



TRACKING TECHNOLOGY DEPLOYED TO HELP KEEP GIANT TUSKER FROM CROPS

NAIROBI, SEPTEMBER 16TH, 2016:

One of Kenya's largest tuskers has been fitted with a GPS tracking collar to allow Kenya Wildlife Service and their non-governmental partners to prevent him from raiding the farms surrounding Amboseli National Park.

Known as Tim, the iconic bull elephant has gained international fame on account of his tusks, but local notoriety because of his habit of entering farms in the Kimana area to feed on crops. The tracking collar gives rangers on the ground the ability to track the tusker's movements and deploy into farmland areas when he approaches and chase him from the area using a variety of deterrents.



"We are committed to exploring effective methods to keep our communities safe while securing all of our elephants," said Kitili Mbathi, Director General of KWS, who took part in the operation.

The 47 year-old bull has been monitored by the Amboseli Trust for Elephants since he was born in December 1969 to a cow named Trista. His grandmother was the matriarch Teresia, leader of Amboseli's TD family. After the operation to fit his tracking collar, Tim began walking towards the Trust's research centre, and spent a morning resting there.

"It will be wonderful to see his life in even finer detail now that his every move is being followed," said Cynthia Moss, Founder of the Amboseli Trust for Elephants.

The tracking system developed and donated by Save the Elephants will allow rangers from KWS and Big Life to monitor his movements using mobile devices and a VHF tracking antenna. When Tim crosses a virtual line near farmland, an alert will also be sent to warn them to prepare for his arrival. The high-tech GPS tracking collar was made by Kenyan firm Savannah Tracking.



"Tim's new collar should give rangers a crucial advantage in preventing conflict between farmers and this iconic elephant, while also helping us to understand how to plan landscapes to keep our two species apart," said Iain Douglas-Hamilton, founder of Save the Elephants.

KWS and Big Life rangers will be on call 24 hours a day to respond. "Despite being injured twice while raiding farms, Tim seems unable to resist the temptation of ripe tomatoes. Now with a collar that shows us his location at any time, our problem animal control teams will be able to be one step ahead of him and keep him away from farms. Another great example of technology enabling conservation," said Big Life Director Richard Bonham.

WildlifeDirect raised the funds that will support the KWS and Big Life Foundation ground teams.

"To collar a majestic wild animal so that he can live out his life in peace and safety is an unnatural act. To build fences where farms have been allowed to encroach on historic migration paths in order to protect the lives of both settlers and animals - those, too, are unnatural acts. But if that's what it takes to protect our wildlife, I support and encourage all of it," said WildlifeDirect's Board Director Scott Asen.

About KWS – www.kws.org

About Big Life – www.biglife.org

About WildlifeDirect – www.wildlifedirect.org

About Amboseli Trust for Elephants – www.elephanttrust.org

About Save the Elephants – www.savetheelephants.org

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