



ELEPHANT COLLARING IN TSAVO NATIONAL PARK AND TAITA TAVETA RANCHES

Twenty elephants in the Tsavo National Park and Taita Taveta ranches were fitted with advanced satellite radio tracking collars (*Jan 29 – Feb 4, 2018*) in an joint operation initiated by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) with Save the Elephants (STE) and the Tsavo Trust providing technical and logistical support.

During the five-day expedition, 10 bulls and 10 females were fitted with advanced Savannah Tracking satellite radio tracking collars. The operation covered some 1,290 kilometres and involved 25 personnel, including two KWS wildlife veterinarians, four ground vehicles, two airplanes and a KWS helicopter.

The Tsavo ecosystem is home to over 12,000 elephants which is the largest elephant population in Kenya. Tracking elephant movements in the Tsavo Conservation Area helps to gather valuable insights into why elephants go where they go, and what space they need. This in turn assists with understanding the behaviour of elephants and coming up with new strategies for farmers and communities to better manage human-elephant conflict. It also provides scientific insight into how elephants are adapting to the new 483km Standard Gauge Railway (SGR).

The team managed to collar one particular elephant which amazed researchers by crossing the SGR twice only two days after he was collared. The elephant's recorded movements will provide valuable data to assist KWS and local stakeholders in better protecting farms in the area and provide enhanced understanding of connectivity for wildlife in the Tsavo Ecosystem, which will in turn influence future infrastructural planning.

In a nod to Hong Kong's historic decision to close down its ivory market, announced during the Tsavo collaring operation, a matriarch elephant was named EQ after Hong Kong MP Elizabeth Quat, popularly known as EQ, who helped lead the people and government of Hong Kong to understand the impacts of ivory trade and to take action against it.

The Tsavo collaring operation, which followed a similar expedition in the Tsavo Ecosystem in 2016 to understand movements of elephants across the SGR railway, was funded by The Kenya Wildlife Service, Save the Elephants, Disney's Reverse the Decline Fund, and Tsavo Trust.

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About the Kenya Wildlife Service

KWS is a state corporation with the mandate, run by a Board of Trustees, to conserve and manage wildlife in Kenya, and to enforce related laws and regulations. KWS undertakes conservation and management of wildlife resources across all protected areas systems in collaboration with stakeholders. It is our goal to work with others to conserve, protect and sustainably manage wildlife resources, its habitats, and provide a wide range of public uses in collaboration with stakeholders for posterity. The Kenya Wildlife Service continues to strengthen the approach of science- driven wildlife conservation and management. These

approaches include *inter alia* protecting and ensuring survival of particular endangered species and ensuring sustainable management of wildlife and their habitats for posterity

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