

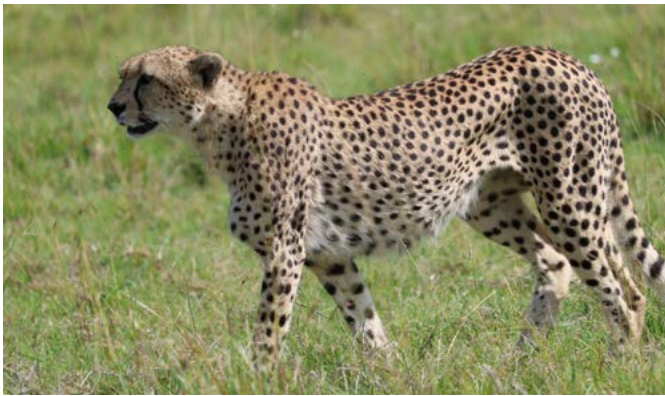
PREDATOR POST

CHEETAH CHAT - 28TH EDITION

APRIL - 2026



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



Milele

Milele, one of Kiraposhe's sons and brother to Mbili, continues to thrive as a dominant roaming male across a vast landscape. Unlike many males that settle into defined territories, Milele has maintained an exceptionally large range, frequently moving across Olchorro, Lemek, Mara North, OMC and the National Reserve. From an early stage, Milele and his brother Mbili

showed strong potential, growing into powerful hunters capable of taking down large prey such as wildebeest and zebra. Their movements initially centered around Mara North and Lemek, but over time, and after the loss of his brother, Milele expanded far beyond these areas, becoming one of the most mobile resident males in the ecosystem.

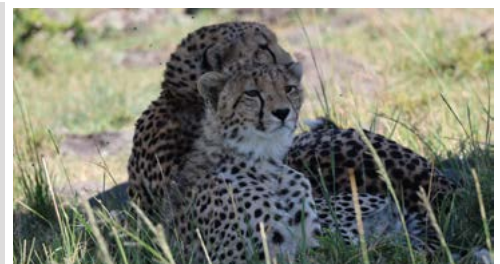
Late last year he intruded into the territory of Olonyok, the remaining member of the once-famous Tano Bora coalition. This resulted in a confrontation, highlighting the risks Milele faces as a roaming male moving through established territories. Despite such high-risk encounters, he has continued to survive and maintain his expansive movements.

Kulete and Sadala

Kulete and her 11-month-old son, Sadala (meaning "playful one" in Maa), continue to do well in Mara North Conservancy. It is quite interesting that Kulete has remained confined within Mara North Conservancy for the entire 11 months while raising Sadala.

This is unusual, as cheetahs with cubs typically move across different conservancies to familiarise cubs with a larger ranging area and to different types of landscapes.

Looking back at Kulete's past movements, she has not always been this restricted in her range. As a mother with her past litters, she showed more typical cheetah movement patterns, moving between OMC, Naboisho, Mara North and even briefly into the National Reserve before



returning to the conservancies.

Sadala is now approaching a critical stage of dispersal in his life. On average, young cheetahs in the Mara ecosystem disperse around 16 months of age. This means that in the coming months, Sadala will begin his journey into independence. His dispersal will be an important phase to monitor, as it will reveal his dispersal range, survival strategies, and whether he remains within the Mara landscape or ventures into new areas.



Nasieku

Nasieku is one of Nashipae's daughters, who dispersed together with her littermates in the first quarter of 2025. After a few months, the three sisters went their separate ways, each beginning their solitary life, fortunately settling in different parts of the Reserve.

Nasieku established herself in the southern section of the Reserve and has since been regularly sighted across Keekorok, Daraja ya Pili, Enkeiwua, Sand River, and the Oololaimutia stretch. Earlier this year, she was observed denning around the Daraja ya Pili area. Unfortunately, she lost her litter while they were still in the lair.

This was Nasieku's first litter, and as is often the case with first-time mothers, the odds were heavily stacked against her. The challenges facing cheetah cubs during the denning phase are immense, and survival rates at this stage remain critically low.

Cub recruitment continues to be one of the biggest challenges for cheetahs in the Mara ecosystem. It is a key driver behind the concerning decline in cheetah numbers across the landscape, highlighting the urgent need for continued monitoring, protection, and conservation efforts

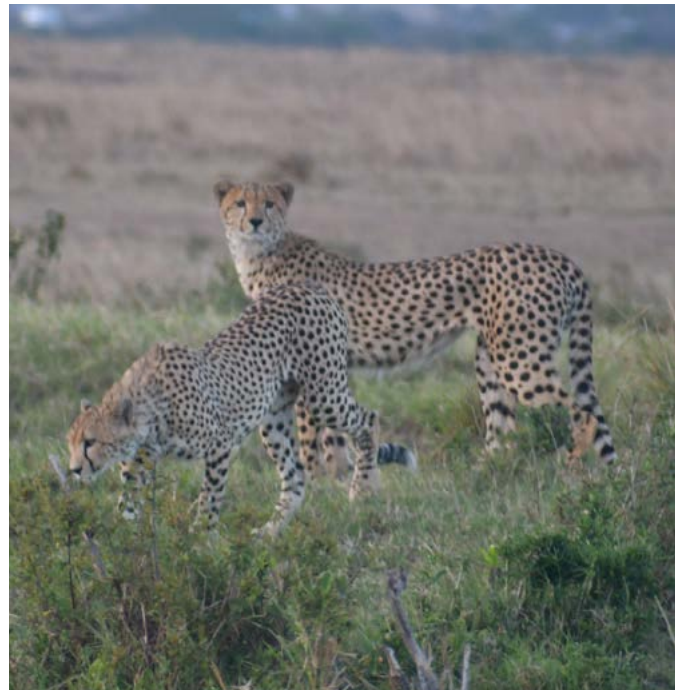
Two shy males

We first sighted two males in November last year around the Simba area. At the time, they were extremely shy, often retreating into bushes whenever vehicles approached. They spent a few days within the Reserve, moving across the plains but appearing very unsettled in their movements. This behaviour strongly suggested that they had recently dispersed from an area with minimal vehicle interaction.

This is a pattern we often observe with newly arrived males in the Mara ecosystem. Initial sightings are usually rare, as they tend to keep a low profile while navigating unfamiliar territory, adapting to the high density of tourism vehicles, and simultaneously searching for suitable vacant areas to establish themselves.

We encountered the two males again in early February. Although still cautious, they were noticeably more tolerant of vehicles compared to their first sighting, indicating gradual habituation.

The continued arrival of dispersing males into the Mara ecosystem is a positive sign for the cheetah population, as it contributes to genetic diversity and long-term stability. However, the sex ratio, particularly the low number of females, remains a significant limiting factor, making it difficult for the overall population to grow.





Nabaya's subs

Nabaya's sub-adults, Naanyu and Nalala, dispersed in January this year and were first sighted in Isaaten Conservancy shortly after leaving their natal range in Olarro Conservancy. Following dispersal, they moved across Isaaten and Siana Conservancies before entering the National Reserve through the Oololaimutia Hills.

By late January, they were observed in the high-use zones of the Reserve. Guides described them as shy, behaviour likely shaped by their upbringing in Olarro Conservancy, where tourist vehicle disturbance is minimal. In such an environment, they could go for months without encountering a single vehicle. The sudden exposure to heavy tourism pressure in the Reserve likely made them uncomfortable, which could explain why they did not remain there for long.

Over the past two months, the pair has been ranging between Olarro, Ripoi, Olkinyei, and most recently into Naboisho Conservancy, as well as the surrounding community lands. They are still together for now, but this bond is temporary, and they will soon go their separate ways. Nalala will eventually disperse further in search of a vacant territory. Males often travel significant distances away from their natal range.

Naanyu, on the other hand, is more likely to establish her home range within the conservancies. If successful, she could play an important role in strengthening the Mara's declining resident female cheetah population.

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