PREDATOR POST

CHEETAH CHAT - 26TH EDITION

JUNE - 2025

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



Siligi's Sons

Seeing this coalition of cheetah males was an exciting sighting during our recent visit to the Mara Triangle. They are part of a litter of five born in April 2021 in the National Reserve to the well-known cheetah, Siligi. However, Siligi lost two of the cubs a few months after bringing them out of the lair.

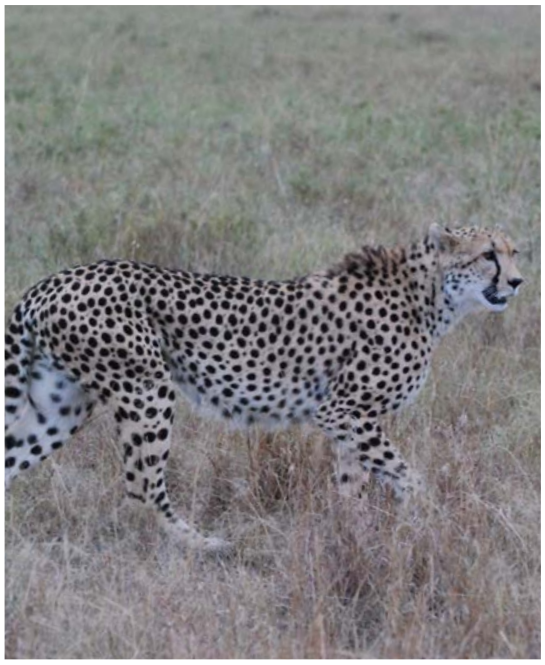
Our last sighting of her with the remaining three cubs was during the last quarter of 2021. After being raised by their mother in the Serengeti and "disappeared" for over two years, the three males made a surprise return to the Mara Triangle.

Their reappearance was especially exciting as they were only a few months old when they left the Mara. The coalition moves between the Mara Triangle and northern Serengeti, with their home range extending across both protected areas.

Namunyak

Namunyak successfully raised a male cub, Olomunyak, to independence who dispersed early this year. He was part of a litter of six, being the only survivor. After leaving her independent son, Namunyak has been moving between Olkinyei and Naboisho conservancies, waiting for new mating opportunities. She was seen heavily pregnant in March and gave birth in Naboisho.

She was seen going in and out of the lair on several occasions and was lactating. Unfortunately, she lost her entire litter while still in the lair. Namunyak was last seen in Olerai and Naboisho conservancies, and we wish her more luck with the next litter.





Nashipae's Daughters

Ever since Nashipae's recent set of cubs dispersed from their mother earlier this year, the single male in the group of four siblings left the group shortly after, in late March, which is earlier than usual. The three girls stayed together for some time as they explored more of the areas they used to visit with their mother in the National Reserve.

They have improved their confidence, especially when hunting and interacting with other predators, especially when hyenas steal their kills.

One of the three daughters recently separated from her two sisters, and we hope all three will stay within the Mara. This will be important for our Mara cheetah population, as the Mara adult resident female population has drastically declined over the last few years.

Ruka

Ruka is the only surviving male offspring of Rosetta and a littermate to Risasi and the late Rafiki. After separating from their mother, Ruka and Rafiki remained closely bonded, often observed roaming between the Maasai Mara National Reserve, the Mara Triangle, and the Serengeti border, a dynamic pair thriving in independence.



Tragically, Rafiki failed to return from one of their crossings into the Triangle. In the aftermath, Ruka was seen vocalising and searching for his lost sibling for several days, a sad display of distress that raised concerns about his ability to survive alone. However, Ruka defied expectations. Since then, he has established a solitary but stable presence across the Reserve, Mara North, and Olare Motorogi conservancies.

Recently, Ruka was observed in the company of Nagol, the daughter of Neema. The two were seen hunting together and spending several days in proximity, suggesting the potential for a mating event. However, no mating was observed, and Ruka has since been predominantly sighted within the Reserve. His movements now come at a significant time, especially with the Musketeers' once-vast territory collapsing and Olonyok now left alone. Ruka's continued survival and expanding range reflect the dynamic nature of cheetah spatial ecology and the resilience required to persist amid shifting territorial structures and ecological pressures.



Nashipae

Nashipae, the daughter of the legendary Musiara and littermate to Neema, has earned her name and reputation in the Mara. She is an experienced mother, having successfully raised her last litter of four to adulthood, an impressive achievement by a Mara cheetah.

We came across Nashipae and Mwanga both resting under a thicket of croton bushes. Nashipae was sleeping but Mwanga was active, stayed close and vocal, chuffing softly, displaying typical courtship behaviour. For over an hour and a half, we observed quietly from a respectful distance, observing their interaction. Nashipae remained largely still, seemingly fatigued under the sun, until she finally rose. Mwanga was instantly alert, and the two engaged briefly in a mating session.

Sadly, just a few weeks ago, before this encounter, Nashipae lost her new litter in the National Reserve before they emerged from the lair. To shortly witness her back in estrus and already mating again shows how difficult cheetah reproduction can be.

New Triangle males

Another exciting sighting was with a coalition of two male cheetahs in the Marsh area of the Triangle. We identified them as the Lamai males from Bologonja area in the Northern Serengeti, who are relatively new to the Mara.

They first appeared in the Triangle around July last year and were seen by the Oloolo escarpment and appeared to be very shy. They now seem to have become accustomed to the presence of vehicles and seemed calm as we observed them.





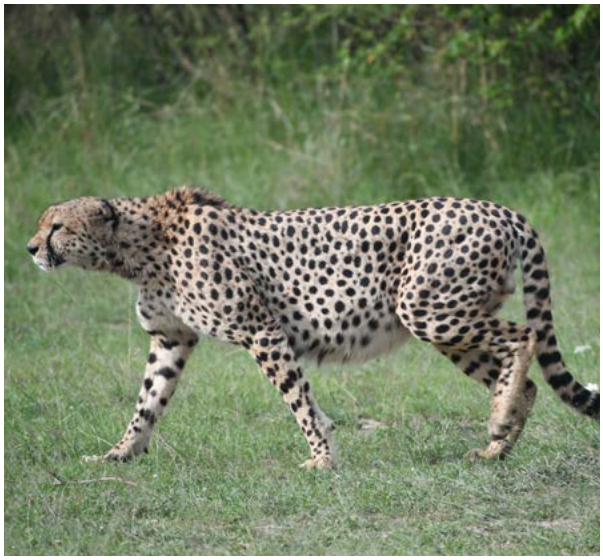
Naboisho Male/ Olope

We first encountered this male in 2022 in Olkinyei Conservancy, but even getting just a single photo of him was nearly impossible because he would run the moment he saw us drive towards him. Additionally, he preferred the bushes and hilly areas keeping a low profile, avoiding us for a very long time.

He was frequently sighted in Olkinyei and Naboisho conservancies, and this is where the rangers and guides named him Olope, which is Maa for alert. He started getting more and more friendly towards vehicles and even started hanging out more often in open areas as compared to before.

Olonyok

At almost 11 years of age, Olonyok, the last member of the once Five Musketeers aka Tano Bora, has lived up to his name, which in Maa means the hardworking one. Despite losing his coalition partner Winda in March this year, many were uncertain for Olonyok's future, with many odds now against him. Despite his old age, he has adapted to solitary life even changing hunting tactics like switching larger prey out with medium sized antelopes and even occasionally sharing kills with other predators like hyenas and other cheetahs. Hopefully, these new tactics will add a few more years to this legendary cheetah male.





Olarro Males

We became aware of this coalition of two males in Olarro conservancy in December last year, and the rangers described them as very shy and as they preferred staying in bushes rather than in open areas. We were lucky to observe them firsthand this year, and they still appear to be shy.

The males are around four years old, and they have come from the community areas on the eastern sides towards the Loita plains. They seem to have made Olarro Conservancy their territory, which overlaps with Nabaya's home range.

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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