



BIG LIFE

FOUNDATION

QUARTERLY REPORT (APR–JUN 2014)
KENYA OPERATIONS

MISSION STATEMENT

“Recognising that lasting conservation can only be achieved through a collaborative community-based approach, Big Life uses innovative conservation strategies to address the greatest threats: wildlife poaching, human-wildlife conflict, and habitat destruction.”

Big Life’s vision is to take the successful holistic conservation model used in the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem and replicate it across Africa.”

DIRECTOR’S NOTE

As you will see Big Life has had a very busy 3 months, most of it positive but also sadly, some negative events to report. The worst is the killing of a cow rhino by poachers and the wounding of her calf, only 14 months old. The good news is that as of now the calf seems to have recovered from the bullet wound in the neck and is doing well, despite the loss of its mother.

Crop raiding has been at an all time high, with the main perpetrators being elephant. The rangers have been run ragged, sometimes dealing with up to 10 cases in a night, and have managed to mitigate hundreds of cases, but at the same time they can’t be everywhere and many farms have had their crops partially or completely destroyed. This conflict has resulted in the deaths of 5 elephants as farmers take the law into their own hands. The long-term solution is to electric-fence these animal crop raiders out of the farms, and we are beginning to make inroads into creating a fundraising appeal to finance this initiative. Initial research shows we will have to fence 170 kms, a huge undertaking that comes with a \$1.5 million price tag that Big Life and other stakeholders in the ecosystem will have to find. The good news associated with this is that we have not lost one elephant to poaching over the period and all the ivory from the deaths associated with the crop raiding have been recovered.

Our community outreach has continued to grow, with an 8 percent growth in students winning wildlife scholarships. There was also a hugely successful visit from Highland school from Virginia, which has twinned with one of our local schools. This visit generated over \$25,000 in donations in the form of improvements to the school.

Many other exciting developments have happened over the period, which you will read about below, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the donors and supporters of Big Life for making our work possible.

Richard Bonham

ANTI-POACHING

ELEPHANT

A total of 6 elephant deaths were recorded over the reporting period, all of which were males. Of the total, 5 mortalities occurred within BLF's Areas Of Operation (AOO), the 6th occurring on neighbouring Kuku Group Ranch, where Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust (MWCT) operate wildlife security operations. The Kuku incident was the only verified poaching attempt, cause of death being a poisoned spear wound.

One large, mature bull died due to natural causes in Kimana Sanctuary, while 4 bulls of varying (young) ages died as a result of Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC). The tusks were recovered in all cases.

HWC has been exceptionally high over the reporting period* and this is reflected in relatively high number of HWC-related mortalities. Of the 4 HWC-related deaths, one medium aged bull died during an attempt to relocate him following a series of incidents of crop-raiding and dangerous behaviour. Another young bull died after receiving a spear wound in farmland near Satao-Elerai area. 2 young elephants died following ingestion of poisoned crops in farmland bordering the Chyulu Hills National Park (separate incidents).

* HWC will be covered more extensively in the relevant section below.

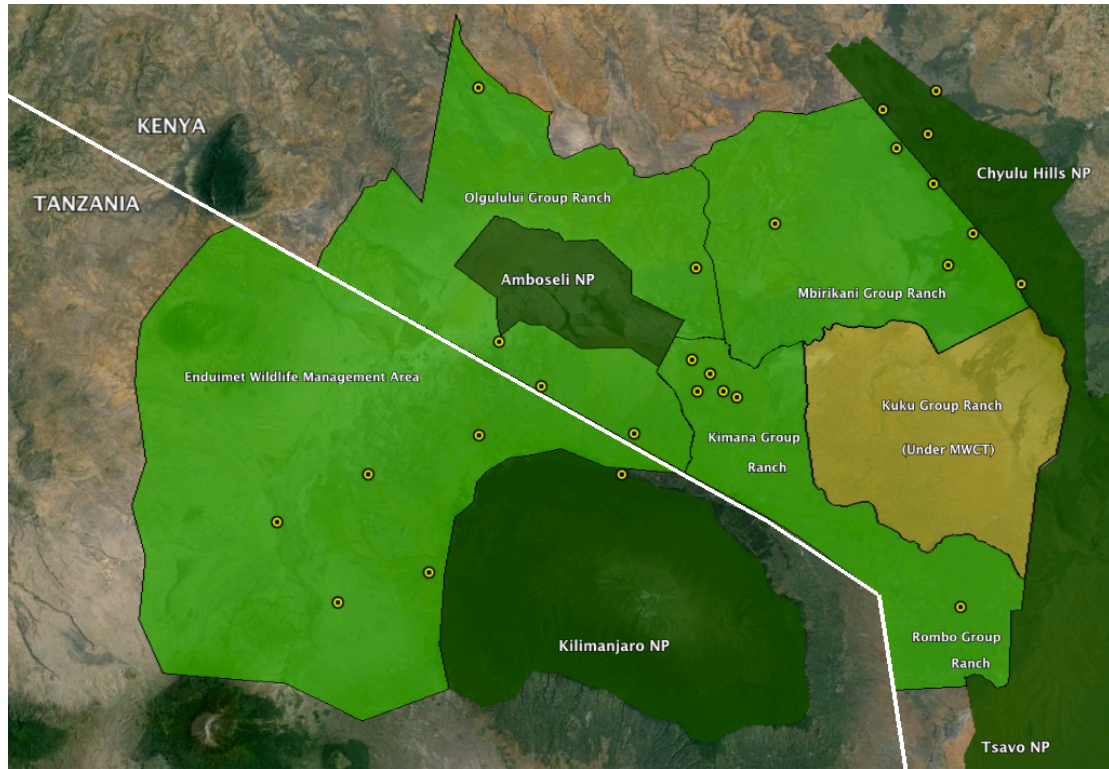
GAME MEAT

Game meat poaching escalated over the reporting period, with 5 suspects arrested in 4 different incidents. This increase in activity is in line with trends observed in previous years. Areas most significantly affected have been Rombo/Taveta, Mangula (east of Namanga) and the eastern border of the CHNP. These areas are on the extreme edge of BLF's AOO. With no permanent presence in the areas we can only assess the level of bushmeat poaching through on the ground informants, with all reports indicating that there is a high level of poaching. Many of these high activity areas will be covered by Big Life's new Rapid Response Unit (RRU), a vehicle based team that will cover large areas on the periphery of our core AOO. The vehicle is in the final stages of customisation, and will hopefully deploy in the next month.

BIG LIFE GAME SCOUTS

Big Life's game scout program continues to grow, a total of 33 (6 in Tanzania) units now make up the 260-man ranger network managed by Big Life, with plans to expand further in the next 2-3 quarters.

On the Kenyan side these units are made up of 21 permanent ranger outposts, 4 mobile units and 2 permanent observation posts (OP's) covering a total of 1,078,000 acres (425,000 hectares).



Map: Big Life areas of operation in both Kenya and Tanzania, coloured lime green. Yellow dots show location of Big Life ranger bases.

MBIRIKANI GROUP RANCH (MGR)/CHYULU HILLS NATIONAL PARK (CHNP) *

The Mbirikani game scouts operate in nine units, separated into 2 semi-distinct zones. Five of these units operate in the northeast of the ranch and are primarily focused on rhino protection and monitoring. The 4 other units on Mbirikani are focused on general security.

Mbirikani Game scouts continue to perform well and have controlled threats over much of area. Most significant incidents involve HWC. Game meat poaching on MGR is low, with no incidents reported. Charcoal and habitat destruction is ongoing in the areas bordering the ranch and Chyulu Hills National Park. The Chyulu Teams have made arrests of several such habitat destruction cases, as well as incidents involving marijuana farming in the park.

*Rhino Units not included, for information pertaining these teams see below rhino program section

OLGULULUI GROUP RANCH (OGR)

Olgulului Big Life operations consist of 5 permanent base camps and a mobile team.

During the reporting period OGR has been severely understrength with 10 men attending KWS Manyani Training camp and 8 attending in-house refresher training. To compensate for this Mobile 3 was disbanded and the personnel deployed as

replacements to the 5 permanent camps. Thus coverage of certain areas of OGR has been insufficient.

The threat on OGR remains low, permanent presence in hotspots is an effective deterrent at present. Mangula area remains an issue with game meat poaching ongoing, both on the Kenyan side of the border and the Tanzanian. The redeployment of Mobile 3 will increase coverage and increase security presence in this area.

HWC in the form of borehole conflict remains a major issue on OGR, with damage occurring as often as daily in some areas. It is due to the scout's reactions to such incidents that not a single elephant (or human) was injured this period on OGR.

KIMANA GROUP RANCH

Kimana Scouts (funded by the African Wildlife Foundation) continue to perform well with no significant incidents recorded over the reporting period. Habitat destruction along the corridor remains an issue, with firewood collection the main threat. All 5 such recorded incidents for this period originate from Kimana Corridor.

ROMBO GROUP RANCH

Rombo team have continued to impress with their arrest rate this quarter. This single unit has an enormous area to cover within which the poaching threat is exceptionally high. While Rombo Unit works well their number is insufficient to effectively reduce poaching and habitat destruction in their area. Another outpost on the ranch is under consideration.

CROSS BORDER OPERATIONS

BLF is in the process of adapting its cross border operations; past methods were a monthly operation of a single team of both TZ and Kenyan rangers, numbering up to 16. Current changes include the decrease in team size, by splitting the team into 3 or 4 units, increasing area of coverage, decreasing predictability and increasing regularity of presence. At the same time Mobile 3 and Rombo Units have increased the total time spent along the border on Cross Border Duties without TZ personnel.

BLF Rangers Achievement April-June 2014		
Crime	Number of Incidents	Suspects Arrested
Charcoal Burning	12	40
Firewood Collection	8	36
Logging	9	23
Game Meat	4	5
Wood Carving	2	5
Community Crimes	2	2
Total	37	111

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

BLF secured funding for the formation of an elite Rapid Response Unit to operate both in response to incidents within the current AOO's while also increasing wildlife and habitat security in area immediately adjoining the current AOO's.

Procurement of the necessary equipment and customisation of the vehicle is in the advanced stages; the launch is expected to take place in August. Plans to arm the unit with firearms are underway.

BLF plans to construct an outpost in western MGR next quarter, following the construction of a cement factory in the area and subsequent influx of people. Fundraising for the outpost is underway.

BLF held the first of 4 in-house training courses, in which 30 untrained scouts went through a rigorous program designed to increase their knowledge and capabilities. The next three programmes are in ascending order in terms of level of training, with the final program consisting of elite rangers to be utilised in armed teams (rhino protection and Rapid Response).

RHINO PROGRAM

One rhino was poached during the reporting period. The rhino, named Nasha, was shot in Kitie area on the eastern side of the Rhino Area. Nasha's calf, Chester was wounded during the attempt. Poachers escaped with the horns. Efforts to locate and treat the 1 year old (approximate age) are underway following several attempts over the last two weeks of June.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

RHINO IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM

Data collection and analysis as part of the rhino identification program has been ongoing. During the reporting period 1 more adult rhino has been identified.

*Security of these rhino prevents the release of any more details.

NEW WATERHOLE AND PIPELINE

The construction of a pipeline to feed a new waterhole in the centre of the rhino area was completed on the 1st April while construction of the accompanying observation post was completed in May.

This waterhole will decrease the threat to the rhino population by providing water at a greater distance from community land. It is hoped that rhinos will frequent this area further from communities, making them more difficult for poachers to access,

and creating a longer distance over which to intercept poachers. Over the past year, 5 rhino's have died in this area bordering the community.

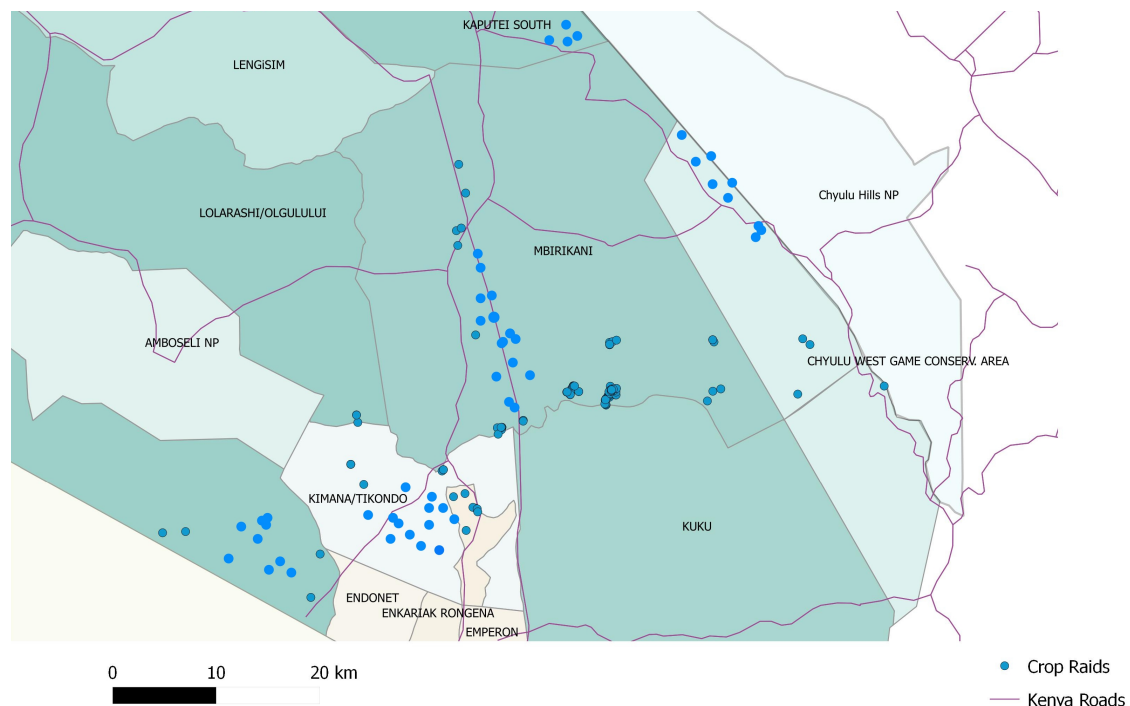
Following the poaching of Nasha, BLF agreed to take over KWS's camp in the north west of CHNP in order to facilitate an increase in armed KWS personnel in Kitie area to the east of the park.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) takes two primary forms across the Big Life area of operation. One type of HWC is raiding of crops by wildlife, largely elephants. Another form of HWC occurs when predators kill local pastoralists' livestock. Both these forms of HWC can incite deadly retaliatory attacks by the affected community.

CROP-RAIDING

Crop raiding has been very high over the reporting period, typical to historical seasonal fluctuations.



Map: Locations of crop raids from May-June 2014 in Mbirikani, Kimana and Olgulului Group Ranches. This map is an underrepresentation of the true number of crop raiding incidents, as not all incidents are reported and/or recorded.

Over the reporting period a total of 127 incidents of crop raiding were recorded, of which 65 occurred in Inchalai area (southern MGR). Crop raiding in western Kilimanjaro, Rombo and Eastern Chyulu's has also reportedly been high, however no official records exist for those areas.

DEPREDATION

Depredation has consistently raised the threat to wildlife security in several areas. There were eight recorded occasions when attempts were made to retaliate against lions following depredation events. Seven of the 8 attempts were successfully halted by a combination of BLF, Lion Guardians and KWS. Olgulului group ranch has been the most severely affected. The one unsuccessful intervention resulted in one lion being speared on MGR. In this case the morans (young male warriors) responsible were arrested and subsequently released because community payment of the fines was negotiated.

In addition to the above, rangers successfully stopped 4 lion hunts in the Kaputei area and one cheetah hunt in Kimana.

Areas consistently affected by lion predation are South Amboseli, North Amboseli, Osewan area (all in Olgulului group ranch) and Merueshi group ranch.

*Depredation will be covered more extensively under PCF.

PREDATOR PROTECTION PROGRAM

Big Life protects all the major predators of the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem through an innovative program comprised of two main elements. The first is a form of compensation scheme, aimed at reducing the motivation for retaliatory killing of predators following livestock depredation. The scheme pays people a portion of the value of their livestock lost to predators, on condition that no predators are killed in retaliation. BLF staff verifies all depredations, and penalties apply for poor husbandry. The community provides 30% of the total compensation amount, and there are severe fines if any predators are killed on the areas covered by the scheme.

The second part of our strategy is focused on the young warriors (morans) of the Maasai community, and is known as the Moran Education Initiative program. In Maasai culture, lion killing has traditionally been an important part of becoming a man. Through the creation of the Maasai Olympics, a culturally relevant sporting event for warriors across the ecosystem, we intend to give young men an alternative avenue through which to demonstrate physical prowess. The lead-up to the event is combined with a targeted education program aimed at changing attitudes and behaviour to wildlife and conservation.

PREDATOR COMPENSATION FUND

MBIRIKANI GROUP RANCH

The payouts for MGR, for claims made in March/April, was held on 5th of May. A total of KSh 393,300 (approx. US\$4630) was paid, and the next payout is scheduled to take place in July.

One Lion was killed in the reporting period, a young male killed after killing a cow in Orngosua area on MGR. BL rangers reacted and apprehended the 4 culprits. After extended negotiations between KWS and the community the community agreed that the families of the offending warriors would pay the fine so that the zone would not forfeit their compensation payments.

Predator	Cattle	Shoats	Donkeys	Total
Cheetahs	3	39	0	42
Leopards	0	14	0	14
Hyenas	20	86	1	107
Jackals	0	28	0	28
Lions	3	9	2	14
Elephants	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	27	176	3	206

Table: Number of livestock reported killed by each predator on MGR in the quarter.

Mbirikani experienced relatively low predation levels over the reporting period, hyena being the main culprit. Lion predation remained low. Cheetah predation remains relatively high, although the majority of incidents can be attributed to a single male believed to be old and unable to hunt wildlife effectively.

OLGULULUI GROUP RANCH

OGR claims made within the period March to April 2014 were paid on the 4th of June. A total of KSh 662,700 (approx. US\$7800) was paid.

Members of Olgulului zone (a zone within OGR) forfeited predation claims for March and April 2014 in order to pay the penalty of KSh 140,000 resulting from the poisoning of a sub adult lion in February 2014.



Photo: Queues at the OGR payout in May

Depredation incidences on Olgulului have remained low and constant over the reporting period with hyenas killing most of the livestock, followed by cheetah, jackals and lions respectively. A bigger percentage of livestock killed was as a result of poor husbandry by the owners, most of them being the young ones that were left unattended out in the field.

Predator	Cattle	Shoats	Donkeys	Total
Cheetahs	4	35	0	39
Leopards	1	4	0	5
Hyenas	14	142	9	165
Jackals	0	24	0	24
Lions	11	25	2	38
Elephant	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	30	230	11	271

Table: Number of livestock reported killed by each predator on OGR over the reporting period.

MENYE-LAYIOK AND MAASAI OLYMPICS

We are still continuing with fundraising efforts for Maasai Olympics. Unfortunately the lack of funds has seen a change in the plans, with prizes for team selections struck out and number of officials, who oversee the team selections, cut down drastically from 7 to 2.



Photo: Maasai Warriors attend a Maasai Olympics team selection exercise on MGR, in April, 2014

The team selection process has changed, with prizes no longer awarded for this first level of competition, where competitors compete for places in their ranch teams. Team selection meetings have been held in three out of four manyattas (traditional collection of warrior homesteads), in which over 1,278 people were reached. The regionals' competitions are on track as scheduled for the second week of August, 2014. The finals, which involve the teams from each group ranch, are still scheduled for the 13th December 2014.

The team selection meetings have continued to serve the role of engaging the warriors, and bringing them together for discussion on the importance of conservation and the benefits it is bringing to local communities. This engagement of the warriors and local communities gives them a sense of ownership of the program.

We have developed a website showcasing the Maasai Olympics event. Please go to www.maasaiolympics.com for more information.

EDUCATION

Community education is critical for the long-term success of any conservation initiatives. How will people ever make the right choices if they don't understand the consequences? As part of our drive to support general education and upliftment in the area, Big Life sponsors teachers and students. We also undertake to provide conservation education in schools in the ecosystem; this through school visits by members of the Big Life team. Up to this point the focus of our education program has been on MGR.

BLF sponsored students increased by 8% in the period under review, and we currently sponsor 109 children. 5% of the increase is for secondary school sponsorships, while 3% are for primary school and came from the Highland School group who visited from the 18th to 20th June, 2014. The new sponsorships were split exactly 50/50 between boys and girls.

We are immensely grateful to our new sponsors who have thrown a line to these students, who would otherwise have dropped out of school, or not been able to start at all.

The visit by Highland School in Virginia USA went very well, with a traditional Maasai dance reception at Enkijape Primary School, as well as at Inkoisuk primary School. A number of the Highland visitors taught classes on birds, geography and some fun with American dance. Over 100 trees were planted by the Green Team Club at Enkijape. The Green Team Club recited a poem on conservation and environment as the tree planting exercise, kicked off in honour and memory of Finley Broaddus (Highland School student), who was a big supporter of environmental issues and who died of cancer in June 2014.



Photo: Enkijape School students with visiting Highland School

The Highland School group, led by Alice Laimbeer, brought a lot of school supplies, and sponsors 3 teachers at Enkijape School, as well as sponsoring the top boy and girl students from Enkijape. This program now grown to cover 20 students sponsored through high school since 2004. These students are among our conservation ambassadors out there in the community.

Through Alice Laimbeer, Richard Kasino -- the top student from Inkoisuk School (with 381 marks out of 500) in the 2013 KCPE (Kenya Certificate of Primary Education) got a full scholarship to high school.

There are problems with teachers' housing at Inkoisuk School; the government has not built a single teachers' house, and there is no rental housing near the school. Day scholars in both Enkijape and Inkoisuk go without lunch, as the students are far from school (some having to walk more than 4 kilometres each way). Students cannot learn on an empty stomach and help is sorely needed in setting up a lunch program.

There are plans to strengthen engagement with students and faculty in the schools supported by BLF, by more frequent visits by personnel from BLF. Environmental and drama clubs are the focal points in educating students on conservation topics, and stimulating this interest through activities held throughout the year. There are also plans to get Orbili School adopted by Highland School.

Not a single one of the schools supported by BLF has a library, and support is badly needed in nurturing a reading culture through setting up of libraries in the schools. The number of students in the local community in need of financial assistance has grown phenomenally, and there plans to seek out more donors, as well as rolling out the education program in OGR.