

# NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2017

HIROLA CONSERVATION PROGRAMME | [www.hirolaconservation.org](http://www.hirolaconservation.org)



## Anti-poaching operations within the hirola's geographic range yield success!



Kudos to our **wildlife warrior award winner**, Ali Hassan as he does it again. His efforts to help curb the rampant wildlife poaching in the area resulted in the prosecution of one of the most notorious bush meat dealers within the hirola's geographic range. The culprit was arraigned in court late this month and will serve a one-year jail term for his crimes. Ali Hassan was the key witness who appeared in court to ensure the culprit was put behind bars. Thanks to the efforts of our dedicated rangers, informers and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) patrol team in Bura who helped this to be a success.



This month also saw a successful collaboration between the KWS rangers and our scouts conducting joint anti-poaching operations. These impromptu operations resulted in the arrest of three poachers with one already in prison serving a one-year term having been caught red handed with bush meat (bushbuck). Further, the KWS team stationed in Masalani, a local town near Ishaqbini, has been working with our team to help flush out

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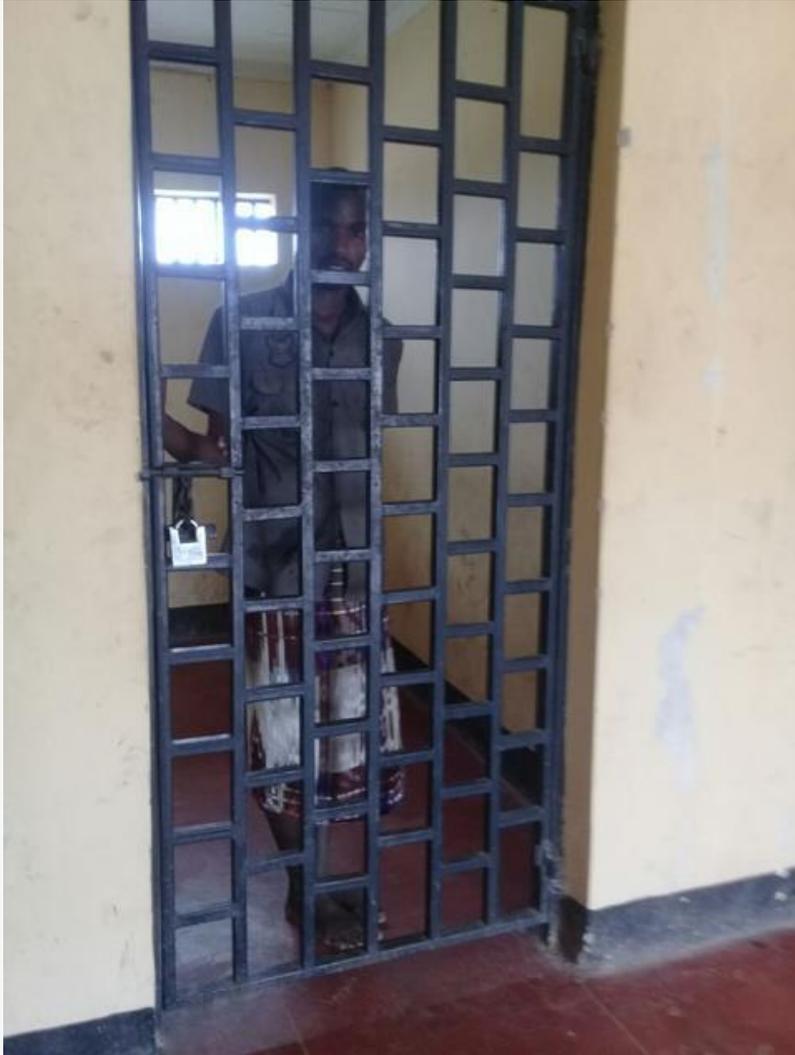
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illegal grazers found invading the conservancies' core areas (areas where livestock grazing is not allowed). These operations have seen over 24 illegal livestock grazers being arrested and prosecuted for their crimes. These efforts complemented by our ranger patrols have proven successful because communities have been reporting suspicious activities in the area. In fact, the sale of bush meat in the villages is declining within the hirola's geographic range. We must laud the KWS for their continued collaborations and efforts to help in curbing poaching in the area.



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## General updates from the conservancies

The ongoing dry spell continues to take a toll on both wildlife and livestock in the conservancies as pastoralists invade protected areas in search of better pasture and water. The short rains experienced late last year did not have much of an impact on the vegetation especially the grasses in Bura east, Sangailu, Gababa and Ishaqbini conservancies. The understory vegetation that sprouted just after the rains is already drying up and insufficient to sustain both livestock and wildlife. This has subsequently resulted in pastoralists invading the protected areas in the hirola's geographic range including Bura east, Ishaqbini, Sangailu and Gababa.



### Ishaqbini Community Conservancy

Desperate pastoralists have invaded the core area of Ishaqbini in search of better grass and water for their large livestock herds. Ishaqbini conservancy has been the worst hit with over 1000 herds of cattle traversing the conservancy as the rangers try to keep them away. The herders have been driving the herds into the conservancy while trying to evade the rangers patrolling the conservancy. Most of the herds have been found to encroach deep into the conservancy while some of the herds have been sighted in the core area (an area apparently out of bounds to livestock, according to the grazing management in the conservancy). These incursions have resulted to over 24 herders being arrested and fined. Some of them have been fined heavily in order to discourage them to use the core area. Despite this, all hirola groups in the conservancy and the sanctuary are doing well. We did not record any mortalities for hirola both in the sanctuary and the conservancy. However, there was a single poaching incident in which a lesser kudu male was killed by poachers along the western edge of the Ishaqbini Conservancy.



## Bura East Conservancy

The situation is no different in Bura east and the pastoralists are already on the move again as they make futile forays in search of pasture and water for their livestock herds. Their stops inside the conservancy have largely been reported by our rangers, resulting in competition of pasture by both wildlife and livestock. Numerous wildlife sightings have been reported along the banks of Tana river as wildlife visit the river for a drink. This situation is likely to result in human wildlife conflict along the river banks. The rangers in Bura east conservancy patrolled 21 clusters of their daily patrol routes this month, covering over 2534 km<sup>2</sup>. The two teams managed to clock 430 hours during their routine patrols. They collected eight (8) snare wires in the bushes that were meant to trap wildlife, plus six pitfall traps especially for giraffes and other large ungulates. Other wildlife threats such as charcoal burning activities (6) were also documented during the patrols. Wildlife sightings in Bura east included giraffes (44), Gerenuks (18), Grevy's zebra (14), grant gazelles (15) lesser kudu (29), bush buck (4), Buffaloes (4), common zebras (10) and dikdiks (24). These are in addition to a rich list of avian and herpetofauna of this vast conservancy.



## Sangailu Conservancy

Reports from our scout stationed at Sangailu conservancy, paints a picture of a similar scenario but with numerous sightings of wildlife in the nearby forest in Sangailu conservancy and close to the villages and water holes. But reports of human wildlife conflict especially of buffaloes spending their time lurking around villages is common. Actually, recently an incident of a buffalo attacking a boy in the village was reported. Our scout in Sangailu also reported sightings of hirola herds (n=14) hanging out with topi (8) and unknown number of giraffes, gerenuks (4), warthogs and baboons at the waterholes.



Left Pic: Our sangailu head ranger Aden Abdullahi comforts the boy injured by a buffalo.

Right Pic: A herd of topi spotted in the conservancy.

## Hirola rangers training and monitoring manual underway



As a direct output of the ranger's trainings we have been doing, we are compiling the hirola rangers training materials into a manual for future use. This manual will be a comprehensive guide specific to hirola and covers wide topics including physical training, hirola and other wildlife monitoring, survival skills, maps and map reading, radio communication and signals, first aid and hygiene, community education and outreach, threat mitigations and conflict resolutions, administration (monitoring personnel including scout meetings), ethics and anti-corruption, Kenya wildlife laws and policy and finally reports and report writing. We are hoping to publish this manual and distribute it for free by end of 2017 to conservancies, government officials and law enforcers for future trainings. Please contact us if you are interested in either reviewing or contributing to this manual in anyway.

Hirola Conservation Programme (HCP)

[www.hirolaconservation.org](http://www.hirolaconservation.org) | [hcp@hirolaconservation.org](mailto:hcp@hirolaconservation.org)

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