

THE NEWS

Pachyderm Patrol Prevents Poachers



The long-term future of one of the world's most endangered species now is a little more secure, thanks to the global positioning system (GPS) network of satellites.

Rangers in the Kenya Wildlife Service, whose job it is to protect elephants, have turned to space technology in their battle to prevent ivory poachers from killing the country's dwindling number of pachyderms.

Produced by Lotek Engineering Inc. of Ontario, Canada, the GPS equipment is fitted to the elephant courtesy of a giant collar, enabling the rangers to track the movements of the animals via a laptop computer. Lotek specializes in designing sensors and transmitters to monitor wildlife ranging from salmon to caribou, and now elephants. Each elephant tracking device costs around \$7,000 and features a lithium battery, a GPS antenna and a VHF transmitter, all worn as a huge high-tech, life-saving necklace by the elephant.



In Kenya alone, poachers butchered an estimated 147,000 elephants during the 1970s and 1980s, reducing the current herds to a mere 27,000. However, apart from preventing the ruthless ivory poachers from achieving their evil goals, the rangers also are hoping that they will be able to use the GPS collars to learn more about elephants' habits; this hopefully will enhance future protective measures and ensure the world's largest land mammal is preserved for generations to come.

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