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### **AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION TO REVITALIZE KWS CANINE UNIT**

African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) is set to establish more than five canine units across the country to aid Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) in deterring trafficking of ivory and other prohibited wildlife products.

Speaking during an inspection of newly built dog handlers' house at Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute (KWSTI) based in Naivasha, AWF Vice President, and Species Conservation Dr. Phillip Muruthi cited Kenya as a possible conduit for transportation of illegal ivory and bush meat to neighboring countries according to recent inspections conducted across all Kenyan border points.

According to existing partnership ties between AWF and KWS, five full canine units are set to be established in Kabsabet, Busia, Isiolo, Naivasha and Mombasa soon as part of the KWS dog unit Program to educate and deter poachers from trafficking illegal ivory.

Currently, KWS has three operational canine unit based in Nairobi's JKIA, Mombasa and Naivasha with well trained dogs drawn from Dutch Shepherd, Black German Shepherd and Belgian Malinois Shepherd breeds.

The six dogs based at KWSTI for Naivasha station were all acquired from Israel in 2015, underwent a superior six-month training and each of the dogs is now estimated to cost one million shillings. The dogs are trained to detect, track and attack criminals found with illegal ivory and prohibited wildlife products.

In a bid to improve integrity in the KWS canine unit, the KWS Canine Master Frank Keshe ascertained that curriculum for the canine unit is set to be developed. He added that KWS will present curriculum documents to the Director of Criminal Investigation and National Police Service for approval.

African Wildlife Foundation through partnership with wildlife organizations has established Kennel Units in more than eight African countries. "We are setting up a strong foundation in our inspection units and partnering with conservation organizations like KWS, to achieve the conservation goal of preserving wildlife as a national heritage," said Dr. Muruthi during the inspection of kennel attendant house.

KWS is set to receive additional eight dogs for Naivasha Station, currently undergoing special training in Dar es laam, Tanzania and one dog van.

**For more information, please contact us**

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