

To: WPT, FFF, and BCWEZSL
Subject: USPP Quarterly Report, Jul-Sep 2022

From: Southern Tanzania Elephant (STEP)
Date: 29th November 2022

Project name	Uzungwa Scarp Protection Project (USPP)	Report period	July to September 2022
Project duration	Starting: September 2017		Ending: In progress
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Project description in summary	Uzungwa Scarp Nature Forest Reserve (USNFR) received inadequate protection in the past and has already lost much of its wildlife. As a result, USPP aims to build the capacity of the Tanzania Forest Services Agency (TFS and local communities) to carry out effective law enforcement to reduce illegal activities within the forest.		










1.0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report of the USPP highlights activities from July to September 2022. STEP carries out this project in collaboration with the Tanzania Forest Services Agency (TFS), Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) under Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA), and Village Game Scouts (VGS) representing the adjacent local communities.

USPP supported five joint patrol operations during this performance period at Uzungwa Scarp Nature Forest Reserve (USNFR). Patrols resulted in a coverage of 190 km and 128 effective patrol man-days over three months. These patrols intervened in several signs of illegal activities, including snaring, poacher camps, and logging in the Nature Reserve. All of these patrols were planned and executed based on the strategic plans developed prior to each patrol. Patrol data were aided with GPS, a digital camera, and patrol datasheets.

Drying out of rechargeable batteries for camera traps and TFS fuel shortage were the main notable challenges during the last quarter. Necessary steps were considered to make sure project activities are continuing despite these challenges.

In August 2022, we facilitated meetings in 19 villages adjacent to the USNFR to bring together Village Natural Resources Committees (VNRC), Village Leaders, Chita JKT representatives, and foresters. In these meetings, 251 VNRC members and 38 village leaders gathered in 10 meeting events and received training on Participatory Forest Management and fire management, shared lessons learned, and discussed the way forward on the management of the Reserve.

USPP Patrol Results Infographic Summary		
1-July-2022 to 30-Sep-2022		
 05 # Patrols conducted	 40 # Participant positions	 20 (50%) # VGS positions
 191 Kilometres patrolled	 81 # Snares removed	 240 # Person-days
 5 Tree cut	 03 # Poachers' camps destroyed	 289 VNRC members

2.0. SUPPORT JOINT PATROL OPERATIONS

2.1. Patrol Team Composition

To safeguard the USNFR's flora and fauna, STEP continues to support the efforts of committed teams of rangers and local communities in protection works. In the last quarter, five combined foot patrol missions lasting six days each were supported, with 48 staff positions (8 positions per patrol) occupied by TFS staff (25%); APU rangers (25%); and VGS (50%) from the adjacent village to the USNFR (Figure 1 and Appendix 1) to enhance collaborative forest management.



Figure 1: Team ready to commence patrol

2.2. Patrol Results

Patrol teams covered 191 kilometres with 128 actual patrol man-days of the USNFR's steep slopes during these five patrol operations. To enable visualisation, assess the success of the plans, and enable re-planning from July to September 2022, all patrol data were mapped (Figure 2). As a result of the intervention, five distinct forms of unlawful activity were intervened, including the removal of 81 snares and the shouting down of three poacher camps.

Encounter rates of illegal activity were calculated by dividing the number of recorded illegal activities by the patrolling distance. Snaring was the most frequently detected activity, with an encounter rate of 0.43 across all ranges, as shown in Appendix 2. The rarity of other illegal activities (such as logging and poachers' camps) and their low prevalence (each below 0.04) were encouraging indicators that the majority of peripheral illegal activities had been curbed by these protection measures. Also, during these patrols, three red colobus monkey troops were discovered.



One of the encountered poachers' camps

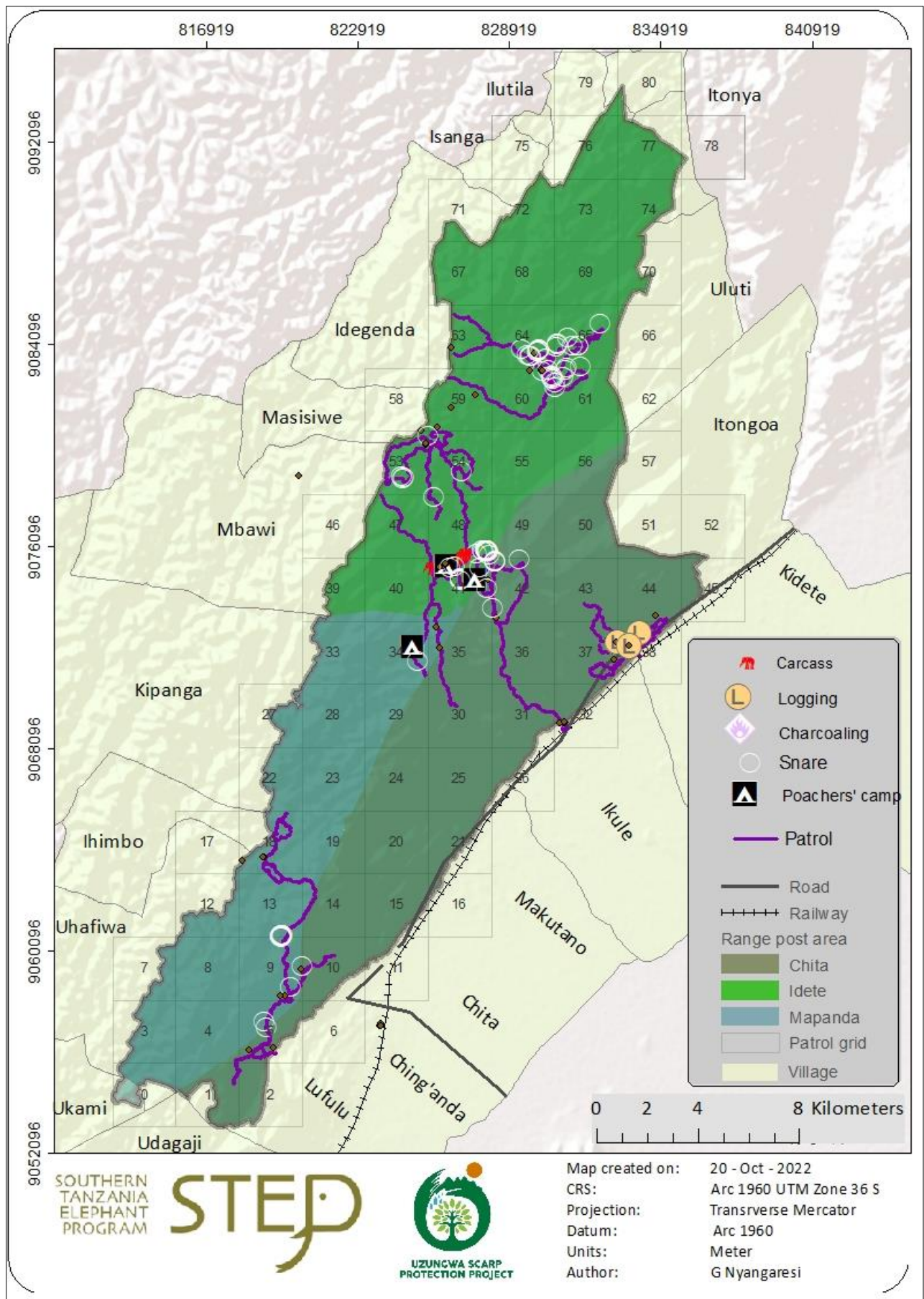


Figure 2: Patrol tracks and spatial distribution of the encountered signs of illegal activities at USNFR for the reported quarter

2.3. Patrol challenges and lessons learned

- *Drying out of rechargeable batteries for camera traps.* The new ones were purchased in Iringa Region; however, the batteries are not well functioning. We will procure additional batteries from a reputable provider to support this activity in the next dry seasons.
- *Fuel shortage:* It is the TFS/USNFR obligatory to provide fuel to facilitate the project activities. However, due to the change in the government system, they are experiencing difficulty in accessing funds for fuel in time. And that impacts the planning and execution of patrols. Despite the difficulty, we believe TFS should continue providing fuel for project activities.

3.0. COMMUNITY (VNRCs AND VILLAGE LEADERS) MEETINGS

3.1. Purpose of the meetings

As part of our forest protection work, STEP aims to increase the involvement of communities in the management of USNFR. We are doing so by building capacity through training, facilitating meetings for information sharing, assessing community benefits, and enhancing the participation of VGS in joint patrols. In August 2022, we facilitated meetings in 19 villages adjacent to the USNFR to bring together Village Natural Resources Committees, VNRC (local institutions entitled to manage access to benefits and jointly manage the Reserve), Village Leaders, Chita JKT representatives, and foresters.

In these meetings, 251 VNRC members and 38 village leaders gathered in 10 meeting events and received training on Participatory Nature Forest Reserve Management and fire management, shared lessons learned, and discussed the way forward on the management of the Reserve.

VNRCs have been a pivotal team in managing the Nature Reserve and a link between the USNFR office and the villagers. They have been consulted by the USNFR offices in the clearance and maintenance of the (buffer zones, nature trails, and tourist campsites), joint patrols, and assisting researchers.



Figure 3: VNRC members and village leaders after meeting and training sessions at Kipanga Village

3.2. Challenges and lessons learned from the VNRC members and village leaders

- *Shortage of working gear* including patrol uniforms, gumboots, raincoats, cameras, mobile phones, and GPS. These additional patrol gear will be considered for procurement based on availability of funds.
- *Insufficient training workshops*: VNRC members suggest to be offered with, use of GPS (Ihimbo), paramilitary, and first aid training to strengthen their knowledge and skills. Training will be jointly organized based on availability of funds.
- *Conspiracy and blames* perceived by VNRCs members from other villagers due to their obligation to enforce laws. VNRCs were advised to have a joint effort like what happening between VNRCs of Ikule and Kidete. This increases cooperation and collaboration between VNRCs. Also, one VNRC works in a nearby village to reduce enmity and hostility in their village.
- *Lack of payment during non-joint patrol activities*: VNRCs request allowances of 20,000 Tanzanian shillings per month to cover meals and drinks during their patrol activities in the village and at their respective Forest Management Unit. Also, the VNRC requested an increase in allowances in joint patrols from 15,000 to 30,000 Tanzanian shillings to raise motivation between members. USNFR's Conservator and his team will review the rate and share their insights.
- *Un-fully utilization of permit system in benefit access and lack of motivation for VNRCs in supervision*: Since the establishment of the permit system to access NTFPs from the Nature Reserve, some of the villagers are just entering the USNFR in the permitted days without permits. Also, the lack of VNRC motivation leads to difficulty in the supervision of the system. Village leaders to emphasize in meetings.
- *JFM remained dormant in case of cost sharing*: There has not been a report from USNFR on what they have accrued and what percent was supposed to come back to their villages as agreed in the JFM. Village leaders of Lufulu and Udagaji seem to be fully aware of the JFMs and were asked about the agreed issues such as 33 percent of the USNFR revenue (based on tourism and fines) going back to their villages.
- *Telecommunication problems* in most of the Kilolo and Mufindi villages. They suggest the building of a telecommunication tower. In this, village leaders were advised to share it with political leaders.
- *Carbon credit*: They are not aware whether the government receives carbon funds or not, but they are sure that the village receives nothing despite the forest's contribution to reducing carbon dioxide in the globe. The Conservator briefed on the national process on this and it is still far behind attainable.

3.3. Lessons learned

- *Lack of formal communication between USNFR and VNRCs*: Participants pointed out that these meetings between VNRCs and USNFR were not held for three consecutive years and this was jeopardizing their relationship. USNFR's Conservator said this was due to a shortage of funds at TFS HQ and appreciated the USPP's support for this activity.
- *Lack of proper information sharing protocol*: During these meetings, it was noted that there was no formal, regular or proper channel or protocol for reporting from villagers to VNRCs; from VNRCs to village leaders, and from village leaders to the USNFR office. These three levels of communication were established during those meetings. Follow-up by the USNFR office is required to enhance effective and proper communication.
- *VNRC's obligations at the village levels*: Ihimbo VNRC conducts a "trash collection activity" among other obligations which is unique from other VNRCs. Via these meetings, VNRCs agreed that this activity will be among other obligations of each committee. The common VNRCs obligations comprise patrols at USNFR, patrols at village forests, patrols at the village's water sources, clearance and maintenance of the (buffer zones, nature trails, and tourist campsites), assisting researchers, and meetings between members and villagers).
- *The status of USNFR was not clear to most of the VNRC members and village leaders*. Most of them regard it as National Park, and others confuse its name and call it Udzungwa. Most of them in 8 out of 10

meetings were not aware of who manages and owns the Nature Reserve! This was emphasized in participatory forest management training and the Conservator stressed it.

- *Leakage of information and jeopardize the joint patrol effort:* It was suggested that the joint patrol team should not notify the VNRC members that they are coming, as doing so makes few of the VNRC members who are not trustworthy inform the poachers.
- *VNRC to have beekeeping projects:* Three VNRCs requested to be allowed to utilize the buffer areas to USNFR so as they can utilize it for beekeeping. They also requested to be capacitated with beekeeping knowledge and skills so that they can generate money which will enhance them to conduct their patrols independently. The Conservator insisted he will work on it to see the possibility in granting permits.
- *Villages forests:* We learn that village forests such as at Uluti, Masisiwe, Mbawi, Kidete, Itongoa, Lufulu, and Udagaji are used for various purposes including environmental protection, worshipping, firewood collection, beekeeping, etc. Having village forest reduces pressure from the Nature Reserve.

4.0. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of patrol results.

Month	Patrolled-area	Range	# Patrol	#Patrol days	# Participants	# VGS participants	Person days	Patrol duration (HRS)	EPMD	Coverage (km)	Type of Illegal signs observed	# Illegal signs
July	Ikule, Mbawi, Ihimbo and Masisiwe	Idete, Chita and Mapanda	2	12	16	8	96	32	45	85	Poachers' camps, carcass and snaring.	49
August	Idegenda, Uluti, Isanga and Ikule	Idete and Chita	2	12	16	8	96	254	50	65	Logging and snaring.	37
September	Idegenda, Ihimbo, Itonya, and Uluti	Idete and Mapanda	1	6	8	4	48	145	33	40	Snaring	6
	Total	Total	5	30	40	20	240	431	128	190		92

Appendix 2: Encounter rates of signs of illegal activities

Illegal activity		Ranger area			Total	Encounter rate
		Chita	Idete	Mapanda		
Habitat disturbance	New tree cut	5	0	0	5	0.03
Hunting	Poachers' camp	0	3	0	3	0.01
	Snaring	1	68	12	81	0.43
Total	All	6	71	12	89	0.47

Thanks for the partnership and financial support from:

