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June 18, 2019

KWS AIRWING PILOTS RECEIVE SPECIAL TRAINING FROM USA

Hammond Northshore Regional Airport based in USA hosted Kenya Wildlife Service Airwing pilots for the special training of Gyrocopters for a total period of one month.

Seven pilots from KWS received specialized training in Hammond and got familiar with flying Gyrocopter which are intended to support wildlife management across the country.

Two engineers and one Kenya Civil Aviation (KCA) Inspector are also undertaking training in Maryland on maintenance of Gyrocopters covered by the grant.

The training conducted by Stephen Rastanis, brought pilots from Kenya to Hammond and Elizabeth City State for specialized training.

A gyrocopter is a rotary-wing aircraft that uses a propeller and a freely rotating rotor for lift.

A project started when the North Carolina University received more than \$900,000 grant in 2015 from the Office of Justice Programs' National Institute of Justice to introduce affordable aviation solutions to support Kenya Wildlife Service in its conservation agenda.

Needs-assessment team visited all wildlife areas in Kenya back in 2016, talked to KWS pilots and staff. They arrived at Gyrocopter as the ideal, cost-effective, practical and safe to carry out surveillance across all parks and reserves.

"Pilots track poaching, illegal logging, fires and other threats to wildlife, provide intelligence to rangers on the ground, act as deterrent and help mitigate any undue occurring before they happen," explained Chief Pilot John Munyori from KWS Airwing.

Rhinos and elephants seen as most vulnerable due to their prized horns, KWS only manages to cover 8% of the whole landmass covering 30000 nautical miles per month across all conservation areas in the country.

Kenya Wildlife Service is set to receive 5 Gyrocopters after the project. Rastanis the chief trainer confirmed his trip to Kenya in September to provide more training.

“The aircraft is convenient for surveillance, since they have open cockpits, proving wide visibility. The planes can be stopped mid-air and can be landed in about 15 feet, this makes the aircraft perfect for law enforcement as it has worked in many countries across the world,’ said .

Hammond City Mayor Thomas McDermott’s Jr. visited the training camps and welcomed the pilots and shared on the importance of acquiring new skills especially in the Aviation industry

The trainees expressed a sigh of satisfaction from all training sessions, experience and paid a visit to Tangipahoa African American Heritage Museum in New Orleans Louisiana, USA to learn African American culture and teachings.

“We have had a lot of experiences and we have been imparted with additional skills which I believe is a plus in improving efficiency and effectiveness in wildlife management in our country,” admitted Head of KWS Airwing Michael Nicholson.

For more information, please contact us

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