentrated in these areas. The aerial team was busy throughout the quarter relaying locations of these large groups to the ground teams to better deploy security for the elephants. The beginning of February the aerial surveillance team spent a lot of their patrols surveying the areas around the recently-collared elephants within the project area. Out of the 20 collared elephants, seven were chosen in the Wildlife Works project area, bringing the total number of STE collared elephants currently in the Wildlife Works area of operation up to 11. The aerial team assisted with this collaring operation by mapping locations of elephants over the Kasigau corridor prior to and during the collaring, ensuring less time and energy was spent searching for which elephants to potentially collar.

Elephants Deaths:

Elephant Deaths	Number
Poached, found inside the project area	1
Poached, found neighboring the project area	1-Sagalla reserve
Related to Human Wildlife Conflict	N/A
Death from Natural Causes, Unknown or Drought	2
Total deaths within the project area	3
Total Tusks Recovered	5
Elephants Injured & Treated	0
Responses to Armed Situations	1

Notes: 10/01/18: Male 30-35 years old. Location: Sagalla reserve. Cause - poison arrow. Tusks taken, later recovered after arrest of 1 suspect on LMD. 15/01/18: Male 25-30 years. Location: Rukinga. Cause unknown. Naturally 1 tusk, recovered. 18/01/18: Male 30-35 years old. Location: Taita. Cause unknown, tusks recovered. 20/01/18: Female 35-40 years old. Location: Sagalla, near Westerman's camp. Cause - poison arrow, tusks missing.

Elephant Activity: (see Appendix 2 for Elephant Distribution Map)

After spending a long period in remote Koranze ranch on the Tanzanian border, it was a relief to see the large herds of over 500 elephants moving to concentrate in the northern parts of Rukinga sanctuary. Over 300 elephants were also recorded along the Sagalla community boundary. This seems to be a normal pattern in the late December and early January time. However, the large influx of elephants onto Sagalla was an expected disturbance to the local Sagalla farms. The aerial team spent many hours over the last week of December spotting herds entering farms and relaying coordinates to Kenya Wildlife Service rangers and Wildlife Works ground teams. Over 2,000 thunder-flashes or elephant deterrent fireworks were used during this period. Two KWS rangers were seriously injured and many community members suffered property and crop damage. There were efforts by KWS and David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust helicopters to push some of the herds across Mombasa highway and Standard Gauge Railway (SGR). Some efforts to move several of the family herds were successful, but other

attempts the elephants stopped responding to the aerial herding altogether and were unmovable. The concentration of elephants on the Sagalla side lasted until the end of January when the area got dryer. More rains fell on the southern sector of the corridor, forcing the majority of the elephants to move south towards more permanent water sources on Mgeno, Choke and Maungu ranches. At a similar time, the herds in Rukinga slowly separated and moved onto Taita ranch towards the end of February.

Collared Elephants recorded:

Following the collared elephants was an efficient way to locate the big herds in the area. Many flights observed the conditions of the areas the collared individuals were moving into with the rest of the elephant populations. By doing this, security efforts from the air and the ground were provided for these animals. The surveillance team exercised appropriate flying distance from the elephants, as some of the sightings were large groups that were quite nervous of aircraft. Both “Rukinga” and “Taita” proved again that they are able cross the SGR and Mombasa highway from TENP onto Rukinga sanctuary. “Rukinga” and “Rob” spent several nights entering farmlands from the Mwaguede area of Rukinga ranch with other large groups of elephants. Below are the sighted collared elephants.

Elephant Seen	Date	Location and details
Sagalla	03/02/18	WPT #093 - Sagatisa hill, Mgeno Ranch, alone, with 35+ elephants nearby, water nearby.
Jojoba	05/02/18	0475182 9601738 - on Jojoba, total 12 elephants, water nearby.
Rob	05/02/18	0479682 9585495 - Rukinga Ranch, total 3 bulls, water nearby.
Salama	05/02/18	0481374 9575119 - Taita Ranch, with 80+ elephants, water nearby.
Rukinga	20/02/18	0450915 9582915 - 08:22am, Kasigau Ranch, total 19 elephants, water approx. 5km away.
Salama	20/02/18	0482461 9572619 - 09:24am, Kisima hills, Taita Ranch, with 200+ elephants, water nearby.
Taita	20/02/18	0485592 9572599 - 09:30am, Kisima hills, Taita Ranch, with 150+ elephants, water nearby.
Salama	21/02/18	0480851 9572365 - 09:09am, Amaka/Taita border, with 100+ elephants, water nearby.
Jojoba	23/02/18	0476718 9599890 - 08:50am, Chui forest, total 38 elephants, water nearby.
Jojoba	25/02/18	0476487 9598805 - 07:26am, Chui forest, total 14 elephants, water nearby.
Rukinga	24/02/18	0467844 9590049 - 07:26am, Mkuluni area, with 50+ elephants, water nearby.
Jojoba	26/02/18	0473723 9598753 - 07:21am, Marungu area, total 16 elephants, water nearby.
Rob	27/02/18	0469031 9587249 - 08:44am, Juliana forest, Rukinga Ranch, total 5 bulls, water nearby.
Rukinga	27/02/18	0471672 9594063 - 08:35am, Mkuluni forest, Rukinga Ranch, with 50+ elephants, water nearby.
Sagalla	27/02/18	0443674 9600708 - 08:06am, Panda 2 forest, Mgeno Ranch, with 50+ elephants, water nearby.



Left: "Jojoba"



Right: "Rob"

Poaching Activity:

Bush meat poaching was quite active this quarter, and several arrests were made. Elephant poaching, which usually sees a large spike this time of year, was not as bad as previous years, due to good systems and efforts in place between rangers, partners and aerial surveillance operations. There were two bushmeat poachers arrested on Wangala and Bungule OB# 31/18/01/2018 and OB#4/27/01/2018. Three bush meat poachers were arrested on Mgeno on 12/02/2018. Two tusks were recovered from a poached elephant on Sagalla reserve, which resulted in the arrest of one man on Livestock Management Division (LMD).

Charcoal and Illegal Activity Located:

Activity	Number
Log piles / Posts	158
Charcoal Kilns	33
Charcoal Bags	43
Charcoal Camps	0
Arrests Made	15
Bush Meat Carcasses	25
Snares Collected	26L / 35M / 21S
Poaching Arrests Made	5

Bush meat seized: 20 dik-diks, 1 oryx, 2 franklins, 1 lesser kudu.

Confiscated items: 1 motorbike, 4 bicycles, 2 handcarts, 1 bow, 36 arrows, 1 spear.

Grevy Zebra: Grevy's were seen in good numbers on Rukinga, Jojoba, Wangala and LMD ranches, as well as common sightings around Sagana dam located on Taita ranch.

Species of Interest: Melanistic serval cat, a lioness with 3 sub-adult cubs, cheetah with cubs, bat eared foxes, aardwolf, ostrich with young were all witnessed in good numbers this quarter.

Other Events this Quarter:

In January the aerial surveillance team carried out on going monitoring of the SGR wildlife corridor between Bachuma gate and Voi. It was discovered that almost all wildlife underpasses and smaller vehicle access points were obstructed with human development or activity. Cattle counts from these developments entering TENP daily were given to KWS and Taita-Taveta County Authorities. The cattle movements at that time were a great concern with the overgrazing of the limited food resources in that section of the park for wildlife. Currently, numbers of cattle in the park have decreased, however

settlements obstructing wildlife corridors remain an issue. These types of aerial reconnaissance are crucial in bringing to light security issues facing the ecosystem and free movements of wildlife. The information gathered is invaluable for putting pressure on county and government authorities.

The aerial team also conducted cattle and boma counts on Taita ranch. This was in response to requests for support from landowners, who were struggling with invasive cattle. Locating and removing invasive herds is a big priority for elephant security because it limits the numbers of unauthorized persons on the land and reduces competition for resources between livestock and wildlife.

The search for four lion cubs took place for over a week, after being separated from their mother for unknown reasons. However, they are presumed to have died when other lions moved into the area.

The aerial surveillance team responded when gunshots were reported on Rukinga in December, later discovered to be an elephant charge incident involving stationed KWS officers, which cannot be confirmed.

STE Elephants and Bees' volunteers assisted with flights looking for the newly collared elephants and general elephant movements near farm areas.

Aerial patrols are still being conducted to keep a close eye on community borders for potential conflict between elephants and farmers. With more rain expected, aerial patrols will be required to follow the dispersal patterns of elephants as they move further south on the ranches.



Left: Bungule bush meat capture

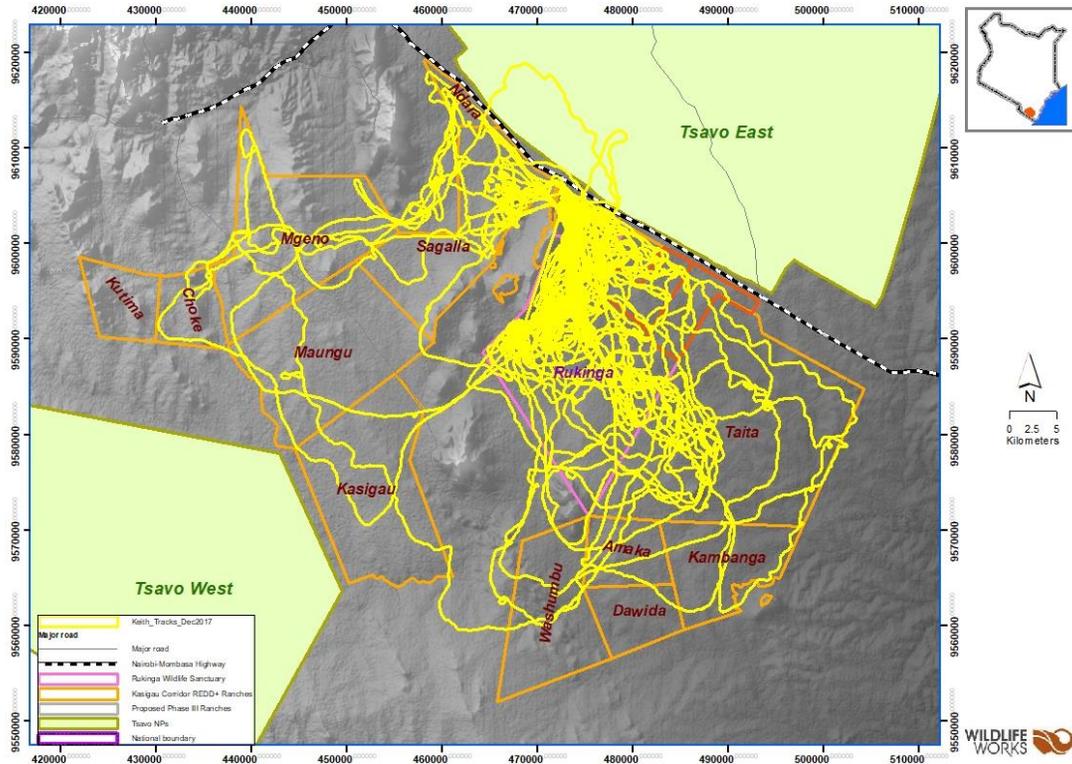


*Right: Over 3,000 head of livestock entering Maungu plains TENP
25/01/18*

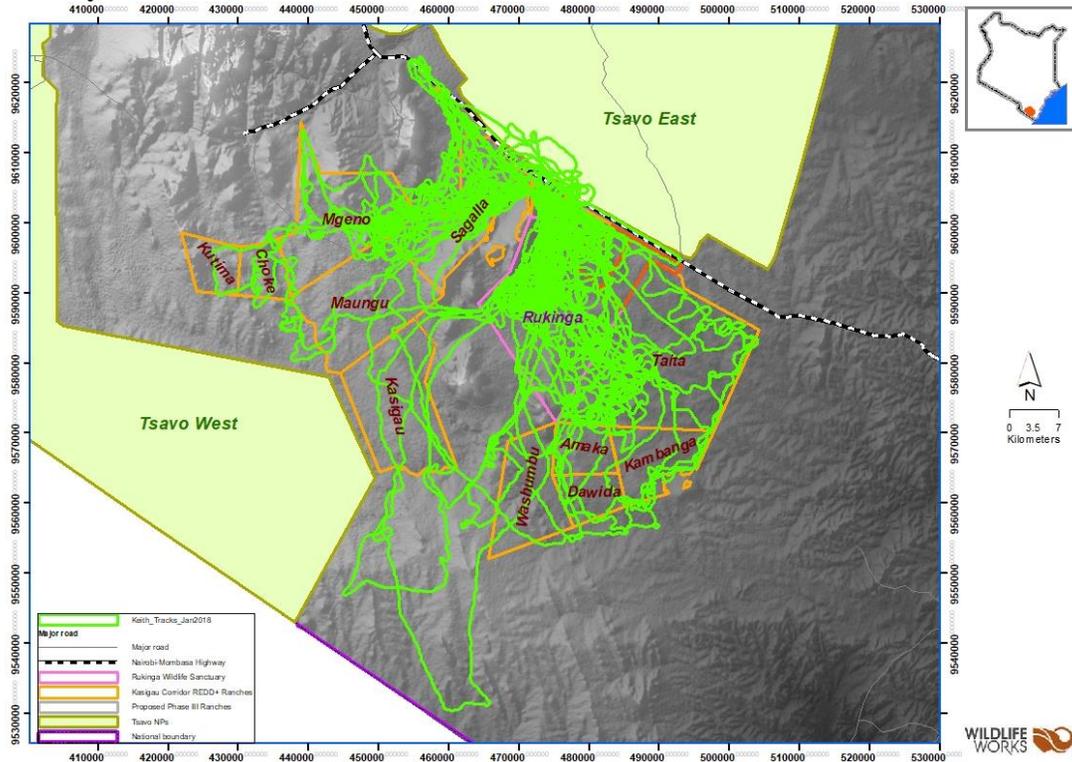
Thank you for your continued support.

Appendix 1: Recorded Patrol Tracks December 2017 – February 2018

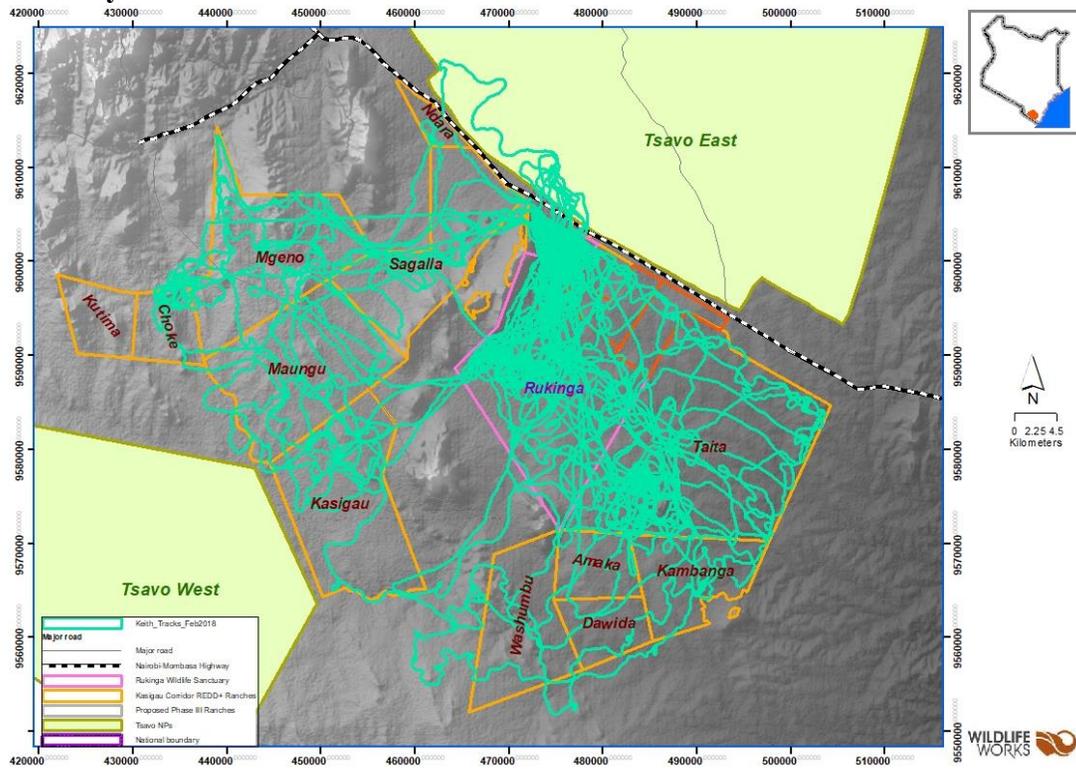
Map 1: December 2017



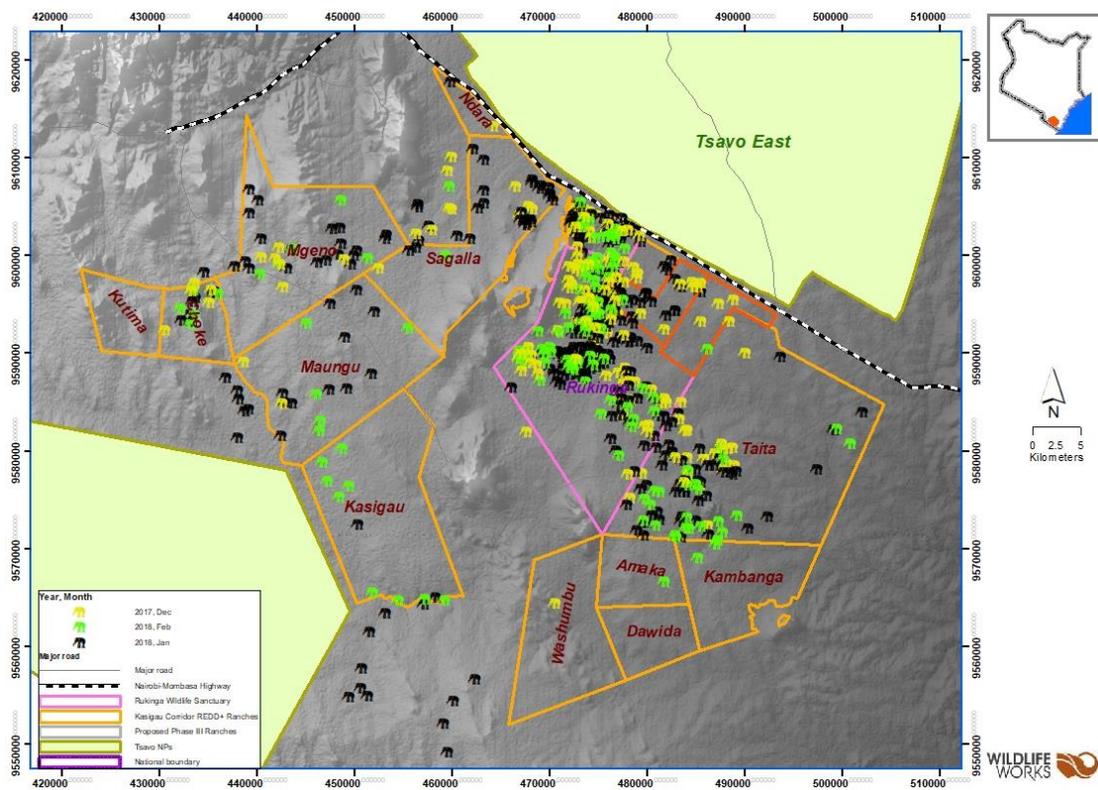
Map 2: January 2018



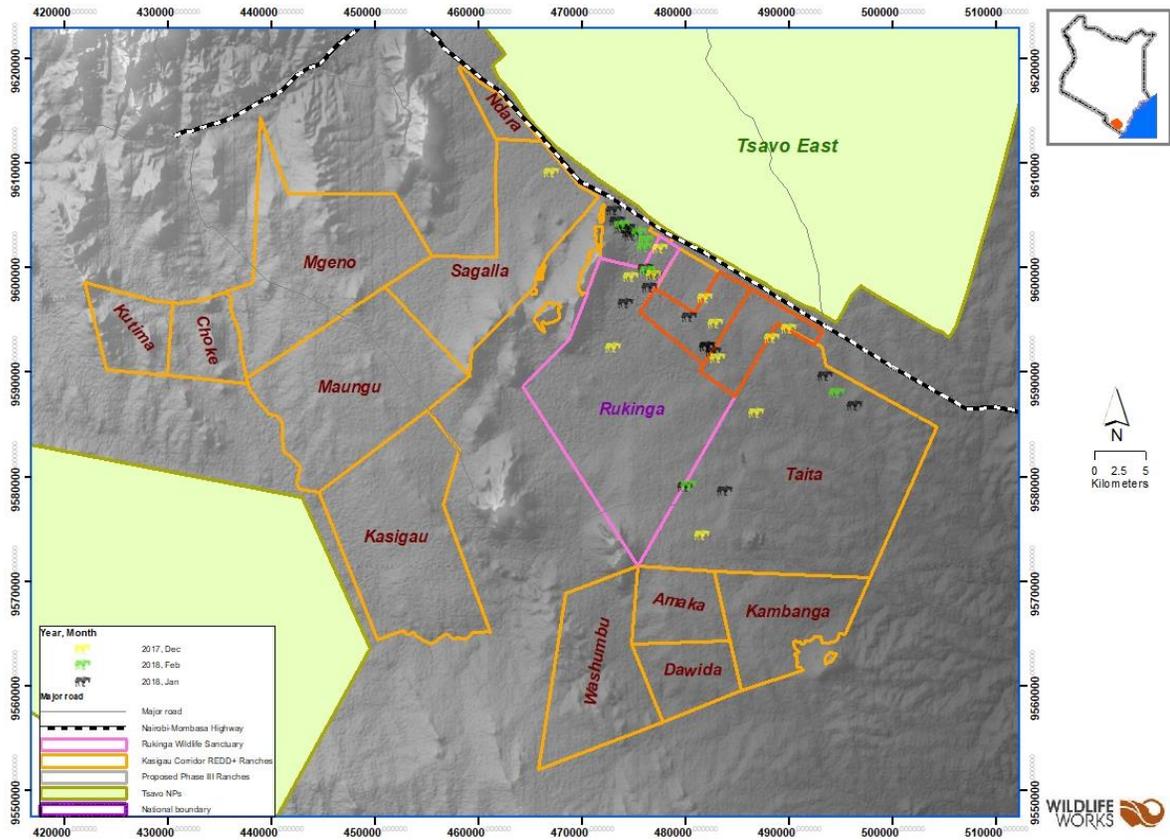
Map 3: February 2018



Appendix 2: Project Area Elephant Distribution this Quarter



Appendix 3: Grevy Zebra Distribution



Above: Grevy zebra on Taita ranch