

PREDATOR POST

LION TAILS

APRIL 2026



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



ISANCHU PRIDE

The Isanchu pride, mainly known by guides as Simba Pride, originated as a breakaway group from the Maji ya Fisi pride. Following their dispersal to Nashulai and Isaaten Conservancies, they became known as the Isanchu pride.

The group was initially founded by two adult females, Nailois and Nairoshi who left their natal pride with three cubs born in 2019 and has since grown significantly, now comprising more than 15 individuals.

The pride is currently under the control of two dominant males, Lorkinyei and Mzee, who have collectively sired more than ten cubs, contributing to the rapid growth of the pride. The Isanchu pride is expanding its range from the Mara Simba area into the Fig Tree and Rongai pride territories.

This has pushed the Fig Tree Pride toward settlement areas and into Olerai and Naboisho Conservancies

TOPI CORE PRIDE

The Topi Core Pride, now consisting of adult females Dunia, Jua, Moto, and Nyota, alongside the three subadults (Jua's two sons and Moto's daughter), appears to have firmly settled within OMC. Their current movement patterns have been shaped primarily by two key factors: the movements of their pride males, the Salas Boys, and prey availability.



At one point, the Salas Boys shifted southeast of the original Topi Pride territory, frequenting areas like Ng'weng'eny, just about a kilometre from OMC. This movement was likely a behavioural strategy to avoid mating with their own daughters that had dispersed nearby.

In May last year, the Salas Boys made their first major push into OMC. This incursion, however, came at a cost, with Orkitok being killed in a territorial confrontation. Following this, the Topi Pride began gradually shifting toward the border areas, following the movements of their pride males. By late last year, this transition became more permanent, with the pride fully crossing into OMC.

Recent sightings now place them deep inside OMC, particularly within the former Moniko Pride range, indicating a strong establishment in this new territory. One of the biggest drivers behind this settlement is likely prey abundance. OMC offers a significantly richer and more stable prey base compared to the National Reserve, where the Topi lions previously relied heavily on more demanding and risky prey such as buffalo, as well as opportunistic feeding on warthogs and occasionally livestock.



CHELI SUB MALES

The six Cheli born males continue to rise as a dominant coalition in Mara North Conservancy (MNC). They have already sired cubs with the Offbeat Pride and are actively involved in protecting and raising them alongside the pride females. The other five males have now been named by Mara North guides as Lorpapit, Oloisiriri, Bahati, Mkia and Osero.

What makes this coalition particularly fascinating is their clear ambition to expand by taking advantage of their coalition size. The Cheli males have pushed beyond their core territory, crossing into Olare-Motorogi Conservancy (OMC) where they have successfully taken over both the Oldikdik Pride and, more recently, the Engoyanai Pride. Their presence has already been marked by mating activity with females from both prides, an early sign of their intent to firmly establish themselves in these new territories.

A major highlight in their expansion came during a recent encounter with Olepolos, one of the renowned Salas males. The confrontation, which occurred within Engoyanai territory, was intense and aggressive, an inevitable clash between a rising power and established legacy. Fortunately, no serious injuries were reported on either side. If the six males continue to stay together as a coalition, they could reshape lion dynamics across Mara North and OMC in the coming months.

THE REMAINING SANKAI MALE

Kini was born in 2017 in Olare-Motorogi Conservancy to the Sankai Pride. Originally, he was part of a coalition of five males, but now is the last one standing. Together with his brothers, mainly Lemurt and Seenka, they remained with the Lemek pride for a considerable period, fathering multiple cubs across different litters. A strong bond between the coalition brothers has been evident over the years as they moved together across territories, covering Ol Chorro and Enonkishu conservancies and even dipping into Mara North Conservancy. Lemurt however disappeared and Kini was left with his other brother Seenka.



Kini and Seenka intruded into Mara North conservancy in an attempt to expand their territory but unfortunately, they encountered the four Engoyanai males and were forced to retreat to Lemek Conservancy. They made a second attempt and this time the Engoyanai males had moved back to Oloisukut conservancy but still the two males crossed paths with the remaining Iseketa male Oronkai whom they fought. Fortunately, Oronkai escaped with only minor injuries.

A few months later the four Engoyanai males returned to Lemek Conservancy and killed Seenka in the most recent hostile territorial fight, leaving Kini as the remaining male of the former Sankai boys coalition. He is now a nomadic male, keeping a low profile yet hoping to team up with another male.



BLACK ROCK DISPERSING SUB-ADULTS

Earlier this year, four sub-adult males and three sub-adult females separated from the main pride. These dispersing individuals have since been ranging around Julie Ward, the First and Second Bridges, Enkewa Camp, and the Sand River Gate.

In a recent sighting, a female born in 2017 made a warthog kill approximately 200 metres from the sub-adults. However, the kill was quickly taken over by a clan of hyenas that overpowered her. The sub-adults later joined the females, although we observed that the females showed little tolerance toward the sub-adults, mainly because of the small cubs in the pride.

At present, a coalition controls the three prides, maintaining dominance and contributing to the continued stability and genetic diversity within the region's lion population.

FIG TREE PRIDE

The Fig Tree pride has moved on from their original territory after an intrusion by the Isancho pride. Following this, the pride has become increasingly mobile, moving between Olerai and Naboisho conservancies, the Mpuai area, and more recently spending a significant amount of time within the community area of Ngila.



The pride currently consists of two adult females, Sukari (who is collared) and Samara, along with three cubs. This is not their first time moving between the Reserve and Olerai Conservancy, using settlement areas as movement corridors.

Notably, the two adult females have increasingly come into conflict with the local community. They are reported to prey on livestock within Ngila on an almost daily basis when occupying the area, raising concerns about human-wildlife conflict in the area.



KWS PRIDE

The KWS pride is currently under the control of the four Molibany born males, Oinoti, Letipat, Oloju, and Oldungoret. Monitoring and sightings of this pride have proven to be challenging due to their preference for rugged and largely inaccessible hilly terrain.

The KWS Pride has recently split into two groups. One group has moved toward Enkewua Camp via the Mlima ya Faru area, while the remaining individuals are primarily found around the WRTI Research Station. There is occasional territorial overlap between the KWS pride and the Black Rock pride, which is currently ranging around the Mlima ya Faru area.

No cubs have been recorded in the pride during recent sightings, which may have implications for the group's current reproductive status. The WRTI Research Station sub-group ranges between the Golf area and Kisenja area, using this corridor for movement and hunting. However, their presence within these zones has occasionally resulted in livestock predation incidents.

In response to the increasing risk of human-wildlife conflict, one of the adult females, Nasha, was fitted with a tracking collar. This intervention is intended to support monitoring efforts and enable timely management actions aimed at reducing cattle predation and mitigating conflict with local communities.

SERENA RONGAI PRIDE

The Serena Rongai pride currently consists of 13 individuals and is under the control of the remaining Black Rock male, Oloiminā.

This pride has significantly shifted its territory, now spending more time around Pose plains on the Ishara

side, Kananga area, Olkiombo area and even recently sighted at the Rhino Ridge area which was originally a Topi pride area.

Notably, the six subadult females have dispersed from the main pride forming a breakaway group. This splinter group is now ranging independently, occupying an extensive area from Maji ya Fisi through Piyayoi and Rongai Streams which forms a large part of their natal territory.





A GROUP OF THREE FEMALES FROM THE SALAS BREAKAWAY PRIDE

The three females were born in 2022 and dispersed and settled south of their natal territory. They occasionally move between the Serengeti and the Sand River area.

Last year, they were intermittently sighted near the Sand River Gate and Rocky Valley areas, and it appears they are gradually expanding their territory toward the Keekorok closed area.

This region had previously been left vacant after the Black Rock pride shifted eastward within their territory, likely due to the presence of four Oloolamutia males and the Sand River Border males, Ormawoi, Bare Nose and Lemayian. In our most recent observation, we sighted the three females spending more time with the Sand River Border males, mating, hunting and feeding together.

LEDAMA AND LETEIPA

Leteipa and his brother Ledama were born in Olare-Motorogi Conservancy's Iseketa pride in 2021. They dispersed and traversed several lion territories in Mara North Conservancy and eventually settled in Olchorro and Enonkishu conservancies with a breakaway group from the Lemek Pride, where they have already sired cubs.

Kini and Seenka collided with the two males in Olchorro Conservancy and chased them away, but the younger males managed to escape safely.

Leteipa and Ledama spend a lot of their time within Naretoi, which is situated just adjacent to Enonkishu Conservancy. We hope the two males will manage to stay with their pride, successfully raising cubs and avoid conflict with the powerful Engoyanai males.



