PREDATOR POST

CHEETAH CHAT - 25TH EDITION

MARCH - 2025

Updates by the Mara Predator Conservation Programme on cheetahs in Maasai Mara



Nabaya

Natasha's daughter, Nabaya, was born in 2017 and had her first documented litter in April 2020 in Olarro Conservancy. The litter comprised two females and one male, but she lost one of the female cubs in February 2021 under unclear circumstances.

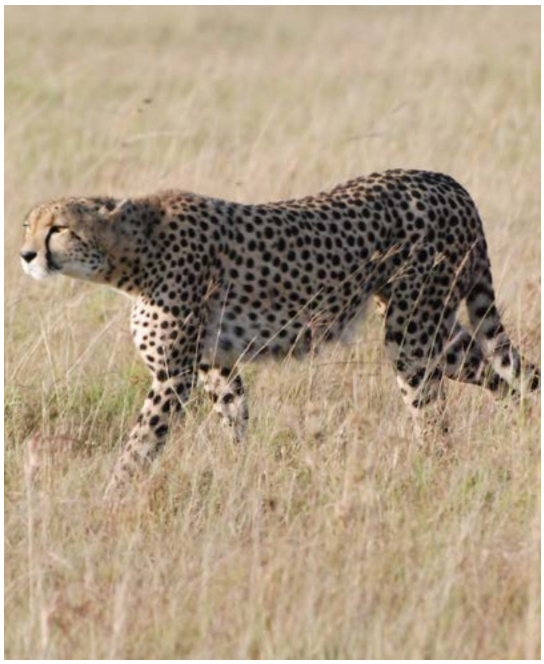
She successfully raised the remaining two cubs, but the entire family disappeared around June 2021. Late December 2024, reports emerged of a female with two cubs in Olarro Conservancy. Upon investigation, we confirmed this female to be Nabaya, who had surprisingly reappeared after nearly three years of absence.

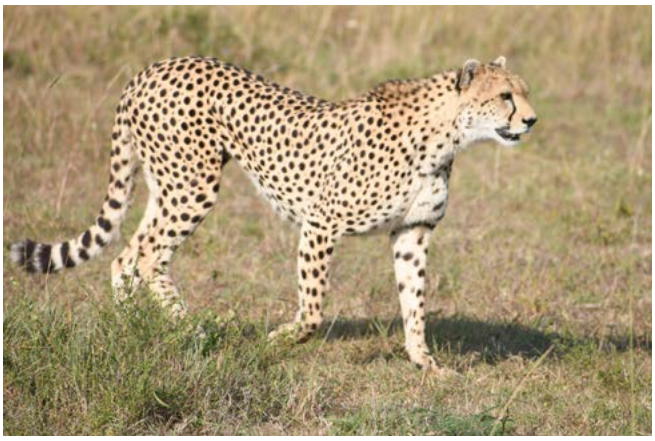
It is always a joy to see previously disappeared individuals return to protected areas. We wish her the best with her litter of cubs, a male and a female, who are now just over a year old.

Kulete

After bringing three cubs out of the lair towards the end of last year in Olare Motorogi Conservancy (OMC), Kulete lost one cub on the same day. The loss is suspected to have occurred when she took them to a kill, where lions or hyenas might have preyed upon the cub during the night. She took the two remaining cubs back into hiding, but unfortunately, when she brought them back out she had lost another cub. She then moved from OMC to Mara North Conservancy with the remaining cub, where they thrived for a while.

However, early January this year, she lost the last cub at night. Recent sightings shows that she is now primarily within OMC, with occasional visits to neighbouring Naboisho Conservancy.





Nashipae

Nashipae has done an excellent job raising her four cubs to independence. She gave birth to this litter in July 2023, consisting of three females and one male. She has previously raised a successful litter to independence in 2020, who were Namelok and Noma.

The current four youngsters, now approximately 21 months old, had an unusual late dispersal at 20 months of age. The average dispersal age for Mara cheetahs, according to our data, is 16 months. Nashipai was seen courting the two remaining Musketeers, Winda and Olonyok before the death of Winda, confirming the separation with her offspring. Although she has had a bad limp for a while, which is concerning, she has been coping well.

New Males

Towards the end of last year, we recorded three sets of new males in our study area. In the first half of October 2024, three young males appeared in Enoonkishu Conservancy. These three shy males are gradually expanding into new territories and have also been sighted in Lemek, Mara North and Olare Motorogi conservancies and the National Reserve.



While being sighted by rangers and guides, the males, who are approximately three years old, are difficult to follow as they are shy of vehicles and prefer dense, bushy cover. They do not match any individuals in our database and their behaviour indicates that they come from outside of protected areas with less tourism. Their most recent sightings were in the National Reserve and OMC, where they continue their exploratory movements.

Another set of two new males were seen in the Mara Triangle at around the same time, and they were extremely shy and judging by their behavior, they must have most likely crossed from the Serengeti.

The last set of new males were observed in Olarro Conservancy during our monitoring session, and they were also extremely shy. They have most likely dispersed from the Mara East.

Nolari

At nearly 13 years old, Nolari is one of the oldest female cheetah recorded in the Greater Mara ecosystem. Despite her age, she has not successfully raised any cubs to independence.

Her home range is extensive, stretching from the Survey area to Maji ya Fisi, with occasional sightings in the Talek closed area, a quieter section of the National Reserve due to tourism restrictions. While in the closed area, she remains in close proximity to the Musketeers, Nashipae, and Nashipae's dispersing youngsters.



Sanaipei

Sila's daughter, Kara, had three cubs who dispersed last year. This litter, consisting of two females and one male, stayed together for a while before separating. We have since sighted one of the daughters, named Sanaipei, in OMC, Naboisho, and Isaaten Conservancies.

It is typical for young adults to explore their mother's home range before eventually establishing themselves. We look forward to monitoring Sanaipei's movements and seeing where she settles.





Olomunyak

Olomunyak, one of our two collared male cheetahs, left his mother Namunyak, as the lone survivor from a litter of six, in January this year. He has been moving substantially and covering long distances. Since we collared him in Ol Kinyei Conservancy in December last year, he has utilised Naboisho, OMC, the Reserve, Nashulai, and is currently in Isaaten Conservancy. Olomunyak has been careful in his movements so far, staying in the peripheries of the protected areas.

More than 90% of Mara dispersing male cheetahs disappear from the Mara and we do not know what their fate is; if they are establishing themselves successfully or if they are being killed while dispersing, either by natural of human related factors. Collaring dispersing males well help us gain insight to these questions and help us provide them with better protection.

For more information, please visit our website or follow us on social media. If you have photos and a cheetah story that you would like to share in the next update, please email us at info@marapredatorconservation.org

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