

PREDATOR POST

LION TAILS

JUNE 2025



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



DISPERSING TOPI MALES

A coalition of dispersing Topi males has firmly settled down on the Musiara Marsh and Bila Shaka area, and day by day, they are transforming into a formidable force within this historic lion territory. The seven sub-adults Ukingo, Otipo, Moja Moja, Kiongozi, Vuli, Nzuri and Djodjo have often been staying together, except for Autumn's son, Vuli, who is somewhat detached from the others, only joining them occasionally.

This separation usually raises curiosity about whether he will integrate with the coalition or make his own path.

Since moving to the Musiara general area, these sub-adults have shown power and great resilience, from pushing out the Six Pack coalition, who are commonly known as the Bila Shaka males, standing ground and chasing off male intruders like the four Enkoyanai males, who made a brief visit to the area, to continuing to survive in a tough territory that is prone to human-wildlife conflicts. They have also been mating with the Marsh Pride females, and we hope to see their offspring soon.

SALAS PRIDE

The Salas Main Pride and the Salas Breakaway Pride spend roughly half of their time in the Maasai Mara National Reserve and the other half in the Serengeti, Tanzania. The Salas Breakaway Pride continues to utilise areas around Sand River, Elewana Camp, and the ODM Tower.

The two Kaskas males, Bron and Omokale, from the Serengeti have now taken control of a few females from this pride and have sired four cubs across two age classes. Meanwhile, four other females from the same pride have been bonding with and mating with two males born from the Oloolaimutia Pride. These males are frequently seen between Elewana Camp, Sand River Camp, and Black Rock.





RIP DADA

The Marsh pride has been hit by another big loss recently with Dada's death. Dada succumbed in the early hours of 11th May to an attack by other lions the previous night. Dada's death was tragic, as she had just given birth to what was to be the first offspring of the Topi sub-adult males.

We believe that Dada, as an experienced lioness, might have paid the ultimate price defending

her cubs from the uncertainty among the Topi sub-adult males, unsure whether Dada's cubs were their own, a common confusion among young males that may have led to a fatal confrontation.

That morning, one of the Topi males, Nzuri, was seen with a fresh injury on his lower left lip, suggesting a violent clash had taken place. Dada's littermate was Yaya, both born in 2012 to the legendary Siena and the Musketeers. Dada has been a symbol of strength and resilience and a much-loved member of the iconic Marsh Pride.

Rest in peace, Dada.

SAUSAGE/ OWINO PRIDE

The Sausage Pride, also commonly known as the Owino Pride, originated from females of the Mugoro Pride and has faced numerous challenges, particularly due to overlapping territories with the Oloololo females and the Egyptian Goose Pride. Their situation worsened when the Serena North Pride (Paradise Pride) crossed the river and occupied their territory, followed by the arrival of the Six-Pack males. These males took over this pride, sired cubs, and later abandoned them.

At the beginning of this year, the Sausage pride seemed to have reduced to just two adult females and four cubs. Unfortunately, one of the adult females was killed following a confrontation with the Egyptian Goose females. We recently sighted the remaining adult female, who is still caring for the four cubs, and they all appear to be doing well.



ORKURET AND SANKAI MALE (LEMONIKO)

“Collars for Conservation” is one of the key objectives of our programme. Orkuret, a male lion born in the Oldikdik pride, is currently collared. He has recently shown significant movements between the Maasai Mara National Reserve and Olare-Motorogi Conservancy.



Orkuret has formed a coalition with a male from the Sankai pride, and together they appear to be nomadic. Collar data reveals Orkuret’s movement patterns as he searches for new territory while strategically avoiding areas dominated by established males. He has also been sighted courting several females, including Samara, a Figtree female, Naponono from the Enkuyanai pride in Olare-Motorogi, Jua from the Topi pride and Kito from the Marsh pride in the National Reserve.

Notably, the coalition has been avoiding the Topi pride’s territory, likely due to the presence of the dominant Salas males in that area.



ILKISIAUSIAU PRIDE

The Ilkisiausiau Pride is the biggest lion pride in Naboisho Conservancy. However, since late last year, the pride has split into two distinct groups. One group moved north, settling along the Olesere Stream and the Osuguroi area, while the other remained within the core Ilkisiausiau territory, occasionally extending their range toward the Mara Nyika Camp area.

Despite the separation, both groups were initially under the control of the same dominant males, Limpy and Bully from the Maji ya Fisi coalition. Recently, however, the Lemek males, a formidable coalition from Olare Motorogi Conservancy, have begun a gradual but aggressive takeover of the ‘Enoolera-Ormasiligi’ group. This group, consisting of around 20 lions including young cubs, has suffered the brutal consequences of this power shift. The Lemek males recently killed a sub-adult male and seriously injured another. Tragically, they also killed one of the six five-month-old cubs, leaving only five survivors.

In contrast, the northern group that moved to the Olesere area is faring significantly better. Now numbering over 30 individuals, they continue to benefit from the strong presence and protection of Limpy and Bully, who remain with them. This group includes 11 sub-adults nearing one year of age and three young cubs. Due to their size and strength, they occasionally break off into sub-groups, ranging as far as the Payia area and sometimes appearing near the Naboisho airstrip.

SAMPU ENKARE BREAKAWAY PRIDE

This pride originally split from the main Sampu Enkare pride in Naboisho. Initially, it ranged between Naboisho and Ol Kinyei conservancies. However, since last year, it has primarily settled within Ol Kinyei.



The pride is now fully under the control of the two Ilkisiusiu males, Lembalang and Ole Cook. Currently, the pride consists of 36+ individuals, including adult females, sub-adults, and cubs. The oldest females, Nentubiu, Napono, and Leyai, the original three breakaway females, are set to turn eleven years old by the end of this year.

The pride is frequently observed displaying fission-fusion dynamics, where it breaks into smaller groups before regrouping again. A remarkable recent observation was the discovery of four adult females from the 2021 litter, who are currently lactating eight young cubs, sired by the two Ilkisiusiu males.

OLOISUKUT/ PUSI NKARIAK PRIDE



This pride is currently led by two core females, Komeyian and her sister, who have gradually expanded their territory from the Pusi Nkariak area to the Mpata Safari club general area along the Oloololo Escarpment. Over the past two years, the pride has grown to 11 individuals, comprising two sub-adult males and seven sub-adult females. Recently, the two adult lionesses gave birth to nine cubs, sired by males from the Oloisukut coalition, whom we call the Enonkishu males, as we first sighted them in Enonkishu Conservancy.

Unfortunately, one of the sub-adults died earlier this year after consuming a poisoned wildebeest near community settlements. The Oloisukut Pride has also been preying on livestock during the day, particularly when herders drive their livestock deep into the conservancy. Such behaviour significantly increases the risk of human-predator conflict and potential retaliatory attacks. Monitoring this pride presents logistical challenges due to the rugged, densely vegetated terrain within their range, which limits direct observations.

Most sightings rely on reports from conservancy rangers, and their expansive home range complicates regular tracking efforts. Currently, only one adult male remains with the pride, following the death of his coalition partner in a territorial conflict with the Enkuyanai males. It could prove difficult for this male to retain his control over the growing Oloisukut Pride, keeping the cubs safe.

ISANCHU PRIDE (MAJI YA FISI BREAKAWAY)

The Isanchu Pride is a breakaway group from the original Maji ya Fisi Pride, which was initially composed of 13 adult females. In 2017, three of these females disappeared from the main pride and remained missing for an extended period.



We found the three females in 2023 within Nashulai Conservancy together with Olopi and his coalition partner. It was at this point that the group was named the Isanchu Pride, a name derived from the conservancies they were utilising, Isaaten and Nashulai. Among the pride is Nailois, recognisable by the MPCP collar. Recently, several members of the pride have been sighted around the JW Marriott area, where they now appear to have established themselves. The pride currently consists of five adult females, ten cubs, and two new pride males, Lorkinyei and Mzee.

It's no surprise that some of the females have retraced their steps towards familiar territory, a common trait observed in lionesses returning to their natal ranges. With no immediate threat from rival males in the vicinity, the pride is well-positioned to thrive.

OLOOLAIMUTIA (SOPA) BREAKAWAY PRIDE (KENYA-TANZANIA BORDER)

Following the unfortunate poisoning incident near the Kenya-Tanzania border early this year, where at least five lions from this pride died, including Osopia, a collared territorial male, we have recently found the remaining members of the pride. These include at least four adult females, six cubs, and two territorial males. Osopia's coalition partner, who was treated after the poisoning, has disappeared and has not been seen in recent sightings of the pride.



Currently, the pride is under the control of Mdogo and Osidai, who are nomads from Mugoro/Hamerkop nomads and who until recently controlled the Oloolaimutia Pride. Interestingly, these new males have shown an unusual level of tolerance toward the cubs sired by Osopia and his partner, and we have sighted the cubs interacting playfully with the males. This behaviour deviates from the common pattern where incoming males typically commit infanticide to bring females back into estrus and sire their own set of cubs. Encouragingly, the pride seems to be doing well, especially with the high abundance of prey in the area, particularly with the wildebeest migration currently approaching.

However, the continued influx of livestock into the Reserve from both Tanzania and Kenya remains a serious concern. There is an ongoing risk of livestock depredation, which could lead to more retaliatory attacks on lions, as previously witnessed, despite the efforts made by the National Reserve sector rangers.

LEMUNY PRIDE

Naramat and Nempiris, born in 2014, are the oldest females in this pride. They originally split from the Enesikia Pride, together with the late Sero, in Naboisho Conservancy in 2018. The Lemuny Pride has an interesting and complex history, having endured multiple instances of infanticide over four cub generations.



Various male coalitions have temporarily taken over the pride, sired cubs, and were then ousted by younger, stronger males, typically originating from the National Reserve or neighbouring conservancies. Naramat and Nempiris had their first successful litter in 2021. Currently, four of their daughters are lactating, and two of their sons have begun establishing themselves in Olarro Conservancy. Naramat is currently nursing four tiny cubs, just over a month old.

Remarkably, Naramat and Nempiris have made history by welcoming their next generation of cubs sired by the three Ol Kinyei East males.



SERIAN PRIDE

The Serian Pride comprises eight adult females and nine cubs spanning three different age classes. Nairoshi, the oldest female in the pride will turn fourteen in July. The pride primarily utilises the northern part of the conservancy, ranging from Karen Blixen Camp to the Aitong–Mara Rianda main road, including areas around Mara North Conservancy (MNC) headquarters and along the Mara River. The pride is currently under the control of the Enkuyanai coalition,

which consists of the four males Saningo, Mwana, Enkong'u, and Lenkoe. This coalition has effectively defended the pride's territory against repeated incursions by rival males, particularly from the adjacent Oloisukut and Lemek Conservancies. Recently, the Enkuyanai males were involved in a territorial fight with two intruding males from the Oloisukut Conservancy.

During the altercation, one of the Oloisukut males was cornered while the other managed to escape. The Enkuyanai coalition fatally killed the cornered male. Interestingly, following the kill, one of the Enkuyanai males was observed feeding on the carcass and dragging it into nearby bushes, an unusual behaviour of cannibalism.

