

Project Update: September 2008

Community Scout Monitoring Program (MOMS)

- MOMS annual reporting and training workshop was completed in August lead by A. Jorge (AJ; SRN monitoring Officer) and M. Marufo (MM; SRN community officer). 4 new monitors from 4 additional villages were trained (14 Community Monitors from 13 villages have been trained to date).
- Two meetings were held with AJ and MM to discuss goals for 2008, problems encountered and the need to develop a three-year strategy for MOMS program. The end goal is for the communities to pay the community scout salaries from the 20% they receive from trophy/concession fees. The need for the data to be communicated back to the communities was re-emphasized. Results on human-wildlife conflict were reported back to Mbamba village by community monitor in August

Goals: Resolve current problems, mentor development of MOMS strategy.

Human-Carnivore Conflict: Identify and implement practical mitigation methods

- To date this year, six incidents of human-carnivore conflict reported (5 lion, 1 leopard), including a leopard that killed 22 goats in Mussoma village, a lioness inadvertently snared in Mbamba village, a person injured while trying to kill a snared lion for its skin, and a lion cub offered for sale in Negomano.
- Livestock-carnivore conflict can be reduced by effective corralling of goats at night, however at present effective corralling is uncommon. PAC guidelines are urgently needed with responsibilities of communities and NNR clearly defined (what is a problem carnivore, minimum protection of livestock required, unprovoked vs. provoked attacks, quick response; systematic record keeping).
- In March, 45 interviews and camera traps were used in Mbamba village to assess the presence of carnivores, their prey, and protection methods currently in place and behaviours that make people vulnerable to carnivore attack.
- Warthog, baboon and elephant are the top three problem animals. Lions appear to be entering mashambas due to high warthog presence: 5 warthogs and 1 bushbuck were killed by lions in fields during wet season. Sightings of large carnivores in fields are common (19 of spotted hyaena, 18 leopard; 15 lion). A number of behaviours place people at risk from large carnivore attack, particularly sleeping in the open with no walls or door, and walking alone at night.

Goals: Develop guidelines for carnivore PAC in NNR and awareness material (posters, DVD). Find funding to support a full time extension officer in NNR. Test the bamboo fence around 1-2 mashambas in Mbamba 2008-2008 wet season.

Disease: Minimize risk of disease transmission from domestic dogs to wild carnivores

- Supported by NCP, Mozambican vet, Rui Branco (RB) vaccinated 175 dogs against rabies and initiated a registration procedure for dogs in NNR. 300 Rabies posters (designed by NCP in 2006) were reprinted for distribution in NNR.

Targeted Ecological Research

- Four leopards (2 females; 2 males) radio-marked with GPS collars in the intensive study area. This brings to six the number of leopards radio-collared. Preliminary data on home range and visual aging criteria collected. Three new lions radio-collared (sub-adult male, adult female, adult male). At least three of these lions are known to visit Mbamba village surrounds.
- Camera trapping initiated (30 camera traps at 15 camera stations through a 50 km² for 3 mths) to assess leopard density. To date 21 pictures of leopards representing at least 7 individuals have been obtained. This information will be used to inform the current leopard quota in NNR.
- Lion-Hyaena call-up survey completed in July (104 call stations, 35 lions, 59 hyaenas, 28 leopards) to compare with 2005 data. The lion and hyaena population is stable with a slight increase in lion density in watershed habitats. Further analysis to be completed.
Goals: Collar two leopards and two lions. Continue to assess home range, movement patterns and validate visual aging cues.

Trophy Monitoring and Sport Hunting Guidelines

- 2007 sport hunting results were presented at SRN annual Operators Meeting in Maputo (12-13 June), with emphasis placed on the quality of the lion and leopard trophies taken in the 2007 season and problems encountered.
- All sport hunting operators (2008) were provided with lion and leopard datasheets for the 2008 hunting season.
Goals: Annual trophy monitoring in November. Training of AJ in lion and leopard trophy monitoring.

Training and Mentorship, Dissemination of Results

- Field training of 2 local research assistants (Mbamba village) continues. E. Waiti learned to drive.
- AJ and MM were each provided with a GPS, digital camera, laptop, and binoculars and provided with guidance on their use to increase their effectiveness. AJ joined the field team in July for lion collaring and surveying experience, and will be joining project in September and November to gain further experience in research and monitoring.