



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report (due 31st October 2021)

Project reference	IWT070
Project title	Saving lions by reducing trafficking in their parts
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Mozambique and South Africa
Lead organisation	Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)
Partner(s)	Peace Parks Foundation, Freeland, Mozambique Wildlife Alliance, 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)	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	www.ewt.org.za @EndangeredWildlifeTrust

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 end September).

Lion monitoring

We continue to monitor eight collared lions, which belong to prides of differing size. One collared male Lion travelled between Mozambique and South Africa twice, coming into contact with livestock in Mozambique and putting his life at risk (dark blue movement lines in Figure 1). In both instances, we engaged closely with the Limpopo National Park anti-poaching team, who deployed rangers to the area to prevent retaliatory poisoning. This male's movements illustrate the impact that the poisoning of a male Lion can have on the larger population of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area. If this male holds a pride in South Africa and is killed in Mozambique, his cubs will be killed by the new resident male, setting the population back. When this happens repeatedly with successive pride males, the population stagnates. Efficient communication between partners and rapid response of the anti-poaching teams on this and three other occasions since February 2021 is encouraging and has saved the lives of at least eight lions. With an estimated Limpopo Lion population of 35 adult individuals, this is a significant achievement.

We have been searching an area between Chimangue settlement and Giriyondo border post (red circle in Figure 1), which appears to be a high-risk area for poisoning. The poachers arrested in the previous financial year were from Chimangue and set their poison on the border just north of Giriyondo border post. We have encountered lions singly and in pairs, but they are extremely skittish in this area, making them difficult to collar.

Going forward, we will focus our collaring and monitoring on the sandveld to the east (brown circle in Figure 1). This area of Limpopo National Park is bounded by the Singwedzi and Limpopo Rivers, both of which are home to local farmers that fish, hunt, and raise livestock. We plan to place four to eight more collars on Lions in the next half of the financial year. Monitoring Lions in the large sandveld area will enable anti-poaching teams to protect important Lion

resources in this critical area. This will allow the population to recover as we plan the next phase, which is to restore connectivity between Banhine and Limpopo National Parks (green arrow in Figure 1). Within the next year, we plan to conduct a census of Lions across Kruger and Limpopo National Parks, which will give us a more complete picture of Lion distribution and poaching pressure across this large and diverse landscape.

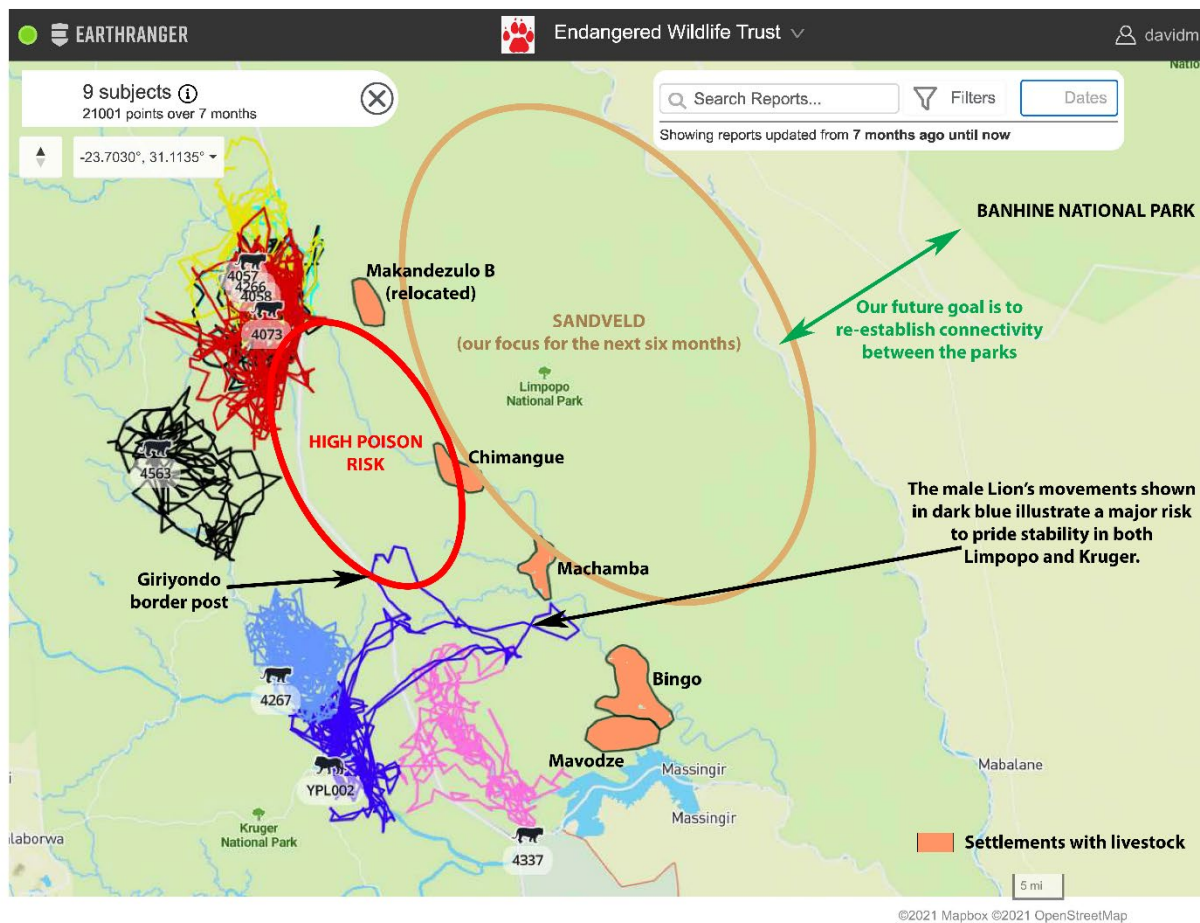


Figure 1. Lion movements (coloured lines), project activity areas (circles), and human settlements in the project area.

Antipoaching

The anti-poaching unit located a dead Lion cub in one of the settlements along the Shingwedzi River. This information is currently confidential as the poachers have not been caught and the incident is still under investigation.

The anti-poaching team leader continues to discuss ranger deployment with the Lion team to ensure anti-poaching patrols incorporate high risk areas for Lions and areas that are important to collared and known uncollared Lions. This relationship continues to be strong, effective, and mutually respectful.

Training

We have submitted a change request to move all Customs training online. While this presents additional challenges, it will allow us to conduct this critical training in the current financial year. The training will still follow the train-the-trainer model and will cover the identification of parts from all priority species, including Lions.

Advanced ranger training will take place between January and March 2021, dependent on COVID travel and gathering restrictions. This will further increase the anti-poaching team's capacity to prevent poaching of Lions and other priority species.

Poison training

In April, we provided Poison Intervention Training for rangers in Limpopo National Park. While the training team was in Mozambique, they also trained rangers in nearby Banhine National Park. We trained a total of 69 rangers. Both of these parks are part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area. In October, we will conduct training in Zinave National Park. Once complete, rangers from all three parks co-managed by the Peace Parks Foundation in the GLTFCA will be equipped to identify, decontaminate, and collect critical evidence from poison sites.

Mapping international trade routes

Freeland's completed their work in June 2021. During this project, Freeland gathered information and intelligence from various law enforcement agencies in Thailand, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa. Freeland intelligence investigators conducted interviews with key stakeholders and sources by Zoom conference calls and in-person. They conducted and created intelligence leads which were analysed and confirmed through the Freeland Analytical Centre of Excellence (ACE) Nuix data platform. These intelligence leads were presented to law enforcement officials from Tanzania, Mozambique, and South Africa during the Big Cats Working Group (BCWG) workshop held in Karingani, Mozambique during 13-15 April 2021.

During the BCWG workshop, specific high profile, wildlife criminal cases and syndicate members were discussed by Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF), South African, and Mozambique authorities. Three well-planned collaborative cross border investigative strategies were formulated with critical information and intelligence shared by the BCWG. Tasks and responsibilities for South African and Mozambique law enforcement were agreed and a memorandum was drafted by Lusaka Agreement Task Force and submitted to the BCWG members.

During Freeland's collection and analysis of intelligence, links between a known wildlife trafficker, Simon Ernesto Valoyi, who is based between Massinger, Mozambique, and Phalaborwa, South Africa (known strongholds for wildlife traffickers) and a known narcotics trafficker, Mohamed Bashir Suleman, located in Maputo, Mozambique, were investigated by Freeland in conjunction with ANAC.

On 14 June, Freeland delivered a detailed mapping presentation comprised of 79 PowerPoint slides to ANAC and Mozambican law enforcement. This summarised the intelligence, trade routes, and linkages discovered during their work on this project. Freeland's involvement is now complete. They will continue to work with Mozambican law enforcement authorities and ANAC in their own capacity.

Match funding

Thanks to the progress and achievements made on this project thanks to this IWT grant, we have been awarded a grant from the Lion Recovery Fund. This will allow us to expand our work across a larger area, including the purchase of a second vehicle and hiring of a second field officer. With this increased capacity, we will be able to locate and protect Lions across a much larger area, enhancing the impact of our work and our collaboration with the Park Protection Unit and the Mozambique Wildlife Alliance, who provide our veterinary services.

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.

The Lions most at risk of poisoning have apparently survived by becoming exceptionally wary. It is impossible to get close enough to dart them. We are working with Mozambican veterinarians to explore other options to place tracking collars on these at-risk Lions, including anaesthetic-laced bait. While we solve this challenge, we will place collars on Lions living in the eastern part of the park, between the settlements on the Shingwedzi and Limpopo Rivers.

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.

Now that borders are open, the COVID pandemic is less of an issue for monitoring lions. However, to travel between the Mozambican and South African project areas, we must still drive through the southern border of Renata Garcia and back north rather than crossing the Giriyondo border post, which is within the study area. This turns a 2 hr, 115 km trip into a 13 hr, 800 km trip. When this border post has opened, it will significantly reduce our travel costs and increase our efficiency. As long as borders remain open, the budget and timetable will remain the same.

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**

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 Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

We are in discussions regarding a financial change request submitted for Y2 for our partner organisation, Freeland. The request was approved, but reflected a change from Y3 to Y4. After reviewing the submitted change request, we confirmed the change request was submitted for Y2 to Y3. We are awaiting feedback to determine how to move forward and draw down this money in the current financial year.

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.**