

## **EWCP Monthly Summary of Activities in Bale Mountain National Park, May 2016**



This report provides the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme (EWCP) monthly activity summary from the veterinary, monitoring and education/awareness teams in and around the Bale Mountains National Park in May 2016.

### **Vaccination Team:**

The Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme has one vaccination team that works hard to vaccinate domestic dogs in and around the Bale Mountains National Park against rabies. By doing this, they hope to decrease the threat of rabies to Ethiopian wolves, as this deadly disease is easily spread from the dogs to the wolves. They visit as many villages as possible, educating villagers and encouraging them to have their domestic dogs vaccinated against.

The dog vaccination team vaccinated in Hora Soba and Karari, Dinsho woreda, between 11<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May and between 21<sup>st</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> June, respectively totalling 17 days of presence among the community. These communities were visited to complete dog vaccination initiated in March and April.

During 7 days, the team vaccinated in Hora Soba 121 dogs out of 152 recorded (79.6%). Forty eight dogs were vaccinated for the first time (39.7% of the dogs vaccinated during this trip). Fifteen dogs were not handled and had never been vaccinated before (9.9% of the dog population recorded). In April and May, EWCP dog vaccination team vaccinated 479 dogs out of 580 dogs recorded (82.6%). During the second trip, the team vaccinated in Karari to end vaccination initiated in March in the community. In 10 days, they vaccinated 160 dogs out of 217 (73.7%), which 89 have been vaccinated for the first time (55.6%). Twenty seven dogs have not been handled and never been vaccinated (12.4% of the dogs recorded). In March and May, the team vaccinated 246 dogs out of 317 dogs recorded (77.6%).

In May, the EWCP team vaccinated 281 dogs (76.2% of dogs recorded). In each community, more than half of the dogs were not vaccinated against the rabies before EWCP team came to vaccinate, suggesting a high turn-over over among the dog population around the BMNP.

### **Monitoring Team:**

In May 2016, EWCP monitoring team visited respectively the Web valley, Sanetti, Central peaks, East Morebawa and West Morebawa areas.

Web valley was monitored 7 days between 10 and 16 May. These days were dedicated to train newly appointed Wolf Monitors and Wolf Ambassadors from northern Ethiopia and to actualise the knowledge of Wolf Ambassadors from Arsi Mountains (appendix 1). The training was carried out by the Head Monitor Alo Hussein and the Simien Project leader Getachew Assefa. Seven focal packs were monitored. McKenna packs were not visited.

Pack compositions will need more observations during the next coming months as repetitive records will ascertain the number of wolves in each pack and the limits of territory. Number/composition given here is only a picture of the situation during the current month.

In Meggity pack, the team observed five animals, including three AM, two AF. In “Meggity 2”, three animals were observed including one AM and two AF, including female Bow10 which migrated during the CDV outbreak from Bowman pack to Meggity “2” pack. Three individuals were recorded in “Meggity 3”, including one AM, one AF, and one SAM. The two pups were observed. Three animals are observed in Bowman pack, including two AM and one AF. Three out of four pups were observed healthy together. Three AU and one AF were located in Tarura pack. Three out of four pups were recorded. In Alandu, monitors recorded two AM and two AF. In Genale “2” the monitors located one AM, one AF and one SAF. Three pups were observed.

Seven identified wolves were located in May in Web valley, namely ALA06, ALA12, ALA15, ALA17, BOW10, GEN12 and KOT31.

The Sanetti plateau was monitored 7 days between 10 and 16 May. Three packs were monitored. Five packs of central peaks were monitored during 9 days between 23 and 31 May. No carcass of wolf or sick wolf was located during these surveys.

Two females were reported in Badagassa pack. Two wolves were recorded in Batu including one AM and one AF. The four pups were observed. Two AM and one AF were located in BBC pack, together with the litter of four pups. BBC2, Quarry and Garba-Guracha packs were not monitored.

In Central peaks, the monitors monitored six packs, namely Rafu, Lakota, Buyamo, Kar Dima, Chumfo and Umburi. In Rafu, the monitors observed three animals, including two males and one female, one of them ear tagged but not identified. In Lakota, one male and one female were located with three pups. One male and one female were spotted in both Chumfo and Umburi packs. In Kari Dima, the monitors located two males and one female. No wolf was observed in Buyamo pack.

Two individuals were identified in May in Sanetti and Central peaks, namely BBC41 and LAK07.

East Morebawa was monitored between 10 and 17 May. Three packs were visited, namely Weshema, Fulbana and Genale. In Weshema pack, the monitors located one male and one female. In Fulbana pack, they observed three individuals, including one AM, one AF and one SAM. In Genale one AM and two AF were seen.

Three individuals were identified in May in East Morebawa, namely GEN08, WES09 and Wes 10.

West Morebawa was monitored during 10 days between 24 May and 02 June. Seven packs were visited, namely Gurati, Waota, Liliso, Duna, Chokisa, Arie and Kumbuta.

Four animals were located in Gurati pack, including three AM and one AF. One AM is a well floater individual, which miss the left hand, and can be observed all over territories from Web valley to West Morebawa. Two juveniles were seen in the pack. Two AM and one AF, with two juveniles, were recorded in Waota pack. In Liliso pack, the monitors recorded two AM and one AF. In Duna pack, the monitors were delighted to record four AM and two AF, accompanied by seven juveniles. It is the second time in 20 years that a litter of seven has been witnessed. In both Chokisa and Arie packs, two AM and one AF were recorded. One AM and one AF were spotted in Kumbuta pack.

In total 19 individuals (adult to Sub-adult) were recorded in West Morebawa and 11 juveniles/pups were observed. These observations suggest recovery from the West Morebawa population after the rabies outbreak of 2015. The area was not visited during the CDV outbreak in 2016 and the impact of the possible CDV could not be documented there.

Seven ear-tagged individuals were identified during this trip, namely DUN12, DUN13, DUN15, LIL13, Mck15 (to be confirmed, Web valley pack), WAO01 and WAO12. These animals had been captured and vaccinated in February 2015 against rabies during the 2014-2015 rabies outbreak, except possible Mck15 vaccinated in March 2015.

Behind this nice figure, our monitors were saddened by the finding of the building of an “illegal” road Adaba – Wege Harena inside the park across Afro-alpine and most of wolf territories (appendix 2).

#### **Education and community outreach:**

EWCP has an education and outreach campaign with the goal to improve knowledge and interest in conservation and environmental issues in general and Ethiopian wolves in particular, by having participation in activities with schools and communities all around the Bale Mountains area.

During the month of May, Mustafa Dule accompanied the dog vaccination team to raise awareness and facilitate the dog vaccinations. He worked also in 5 kebeles of the Dinsho woreda to meet community leaders and local stakeholders.

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**Appendix 1.** Newly appointed EWCP Wolf Monitors and EWCP Wolf Ambassadors training  
Bale Mountains National Park, 10-16 May 2016

By Getachew Assefa, Simien Project Leader, and Alo Hussein, Senior Wolf Monitor

The project activities have expanded in Northern Ethiopia with the objective to get a better picture of the wolf populations in each areas where the wolves survived. This led EWCP to reinforce its team of monitors and wolf ambassadors. A training was implemented in Web valley between 10 and 16 May in order to:

- Provide techniques of wolf monitoring through field observation and to practice identifying wolf behaviour and wolf pack;
- Enhance the skills to properly and scientifically collect data on wolves using GPS, Compass, Binoculars and Tablets;
- Share knowledge and experience from Ato Alo Hussein and Ato Getachew Assefa who accumulated years of experience;
- Give opportunity to newly appointed staff and/or geographically distant staff to meet with their colleagues from Bale.

During the week of training, the monitors visited the following packs: Meggity, Meggity “2” and “3”, Bowman and Tarura. Practical sessions as well as theoretical were performed. An emphasis was made on how to use and set up GPS, as well as compass and binoculars, all tools essential to collect data on a proper way.

On the morning of the third day, we were happy to meet our old friend Dr James Malcolm, former EWCP coordinator, who came with a group a student of a South Californian University to visit the Afro-alpine of Bale Mountains. We, Alo and Getachew, made a talk to the students, summarizing more than 20 years of wolf conservation.

Other days were dedicated to field training and the new staff was amazed to be able to observe each days numerous wolves. We witnessed also twice interactions between wolves and dogs. On 10 may, two dogs were seen attacking and chasing a wolf in Meggity “3”. On May, three wolves from Meggity pack chased a dog but stopped the aggression when they spotted our group. The dog was looking protection with us!

On 6<sup>th</sup> day, the staff was introduced to transect counting, practicing from Bowman pack to Meggity. This gave again the opportunity to practice GPS, compass, binocular and tablets!

On the last day, the trainees were introduced to the diverse questionnaires concerning fire, deforestation, new settlement, new farm land, livestock predation, among other.

The objectives have been fully reached. The new staff has been introduced to most of the techniques used to collect data, and daily practicing on observation and data collection. The dog problematic was highlighted through direct observation and consequences (disease risk, territory competition, food competition, hybridization) fully debated. This was important as wolf monitors and wolf ambassadors will communicate in their respective areas with community and are in the front line to spread awareness about the wolves and Afro-alpine habitats. The energy, commitment and enthusiasm demonstrated by Alo Hussein and his team was a priceless example for the newly appointed staff. In other side, the eagerness and motivation demonstrated by the trainees let us think that the wolves are in good hands and that information and awareness will circulate in the remoteness of Ethiopian Afro-alpine.

EWCP is studying the opportunity to repeat this training a smaller scale at a local level, and to focus on vegetation and rodent identification, both components of habitat quality. Material was distributed to the trainees.

Participant list:

Alo Hussein, Senior Wolf Monitor, Bale Mountains  
Seid Naasiroo, Wolf Monitor, Bale Mountains  
Getachew Assefa, EWCP Simien Project Leader  
Jejaw Mequanenent, Wolf Monitor, Simien Mountains  
Andualem Ambachew, Wolf Monitor, Simien Mountains  
Talegeta Wolde Selassie, Wolf Monitor, Menz-Guassa  
Melkamu Sinaga, Wolf Ambassador, Simien Mountains  
Dejenie Erpa, Wolf Ambassador, Arsi Mountains  
Ahemed Haji, Wolf Ambassador, Arsi Mountains  
Feyessa Gudeta, Wolf Ambassador, Arsi Mountains  
Ayele Adino, Wolf Ambassador, South Wollo  
Limenew Arega, Wolf Ambassador, North Wollo  
Wubeye Dersso, Wolf Ambassador, North Wollo



All wolf habitats were represented by EWCP trainee staff from Simien, South Wollo, North Wollo, Menz-Guassa, Arsi and Bale! Web valley, May 2016.

**Appendix 2.** A road constructed illegally into the Bale Mountains National Park, West Morebawa

This is not a speculation, neither a news, but a fact! A road linking Adaba to Wege Harena is being built since 2015 in West Morebawa in the heart of the Bale Mountains National Park.

In February 2015, when EWCP team in association with park staff was vaccinating the wolves against rabies in Gurati, West Morebawa, the road had been recorded. At that time, it was reaching the top of the escarpment from the Adaba side, near Gurati mountain, and had already progressed into Juniper forest and Erica slopes. The Park management had been alerted at that time, and reminded between 2015 and today, to the eminent risk to see a road built illegally inside the BMNP connecting Adaba to Wege Harena settlement in the Harena forest...

In May 2016, EWCP monitors visited the area of West Morebawa, non-focal area, and found heart broken that the road had progressed deep inside the park. The road has been built into the Afro-alpine and crossed several wolf territories, such as Gurati, Liliso, Waota... The aim of the building is to link Adaba (north side of the BMNP) with Wege Harena in the Harena forest (south side of the BMNP), and could be completed soon... Quarries inside the BMNP have been dug to build the road, fires initiated from the road to clean vegetation, and we can expect a rapid development of illegal activities and disturbance in one of the last optimal habitat remaining in Ethiopia for the wolves. Forestry products are also expected to be extracted at a higher rate to supplement the growing Adaba market.

West Morebawa supports one of the largest sub-population of Ethiopian wolf in Bale, living until today in optimal habitat despite an increasing human pressure during the wet season. The majority of the rivers irrigating the lowlands of Adaba and Dinsho, Web River as for example, have their sources there and spectacular swamps hosts water birds during the migratory season.

This road, illegally constructed inside the BMNP, and beside the fact that the landscape has been for ever deteriorated, is a clear threat to the Park and should be considered as top priority for the Park management. The non-management of this situation will lead rapidly to the irreversible degradation of the western side of the BMNP.

The following pictures have been taken during the assessment BMNP-FZS mission in June 2016. They all have been taken inside the BMNP (Gurati – Waota) and are sufficiently explicit without captions (author: Neville Slade/FZS).

