



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report (due 31st October 2020)

Project reference	IWT070
Project title	Saving lions by reducing trafficking in their parts
Country(ies)	Mozambique and South Africa
Lead organisation	Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)
Partners(s)	Peace Parks Foundation, Freeland, Black Mambas, National Administration of Conservation Areas (ANAC), Mozambique Customs, and South African National Parks
Project leader	Dr David Mills
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	April 2020–September 2020 HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	Website: www.ewt.org.za Instagram: @endangeredwildlifetrust Facebook: @EndangeredWildlifeTrust Twitter: @TheEWT

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to the end September).

Output 1. By December of Year 3, lion poaching for parts has been reduced by >80% in the Mozambican GLTP, resulting in a measurable increase in wild lion abundance and range

Our ability to operate in Mozambique was hindered by COVID and the resulting shutdown of government offices. We received our permit from ANAC on 18 September 2020 (Appendix 1). This will allow us to fully operate in Limpopo National Park (LNP) once borders open on 1 October.

Activity 1.2. Provide refresher training for existing rangers including the existing Lion Protection Unit teams in Year 1. Refresher Training shall be undertaken over 10 days and shall include, conservation training (5 days), legal arrest procedures (2 days) and SMART (3 days).

Due to COVID related travel restrictions, it was not possible to provide refresher training to rangers. This will be scheduled once all borders are reopened.

Activity 1.4. Deploy and manage all three Lion Protection Units (LPUs) known important lion areas

During COVID lockdown, the Forward Operating Base (FOB) was required to operate at 50% capacity. Since no Lions were collared, it was not possible to locate important Lion areas. The LPU were therefore deployed with regular anti-poaching patrols. They continued to record Lion sign during these patrols.

Activity 1.5. Document changes in earnings and clarify number of dependents of employed APU rangers.

Due to COVID restrictions, we were not able to travel to LNP to interview Anti-poaching Unit (APU) rangers.

Activity 1.9. Lion Protection Units conduct patrols; patrols are 3–5 days in length and cover a minimum of 10 km per day in important lion areas.

LPU were deployed as regular APUs with varying patrol routes and durations.

Activity 1.10. Lion Protection Units find, record, and remove or destroy all snares, traps and poison from important lion areas.

The LPU and APUs removed 13 snares during their patrols. On 8 July, LPU team Lima 1 and APU team R3 discovered a poisoned Kudu carcass northwest of Ngwenya. Two vultures had fed on the Kudu and died. They secured the area and burned the carcass.

In an unrelated incident, also on 8 July, the Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) team reported two cattle killed by Lions near Bingo village. Poachers, suspected to be the cattle owner or herdsman, poisoned part of a carcass. Two vultures died before the area was discovered and secured by the HWC team.

A Kudu carcass that had been dead for approximately two months was discovered on 16–17 July. Five vulture carcasses of approximately the same age were found nearby. The area was secured.

On 16 August, APU R1 and LPU Lima 2 discovered a bottle suspected to be poison northeast of Madzudze. It was recovered and destroyed.

Activity 1.11. Lion Protection Units arrest suspected poachers, and hand over suspects to police with all necessary documents to support a prosecution.

The LPU encountered 9 suspected poachers. One jumped the fence from Kruger National Park (KNP) into LNP. The FOB was alerted to the incursion by KNP rangers. The other suspects were heading from LNP toward KNP. KNP rangers were alerted and one suspect was arrested with snares and meat in his possession near Parfuri by APU team R4. The suspect will be tried in the Chicalacuala District court and is currently awaiting trial/possible

bail application. The Investigation Unit (UIE) is closely monitoring the case.

Activity 1.12. Lion Protection Units record all patrol data and poaching data in SMART and debrief with APU leader and SMART technician daily.

The LPUs have been deployed with an APU team for paired patrols. All data is recorded in SMART and normal pre-patrol briefing and post-patrol debriefing procedures have been followed.

Lion sign in LNP was encountered infrequently, which aligns with evidence of frequent targeted Lion poaching. The spoor of 5 Lions was located north of the Mala Mala River, the spoor of 2 Lions was recorded near Nkwankande. And the spoor of 2 or more Lions were discovered northeast of Vespa Camp. They also recorded 6 animals killed by Lions in addition to the cattle, including Buffalo, Kudu, Impala, and Waterbuck. All of this data was recorded in the SMART database.

Activity 1.13. Conduct regular follow ups on legal proceedings to evaluate prosecution success resulting from our arrests.

Due to COVID related government closures, there is a backlog of cases and there was no significant progress on court cases.

Activity 1.14. Conduct call -up and spoor surveys along the border between Kruger and Limpopo National Parks in order to identify potential prides for collaring.

Since we were not able to cross the border into LNP, we were not able to conduct spoor surveys or call-ups.

Activity 1.15. Combine lion survey results with recent poaching and poisoning events to identify three prides along the border that are at the greatest risk.

Though we have not been able to survey the Lions, we have identified several prides in KNP in addition to the groups identified in LNP during patrols. Once we are free to do so, we will focus on collaring these prides.

Activity 1.16 Collar one female from the three prides and one male of each coalition utilising their pride area.

Though we were not able to enter LNP, we negotiated an agreement between LNP ANAC management, PPF, and the EWT, whereby ANAC approved veterinarians could place our collars on Lions for HWC and poison prevention purposes (Appendix 2). This agreement was signed in July. The LNP HWC team began baiting for Lions in early August in the general area that was experiencing HWC problems. We decided on this course of action to build trust with

park management by supporting their urgent needs and with communities by showing them from the start that we are willing to help them with their Lion problems by alerting them when the Lions are close. Under the current plan, when the Lions breach a pre-determined geofence, and LPU or HWC team will be deployed to warn the farmers and, if possible, move the Lions away from the livestock. Since there is strong evidence that HWC and the targeted poisoning of Lions are intertwined in the project area, we expect this course of action to protect Lions by reducing conflict and making it clear that we are watching the Lions.

Due to reduced operating capacity necessitated by COVID regulations, only one bait was maintained. The LPUs and HWC teams shared the responsibility of checking and maintaining the bait. Lions did not respond to the bait until 24 September, when a lone male was captured on the camera trap associated with the bait site. The veterinarian was not available and the Lion did not return to the bait. The area is being monitored closely for further Lion sign. Once the borders open on 1 October, the Lion Field Officer will travel to LNP to lead the Lion survey and collaring operations.

Activity 1.17. Use lion movement data from GPS collars and spoor data integrated into SMART to direct deployment of ranger teams (existing and new) in important lion areas.

Once the border is open, we will use spoor and sighting data recorded in SMART to direct collaring operations. Once Lions are collared, we will be able to move forward with this activity.

Activity 1.18. Conduct ongoing surveys to update lion population status and habitat use and to measure the impact of poaching on lion viability.

Our Lion survey has been delayed due to COVID related government shutdowns.

Activity 1.19. Use SMART data and lion movement data to identify prides farther into both Limpopo and Kruger NP for collaring, focusing on prides recolonizing extirpated home ranges in Mozambique.

This activity has been delayed due to COVID. It will resume once lockdown is lifted and we can move freely into LNP.

Activity 1.20. Use lion population data to monitor lion population trends and SMART data to monitor poaching trends.

This activity has been delayed due to COVID.

Output 2. The impact of poisoning on lions and other wildlife is reduced through effective proactive and reactive response strategies

Due to border closures, it was not possible to provide Poison Intervention Training (PIT) in

Limpopo. We are in discussions with partners in Limpopo to schedule training as soon as the borders open. In June and July, during lockdown in South Africa, an EWT team led by Andre Botha and including the Lion Field Officer provided Poison Intervention Training to 465 rangers in Kruger National Park. This is was an important step towards ensuring all rangers in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA) are fully capacitated to safely secure poison sites.

Output 3. The capacity of customs law enforcement officials is enhanced through targeted training, enabling them to combat illegal trade in lion products through enhanced detection

Due to border closures, it was not possible to provide training to customs officials. This will be rescheduled when borders reopen. We envision this taking place in early 2021.

Output 4. Transnational crime syndicates are disrupted through targeted, well-planned investigations aided by supply chain mapping

In collaboration with Thailand's Anti-Money Laundering Office, progress is being made on the case against Boonchai Bach. The office has identified assets belonging to Bach and is now expanding the scope of the case by looking at his peripheral network including South Africa and Mozambique. Due to the sensitive nature of the case investigation, additional details will be provided in the next quarterly report.

Activity 4.1. Log verified information on locations of the consolidation points, points of departure, transit routes and the scale of quantities poached and trafficked.

Beginning in early August, Freeland has held weekly Zoom calls with ANAC. Through these calls, one case of illegally trafficked wildlife products, including Lion bones was identified:

- On August 12, 2020, Customs of Cambodia Phnom Penh airport, seized 15 boxes containing wildlife products.
 - 279.86 kg of Lion/Tiger Bones, in 4 boxes, originating South Africa and transiting Maputo, Mozambique.
 - 56.92 kg of Sea turtle carapaces and plastrons, in 6 boxes, coming from Madrid, Spain.
 - 560.08 kg of Pangolin scales, contained in 6 boxes, coming from Lagos, Nigeria.

Activity 4.2. Assess linkages of other associated crimes.

Due to COVID travel restrictions in Mozambique, and the recent increase of infections, ANAC officials and Freeland program staff were unable to travel to certain regions within Mozambique. Given the imminent re-opening of international borders, Freeland has recommended to ANAC that they should re-engage confidential informants (CIs) within and

outside the Limpopo Trans-frontier National Park. Freeland is also currently engaging CIs within the region to gather information on lion parts poaching and trafficking incidents and syndicate members involved. This will ensure that the project can restart at full capacity once international travel bans are lifted.

Activity 4.3. Confirm data by means of analysis through Freeland and IBM / i2's Analytical Centres of Excellence (ACE).

ANAC officials continue to share poaching and seizure case details with Freeland, which have been analysed by Freeland and recommendations given. These data are analysed, confirmed, and used as the basis for actionable recommendations in bi-weekly reports.

Freeland has secured in-kind match funding from Nuix at a value of approximately \$ [REDACTED]. This processing and investigation software will greatly enhance the ability of Analytical Centre of Excellence (ACE) analysts to extract relevant data to inform recommendations to LEAs. This information is cross-referenced with the ACE database to verify data integrity prior to dissemination to trusted law enforcement officers.

Activity 4.4. Send analysed information to trusted LEAs for actioning or for verification purposes, at least twice per month. Open source information confirmed and verified.

ANAC have revised and agreed to the Freeland ACET Intelligence Report format. ANAC has agreed to accepting bi-weekly reports with a focus on using the information and analysis of supply chain mapping to identify an international trafficking syndicate and to be in a position to arrest syndicate members and focus on identifying assets derived from the illegal Lion parts trade. Freeland is building a syndicate organigram, which is provided in the intelligence report with supply chain and suspect details. During the length of this programme the organigram will be, based on further information obtained, expanded to further assist law enforcement in their investigations concerning the trafficking of Lion parts from the LNP in particular and the region in general.

The first intelligence report is currently being compiled and will be sent by Freeland to ANAC in early October. An updated report will be forwarded to ANAC and other participating law enforcement agencies every two weeks during the course of the program. All information within the report has been analysed by ACET analysts and information is cross-referenced with the ACET database.

ANAC will now conduct verification of the information supplied by Freeland and will act on initial recommendations. Freeland will incorporate feedback from this report into future reports.

Activity 4.5. Maps of transit routes and supply chains used to assist LEAs to target upper-level traffickers and aids in development of complex transnational investigation strategy.

COVID has slowed the intelligence gathering process. In anticipation of borders reopening, Freeland has engaged the services of Ms Prerana Sethiya who is a qualified Mechanical Engineer with extensive experience in Data Management & Analytics. Prerana's experience includes working with various NGOs assisting them to draw insights, measure impact and future strategies with their data. Prerana will be leading the development of maps relating to consolidation points, points of departure, transit routes and the scale of quantities poached and trafficked within and associated with the Limpopo Trans-Frontier National Park. The resulting maps will be shared with trusted law enforcement officers in Mozambique and South Africa and presented to the Big Cats Working Group.

Activity 4.6. Add verified information to the ACE database on a bi-weekly basis. Open feedback loop with LEAs participating in information sharing sessions.

Freeland has leveraged match funding from USAID Wildlife Asia to finance specialised (Counter-Transnational Organized Crime) CTOC events that convene, inform, and enable cross border enforcement chains to disrupt illicit wildlife trafficking supply chains. A unique CTOC Big Cat Investigation Working Group has been formed, which will involve Law Enforcement Agencies from Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Malaysia, Cambodia, South Africa, and Mozambique. Due to COVID, the inaugural working group meeting has been delayed.

Freeland initiated and set up a COVID-friendly webinar and CTOC training video that will link the big cat trafficking countries (source, transit, and consumer) to establish protocols for information sharing and build their capacity to conduct intelligence analysis more effectively. This will empower agency investigators to collect, analyse and share data from their desks until it is safer to travel and an in-person CTOC Big Cat Investigation Working Group meeting can be organised.

Activity 4.8. Share recommendations with LEAs to provide opportunities for feedback.

Throughout the project period, Freeland will hold weekly calls with ANAC and will submit intelligence reports every two weeks. During both of these, Freeland will make recommendations to ANAC based on data analysed.

COVID has hampered the movement of Confidential Informants and the collection of intelligence. Therefore, the first recommendation made to ANAC was to re-engage with the APUs in LNP to request details on 13 lion poaching incidents that occurred in 2018 and 2019. By linking these incidents to seizures in Southeast Asia and southern Africa, Freeland will begin to identify the probable trafficking routes these parts took from the study area to market.

Once borders open and Cis can move freely, intelligence gathering and resulting recommendations will greatly improve.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for Covid-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

We have overcome the significant complexities of international politics through targeted and respectful engagement. We have facilitated discussions between stakeholders and have created a collaborative framework that respects the roles, responsibilities, and management authority of all participants. Since COVID travel restrictions were in place, this did not actually delay the project. The project is now on a much more solid footing and we are well on our way to establishing a lasting trust and meaningful and productive collaboration between all parties.

Given the intel coming out of Limpopo National Park, we expected significant difficulties in locating and collaring Lions. However, shortly after the end of this reporting period, by 20 October, the Lion Field Officer has been in the park for 5 days and, with the support of the highly skilled LPUs, has already located a pride of Lions.

The LPUs have expressed interest in educational and capacity development, which is difficult to access due to the remoteness of the area. Since some training is budgeted under this grant, we will be able to assist in this regard. We will also help them with official certifications for tracking and other skills.

2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of Covid-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

For the entire reporting period, the border between South Africa and Mozambique remained closed. As a result:

- The Lion Field Officer could not travel to LNP. He spent his time in continuous contact with rangers and HWC personnel in both Kruger and Limpopo. He also was one of the trainers that provided PIT to KNP rangers as indicated below. LNP personnel have been baiting for Lions since August. The Lion Field Officer was only able to cross the border in early October to support and expand collaring efforts. Unfortunately, Giryondo border post, which is within the study area, is not yet open, so he will cross at the Ressano Garcia border. We hope the Giryondo border opens soon to avoid this significant detour.
- ANAC was closed until early August and therefore did not process our permit application until 18 September (Appendix 1). We addressed this by negotiating in July with LNP park

authorities to allow ANAC affiliated veterinarians to collar Lions for us specifically to address park management issue related to Human-Wildlife Conflict and poison prevention (Appendix 2). Though COVID certainly delayed the project, the engagement and negotiation process turned out to be critical for relationship building. The complexities of international and public-private relationships and a history of negative experiences created suspicion and many misunderstandings concerning the project. COVID gave us the time to engage with stakeholders and respond thoughtfully to questions and concerns. The project is starting on a much more secure footing than it was in February before lockdown.

- The customs trainers were unable to travel to the ports of entry for training.
- Poison Intervention Training (PIT) in LNP, which was scheduled for late March had to be delayed. During lockdown, we were able to deliver PIT to 465 rangers in KNP, including the northern region, which is within the greater study area. One border post between Mozambique and South Africa opened on 1 October 2020. We are now in discussions with PPF and LNP management to reschedule training in LNP.
- Freeland continued work in Southeast Asia but was unable to move forward on deliverables for Mozambique until restrictions were eased in August. This delayed the project but has not changed the deliverables.

2c. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS:	Yes/No	
Formal change request submitted:	Yes/No	Some changes, but not all
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes/No	

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget, so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to IWT Challenge Fund management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

Annie DuPre-Reynolds left the EWT in May 2020. Dr David Mills took over as full Project Manager. We will require a change request to address this. It will not require an amendment of

the budget.

COVID has introduced additional expenses, such as COVID tests and extra travel requirements due to limited border crossings and alternative accommodation requirements. We would like to submit a change request to shift some funds to cover these expenses and ensure the success of the project.

We will submit all change requests before 31 December when COVID impacts and our financial requirements will hopefully be clearer.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: IWT001 Half Year Report.**