

ERM creates anti-elephant poaching app

Environmental Resources Management (ERM), a global sustainability consultancy, has designed a bespoke smartphone app for easy use, to assist low-literate and non-literate village scouts to record elephant movement and poaching activities in Tanzania and in the process mobilise local authorities to intervene more quickly to curb levels of poaching.



The app enables data collection to be fed directly into an electronic database, making data collection more efficient, cheaper, and less error-prone than traditional methods of paper-based surveys.

An ERM team of Global Information Systems (GIS) specialists have been working pro-bono to support information-gathering and mapping on this unique Ruvuma Elephant Project with the PAMS Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation run in Tanzania by two South Africans.

The PAMS Foundation supports conservation in Tanzania by safeguarding its biodiversity, habitats and ecological processes.

This project captured the hearts and minds of team members at ERM to such an extent that they have dedicated hours of their own time to raise \$50,000 for ongoing efforts, including the purchase of much-needed tracking devices that will run cybertracker software, enabling PAMS to record and monitor elephant numbers and instances of poaching.

Their technology has been created to stamp out elephant poaching within the trans-border Selous-Niassa Wildlife Corridor Conservation Area located between Tanzania and Mozambique.

This year alone ERMA has dedicated 300 hours to the project, plus many more hours to come, thanks to volunteer participation. GIS team leader at ERM UK, John Lee and his team, have gone beyond the call of duty developing this on-line geographical information system especially for PAMS' so they can reveal key trends and data through analytical mapping and reporting.

Fundraising assistance

The European Middle East Africa fundraising team of ERM has raised money to purchase hand-held GPS tracking devices for the scouts and support local conservation education initiatives. To date, the team has raised more than US \$50 000 with ambitious fundraising activities including sponsored climbs of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and Table Mountain in South Africa as well as a sponsored bike ride from London to Paris. "We will continue to work with the PAMS Foundation over the coming months to support these important conservation efforts," said Lee.

The South African connection

Krissie Clark is a founding member and the Executive Director of the PAMS Foundation. She was the runner-up for the 2010 IUCN Young Conservationist Award. Wayne Lotter is a founding member and Chairman of the PAMS Foundation. He has a Masters Degree in Nature Conservation and has 23 years of professional experience in wildlife management, conservation and environmental management, community liaison and has worked in government, corporate and NGO sectors.

200 game scouts

The PAMS foundation began the mission with no funding or technology. Today, the foundation operates from targeted areas in the provinces of Arusha on the Kenyan border and Ruvuma on the Mozambique border. The project aims are to improve the status of elephant conservation in a 2 000 000 hectare area between Selous Game Reserve in the south and the Niassa National Reserve in Mozambique.

The PAMS Foundation have trained and supported over 200 game scouts to undertake regular anti-poaching patrols. This includes ground patrols conducted by Village Game Scouts and aerial surveillance. Successes have included the capture of snares, illegal timber pieces, hundreds of elephant tusks and firearms as well as ammunition, vehicles and motorcycles. Over 500 poachers have also been arrested.

Elephant survival is at risk

Tanzania is home to around one quarter of Africa's elephants, but with 10 000 elephants killed each year for their ivory, poaching remains a serious threat to their survival and some predictions state that elephants could become extinct as soon as 2020.

This project has the potential to make a real difference to elephant conservation in the region and we are enormously grateful to the EMEA Foundation project team who are volunteering their time and working on a pro-bono basis to support this important activity. Keep a look out for information about fundraising activities in support of this project which will be taking place across EMEA.

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