



K9 Unit Summary Report Fundraising



January–June, 2017

Introduction

The Anti-Poaching team is an integral part of Honeyguide's goal to preserve wildlife. The Dog Tracking unit was implemented to further supplement the Anti-Poaching team's capabilities. It was Started in 2011 in Enduimet WMA, and since then the unit has had 95% success rate in tracking and apprehending suspected poachers. The poaching incidents have had discernible decrease in Tarangire and Serengeti ecosystem. The unit has managed to sleuth more than 67 incidents and send more than 70 poachers to prison since it was established. The unit is often called up on by other wildlife management agencies such as TANAPA and the local Police. "Our goal," said Mr. Damian (Executive Director), "Is to totally eradicate the poaching of Elephants in the Northern Rangeland community based conservation and nearby conservancies."

There are four dog handlers and two tracking dogs in Serengeti which is based in Fort Ikoma; Emmanuel Isaac and Jamal Omari. Their dogs are Jerry and Chester. The Serengeti dog unit operates in VIP/Grumeti Game Reserve, Ikona WMA and the Serengeti NP itself.

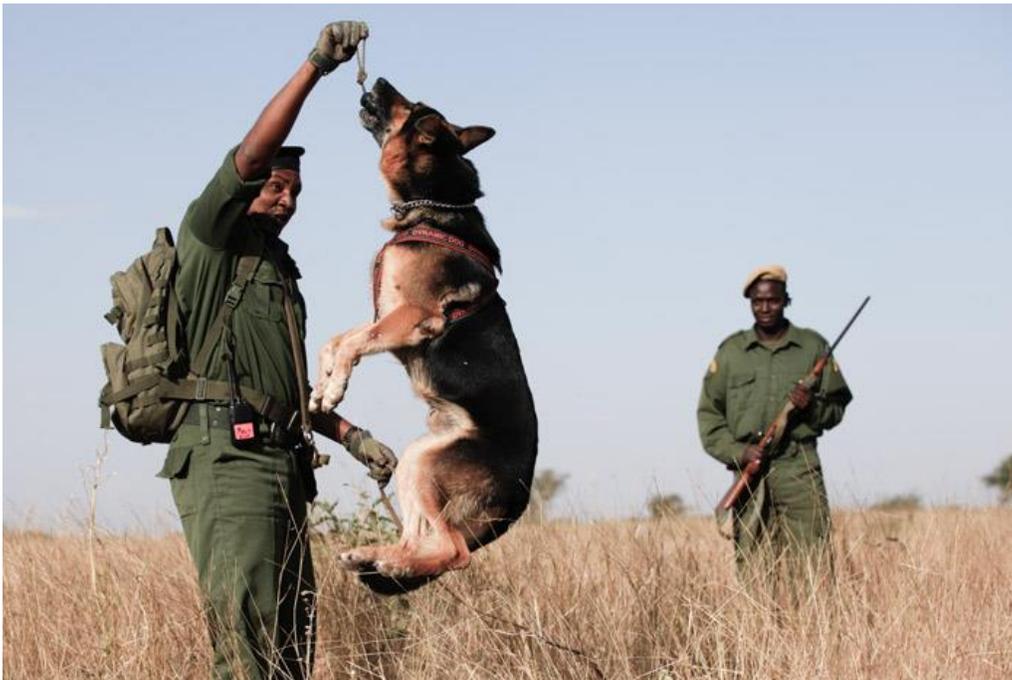


Figure1: Rocky playing with Kayongo

In Manyara there are three dog handlers and two tracking dogs; SGT Kayongo kalasinga, and Saitabau Londasati. The tracking dogs are Rocky and Roztaz. They operate in Tarangire / Manyara ecosystem which includes the Tarangire National Park, Lake Manyara National Park, Burunge WMA, Randilen WMA, Manyara Ranch and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority.

The Tracking Unit has proved to be an essential part of our anti-poaching policy. Not only has it been successful in shutting down a lot of poaching and drastically reducing the number of elephants poached, the stories of their tracking capabilities have served as a deterrent to would be poachers.

“Our vision going forward is to eradicate all form of poaching in the areas the Tracking Units patrol. We plan on educating the community about the importance of sharing information about poachers” say SGT Kayongo Kalasinga

Dog unit operations

The units have proved invaluable in providing reliable information that has led to the arrest of ivory poachers. The team has increased patrol areas of the Tarangire Ecosystem such as around Lake Manyara, Mto wa Mbu and Manyara Ranch in Manyara. There was no elephant poaching in 2016 which we could say poachers are scared they will be tracked. However, results yield is as listed below:

Manyara Tracking Dog patrols Jan-June 2017

The unit was trained on how to use smart applications in order to record the dog’s tracking activities and incidents that they get involved in. This helps in monitoring the dog’s strengths and weaknesses that lead to better training.

In May the Manyara K9 unit did a training to Randilen Wildlife management area lodges and camps on how to handle a crime scene. They trained in Treetops lodge, Eco-science and Nimali. This was vital to help arrest the thieves who attempt to steal in the lodges.

On 30th/07/ 2017 Manyara tracking dogs were called for an investigation of theft that happened in Ecoscience lodge in Randilen WMA. The tracking unit managed to arrest 3 thieves with a camera, first aid kit and passports.

In May the dog unit was used to help to identify the cause of the fire in Lowassa secondary school which got burned. Unfortunately, it didn’t go any further because evidence was tampered.

Another theft incident which happened at Mgungani lodge (Lilian camp) in Mto wa mbu on 09/04/2017 was reported by OCS Mto wa Mbu police station for tracking dog help. The thieves were not caught but the dog led to seizure of money stolen and two cameras that belong to tourists.

On 27/08/2017 at JKT the tracking unit were called for help by the Manyara anti-poaching unit of ivory hidden. The tracking dogs arrived but they didn’t manage to track the poachers.

Medication

Upkeep and maintaining of the Tracking Unit is expensive to maintain. They are however essential in not only helping arrest the poachers, but also serve as a deterrent to would-be poachers.

In the six-month course, the tracking dogs made four prescription visits: For normal checkups and for cure. The illness of Rozdas led to right front leg surgery done. He recovered quickly and went back to normal exercise. Rocky the eldest also had treatment on his eyes because of dust he picked up during training.



Figure 2: Honeyguide Dog handler on daily patrols

Serengeti Tracking dogs daily operation finds:

On 17/01/2017 the Tracking Unit received word of gunfire from the Machochwe community in Northern Serengeti. An emergency unit was sent to investigate and while they rushed to the scene, an elephant had already been killed but the poachers had not been able to take out the tusks yet. With the help of the Tracking Unit and the keen senses of the dogs, the investigation of the dead elephant led to the arrest of two poachers and the recovery of one AK-47 rifle coupled with 420 bullets. The tusks were detached from the dead elephant and sent to KDU for legal procedures.

25th/01/2017 The dog handlers were informed by the patrol unit of a poaching incident that had taken place in the morning. They paused the exercises that are usually carried out in the morning and rushed to the scene. The poachers were not at the scene, but thanks to Jerry, he was able to follow their scent that led to the arrest of two poachers, two tusks and an AK-47.

Again on 25th January the unit receive information of poaching incident from patrol team at around 11am when dogs were on daily exercise. They immediately paused the exercise to arrive at the reported scene. The intelligence team did their best and successfully arrested three poachers who were armed with AK47 rifles and two Elephant tusks. This activity was made simple by the help of Jerry.

16th February on normal patrol, Jerry identified footprints of a poacher. This trail led to a series of barbed wire snares. In one of the snares, a male buffalo was entrapped. The Tracking Unit untangled the buffalo and demolished the rest of the barbed wires. After dealing with the traps, the Tracking Unit, led by Jerry embarked on the trail of the poacher responsible for setting the traps. For nine hours, they tracked his footprints and would have caught up with him but for heavy rains that destroyed the footprints and wiped the smells of the jungle clean.

Conclusion

Generally, it is the rangers who call for the assistance of the dog unit once they are aware of an incident. The tracking unit's success on the field has enabled more collaboration between Honeyguide and other NGOs as well as joined sting operations with TANAPA as well as new ideas to spring up on curbing poaching. It is very encouraging to observe the impact of the good collaboration.

Additional photos



Figure 3: Wires used to trap the Buffalo



Figure 4 Honeyguide's 'K9' unit in ant-poaching operation.