

## PRESS RELEASE

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#### RABIES INFECTED HYENAS-KAJIADO AND KIAMBU COUNTIES

**NAIROBI, February 15th, 2024:** Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) continues to work closely with communities to ensure that wildlife conservation promotes livelihoods, and at the same time addresses human-wildlife conflict.

In the recent past, the Service has received reports of hyenas attacking people in parts of Kiambu County (Juja area) and Kajiado County (Ongata Rongai, Tuala and Eselenkei areas).

In an effort to address the situation, KWS dispatched a team from its Veterinary and Capture Services assisted by Problem Animal Management Unit to capture hyenas that had inhabited caves within Juja area.

A report of a hyena having attacked a student of Multimedia University at Maasai Lodge area of Rongai on February 5, 2024 was responded to and samples collected from the hyena were taken to the National Veterinary Reference Laboratories (NVRL), Kabete for rabies test. The test results from this case was confirmed to be positive for rabies on February 8, 2024.

In another case, a report was received of a hyena having bitten two people on Saturday February 10, 2024 at Eselenkei in Kajiado County. Samples were collected from the hyena and delivered to NVRL, Kabete for testing. The test results confirming the case to be positive for rabies were received on February 13, 2024.

On Sunday February 11, 2024, a report was received from a resident of Kalimoni Location in Juja that a hyena had strayed into his compound. The hyena was later captured and samples sent to NVRL, Kabete for testing. The test results confirming the case to be positive for rabies were received on February 13, 2024.

Confirmation of rabies in the hyenas explains the unusual aggressive behaviour towards people that was witnessed in Juja and Kajiado. The general public in the affected localities in particular are advised to exercise caution as they go about their daily activities as the necessary measures are put in place to manage the situation

The role of wildlife in the spread and maintenance of the rabies virus has not been documented. Studies have showed that domestic dogs transmit up to 98% of human rabies in East Africa. This means that the best approach to control the spread of rabies is by mass vaccination of dogs that will lead to reduction in spill over to human beings and wildlife. The 'Strategic Plan for the Elimination of Human Rabies in Kenya 2014-2030' aims at sustained annual mass dog vaccination for at least 3 consecutive years in an attempt to cover about 70% of the dog population so as to eliminate rabies in the country.

KWS is working closely with the Directorate of Veterinary Services, County Governments of Kajiado and Kiambu to implement control measures that will mainly involve mass vaccination of dogs in the affected areas. The mass vaccination commenced today Thursday, February 15, 2024 in Ongata Rongai Division of Kajiado North Sub-County and Loosirkon division in Kajiado East Sub-County. KWS is appealing to area residents to cooperate by availing their dogs for vaccination, which is free of charge.

## **CORPORATE COMMUNICATION**