

PREDATOR POST

LION TAILS

OCTOBER 2024



Updates by the Mara Predator Conservation Programme on lions in the Greater Mara



ENGUYANAI MALES

Saningo, Jicho, Mwana, Nkong'u, and Lenkoe are five male lions originally from the Enguyanai pride, born in 2017 within Olare-Motorogi Conservancy. As they matured, the coalition dispersed to Mara North Conservancy (MNC), where they took control of the Offbeat pride, having driven away the previous coalition males, the Croton Island Males. The formidable Enguyanai coalition went on to take over the Cheli pride and their territorial expansion forced the legendary Morani of the Musketeers and his partner, the Rekero male, to vacate the area so that they could also take over the Serian pride as well.

The strong coalition dominated most of the conservancy for a while and have sired numerous cubs.

Sadly, Jicho died due to natural causes and the coalition was suddenly down to four.

In a dramatic display of power, the Enguyanai males fought a fierce battle with two of the two pride males from Oloisukut Conservancy. The fight ended with the intruders wounded and fleeing across the Mara River. However, the Enguyanai male Enkong'u also sustained serious injuries to his body, though he still managed to survive and keep up with his coalition partners. The weakening of Enkong'u combined with the loss of Jicho, forced the Enguyanai males to reduce their territory size and they moved away from controlling the Offbeat pride, and are now dividing their time between the Cheli and Serian prides.

Through fission-fusion dynamics, the coalition occasionally splits for short periods, often when courting females or when the pride divides to care for young cubs. Their powerful roars echo across the landscape as they patrol, mark, and defend their vast territory. The Enguyanai males have proven to be a formidable force, shaping the territorial dynamics of the region's prides.

SERENA NORTH (PARADISE) PRIDE

Several pride members have disappeared, leaving only three adult females with three cubs sired by the Six Pack (Bila Shake) males. Their territory spans along the Mara River, extending to the Paradise area. Their favorite location is the Nyoka crossing, where the abundance of herbivores is attracted by the short fresh grass.

Occasionally, they cross over to the Mara Triangle, near the Serena area. Currently, their territory seems free from intrusions. The Rekero Pride has shifted to the Pose plains area, providing the Paradise Pride with ample space, while the Marsh Pride's territory only stretches as far as the Manager crossing.





TOPI PRIDE FEMALE TISHA'S DEATH

On September 5th, 2024, we received the sad news about the death of a lioness, who we identified as Tisha, a lioness from the Topi Pride. Initially, the rangers and guides suspected that Tisha had been killed by other members of the Topi Pride.

However, this would be very unlikely as the pride had shown no prior aggression towards her and

no one had witnessed the conflict. Tisha's last sighting in Olare-Motorogi Conservancy showed her in good health, interacting peacefully with other pride members, including Autumn. It is more likely that Tisha was killed during a territorial dispute with lionesses from a different pride, most likely the Enkuyanai Pride, as they have recently been expanding their territory into the Double Crossing area.

LEMUNY PRIDE

Nempiris and Naramat are the oldest females in the pride who both turned ten years old this past June. Their first successful litter from 2021 has now matured to independence. The pride now consists of six adult females, four sub-adult males from two different groups, and two small cubs, totaling twelve members. Naramat currently has two four-month-old cubs sired by Olmurrani, who is the remaining Moniko male. Nempiris was recently seen mating with Olmurrani in the northeastern part of the conservancy.

Two females from the 2021 litter seems to be lactating, although they haven't yet brought their cubs out of the den. We hope the Moniko male will protect the young cubs from infanticide, although it will be tough as he alone. This male also fathered the pride's current cubs. The previous dominant males, known as the Ilkisiusiu males, have not been with the pride for some time and are now concentrating on the Sampu Enkare breakaway pride in Ol Kinyei Conservancy.



BLACK ROCK PRIDE

During our recent sighting of this pride near Keekorok Airstrip, we observed four adult females accompanied by seven young cubs. Thanks to an abundance of prey in the area, the cubs are fed almost daily on a diverse diet of wildebeest, buffalo, and zebra, ensuring their healthy growth.

These cubs were sired by the two Oololaimutia (Sopa) born males, Manywele and Oloibor, who currently lead the pride. Notably, no sub-adult lions were present during this sighting. The Black Rock Pride appears to be thriving, with a strong foundation built on experienced females and solid leadership from the Oololaimutia males. Their established territory, spanning from the Sand River to Julieward general areas, provides resources needed to support the pride.

OLOISUKUT / PUSI-NKARIAK PRIDE

We started monitoring the Oloisukut pride, also known as the Pusi Nkariak pride, in early 2021 within Oloisukut Conservancy. Initially, the pride consisted of four adult females, but two of them went missing, most likely due to human-wildlife conflict. Given the high risk of conflict between predators and livestock both inside the conservancy and in surrounding community areas, one female, Komeiyian, was fitted with a tracking collar in 2022. The collar provided a close monitoring of her movements and helped prevent potential conflicts. After serving its full tracking period, the collar dropped off and was successfully retrieved.



We are excited to report that we recently found Komeiyian in good health, accompanied by her partner and nine cubs from two separate litters. All appear to be doing well and hopefully this pride will grow. However, due to the ongoing threat of conflict in the area, we are continuing to closely monitor the pride's movements in collaboration with the conservancy manager and rangers.



KASKAZ MALES

The Kaskaz males have recently been stirring up trouble in the southern part of the Reserve as they attempt to expand their territory and gain control over more prides. These three males were originally named by local guides in Tanzania, where they were pride males. Their names are Omokale, Bron, and Rami, with Omokale appearing to be the oldest of the group. Since their arrival in the Mara in 2023, it has been unclear whether they are

related. However, they now seem to have established themselves in the area, having taken over the Lookout pride and have fathered the current cubs. Recently, they ventured east toward the Survey and Salas areas, attempting to take over the Oololaimutia (Sopa) Breakaway pride, often referred to as the Survey pride. The females of the Survey pride were forced to flee to protect their young cubs, and their pride male, Orkirikoi, narrowly escaped an attack from the intruding males.

To add to the drama, the Sopa males Mdogo and Osidai also arrived in the same area a few days later and found Orkirikoi alone. Despite their numerical advantage, the two Sopa males did not attack after Orkirikoi showed submission. In recent turn of events, the Kaskaz males caught one of the three Paradise dispersing males and killed him. Orkirikoi on the other hand wandered into Rongai territory because of the pressure in Survey area and ended up being attacked by the three Rongai males and was left with some minor injuries.



SIX-PACKS OF TOPI PRIDE

The Topi Pride has also produced a coalition of six sub-adult males. There is a good potential for them to become as strong as the six males from the Moniko coalition, (the Bila Shaka males), as they have already been observed hunting together on multiple occasions. The Topi males were sired by the Salas males, who still control the Topi Pride and now seem to be involved with the Enguyanai Pride within Olare Motorogi Conservancy. The six males

roam across areas from Double Crossing and Rhino Ridge to the Marsh.

However, despite their growing strength as a coalition, their survival in the Reserve is at risk. They have been preying on livestock grazed illegally inside the Reserve, which could lead to conflicts with herders, especially at night. A recent incident witnessed by our researchers involved the coalition targeting five cattle near Olapa Camp.

Most recently, one of the males was injured by herders during the night when the sub-adults attacked a group of cattle. The culprits were arrested the following day and are awaiting trial.

OFFBEAT PRIDE

Notchy, Kiki, and two other females turned 10 years old in March this year. The Offbeat Pride currently consists of eighteen members, including seven adult females, five sub-adult males and six sub-adult females. The pride continues to utilize areas around Offbeat camp, Enchorro Naiborr, Kicheche Valley, and Cheli Plains. Recently, Kiki and Notchy have taken the lead in hunting and expanding the pride's territory.

Interestingly, we recently spotted Notchy leading a few members of the pride as they ventured into Serian pride's territory, crossing the Aitong-Mara Rianda Road. This is rarely ever seen.

The other group, led by KiKi, was seen feasting on a warthog snack in the Echorro Naiborr valley. Additionally, we observed the adult male named Olomunyak, born in Cheli Pride, frequently roaming the Offbeat's pride territory. The male attempted kill a young Offbeat pride member, but a buffalo fortunately saved the sub-adult female. We anticipate the birth of new cubs soon. These cubs are sired by the Enkuyanai males, and so they will be at risk if the coalition has abanded the pride for good, offering them no protection.



