Mara Cheetah Project Annual Report

2014



KENYAWILDLIFETRUST



Executive summary

This is the first annual report of the Mara Cheetah Project. The project started from scratch in June 2013 and since its inception the main focus has been to create a sound basis so that the project can run as efficiently and effectively as possible. Some of the activities included setting up the Tony Lapham Predator Hub, permitting and introducing the project to various stakeholders including community members, tourism partners and conservancy managers.

Rather than rushing into a new study area with preconceived ideas, the initial period has been focussed on trying to get a solid understanding of the current situation and the existing problems. Data and information gained in the last year are now guiding both our research and conservation efforts. Naturally, both of these will be adjusted as we acquire more information which will continue to shape our efforts.



In terms of research, this first year has seen the Mara Cheetah Project build a solid foundation for future research and community work. The intention of the project is to use research to guide conservation actions and as a new project, it is important to establish robust methods for gathering data. This involved the creation of a series of databases where each individual cheetah is catalogued together with all information known about the

animal, including an estimated age, sex, number of cubs and lineage. We have developed a series of in-house software applications where all sightings data are recorded and weighted against the effort in a particular area. This methodology will allow us to provide relatively accurate density estimates per area in the future. Furthermore we have established databases to record basic ecological data such as births, mortalities, feeding events and threats. Since we are focusing on a relatively large area, we have also spent a great deal of time in developing platforms for members of the public to get involved. These include a newly released App, available on Google Play, a sightings form on our website, giving talks to guides and tourists, as well as providing guides with GPS-enabled cameras to record cheetah sightings. Along side the research we have also been working on several different community projects including a film on predators that will be used for community discussion, school visits and working with a local women's beading group.

So far the project has been received with great enthusiasm and the support that everyone has given us has really enabled us to achieve a significant amount in a relatively short space of time. Some of the achievements in the past year are highlighted in this report.

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Project overview

Background

The global cheetah population is rapidly dwindling and with less than 10 000 individuals left in the wild, cheetahs are vulnerable to extinction. The remaining populations will continue to decline unless something is done. Realising this, the Kenya Wildlife Trust set up the Mara Cheetah Project in order to determine the threats that cheetahs face in the Greater Mara Ecosystem and to develop sustainable solutions to mitigate them. To achieve this, the Mara Cheetah Project is using a research-driven conservation approach through a combination of long-term population monitoring, ecological research and community-based conservation.



Aims and objectives

Using a research-driven conservation approach the main objectives of the project are to:

- 1. Determine the current and long-term status of the cheetah population
- 2. Collect baseline data on cheetah ecology and behaviour
- 3. Identify the threats that cheetahs are facing
- **4.** Develop sustainable solutions to mitigate threats

The Mara Cheetah Project has developed close working relationships with on the ground practitioners and policy makers. In the Mara, we are continuously liaising with conservancy managers and Narok County Government officials. Since it's inception, the Mara Cheetah Project has enjoyed a close working relationship with the Kenya Wildlife Service both in the Mara and at their head offices in Nairobi. This relationship is in the process of being transformed into a series of collaborations on a variety of projects with exciting prospects for the future.

Due to our research-driven conservation approach and good relationships with relevant stakeholders, this long-term project is looking to make a significant contribution to cheetah conservation both in Kenya and in the rest of Africa.

Where we work

Study area

The Mara Cheetah Project is based in the Greater Mara Ecosystem in Kenya. The study area encompasses both the Maasai Mara National Reserve and the surrounding conservancies including Mara North, Olare Motorogi, Naboisho, Ol Kinyei, Siana, Ol Derikesi and, most recently, the Mara Triangle, covering an area of approximately 3000 km².

Although relatively small, the study areas is highly diverse, both naturally and in terms of management. For instance, Naboisho Conservancy receives roughly half the annual rainfall that the Mara Triangle does. Furthermore, the vegetation ranges from open plains to Acacia woodlands. In terms of management in some areas burning is used as a management tool, whereas in others, systems of controlled livestock grazing are implemented for the benefit of both conservancy and community members. This diversity produces many challenges in comparing across the study area but also provides for a fascinating natural experiment that in the long term will allow us to investigate the effects of both natural and anthropogenic variables on cheetah life history traits.



Where we work

Tony Lapham Predator Hub

The Tony Lapham Predator Hub, or 'The Hub' as it is more commonly known, is intended as a long-term predator research centre for the Mara and is the research base for both the Mara Cheetah Project and the Mara Lion Project. The Tony Lapham Predator Hub was built through the kind donations of Nick Lapham and Skip Dunn in memory of Tony Lapham. Positioned opposite Iseketa boma, on the boundary between Olare Motorogi and Naboisho conservancies, the Predator Hub is perfectly positioned at the interface between wildlife and the surrounding communities.



The official opening of the Tony Lapham Predator Hub that took place on 14th November 2013. From left to right: Allan Earnshaw, Jackson Looseiya, Skip Dunn and Nick Lapham.

In November 2013 we staged the grand opening of the Tony Lapham Predator Hub which officially launched the Mara Cheetah Project. The event was well attended and some of the attendees included dignitaries such as Nick Lapham and Skip Dunn (Funders of the Tony Lapham Predator Hub), James Sindiyo (Senior Warden of the Maasai Mara National Reserve), Robert Ndetei (Project Coordinator of WWF) and Dickson Kaelo (Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association), researchers, conservancy managers and numerous guides that have helped with reporting of cheetah sightings. During the ceremony, moving and supportive speeches were given by Allan Earnshaw (Chairman of the Kenya Wildlife Trust), Nicholas Lapham, Nic Elliot (Project Director of the Mara Lion Project), Jackson Looseiya (Guide and conservationist), Dickson Kaelo and James Sindiyo.

Meet the Team

Dr. Femke Broekhuis

Femke is the Project Director and Principle Investigator of the Mara Cheetah Project. Femke's career with cheetahs began in 2007 as part of her Masters dissertation, investigating cheetah habitat selection in the Serengeti National Park, Tanzania. From there she joined the Botswana Predator Conservation Trust (BPCT) to set up a cheetah project and begin her D.Phil research with the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU) at the University of Oxford. She spent four years studying cheetahs in the Okavango Delta, Botswana, investigating whether the spatiotemporal behaviour of lions and spotted hyaena influenced that of cheetahs. In June 2013 she was entrusted by the Kenya Wildlife Trust (KWT) to start up the Mara Cheetah Project.





Ms. Ruth Kebenei

Ruth is the Senior Research Assistant and joined the project in May 2014. Ruth is a resident of Narok and has a deep interest in conservation. She has worked at the Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary and the Kipepeo Butterfly Farm in Mombasa and in 2013 Ruth attained a BSc in Wildlife Management at Egerton University.

Mr. Dominic Sakat

Dominic is the Community Liaison Officer for both the Mara Cheetah Project and the Mara Lion Project and works in the surrounding communities in an effort to reduce human-wildlife conflict. In 2007 he enrolled in the Koiyaki Guiding School, where he achieved his bronze KSPGA guiding certificate. Dominic is from the Koiyaki region of the Mara and has a keen interest in conservation.





Mr. Eric Reson

Eric recently joined the project as the Chief Community Officer and, together with Dominic, he is in charge of organising and running the community projects. Eric is from the Suswa area and obtained an MSc in Wildlife Biology at Clemson University in 2012. He has worked extensively on vultures in Kenya and has over 5 years experience in human-carnivore conflict research and developing models to enhance human-wildlife coexistence.

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The Greater Mara Ecosystem is a critical part of the global cheetah range but little is known about cheetah numbers, ecology and behaviour in this area. Our objective is therefore to fill this gap both through long-term monitoring of cheetahs and through hypothesis driven research.

Cheetah monitoring

Each cheetah can be identified by its unique spot pattern. Since the start of the project we have been identifying all cheetahs sighted to get an understanding of the number of cheetahs that use the Mara. Since the beginning of the project we have documented 57 cheetahs but these are not finalised figures. The cheetahs currently recorded in our database are only those that have been verified by project members. We have collected reports of approximately another 5 cheetahs that the project has not yet had the chance to verify and individually identify, so it is likely that the number of cheetahs will continue to increase. However, due to births and deaths, cheetah numbers fluctuate continuously. The current count (as of 1 June 2014) of 55 cheetahs (excluding two adult deaths) includes 45 adults (26 females and 21 males) and 13 cubs under the age of 1 year.



While people are generally interested in the number of cheetahs currently present in the Mara, we are concerned that this is not a good indication of the current population. It is only a handful of individuals that are being re-sighted on a regular basis (>40 times) the majority of the individuals sighted have only been seen a few times. In the last year we have recorded 296 cheetah sightings, of which 44% individuals were only seen once or twice and 27% of the individuals were seen between 11 and 50 times. This means that they are either transient and are not resident in the Mara, or that the Mara might be a sink for the Serengeti-Mara cheetah population. Our concern is that the cheetahs in the Mara are under a huge amount of

pressure (see section 'Threats' for more details) and that cheetahs might be disappearing from the Mara, only to be replaced by cheetahs from the Serengeti—hence the high number of individuals seen. Rather than being interested in the number of individuals sighted, we are more interested in how often we re-sight individuals. Therefore it is necessary to monitor cheetahs over a long period before being able to establish the number of resident and transient cheetahs in the Greater Mara Ecosystem.

At each cheetah sighting we collect data on their location to determine distribution and movement patterns, kills made, inter- and intra-specific interactions, presence of disease and any other behavioural observations.

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Baseline data

Our aim is to establish the general ecology of cheetahs in this area in order to have a sound understanding of the underlying ecological processes of a population that is of global importance. In addition this baseline information is essential to critically analyse the results obtained from the study.

Births and deaths



Cheetahs tend to give birth to litters of 4-6 individuals with the highest recorded number being 8. These are extremely large litters compared to other members of the cat family (Felidae) and it is believed that this is an evolutionary trait to compensate for high cub mortality. In areas such as the Serengeti, Tanzania, only 5% of the cubs reach independence with one of the major causes of death being lions and spotted hyaenas. Since June 2013 we have recorded 31 new-born cubs in 8 different litters. So far 23 (75%) have died – 2 were weakened, 5 due to lions, 1 death possibly

due to spotted hyaenas and remaining deaths were unaccounted for. The number of cubs that were born and have died are likely to be higher than this because the number of cubs at birth cannot be determined accurately. In addition to the cub mortalities we have recorded two adult deaths. One adult female was killed by lions in October 2013 and the cause of death of the other adult female is unknown but it is likely due to old age as she was over 10 years old.

Dispersal

Since the start of the project we know of 15 individuals (7 females and 8 males from 6 different females) that have dispersed. Female cheetahs are generally philopatric and will therefore stay in a similar area to their mothers whilst males will move further afield. Little is known about cheetah dispersal including dispersal distances and survival during dispersal. So far we have resignted 6 of the 15 dispersers and are therefore still on the lookout for the remaining 9. We have sent the identification photos of the 'missing' dispersers to the Serengeti Cheetah Project in the hope that they might have signted some of these dispersing individuals.

Habitat use

We have divided the study area according to five dominant vegetation types, Acacia, Croton, Open grassland, Riparian and Whistling thorn. Cheetahs are most often sighted in open grasslands (58%) followed by acacia woodland (11%). Whether this is because cheetahs prefer open grassland or sightings in open grassland are higher due to increased visibility is unknown.

Kills

In the last year we have recorded 63 sightings of cheetahs on kills. The dominant species taken are Thomson gazelle (51%) followed by impala (15%) and Grant's gazelle (8%). In February 2014 we had two reports of sheep killed by cheetah, but only one of which was verified by the project. Cheetah livestock depredation events rarely occur at night but tend to occur during the day when livestock are herded away from *bomas* (livestock enclosure). Cheetahs prefer prey within the 23-56 kg size range and as such smaller livestock like sheep, goats and calves are most vulnerable to cheetah attacks.



Interactions with other predators

Cheetahs suffer from negative interactions with other predators through direct mortalities and kleptoparasitism (stealing of kills) Whenever possible we stay with cheetahs on a kill until the cheetah leaves its kill. On the 40 occasions that we managed to stay with the kill until the cheetah left it 35 (87.5%) kills were finished by the cheetah. Of the 5 kills that were not finished 4 were taken by other predators (lion, spotted hyaenas and jackals) and in one case the cheetah left the kill for an unknown reason, possibly because she had fed earlier that day. We have also documented lions killing adult cheetahs and cubs (see section on "Births and deaths'.).



Threats

To get an initial understanding of the status of cheetahs and the possible threats they face we carried out a simple survey in June 2013 to gauge people's perceptions. Firstly, participants were asked what they think the current status of cheetahs in the Mara is and secondly to quantify the potential threats. Of the 24 responses, two-thirds (n=16) thought that the cheetah populations is declining, a third (n=8) did not know whereas no one thought that the cheetah population was on the increase. Everyone thought that habitat loss, mass tourism and other predators such as lions and hyaenas caused some degree of concern whereas disease and conflict with humans were, in comparison, of little concern. Based on observation and data collected in the last year, we believe that the main threats in the Mara are habitat loss, disease and stress.



Habitat loss

Habitat loss is of major concern as cheetahs now only occupy 17% of their historic range. The loss of habitat is likely to continue at an alarming rate as Kenya's population is now over 39 million, three times what it was in 1970.



With a loss of habitat comes a loss of connectivity. Maintaining connectivity between various cheetah populations is potentially vital to maintain genetic diversity.

In addition, with less habitat available cheetahs are more likely to come into contact with people and their livestock, resulting not only in an increase in conflict cases, but also in transmission of diseases. We are in the

process of planning various research projects to investigate cheetah movement, genetics and disease prevalence in the Mara.

Disease

Disease is of great conservation concern, especially for large carnivores like cheetahs that naturally live at low densities. With an increasing human-wildlife interface there is an increased risk of disease transmission from domestic animals to wildlife. In the Maasai Mara National Reserve 12.5% of the cheetah population has been diagnosed with sarcoptic mange, a skin disease caused by the *Sarcoptes* mite. Infected individuals often suffer from a reduction in body condition which in turn could lead to other factors such as lower hunting success, lower fecundity, and/or increased vulnerability to predation and reduced competitive ability. When severe, mange can lead to mortality and local extinction of isolated populations. Based on the presence of symptoms, we have so far counted 8



cheetahs that could potentially be infected with mange – a similar prevalence recorded by Gakuya et al. (2012). While there is a tendency to treat cheetahs with mange, we have observed that individuals can recover without human intervention. In addition, the current effectiveness of the treatment used and the side-effects are still unknown. Together with the Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) we are hoping to determine the source of mange, whether it causes mortality and whether the treatment regime is effective.

Stress

Stress in animals has often been studied in captive situations, but recently there has been an increase in studies investigating the cause and impact of stress in free-ranging animals. While there are natural factors that can increase stress levels, such as predation risk, competition and social circumstances, there are also many anthropogenic factors that can elevate stress levels in animals including mechanised vehicles, livestock and tourists. Elevated stress levels can in some cases be a conservation concern as it can have severe consequences on behaviour and reproductive success. In addition, chronic stress may increase an animal's susceptibility to disease by reducing their immunity, which in turn could have fatal consequences.

Cheetahs in the Mara are likely to face numerous factors that could elevate stress levels including the rapid growth of settlements around the wildlife areas, severe droughts, intensification of grazing and increased tourism. Our aim is to investigate the stress-levels of cheetahs in the Mara and to determine the potential sources of stress and whether elevated stress levels have an effect on behaviour, reproductive success and disease susceptibility.

Citizen science

We are keen to give the wider public the opportunity to help with cheetah monitoring. We have therefore created several avenues through which people can record and report their cheetah sightings, including an android app, sighting forms on the project website and providing guides with cameras. This gives the general public the chance to directly contribute to cheetah research. All reported sightings are valuable and will be used to monitor specific individuals and to determine the general distribution of cheetahs in the Mara and further afield.



Spot-a Cat Android app

We have recently launched Spot-a-Cat, an Android App that allows everyone from guides to tourists to rangers to record cheetah sightings. The App allows users to upload sightings with photos, view an interactive map of their sightings and learn about cheetahs in the "fact file". Recorded sighting will be used by the project to help monitor individuals in the Mara and to determine cheetah occurrence in areas across Africa. The App is now available on the Google Play store simply search for Spot-a-Cat (including hyphenations). We are working on an iOS version which will be announced once released.

Sighting form

We have also created a sightings form on the project website (<u>http://www.maracheetahs.org/how-to-help/cheetah-sightings/</u>). Interested persons can record information about cheetah numbers and sex and upload this at a later date. We would be interested in both present and historic records since historic photos of cheetahs taken in the Mara, especially females with cubs, will help us to determine relatedness between individuals. Once photos have been uploaded we are happy to identify the cheetahs.

Cameras for conservation

The Mara Cheetah Project has provided a handful of guides with Panasonic Lumix cameras with GPS functionality for the guides to take on their game-drives. When the guide sees a cheetah and takes a photo, the photograph is automatically georeferenced which means that we not only know which cheetah was sighted but also where and when it was seen. These georeferenced photos help us to determine the number and spatial



distribution of cheetahs in the Mara ecosystem. So far the camps that are participating in this activity are Salas Camp, Naboisho Camp, Rekero Camp and the Mara Bush Houses. The project has been a huge success and we are looking to expand it in the coming year.

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Community work

Predator film

As of February 2014 the Mara Cheetah Project, in collaboration with the Mara Lion Project, has been working on a predator film that will be screened in the communities. The main aim of the film is to create a discussion forum in order to determine the perceptions of community members towards predators. The discussion forums will also involve brainstorming sessions on solutions to human-predator conflict where we will attempt to identify sustainable, long-term mitigation methods. The results from this consultation will then be used to guide our conservation efforts.

Education programme



Dominic Sakat is currently working in eight different primary schools in the areas of Naboisho, Olare Motorogi, Talek, Endoinyio Erinka, Olesere and Olkuroto. School visits consist of screening of educational wildlife films, lectures and discussions on human-wildlife conflict aided by hand-puppets of lion, elephant and giraffe. Plans are underway to expand the educational programme in the coming months.

In February we attended the first 'Maasai Mara Conservancies Wildlife conservation Education Programme' meeting, organised by Gamewatchers Porini. The idea behind the meeting was for

different projects and organisations to come together to brainstorm about developing a curriculum that can be used in schools throughout the Mara. Some of the topics that were discussed were human-wildlife conflict, environment and wildlife, sanitation, tree-planting and sports-related activities.

Women's beading

The Mara Cheetah Project has recently teamed up with the Sanata Women's group, a beading group made up of over 300 women in Kenya's Great Rift Valley and the Maasai Mara. The beading group makes merchandise for the Mara Cheetah Project, including these gorgeous bags that are made of sturdy canvas for longevity, vibrant kanga lining for a colourful Kenyan touch and hand-beaded cheetah paw prints and will be on sale in selected lodges and camps. By working closely with these women, the Mara Cheetah Project is hoping to increase awareness about the conservation issues in the Mara, increase tolerance towards predators and reduce the need to own livestock by providing an alternative income. Contacts us if you would like to support the Mara Cheetah Project and the Sanata Women's Group by selling these eco-friendly bags in your camp shop.



Capacity building



Guide training

As part of the project we are keen to get the guides involved in cheetah conservation by providing them with information on cheetahs and some of the conservation issues in the Mara. As a result some of the guides are helping the project by reporting cheetahs sightings. With the training we are hoping that guides can provide guests with detailed information on cheetahs in the Mara and that they become ambassadors within their own communities. To aid this we have visited several camps, including Porini Mara Camp, Porini Lion Camp, Rekero Camp, Naboisho Camp, Elephant Pepper Camp and Mahali Mzuri to give a cheetah workshop consisting of a presentation on cheetahs followed by a practical on cheetah identification. The workshops have been received with much enthusiasm.

Workshops

In April 2014 Femke Broekhuis attended a two-week course on animal movement (<u>www.animove.org</u>) hosted by the Smithsonian Mason School of Conservation (SMSC) in the United States. Based on some of the techniques and skills learned during that course, Femke gave a full day workshop at the Predator Hub in June 2014. The topics covered included an introduction to the software programmes R and QGIS and lectures and practicals on home-range and movement analysis. The workshop was well attended and included participants from the Mara Lion Project, the Mara Elephant Project, MSU Mara Hyena Project, WWF, a PhD student from DICE University of Kent and several interns from the University of Eldoret.



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Collaborations and partners

Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU), University of Oxford

Dr. Femke Broekhuis attained her PhD at WildCRU and has since attained her affiliation with WildCRU as a member of WildCRU's research staff. WildCRU was founded in 1986 by Professor David W. Macdonald and is now one of the leading units for carnivore conservation.



Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS)

In the past year the Mara Cheetah Project has worked closely with the KWS team in the Mara, including Dr. Limo, the head veterinarian and Mr. Kimutai, the Senior Scientist based at the KWS research station in the Maasai Mara National Reserve. Information relating to the health status of cheetahs is regularly transferred between the two entities and a good working relationship has resulted. In addition the Mara Cheetah Project is working together with KWS to start a genetics, hormone and disease study.



Mara Lion Project

The beginning of October 2013 saw the official start of the Mara Lion Project (MLP). Since lions and cheetahs face many of the same issues, The Mara Cheetah Project is now working together with the Mara Lion Project both in terms of data collection and our community conservation efforts.



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Dissemination and Media

Conferences and meetings

In August 2013 the Mara Cheetah Project team attended the annual KWS carnivore conference held at the KWS headquarters in Nairobi. Femke Broekhuis gave a presentation on cheetah ecology and introduced the Mara Cheetah Project. The conference was well attended and it provided the perfect opportunity for the team to meet and share ideas with other researchers.

In May 2014 we attended a two day meeting, organised by Action Cheetahs for Kenya and KWS, to plan the next National Cheetah Survey.

Presentations

In the past year, the Mara Cheetah Project was invited to give presentations at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) in the United Kingdom and Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI) in the USA. In addition, Femke was invited by the Mara Hyena Project to give a guest lecture to a group of undergraduate student from Michigan States University earlier this year.

Website and social media

To increase awareness and provide information to the wider public we have created a project website and we have joined the world of social media.

Website: <u>www.maracheetahs.org</u> Twitter: <u>www.twitter.com/MaraCheetahs</u> Facebook: www.facebook.com/MaraCheetahProject

Cheetah Chat

In addition to the quarterly reports we provide more informal updates on the cheetahs in the Mara in a newsletter called 'Cheetah Chat'. The newsletter is produced every two months and distributed to camps and interested parties in order to keep camps and guides updated on some basic ecology and the behaviour of cheetahs in the Mara. Cheetah Chat is also available on our website.

Media coverage

Despite the fact that the Mara Cheetah Project is still in its infancy the project is rapidly gaining recognition, starting with a mention in the Daily Nation, an interview with Marcy Mendelson, a photojournalist from National Geographic and a piece on the Africa Geographic blog. The Mara Cheetah Project is also featured in the June-August 2014 edition of The Link, Safarilink's inflight magazine and an article in Mazingira Yetu, a Kenyan educational magazine aimed at highlighting grass-root conservation efforts.



During the course of the year we have identified mange as being a cause for concern within the cheetah population. As such we are in the process of developing a proposal and collaboration with KWS in order to investigate the causes and consequences of the problem in detail. In addition we are planning on conducting the first detailed study on cheetah genetics in the Mara, in combination with a study on stress hormones. Stress may increase susceptibility to disease and have consequences on behaviour and reproductive success. This study will hopefully screen for all diseases known to affect cheetahs in addition to investigating whether disease susceptibility could be linked to a low genetic diversity at the immune genes of the major histocompatibility complex (MHC).

Citizen Science

With the rapid expansion of our citizen science project it means we are receiving large numbers of photographs of cheetahs. To identify each cheetah manually is time consuming and as such we are partnering with the University of Surrey to create a cheetah identification software. Once developed we are hoping to embed this in both the website and the Spot-a-Cat App so that the general public can have cheetahs identified. This will be combined with crowdsourcing where the general public themselves can aid with some of the cheetah identification.

Community projects

In addition to improving and expanding the current community projects we have a few more projects in the pipeline. The first one coming up in July is **Team Talk**. Team Talk is an innovative project by The Safari Collection intended to encourage empowerment of girls and considerably improve health and sexual education using sport as a medium to achieve this. The Safari Collection has partnered with Exploring Global Health Opportunities (EGHO) and the Tag Rugby Trust and has brought Team Talk to the Westgate Community for the last 3 years. This year they are bringing Team Talk to the Mara and have chosen the Mara Cheetah Project as their conservation partner on the ground. Some other projects we are planning include a **Carnivore Kids Camp** scheduled for late 2014 in partnership with the Mara Lion Project and The Safari Collection and a **Mara Eye Clinic** supported by the Kenya Wildlife Trust. We will also be screening the **Predator Film** in communities around the Mara and linking this with participatory workshops.

Capacity building

Capacity building is central to the Mara Cheetah Project and we will continue with our capacity building projects as best we can. In the next year we will continue with the cheetah workshops for guides and the plan is to give another Spatial Ecology workshop in the near future. We are also keen to take on more interns from Kenyan Universities and Training Institutes. In addition we are looking to facilitate collaborations with overseas institutions and organisations who are willing to build capacity within Kenya.



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who has supported us in this project and we hope your support will continue into the foreseeable future. We have been truly touched by your enthusiasm and passion.

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Data and photos

Thank you to all of you who have provided us with photos and reports on cheetah sightings. In particular we would like to thank Keith Scholey and Marguerite Smits van Oyen for the cheetah identification from their time working on the BBC and Disney productions, the Mara Hyaena Project for sharing their cheetah photos, the Mara Lion Project for their continued support in the field, numerous guides for reporting cheetahs sightings and Rekero Camp, Naboisho Camp, Mara Bush Houses and Sala's Camp for their support on the ground.

Logistic support

We would like thank Olpurkel, the Olare Motorogi Trust and Asilia for their support in running the Tony Lapham Predator Hub. We would also like to thank Asalia, The Safari Collection, Seiya and the Mara Hyena Project for providing support out in the field.





www.maracheetahs.org

