

ELEPHANTS MOVED FROM LAIKIPIA AND NYERI TO TSAVO

Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) is relocating 21 elephants from Solio and Sangare ranches in Laikipia and Nyeri Counties respectively to the Tsavo East National Park in the Coast region.

The two-week exercise was launched on February 21, 2018 by Tourism Cabinet Secretary Najib Balala at Solio Ranch. It will cost Sh4.5 million.

The relocation is meant to reduce incidents of human-wildlife conflict. The translocation operation involves careful co-ordination between ground and aerial teams.

Since 2012, Laikipia and Nyeri Counties have experienced human-wildlife conflicts ostensibly orchestrated by an isolated population of elephants originating from Mount Kenya National Park. The elephants cross to Sangare, Solio and other parts of Nyeri and Laikipia counties intermittently as these areas have over decades formed their traditional migration routes.

In the recent past, human settlements and other forms of developments have led to the near complete blockage of these known elephant roaming routes, impeding their movements and occasioning human-wildlife conflicts as they attempt to access water and pasture. The isolated elephant population has been fluctuating between 14-21 individuals comprising of one bull and a family unit composed of mainly sub-adult males and females.

The elephant unit based on their frequent fence breaking habits has now transcended into “habitual fence breakers”, making their control and co-existence with humans impracticable. For instance, the elephants have put the rhino security fence in an almost irreparable status threatening the security and integrity of Solio ranch rhinos.

Objectives

The objectives of the translocation are to:

1. Reduce human-elephant conflicts in Solio and Sangare areas
2. Enhance the Solio Rhino Sanctuary security by reducing the risk of rhino poaching once they get out of the sanctuary after elephants destroy the fence
3. Reduce the cost of maintaining the Solio rhino sanctuary fence