



About STEP

Southern Tanzania Elephant Program (STEP) is a Tanzanian elephant conservation NGO working in the Ruaha-Rungwa and Udzungwa-Selous ecosystems of Southern Tanzania. We work with wildlife authorities and communities to increase protection for elephants and to enhance human-elephant coexistence. We also conduct conservation-relevant scientific research.

Producing science and evidence to inform conservation

Running a multi-year elephant research project in Ruaha National Park to assess population status

We are using camera traps to study how elephants access water - a key resource - in different parts of their range. We have 13 cameras placed along elephant trails to water on the Great Ruaha River and 5 on village land adjacent to Ruaha National Park. We have been surprised by how many Ruaha elephants come to drink at water sources on village land. In fact, one of our village camera traps detected 36 bull elephants drinking at a village water source in a single night!



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Between July and October, we also placed a large camera trap (>400 km²) grid in the beautiful miombo woodlands of Rungwa Game Reserve. We will use these camera trap data to study elephant activity patterns, grouping patterns, and habitat use. This work is in collaboration with Charlotte Searle and Paolo Strampelli (University of Oxford), who will be analyzing carnivore photographs, and supported by Ruaha Carnivore Project and Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority. The cameras detected 43 mammal species, including cheetah and endangered wild dog!

Monitoring the mountain-climbing elephants of Udzungwa

In May, we placed 12 camera traps to monitor wildlife movement at the edge of Mwanihana and Magombera forests (which form endpoints of the Mwanihana to Magombera wildlife corridor). 18 taxa of mammal were detected by the camera traps between May and September, including elephants, buffalo, hippo, Udzungwa red colobus, Angola black-and-white colobus and African wild dogs (a first record for Magombera)! Cameras are showing that many elephants are using the Magombera forest edge, particularly bulls. Cameras have also provided the first photographic evidence of elephants moving between the two forests, as a bull we first identified in Mwanihana in 2011-14 was detected by the camera



Conducting long-term study into human-elephant interactions on village land

Trained local elephant monitors in each of our project villages continued to collect data on elephant movements, crop damage, and use of village water sources. This monitoring has helped us to identify Kanyenja village as a current hotspot of elephant crop damage in the Kilombero valley, and this where we are building the newest beehive fence in partnership with a farmers' group.

Ensuring people and elephants can coexist into the future

Elephant conservation education program with schools and organizing community events

STEP's Human-Elephant Coexistence team, in collaboration with Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority, hosted the inaugural *Tembo* (elephant) Cup Week with five villages adjacent to Rungwa Game Reserve in July to raise awareness about how humans and elephants can coexist. 13 football matches were played during the tournament, involving 12 teams, and attended by over 5000 people who learned about the causes of human-elephant conflict, its consequences and benefits to both elephants and humans from increased coexistence. The Tembo Cup Trophy went to Ipenyelo FC from Majojoro village, while second and third place went to Nyuki FC (Rungwa) and Nyuki FC (Mwamagembe). The tournament's best goalkeeper, best player and top scorer were also awarded prizes for their achievements.



The tournament also involved community events and trainings through village meetings, film nights, school trainings, and distribution of Swahili-language booklets (400) and leaflets (500) on human-elephant coexistence developed by STEP. These trainings covered elephant behavior, types of human-elephant interactions and recommended strategies to enhance coexistence. We reached over 1600 students through school presentations and more than 1450 people attended film nights. Next year, we hope to organize the Tembo Cup again, and to include a netball tournament for women.



Increasing protection for elephants and their ecosystems

Supporting the protection of MBOMIPA Wildlife Management Area

To the south of Ruaha National Park lies MBOMIPA WMA, a key area for elephants and other wildlife that regularly use both sides of the Great Ruaha River. We continued to support the protection of MBOMIPA by funding three teams of village game scouts (VGS) to conduct monthly foot and vehicle patrols (minimum 21 patrol days per team per month), by paying scout wages and providing food and supplies. Between May and October, VGS covered over 5,000 km on foot and made 8 arrests. One fantastic result of the VGS' hard work is that no elephants have been poached in MBOMIPA this year!



Aerial surveillance and monitoring flights for critical elephant habitats

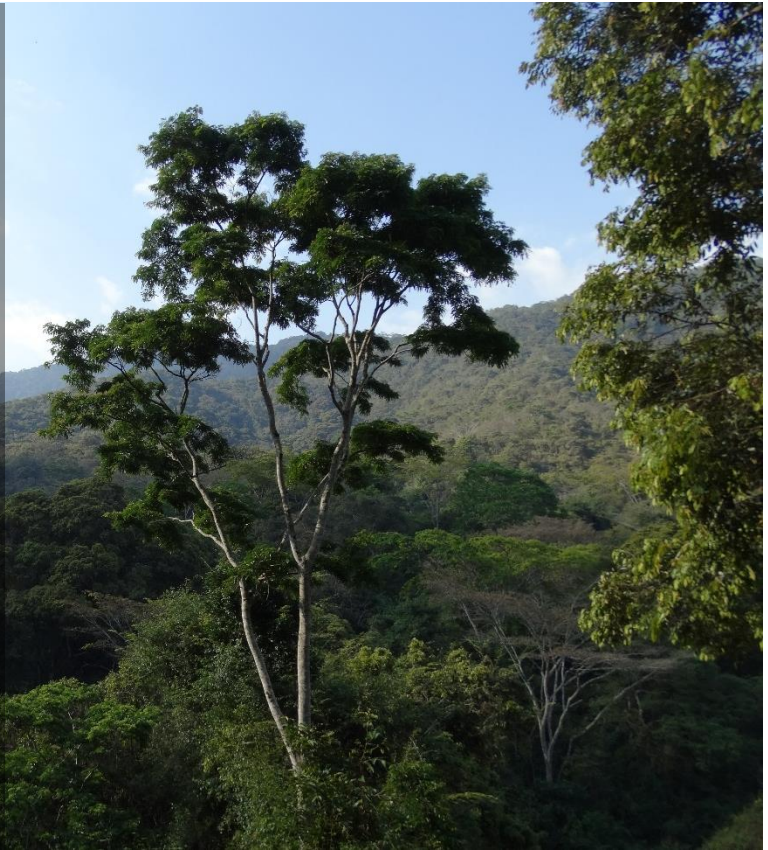
To complement the ongoing ground patrols by the devoted Village Game Scouts of MBOMIPA Wildlife Management Area, STEP's aerial team conducted over 80 hours of monitoring and surveillance flights between July and October this year. These flights helped to detect timber cutting, fires, poaching camps, and cattle grazing within the boundary, which the VGS teams swiftly responded to. The aerial team also spotted many elephants, illustrating how important this area is for elephants in the Ruaha-Rungwa ecosystem.



Supporting the protection of Eastern Arc forests

We continued to support the protection of Uzungwa Scarp Nature Reserve through our partnership with the Tanzania Forestry Services Agency (TFS). The patrol team conducted 26 patrol days over the last six months, resulting in the dismantling of 3 timber sawing sites and removal of 48 snares.

In August, we facilitated training for twenty TFS rangers in forest mammal identification and wildlife conservation law to help rangers identify the wildlife they encounter on patrol and in snares, and to ensure appropriate measures and processes are taken when someone is found to contravene the law.



How you can help



- 🐘 **Donate** to an aspect of STEP's work of your choice. You can make a donation online at www.STEP.betterplace.org or email us at info@stzelephants.org.
- 🐘 **Follow** STEP on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and via our [website](#), and share our work and news updates
- 🐘 **Support** local farmers living with elephants by visiting beehive fence projects in Udzungwa and by purchasing elephant-friendly honey
- 🐘 **Volunteer** your time and skills. Email us at info@stzelephants.org to inquire about opportunities.