

# MONTHLY REPORT

APRIL 2011

Naishuro  
and her  
young calf

Photograph  
taken by  
Warden of  
Tourism  
Joseph  
Kimojino.



## MARA CONSERVANCY CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT FOR APRIL 2011

By Brian Heath

### GENERAL

We had sporadic rain for the first week of April – it was sufficient to keep the grass growing and to fill most of the seasonal water-courses but we did not have any of the extremely heavy storms that characterize the long rains. The rains returned in the last ten days of the month. Although we had some spectacular lightening, the rain tended to be lighter than expected for this time of year.

The Chief Executive met with Mr John Cheboi from

the Ministry of Tourism and Ms Caroline Kwambo from the Rural Electrification Authority – The Government is considering bringing power to the Mara. We advised them that the best starting point would be Narok/Sekenani/Talek.

### WILDLIFE

The big males killed one more young lion cub on the 3rd. This is the seventh lion we know to have been killed by these males and believe that they have actually wiped out all, but one, of

the nine cubs that were in the Mgoro pride. Naishuro, the female rhino, started bringing out her calf, a female, at the beginning of April. The calf had a wound just behind one shoulder; probably caused by another rhino. The wound seems to be healing well. Eight rhino have been seen on a regular basis throughout April.

1 young elephant was found dead near the salt-lick.

Most of the zebra moved out of the Triangle within the first few days of April. This led to a dearth of prey

## WILDLIFE CONT.

for our lions and the Oolololo Pride moved up the escarpment. This is extremely dangerous for these lions, as they are bound to kill livestock – and suffer the consequences. We are trying to monitor the lions but they hide in thick forest. The search for food may have been a prime reason, but we also feel they went up to avoid four new lions that have taken up residence on the Olpunyatta Plains. These lions would almost certainly displace the existing pride male, and that would lead to the killing of the remaining 12 cubs.

Dr Dominic Mijele treated one female buffalo, with huge swellings on her front legs and shoulders, on the 16th. Unfortunately the buffalo was killed by lions the following day.

## RESEARCH

We received the quarterly report from the Hyena Research Project. The project is considering a study of ecosystem health using hyena as an indicator species and have provided us with a paper entitled “Intraspecific Variation in the Behavioral Ecology of a Tropical Carnivore, the Spotted Hyena”. K E Holekamp & S M Dloniak; published in: *Advances in the Study of Behavior*, Vol 42, 2010, pp 189-229, as a rationale for their proposal.

The project also provided us with rainfall records for 2010. Total rainfall at the Hyena Camp was 1,193.5 mm (approximately 48 inches).

Living with Lions will also expand their lion monitoring project to include the Mara Triangle. They will collaborate with our Anti-



## Oolololo Lions

Photograph taken by Warden of Tourism Joseph Kimojino.

Animal Harassment Team and Kichwa Tembo guides to collect data on lion individuals. This is expected to start in the month of June.

## DOGS

John Lutenberg and Linda Porter left on the 5th. Linda had been in the Mara for three months, training the puppies and both she and John also worked on Morani and Anna. John and Linda have done an amazing job in training our dogs and I can confidently say that we have benefited from some of the best and most experienced dog handlers and trainers anywhere.

## VET

The vaccination team has now vaccinated over 1,150 dogs against rabies and canine distemper.

## STAFF

Mr William Deed took three weeks off in April, he will return for one

month and then leave at the end of May. Ms Alice Coulson has volunteered to spend three months in the Mara, in a transitional position, as we find someone to replace William.

Samuel Kortom, Warden Operations took his annual leave in April, he returns mid-May and then Mr P Siampei will take his leave.

## TOURISM

Much of the Mara was full over Easter, mainly residents. However, most of April was as expected – low occupancy in most camps and lodges. This trend will continue through May before tourist numbers start picking up in June.

## SECURITY

Fifteen poachers and potential stock thieves were arrested in April. A total of 92 wire snares were recovered. This brings to total poachers arrested to 1,587.

## SECURITY CONT.

A second rhino was killed in the Ol Choro Conservancy. These white rhino are tame, but two of the males refuse to return to their pens at night. One of the males was killed – the poachers did not recover the horn. We are most concerned about the safety of the rhino in the Triangle and have intensified monitoring. We have also agreed to employ more people within the community to keep an eye on suspected poachers. The housing at Ol Kurruk will also serve to improve our security along the escarpment.

The Ngiro-are rangers collected 25 wire snares on the 1st; 20 near Miungu and 5 near Maji ya Bett.

The Tanzanians requested support on an anti-poaching patrol on the 4th and the combined team managed to arrest one, of three, poachers across the Mara River near Mlima Hotel.

The Ngiro-are rangers arrested four people on the 17th. The first three were arrested with wire snares near Miungu, in the Lemai Wedge, in the afternoon. Later the same evening the rangers arrested one, of three, poachers as he entered the Wedge on the Masanga route – a very favourite entry point for poachers.

The following day, the Iseiya rangers recovered 31 wire snares in the Miungu area. The snares were being set for zebra, which have been numerous in that area. On the 20th a patrol in the same area found ten more snares, two had caught zebra and one had caught an eland.

The tracks of five people were seen near Ngiro-are on the morning of the 21st. Our rangers tracked the people to the thick forest at Sankuria, near Oloololo Gate. A major operation was mounted and lasted most of the day. Two people were arrested, one after six hours of searching. They confirmed that they were intending to steal cattle and were not poachers.

The following night the rangers from both stations organised a patrol along both sides of the river and managed to arrest eight, of thirteen fish poachers. The poachers were using poison and had collected several sacks full of fish when they were apprehended.

Iseiya rangers recovered 20 wire snares near Maji ya Bett – just across the Border – on the 24th. The snares had been there for some time and at least one zebra and one hyena had been killed a few days before. The Ngiro-are rangers recovered another three snares in the same area on the 28th and three more on the 29th.

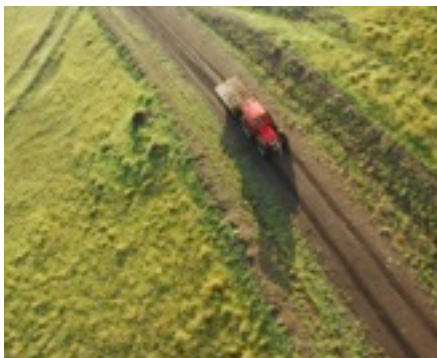
would appear that the main theft occurred at Oloololo Gate; the clerks were issuing transit tickets to drivers with clients and pocketing the money. This was almost certainly in collusion with some of the drivers and we have identified a strong link between the clerks and drivers from Kilima Camp.

The five have been arrested and arraigned in court. To begin with they all admitted to theft – even giving details on how they operated the scam, the amount of money taken and how some of it was spent. The Court has stopped all transactions in the accounts and KAPS are negotiating the recovery of this money. However, we are also pursuing prosecution and they have all pleaded not guilty, despite writing statements to the contrary.

The clerks also implicated the Alpha Scouts; our staff employed to meet and greet visitors and act as a separate control on the revenue collectors. The police are investigating the Alpha Scouts to determine whether they colluded with the clerks to falsify records.

The amount outstanding on balloon cess continues to increase and stands at over US\$ 100,000. We also note that Governors Balloon Safaris have not paid since December. Both these companies pay their cess directly to the County Council and it is often difficult to verify payments.

We expect April revenue to be lower than March – May will be even lower.



**Tractor and trailer follow hot air balloon.**

## REVENUE & ACCOUNTS

Kenya Airports Parking Services (KAPS), our contracted revenue collectors, finalised their investigations into possible theft by their revenue clerks. It was found that one supervisor and four revenue clerks were indeed stealing and each had a second bank account – into which they placed their share of gate money. It

**DEVELOPMENT**

We completed renovations of three houses at Ol Kurruk. We also built a toilet and shower block and installed a solar system - the houses will be habitable by the beginning of May.

Our mason is on leave, leading to a delay in some of our projects.

These will be prioritised on his return

We re-surfaced a long section of the lower road to Purungat (Mara Bridge).

The chassis on our large trailer was returned to Nairobi and should be ready in early May.

Our Case tractor is awaiting spares – it has been out of action for over a month.

**Revenue collected and distributed for the month of March 2011**

Collected	Gate Revenue		Balloon Revenue	
	US\$	Ksh	US\$	KSH
Ticket sales	167,470.00	1,415,100.00	-	-
Non-ticket sales	2,315.00	225,200.00		
<b>Balance for Distribution</b>	<b>169,785.00</b>	<b>1,640,300.00</b>	-	-
<b>Distributed</b>				
Trans Mara County Council	61,562.45	633,296.00	-	-
Group Ranches	31,819.30	268,869.00		
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>93,381.75</b>	<b>902,165.00</b>	-	-
<b>Mara Conservancy</b>	<b>76,403.25</b>	<b>738,135.00</b>	-	-

**Report on Focus for April**

Renovate three houses at Ol Kurruk and establish a ranger post.	Done.
Install new uni-huts at Ngiro-are	Deferred.
Continue with sandbag technique on flood prone sections of the road near Little Governors’.	Ongoing.
Complete Annual Work Plan.	Done.
Continue vaccination programme.	Ongoing.
Work on railing around hippo pools.	Deferred.

**Focus for May**

1. Install new uni-huts at Ngiro-are.
2. Work on railing at Hippo Pools.
3. Hold Board Meeting in the Mara.
4. Move rangers to Ol Kurruk.
5. Complete sandbag section of road near Little Governors’ - weather permitting.
6. Hold meetings to resolve outstanding balloon payments.

