PREDATOR POST

LION TAILS OMC - SIXTH EDITION

Updates by the Mara Predator Conservation Programme on lions in Olare Motorogi Conservancy (August-November 2021)



Engoyanai Core Pride Females/ Oldikdik Pride

Two of the core Engoyanai pride females and part of the breakaway females of the Oldikdik pride have been sighted intermittently together and at times breaking away into small groups then rejoining through the fission-fusion lion pride dynamics. The two Fig Tree Breakaway males are still with the Engoyanai and Oldikdik females and are the fathers of the current litter. These lions have also been sighted within the Ntiaktiak riverine forest with one female originally having four cubs born in June 2021, but only three remain now and are doing well. They have also been sighted in the following areas: Porini Hill, Near Rocky crossing, Loyk camp riverine forest, Sananka crossing Sayialel Plain, Kempiski Olare camp and Albizia stream/ Empurputia.

Oldikdik Breakaway group

This group of the Oldikdik pride that split and moved into the National Reserve has been sighted numerously around Fig Tree Murram and the Olkiombo sundowner tree general area. They have successfully been able to raise around 10 sub-adults who are currently still with the pride. There is also a breakaway group of Sankai lions within the same general area which some guides call Moniko lions.







Oldikdik Subs

We have recently been lucky to have sighted 10 Oldikdik sub-adults together (six males and four females). These lions have been moving between the southern part of Mara North Conservancy (MNC) Enchoro Nairobor area, Engoyanai Saltlick, Richards Camp, Amani Camp, Motorogi gorge, Olkupelia to Hammerkop stream. Livestock grazing within the general area has affected these lions' behavior which has been forcing them into hiding on inaccessible terrains of the ridges. The sub males have attained their prime age where they soon will be moving away for a nomadic transitional period.

Sankai pride

This pride was formed by daughters who dispersed from the original Moniko pride, which previously moved to Naboisho Conservancy and later disappeared. The Sankai pride is still utilizing areas within the Iseketa Ridge, Maa Trust area, the Predator Hub, Iseketa Valley, Kicheche Bushcamp, Olpul, and the Iseketa old bomas. This group has been quite difficult to find because of livestock activity, forcing them to go into hiding just before sunrise, only to come out after sunset. These lions can be heard roaring almost every night around the aforementioned habitat general areas.





Hammerkop Pride

This pride seems to have split and the few sightings in our records have a maximum of two females together. It has also been challenging finding these lions because of the high livestock numbers within their territory crossing the Oloormorijo stream from the Olkuroto area towards the west and further into the conservancy. This has made these lions go into hiding in the very early hours of the day, only to come out very late in the evening. The few recent sightings of this pride have been around the OMC airstrip, Oloolmorijo bushes/stream and around Olempalakai which is further west of their territory. Reports from guides indicate that they have been seen with cubs within the Oloolmorijo croton thickets.

Iseketa Pride

This is one of the peripheral prides within OMC which has one female collared. MPCP collared this lion in order to help understand their movements and habitat use at the edge of the conservancy area, overlapping the community settlements. Through data from the satellite collar, we can now quantify the habitat use, ranging area and how livestock influences this pride. The female with the collar and one of her pride mates has four cubs of two different age sets together. Lemek pride born males are the fathers and still with this pride. Due to the high livestock numbers within the pride's general area, the lions have been going into hiding along Olkuroto stream, Sopia's general area, Levi's crossing and Mahali Mzuri, Motorogi croton thickets. Unfortunately, we've had several reports of this pride attacking livestock within the core area of the pride's territory. The programme has reached out to the conservancy management to address these issues along with the livestock encroachment within the area in general. The collar data from this pride shows that the lions have been more confined along streams riverine and dense cover due to pressure from livestock grazing in the area. The conservancy management has successfully intervened through grazing areas and the general herding practices which have significantly reduced conflict.







Jesse and an Oldikdik Male

Jesse was also briefly sighted near Naronyo Hill with two of the Sankai pride females and a young blonde male from the Oldikdik pride.

We watched the two males with some distance apart and seemed intrigued with one another. After the short visit to the conservancy, the two males went back into the game reserve where they were involved in serious fighting.

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