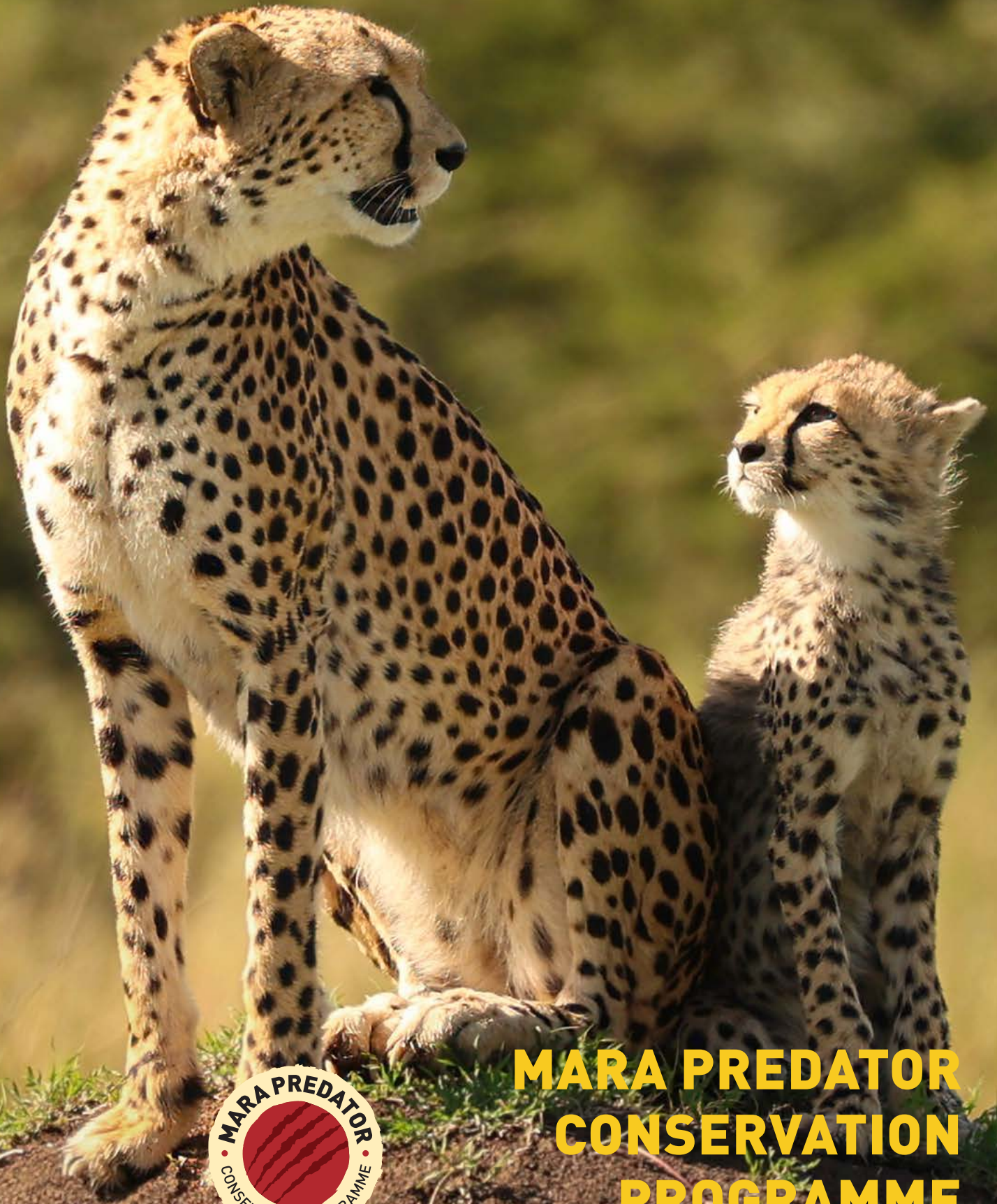


Q1 2026 UPDATED LION & CHEETAH FIGURES



**MARA PREDATOR
CONSERVATION
PROGRAMME**

We are pleased to present updated lion and cheetah figures from the 2025 survey period, which spanned from August 1 to October 31. This is our 12th consecutive year of providing accurate density estimates of lions and cheetahs. Our results are based on the outputs from our Spatial Explicit Capture-Recapture (SECR) framework.

Lions

New lion figures

Table 1 shows estimates for lion density, abundance, and sex ratio for lions over the age of one year in the Maasai Mara (National Reserve and the surrounding wildlife conservancies) for 2024 and 2025. We have been conducting consecutive annual lion surveys in the Maasai Mara since 2014.

Our study area has increased over the years, which has enabled us to calculate lion densities over a larger area. We have identified fluctuations in lion population size and spatial distribution trends.

This year's results show a slight increase to the previous year's estimate, from 16.5 to 17.5 lions > 1 year/100 km².

Lions	2024	2025
Study area (km ²)	2,713	2,713
Lion Density	16.5	17.5
Lion Abundance	465	481
Sex ratio (F:M)	1.76	3.3

Table 1: Lion density is given as lions/100km² > 1-year-old, lion abundance is lions > 1 year old, sex ratio is female to male

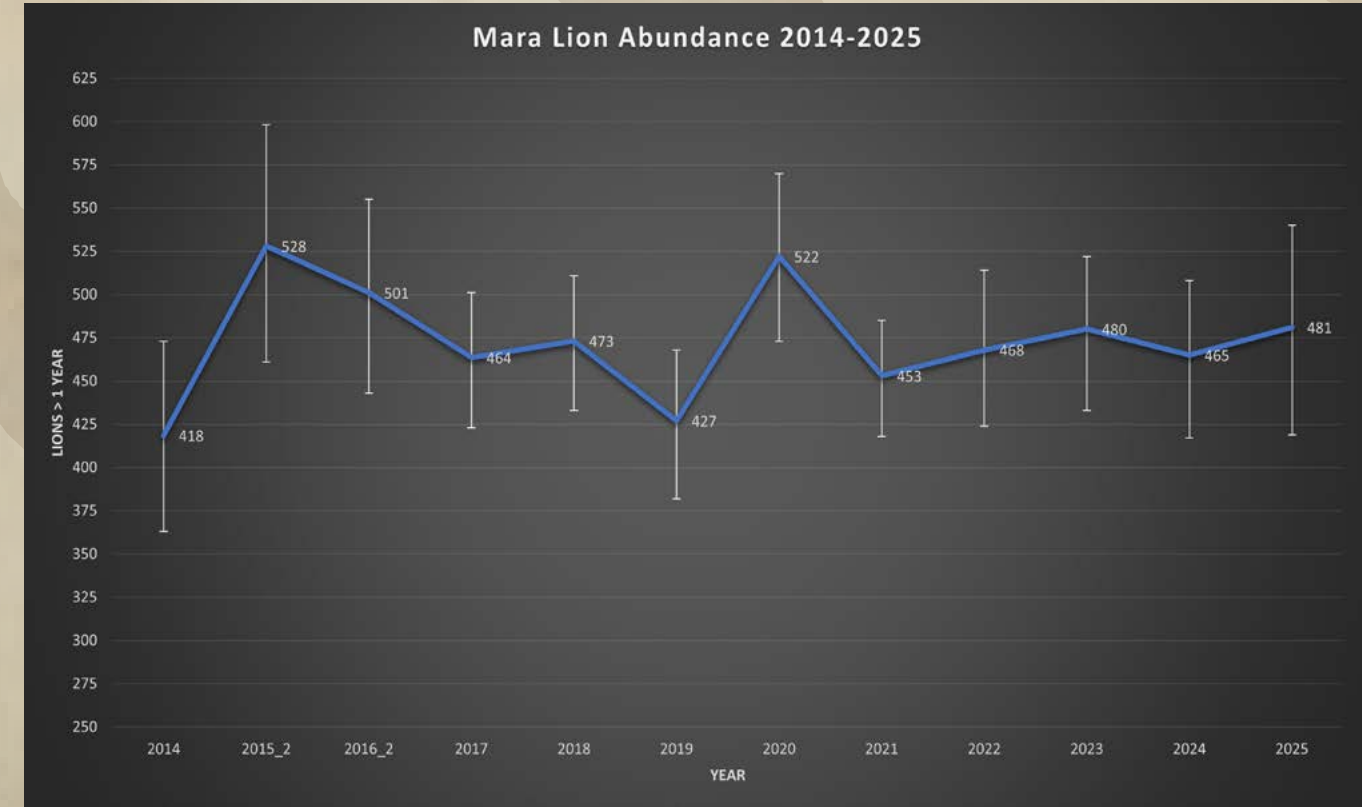


Figure 1. Mara lion abundance from 2014-2025. NB! 2015 figures are preliminary. Error bars represent the upper and lower limits.

Table 2 shows lion density and abundance for the respective management units.

Wildlife area	Abundance		Density	
	2024	2025	2024	2025
Enonkishu	5	3	18.38	12.31
Lemek	16	10	25.75	16.61
Mara North	50	55	17.07	18.56
Naboisho	33	52	15.88	25.01
Olarro	3	2	10.03	8.02
Ripoi	9	11	16.70	19.68
Ol Chorro	6	5	10.53	9.20
Olderikesi	4	5	10.38	12.69
Ol Kinyei	15	19	22.57	28.56
Olare-Motorogi	36	32	24.09	21.98
Siana	4	6	10.89	17.68
Isaaten	2	4	8.72	16.91
Nashulai	3	4	7.47	10.93
Olerai	2	2	12.95	16.93
Oloisukut	13	17	12.87	16.48
Mara Triangle	71	72	14.42	14.67
MMNR	195	183	18.51	17.32

Table 2: Lion abundance > 1 year and density > 1year/100km² for the different management units for 2024 vs 2025

During our survey period, Ol Kinyei Conservancy had the highest lion density, followed by Naboisho and Olare-Motorogi Conservancies. These three conservancies all had densities over 20 lions > 1 year/100 km².

The 2025 lion densities can be viewed as a heat map as shown in figure 2.

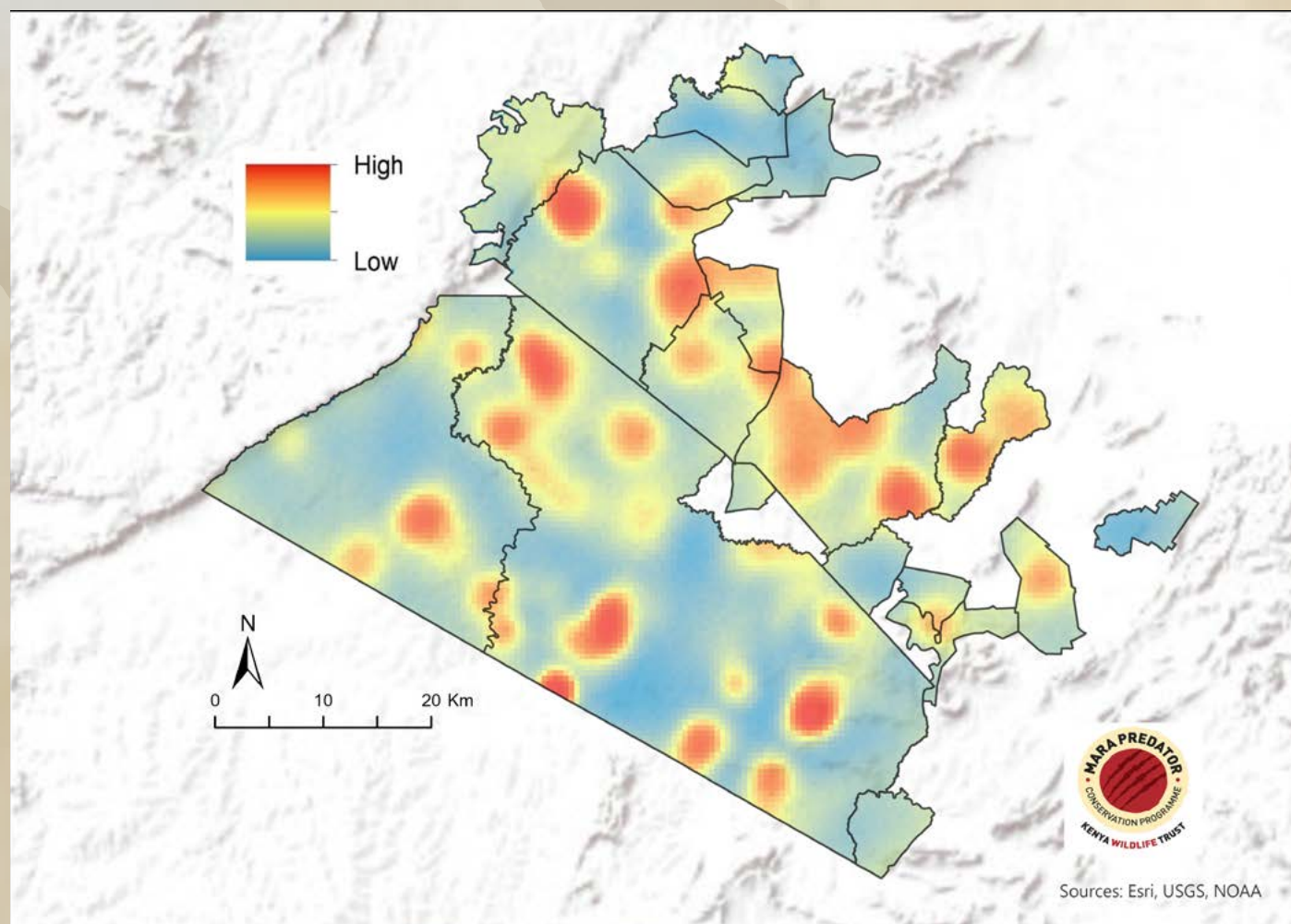


Figure 2. Lion density heat map.

The 2025 survey confirms the Maasai Mara as one of Kenya's most important lion strongholds. Estimated density increased slightly to 17.5 lions (>1 year) per 100 km², with a total abundance of 481 individuals, continuing recent patterns of stability. In a landscape under increasing human pressure and land-use change, this suggests that lion numbers have remained stable despite increasing pressures across the landscape.

A notable result is a shift in the estimated sex ratio to approximately 3.3 females per male, up from 1.7 in 2024, indicating a substantially lower proportion of adult males in the population. This pattern may reflect increased male mortality, potentially associated with human-wildlife conflict, retaliatory killing, territorial competition, or the risks associated with dispersal.

If sustained, a reduced proportion of adult males could have important demographic consequences, including increased pride instability, more frequent male takeovers, elevated rates of infanticide, and reduced cub survival. Continued monitoring of male survival and coalition dynamics will be important to determine whether this pattern persists and to better understand its underlying drivers.

Community conservancies remain central to lion conservation, supporting densities comparable to the National Reserve and maintaining habitat connectivity. However, these shared landscapes also present ongoing challenges where lions overlap with livestock and human activity.

While lion abundance remains stable at the ecosystem scale, ongoing analyses indicate substantial spatial variation in survival and mortality, highlighting the importance of continued monitoring and targeted management. The spatial outputs from this survey provide a strong basis for targeted management by identifying areas of high and low lion density and linking them to conflict hotspots. This supports prioritisation of conflict mitigation, community engagement, and interventions in high-risk areas.

Overall, the 2025 survey indicates that the Mara lion population remains stable at the ecosystem scale. Maintaining this stability will depend on continued monitoring, collaboration among stakeholders, and proactive management of emerging pressures across protected and community lands.

Continued financial and institutional support will be essential to maintain and build on these successes.

Cheetahs

New cheetah figures

Table 3 shows estimates for cheetah density, abundance and sex ratio for independent resident adult cheetahs in the Maasai Mara (National Reserve and the surrounding wildlife conservancies) for 2024 and 2025.

Resident independent cheetahs	2024	2025
Study area (km ²)	2,713	2,713
Cheetah Density	0.44	0.6
Cheetah Abundance	12	16
Sex ratio (M:F)	0.55	0.78

Table 3: Cheetah density is given as independent individuals/100km2, cheetah abundance is for independent individuals, sex ratio is males to females.

The table reveals a slight increase in the resident Mara cheetah population. It is important to note that this number reflects the cheetahs that were resident during the survey period, August to October, and does not include transient cheetahs who pass through the system and cheetahs who are partial residents.

The total number of cheetahs using the Mara over an entire year is much higher than the here provided figure. Regardless, the resident Mara cheetah population continues to be concerningly low, and we are especially lacking adult females, as is reflected in the female abundance figure (figure 3).

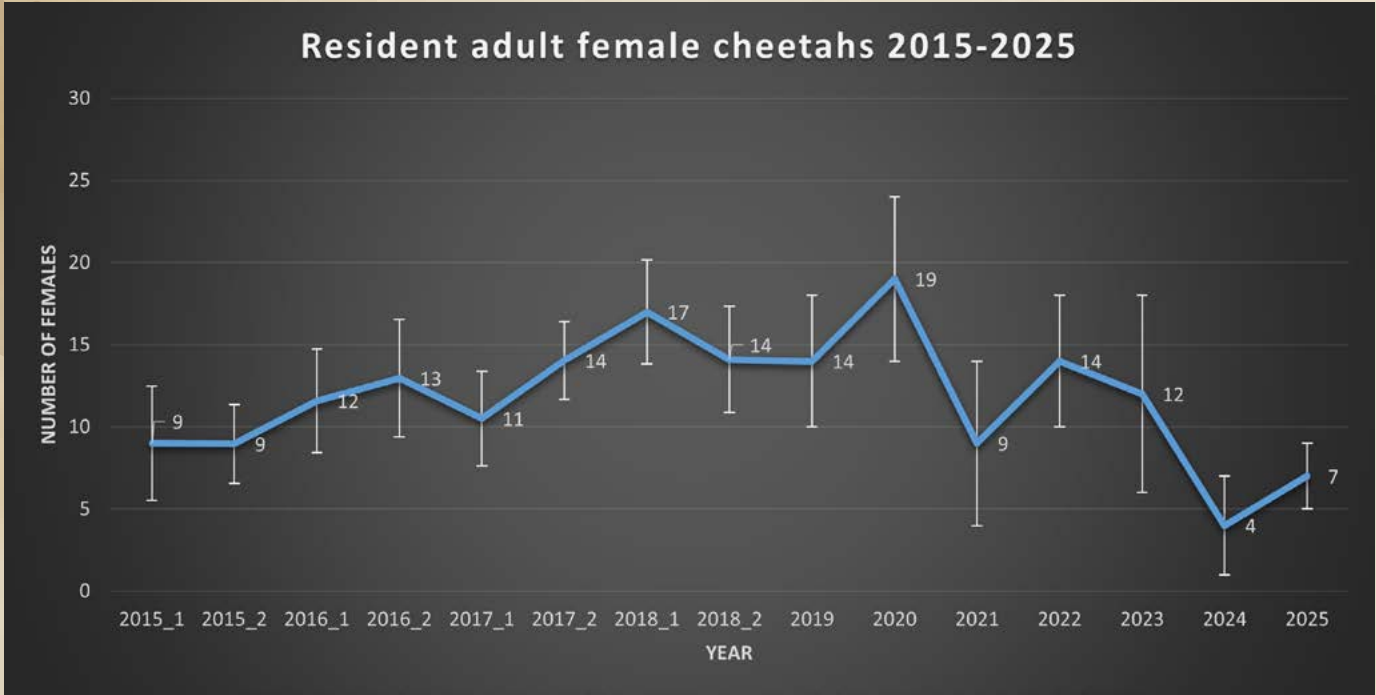


Figure 3. This graph shows the number of resident adult females. It is evident that there has been a downward trend of fewer adult females in the Mara. Please note that although the number in the early years of the survey are also on the lower side, the study area was smaller and hence the density were therefore higher.

We have conducted a comprehensive analysis of cheetah densities spanning the years 2014 to 2025, including biannual surveys from 2015 to 2018, as depicted in Figure 4. The availability of long-term datasets is paramount for examining population trends effectively. It is important to recognise that due to the inherently low population densities of cheetahs, coupled with small sample sizes, any sudden increase or decrease in cheetah numbers, such as during a disease outbreak, can lead to significant fluctuations within the population.

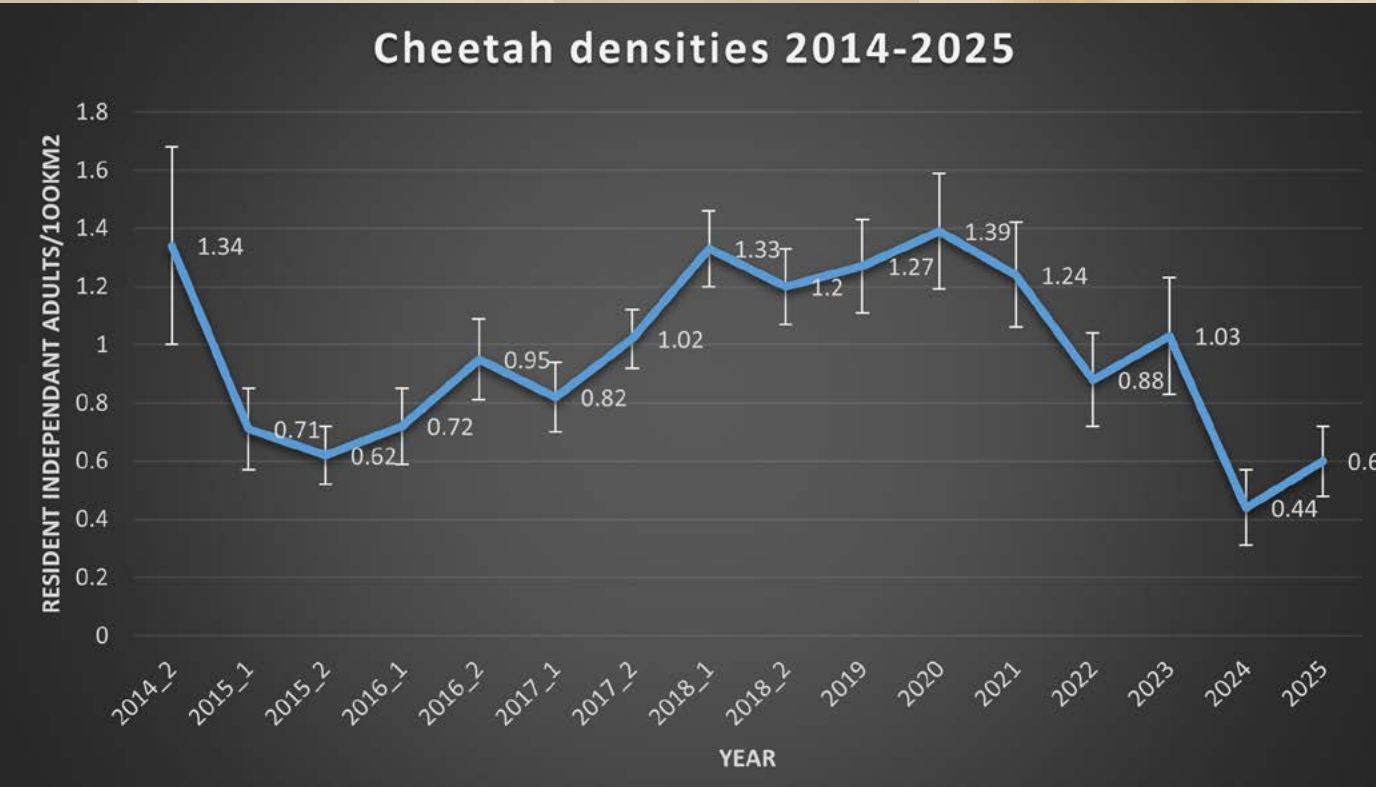


Figure 4: This graph shows cheetah abundance (error bars represent standard deviations) from 2014-2025. There was one survey in 2014 and from 2019-2023 (01August-31October), and two surveys in 2015-2018 (01February-30April & 01August-31October).

As with the lion data, we have produced a cheetah density heat map illustrated in Figure 5.

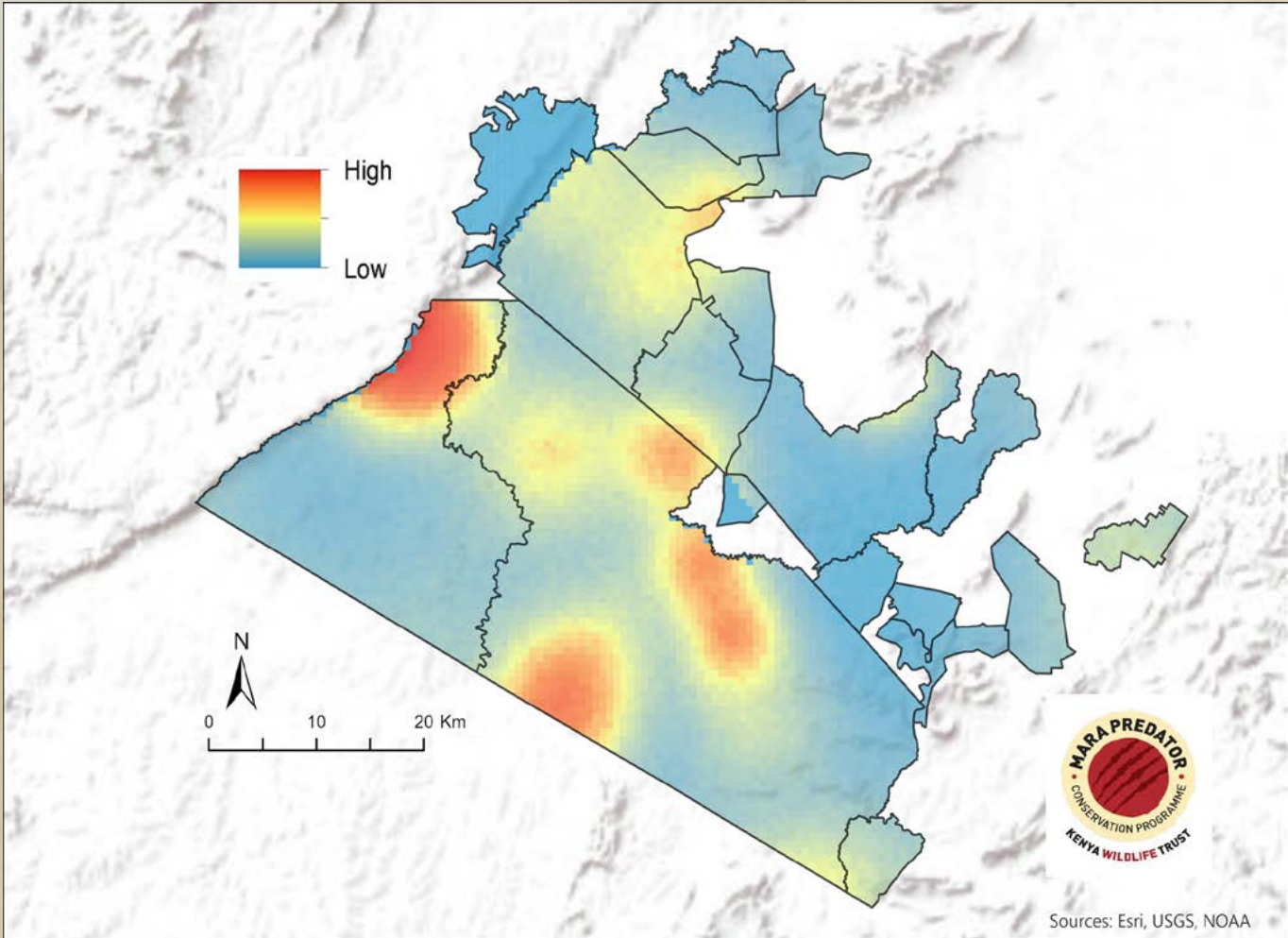


Figure 5. Cheetah density heatmap



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