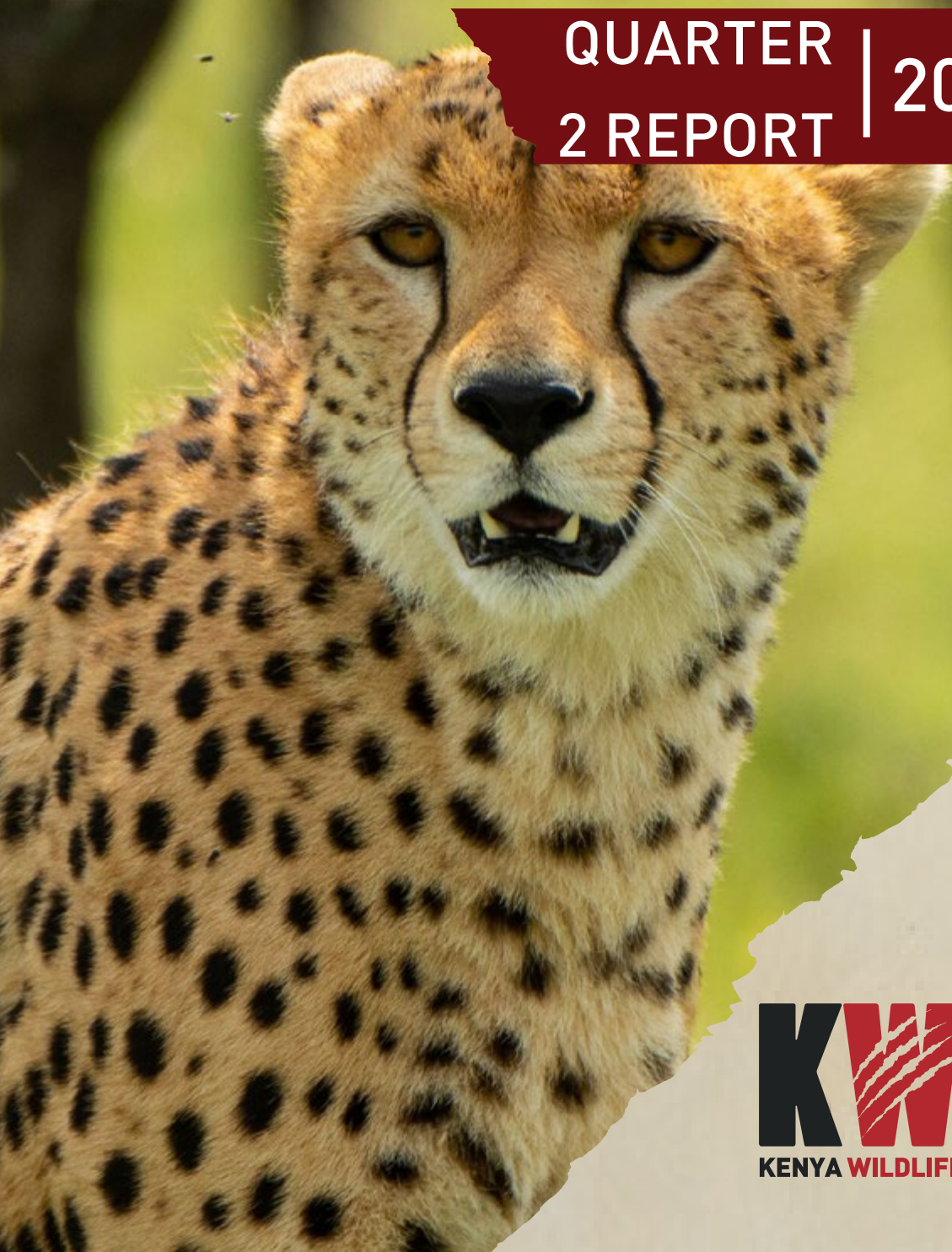


MARA PREDATOR CONSERVATION PROGRAMME



QUARTER
2 REPORT | 2020



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mara predator Conservation Programme has started to deploy GPS collars on dispersing sub-adult males and adult periphery pride females, in its efforts to understand spatio-temporal movements of these two demographics between protected and unprotected areas. We have begun to make our lion ID catalogues available to the public via our website and dealt with many aspects of human-wildlife conflicts, including the de-snaring of a lion. A new adult cheetah has been added to our database and the Lemek/Aitong wild dog pack seems to be thriving, with eight out of the nine puppies that were born last year surviving to their first year of age.

During this quarter, MPCP's community team put up 30 recycled plastic poles bomas across the Mara to help mitigate livestock depredation resulting from poorly built enclosures (bomas). The team also received 300 Lion deterrent lights which will be used to deter lions and other predators from getting into bomas at night. In addition, 170 COVID-19 kits were distributed to selected stakeholders across the Mara to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. In efforts to increase MPCP's conservation footprint across the Mara, 10 Lion Ambassadors were recruited, trained, and equipped. Finally, the team came up with creative ways to engage the wildlife club children while at home to keep them motivated and engaged in conservation.

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Contributors: Niels Mogensen, Michael Kaelo, Grace Cheptoo, Silantoi Saitoti & Dominic Sakat

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Design & Layout: David Mbugua

RESEARCH UPDATE

Lion updates

Lion collaring



Photo © Grace Cheptoo



Figure 1: Collar deployment of a sub-adult male.

Last year, MPCP required a collaring permit from the Kenya Wildlife Service to collar 10 lions, whereof five are for adult females in periphery prides and five are for dispersing sub-adult males. After a delay due to the current pandemic, we were finally able to receive the collars, and we successfully collared two lions in the National Reserve, one adult female and one sub-adult male. The main objective

behind this initiative is to gain insight into lion's spatio-temporal movements across and onto unprotected land and to document potential conflicts with the local community. With this information, we can provide evidence-based recommendations for management decisions on how to reduce conflicts and decrease lion mortality rates due to such conflicts.

Sub-adult male from the Rocky Valley/ Black Rock pride

The current core of this pride comprises four adult females, four sub-adult females and five sub-adult males who are turning three years old in August. We targeted one of the young sub-adults as they had the right age and size and they were still with the pride. Ideally, we want the collar data to include movements while the young male is with the pride besides the dispersal event. The fathers to these sub-adults have disappeared and so there are no pride males to kick out the young sons,, which could explain why they are still with the pride at almost three years of age. However, the mothers should start to show less tolerance to their sons soon and they will eventually disperse.



Figure 2: The collared sub-adult male.

Adult female from the KWS pride



Figure 3: The adult KWS female with a collar attached.

The former core KWS pride comprised nine adult females. The current core pride now consists of four out of the previous nine adults and seven cubs of two different age sets. An adult female from this pride was chosen as it is one of the National Reserve’s periphery prides. The KWS pride borders the Sekenani community and we have received human-lion conflict reports from this community in the past and have evidence of at least one pride lioness being killed there due to such conflicts.

We hope to deploy more collars in Olare-Motogrogi, Ol Kinyei, Olarro and Siana conservancies as well as the Mara Triangle in the near future. In our next quarterly report, we will share the movements of the respective collared lions.



Figure 4: The KWS female a few weeks after the collar was deployed.

Lion de-snaring

In April, MPCP was alerted by the Ol Kinyei Conservancy Warden about a snared male lion. Green Eyes, one of the famous Rekero males, became trapped in a deadly snare most likely while wondering outside areas of protection east of the conservancy, before making his way into the safety of Ol Kinyei Conservancy. After disappearing onto the hills, the MPCP team



Figure 5: Green eyes before the snare was removed.

and conservancy rangers searched for him persistently until he was located, and the KWS Mara vet unit was brought in to remove the snare. Thanks to the great teamwork by the Ol Kinyei Conservancy team, the SWT/KWS vet team and MPCP, Green Eyes is now free of his suffocating snare and is back with his brothers roaming free in the Maasai Mara.

Lion catalogues

During this quarter we started to upload our lion catalogues to our website www.marapredatorconservation.org/lion-id-catalogues, which contains the individual lion ID cards. We hope that safari guests and other people interested in knowing about individual lion ID’s will benefit from gaining access to our ID database. We also hope people will help keep our ID cards updated by sharing recent photos of for example lion profile shots.



Figure 6: An example of a lion ID card.

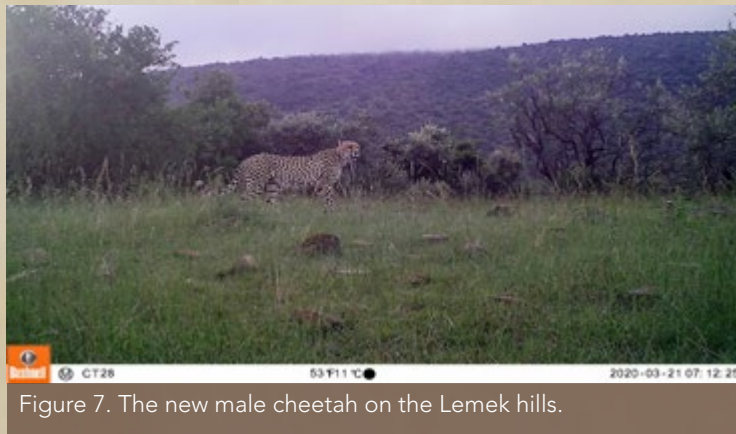
We will have all catalogues uploaded by the next quarter. We will also upload our cheetah ID cards but we will combine this with a new cheetah family tree feature.

Cheetah Updates

Dispersal Events

Over the last quarter, we have only recorded one dispersal event. Nabaati's four sub-adult males successfully left their mother at 14 months of age. After they dispersed, the boys showed up in Olarro Conservancy and it will be interesting to see in which area they will choose to settle and establish their own territory.

New Cheetahs



We recorded one new adult male individual to our database during this quarter. He was caught by a camera trap up in the Lemek hills and from the information we gathered from the guides around that area, he is quite skittish and shy around vehicles, which could be caused by spending much time outside protected areas.

Births

We only documented one birth incident where a female called Nashipai brought two cubs out of the lair in the Reserve.



Lost and found



Entito's last litter which consisted of two males and a female dispersed at a remarkably young age of around 12 months. They were spotted in the National Reserve for a while where they continued moving south towards the Mara-Serengeti border. They disappeared for a spell with our last sighting of them being in September last year. In this quarter, we found one of the males in Olare-Motorogi Conservancy, but unfortunately, there was no sign of his brother.

Wild dog Updates

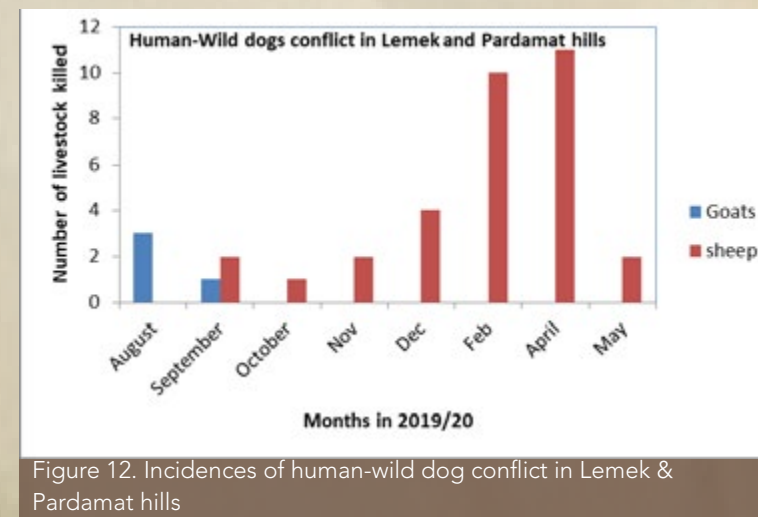
Last year we were able to document nine puppies born into the Lemek/Aitong pack. Eight of these



puppies have made it to one year of age which is a tremendous success for Mara wild dogs. This has been confirmed by footage from our camera traps and sightings from Mara North Conservancy rangers. Furthermore, we are delighted to announce that the alpha female is suspected to be pregnant again as is indicated by a recent camera trap photo.

We hope that this pack will use the same den they used last year and we will try with another collaring attempt to deploy a collar on one of the adult males.

There have been several conflict reports of this pack preying on sheep and goats over the last year, as can be seen from figure 12. We try the best we can to mitigate such conflicts, and with proper documentation of the pack's movements, we hope that the surrounding community will rightfully benefit from living in close proximity to wild dogs.



COMMUNITY UPDATE

Lion Ambassadors

With funding from the Lion Recovery Fund, MPCP has recruited ten Lion Ambassadors. The ten ambassadors are mandated to carry out patrols across 10 designated zones outside protected areas. During the patrols, they collect data on various aspects that affect lion conservation directly or indirectly e.g. human-wildlife conflicts, settlements and water points.

The ambassadors also work with communities to prevent conflicts with predators through early warnings to herders; engaging communities in lion conservation through household outreach and liaising with various groups to ensure information sharing is enhanced e.g. between rangers, Kenya Wildlife Service and other conservation organizations.

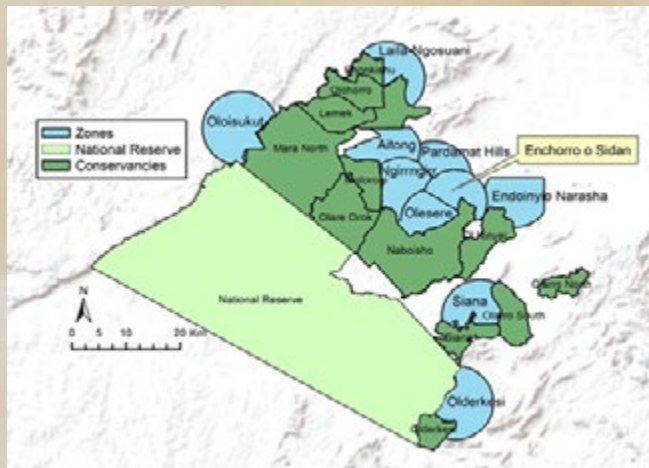


Figure 13. Map of our study area showing the 10 areas where MPCP's Lion Ambassadors are based

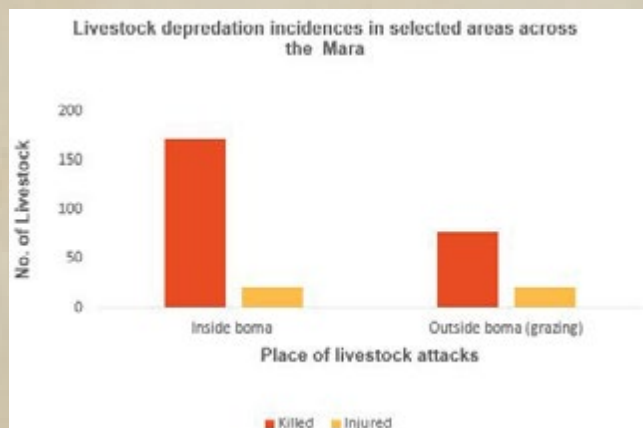


Figure 14. Livestock depredation incidences across the Mara (areas with Lion ambassadors) in the month of June 2020

This initiative has enabled us to appreciate the scale of conflicts that go unreported and the engagements that are currently ongoing have yielded recommendations from communities on tackling conflicts. Although the team started operations in mid-June the number of conflicts involving livestock depredation is unprecedented. The team reported 250 livestock killed and 42 injured by predators. 47% of these incidences occurred in bomas resulting in 69% (N=252) of the livestock killed (Figure 14). The team has also enabled MPCP to better understand the strategies communities would like to see implemented collaboratively.

Recycled Plastic poles bomas

Human-wildlife conflict mitigation is one of our core activities where we engage communities in coming up with area-specific and predator specific interventions to limit livestock depredation in the Mara. Weaker bomas give impetus to livestock depredation through the ease of penetration by predators. The increase in depredation incidences contributes to negative perceptions towards predators by communities living in close proximity to protected areas.



Figure 15 : Mr. Loontaye at Meguara village standing next to his weak traditional livestock enclosure (boma) which easily allows predators to jump in and attack livestock



Figure 16. A completed recycled plastic poles boma at Enkeju enkoirien closer to Motorogi Conservancy

During this reporting period, with support from WWF and Nature Kenya MPCP has put up 30 bomas in three different conflict hotspots across the Mara (see figure 17 below). 17 bomas were put up in Siana, 11 bomas in Oloisukut, 1 boma in Enkeju enkoirien and 1 in Talek. MPCP staff worked closely with a representative of WWF, and managers/Community liaison

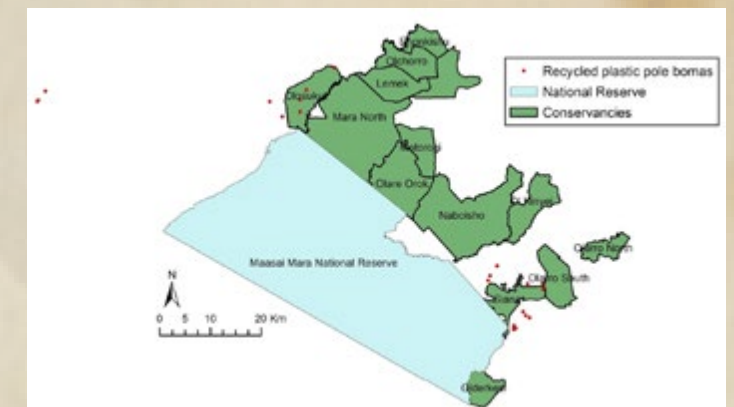


Figure 17. Map showing the locations of all 25 bomas constructed during the reporting period.

officers from Siana, Olare Motorogi, and Oloisukut conservancies to identify the most affected/vulnerable bomas for reinforcing. MPCP staff visited all the bomas, organized for purchase of materials and ensured all bomas were constructed by boma experts to ensure quality works.

Lion deterrent lights

MPCP's order of the Lion deterrent lights arrived into the country and was couriered to the Mara. These lights will be installed in the coming month after testing is finalized to ensure that they work properly. The three hundred lights will be installed in 30 bomas that were pre-selected as a measure to mitigate night time attacks. The effectiveness of these lights will be monitored over a period of six months and an evaluation carried for recommendation to other stakeholders in the Mara. The long-term impact of these lights in reducing human predator conflicts will enhance coexistence due to reduced incidences of night time attacks on bomas.



Figure 18. The new generation Lion deterrent lights are undergoing testing at MPCP's headquarters before they can be installed in selected bomas.

Wildlife Clubs activities

During this period, the nine schools that MPCP works with to implement environmental education (through Wildlife Clubs of Kenya (WCK)) remained closed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, this did not deter us from reaching out to the children to ensure they are kept engaged and continue to learn while at home. We worked closely with the Wildlife clubs patrons to keep us informed on the progress of their students through a WhatsApp group we created with them. We also liaised with the children's parents to facilitate meeting the children to give them materials for learning.



Figure 19. Pardamat conservation manager washing his hands on an improvised handwashing kit made by wildlife club members at Endoinyo-Erinka village.

The key activity that the children were engaged during this period was building of tippy taps, a handwashing kit that is homemade by the children with a complete hands-free operating mechanism, (Figure 19) to encourage people to wash their hands during the current pandemic. Selected club members (those living within MPCP's headquarter's proximity) were given printed materials with illustrations on how to build the tippy taps (tippyapp.org) and encouraged to use locally available materials to put them up in their villages.

COVID-Kindness

As the world continues to tackle the challenges associated with Covid-19, MPCP has not been left behind in the battle. With financial support from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-Kenya), we distributed over 170 hand-washing kits and soap to targeted groups across the Mara. The beneficiaries include, conservancies, ranger outposts, health centres, cultural villages, chief's camps, water points and shopping centres across the Mara Ecosystem.



Figure 20. Residents of Olboma Maasai Manyatta in Sekenani receiving their handwashing kits from MPCP

Each of the handwashing kits was assigned to an individual to ensure water and soap are available all the time. In conservancies kits are monitored by rangers, in cultural villages kits were assigned to wildlife club members while in community water points, they were assigned to village elders. In addition, COVID-19 awareness posters in Maa and English were also placed in strategic public locations in the Mara Ecosystem.



Mara Predator Conservation Programme

info@marapredatorconservation.org | www.marapredatorconservation.org



@MaraPredator



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