

PREDATOR POST

LION TAILS

JANUARY 2018 – MARCH 2018



Updates by the Mara Predator Conservation Programme
on Lions in Mara North Conservancy

THE MAIN CHELI GROUP



The Cheli pride adult females are split into four different groups.

The main group still resides around the original Cheli pride area, ranging mostly from EPC to Kicheche Mara. Amber is now remaining with one male cub.

Amber's companions are still Scarlet, with her three cubs, and Saba, with her four cubs. Earlier this year, a sub-adult male was suddenly seen with the group.

We were able to ID him as one of the three sons that Amber and Scarlet were together with in Lemek Conservancy last year.

The males dispersed, and the two lionesses went back to MNC (see previous Lion Tails for full story).

Now one of the males has come back to its mother. It is very likely that the two brothers died, and that the remaining son is seeking refuge with his natal group. It is very interesting that not only did one of them come back, but also that the adult females tolerate him.



CHELI SPLIT GROUP 1

The main split group is resident around the Maternity and Njia Mengi areas.

The group consists of the two adults Kali & Nairoshi, and the four sub-adult females Naserian, Mpishi, Napono & Swako.



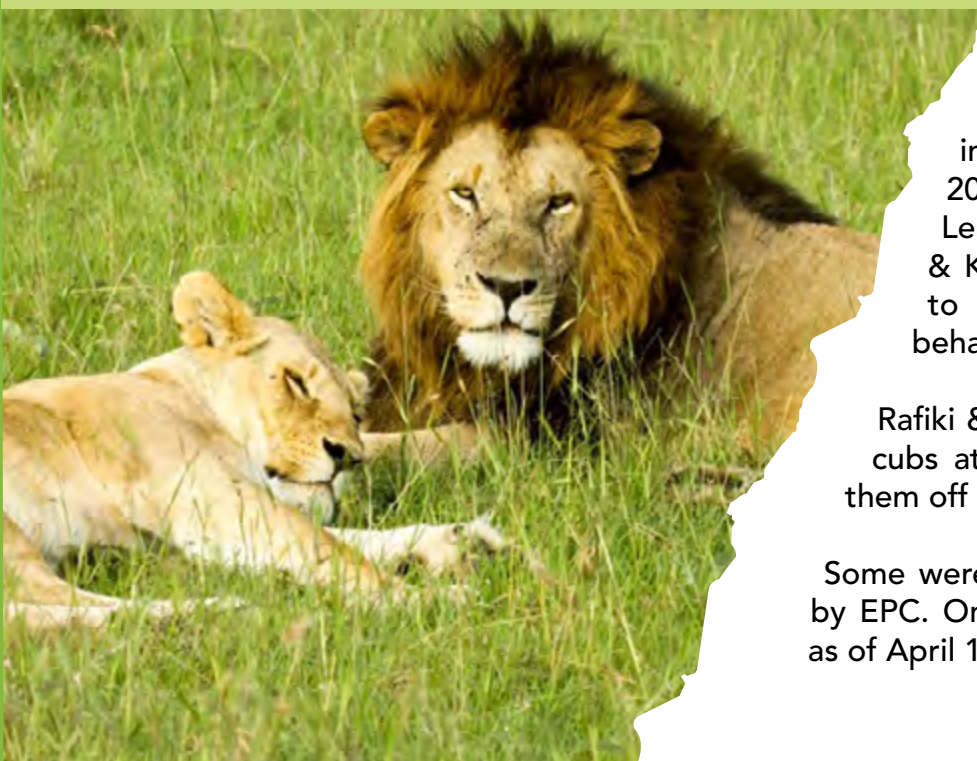
They currently have at least 11 cubs together.

After Karibu & Rafiki's killing spree last year, it looks like the group is stable now.

Kali's two sons, born in October 2016, are unaccounted for.



CHELI SPLIT GROUP 2 & 3



Numba and Angavu, who fled with their six cubs, born in the beginning of January 2017, into the southern part of Lemek Conservancy when Rafiki & Karibu, decided to come back to MNC which was very odd behaviour.

Rafiki & Karibu seemed fine with the cubs at first but then started to kill them off one by one.

Some were killed near Kicheche, others by EPC. Only one female was remaining as of April 1st.

CHELI SPLIT GROUP 2 &3 CONTINUED

Both Numba & Angavu have been mating with the two males, close to Amber's group.

After their mating sessions, they moved close to Kali's group.

The unnamed female with two male cubs, born in September 2016, are still by themselves, last seen close the old horse safari camp.



MORE CHELI LIONS



From the group of Cheli females who were born in April/March 2013, one is still being seen, called Badi.

She is currently together with Siti's daughter, now three years old.

If you recall from a previous edition of Lion Tails, Siti was killed by buffaloes near Kicheche Camp, orphaning her male and female cubs.

They found Badi and came under her care. She was also taking care of her own two daughters, born in January 2016.

Both daughters and the young male are missing, and so it is just the two of them.

They were recently sighted with a dispersing male from Mara Triangle's Angama pride.



KARIBU & RAFIKI

Karibu & Rafiki have certainly settled in MNC.

They are usually roaming between the main Cheli group and the first split group, either mating or checking up on the cubs, but still killing non-related cubs, given the chance.

As they cover such a big area, they are not always on top of intruding males and two nomads managed to kill a cub on their watch, before they could take action (see below).



OFFBEAT PRIDE



The main Offbeat pride now consists of five adult females and at least eight cubs.

They seem stable now and are regularly being seen in the Offbeat Camp area.

The four pride males, originating from the Iseketa pride in Olare-Motorogi Conservancy, are maturing into beautiful big males and are often with this group.



OFFBEAT SUBS



The former Offbeat males, Jesse & Frank, had two litters of cubs, one in 2015 and again in 2016. The 2015 batch of which six boys and five girls made it to independence, were chased away by their fathers. Four of the boys have been seen since they dispersed but only two of them have been regularly sighted, mostly in the Reserve. The females however, vanished for a long period, but have turned up this year close to their natal area. One died of unknown causes, but the four remaining females are doing well and they have probably come back as they are ready to mate with the new males. When Jesse & Frank left their pride (Frank vanished, and Jesse went the OMC and later the Reserve), and the four Iseketa males entered the scene, one of the adult females took off with the 2016 offspring set. They were often seen in the western part of MNC, but now they have shifted downstream from Offbeat Camp. They were eight cubs to begin with but now only five subs remain with the adult female.

MARSH BREAKAWAY SUBS

The main Offbeat pride now consists of five adult females and at least eight cubs.

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The four pride males, originating from the Iseketa pride in Olare-Motorogi Conservancy, are maturing into beautiful big males and are often with this group.



MARSH PRIDE



The Marsh pride group that settled in MNC originally consisted of five adult females and four cubs, two of each sex.

The females Rembo and Kabibi have gone back to the Marsh area and Charm has disappeared, while Dada & Kito have stayed in MNC, taking care of the four large cubs.

We saw this group of six close to the airstrip and a few days later they had moved further southwest in MNC to Kichwa Tempo.

As Rafiki & Karibu are the fathers of the cubs, the group is probably moving around to avoid any confrontation with the Cheli females.



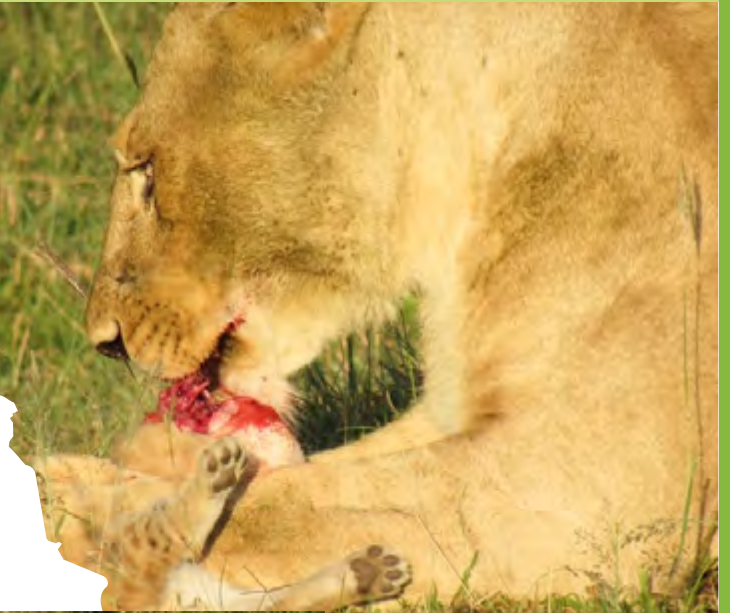
INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

The Cheli female Kali gave birth to two cubs in the very beginning of February.

All seemed well until Serian Camp guest Ian Coldwell spotted Kali eating one of her cubs, only 19 days old.

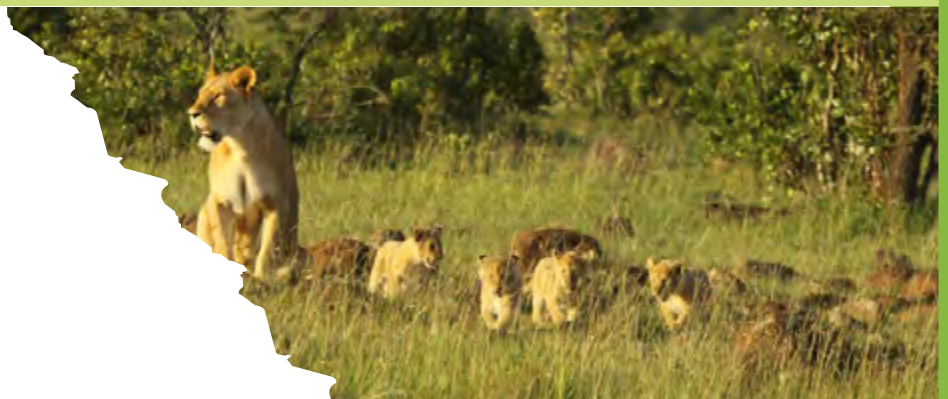
The other cub has not been found and so we do not know if she also ate it, nor do we know how they died.

As it might seem as an unusual behaviour for a mother to eat its own cubs, we have



actually had a handful of instances where this has been documented now in the Mara.

It probably occurs more often than we think, it's only that we are unable to have much insight into such events as lions keep their litters hidden for some time after birth.



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