

MARA PREDATOR CONSERVATION PROGRAMME



QUARTER
2 REPORT | 2026



OVERARCHING GOALS

SCIENCE-DRIVEN CONSERVATION OF PREDATORS IN THE GREATER MARA ECOSYSTEM



FOSTERING HARMONY

To help community members and landowners understand and appreciate the role of predators in the ecosystem

SCIENCE-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS

To ensure that key stakeholders in the Greater Mara Ecosystem consistently utilise sound scientific information to inform conservation strategies



THRIVING PREDATORS, THRIVING ECOSYSTEM

To support stable, healthy predator populations in the Greater Mara Ecosystem by providing scientific evidence for conservation action



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
RESEARCH UPDATE	6
Predator Monitoring	7
Lion Updates	8
Cheetah Updates	11
Hyena Updates	14
COMMUNITY UPDATE	16
Lion Ambassadors Programme	17
Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation	20
Conservation Education	23
Stakeholder Engagement	24

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The second quarter of 2026 was marked by continued long-term monitoring of the Greater Mara's large carnivores and the launch of a new hyena research programme. During the quarter, the research team surveyed **3,878 km**, recording **76 lion** and **14 cheetah** sightings while continuing to build one of Africa's longest-running predator monitoring datasets.

Six GPS-collared lions and **one collared cheetah** provided valuable insights into predator movements across the ecosystem, including the deployment of a new collar on Nenkai of the Topi Pride. The quarter also saw the loss of Kiminati, a dominant Koka coalition male, following fatal injuries sustained during an encounter with a hippopotamus. Among cheetahs, Nasieku lost her first litter during the denning period, while Nabaya successfully emerged from her den with four healthy cubs in Olarro Conservancy.

We also documented two new coalitions of dispersing male cheetahs entering the Mara. Finally, we launched our first dedicated hyena research programme, deploying **GPS collars on three hyenas** to begin investigating their movements, interactions with other predators, and responses to human activity.

Mara Predator Conservation Programme strengthened human–wildlife coexistence across the Greater Maasai Mara through conflict mitigation, community engagement, Conservation Education, and predator protection. Predator–livestock **conflict declined by 14.5%**, supported by enhanced

monitoring and rapid response to **over 750 geofence alerts**.

Community-based conservation remained central to programme success. The Lion Ambassadors Programme reached more than **7,000 community members**, while patrol teams removed over **120 illegal snares**. Community outreach efforts included **training 156 herders**, convening 226 stakeholders in a community conflict-resolution forum, and recruiting and training seven Predator Ambassadors to strengthen conservation coverage and conflict response.

Conservation education reached more than **350 community members** and **226 learners** and teachers through wildlife club activities, environmental education, and guided game drives. These achievements highlight the strength of partnerships among communities, government agencies, conservancies, and conservation partners in reducing human–predator conflicts, promoting community stewardship, and supporting the long-term conservation of predators and livelihoods across the Greater Maasai Mara Ecosystem.

Together, these activities demonstrate MPCP's integrated approach to combining long-term research with community-based conservation.

RESEARCH UPDATE



Photo © Brian Schuh

Predator Monitoring

During this reporting period, the research team continued regular predator monitoring across the study area to assess population dynamics across the Greater Mara ecosystem. The team covered 3878 km, recording 76 lion sightings and 14 cheetah sightings

The consistent monitoring efforts provide critical data on pride dynamics, territorial changes, reproduction, survival, and predator distribution, strengthening our long-term predator monitoring database and informing day-to-day conservation management across the Greater Mara ecosystem.

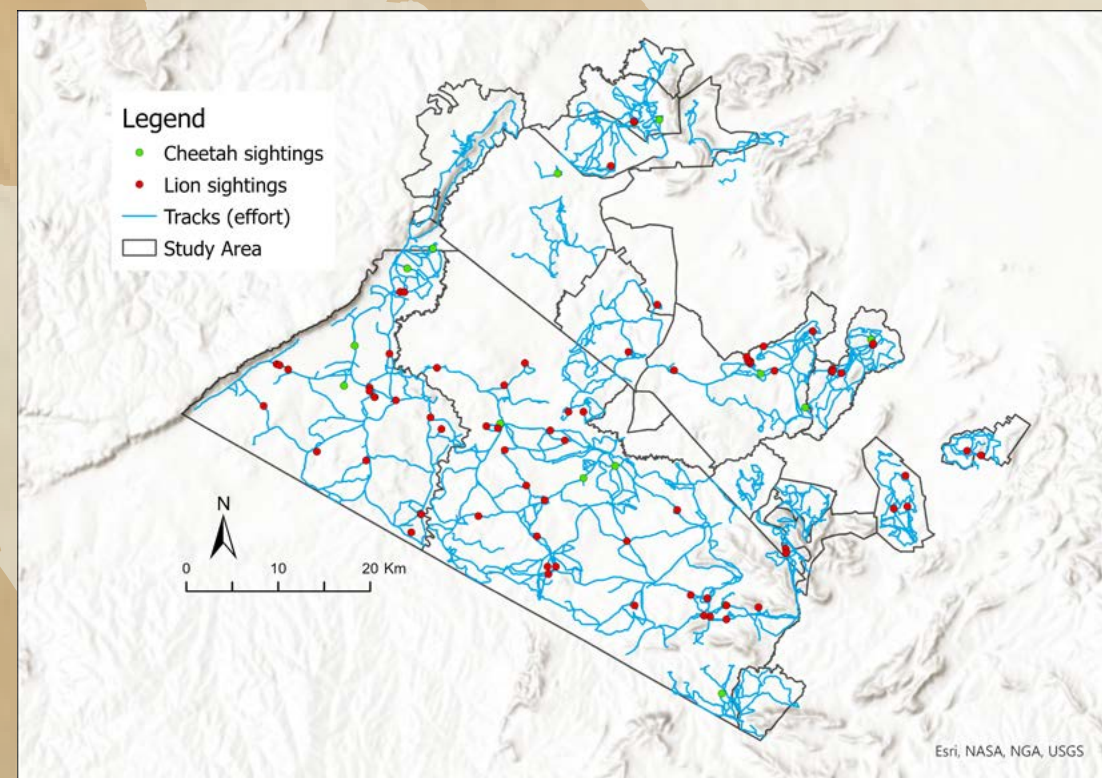


Figure 1. Study area overlaid with tracks driven, lion and cheetah sightings

Lion Updates

Lion Collars

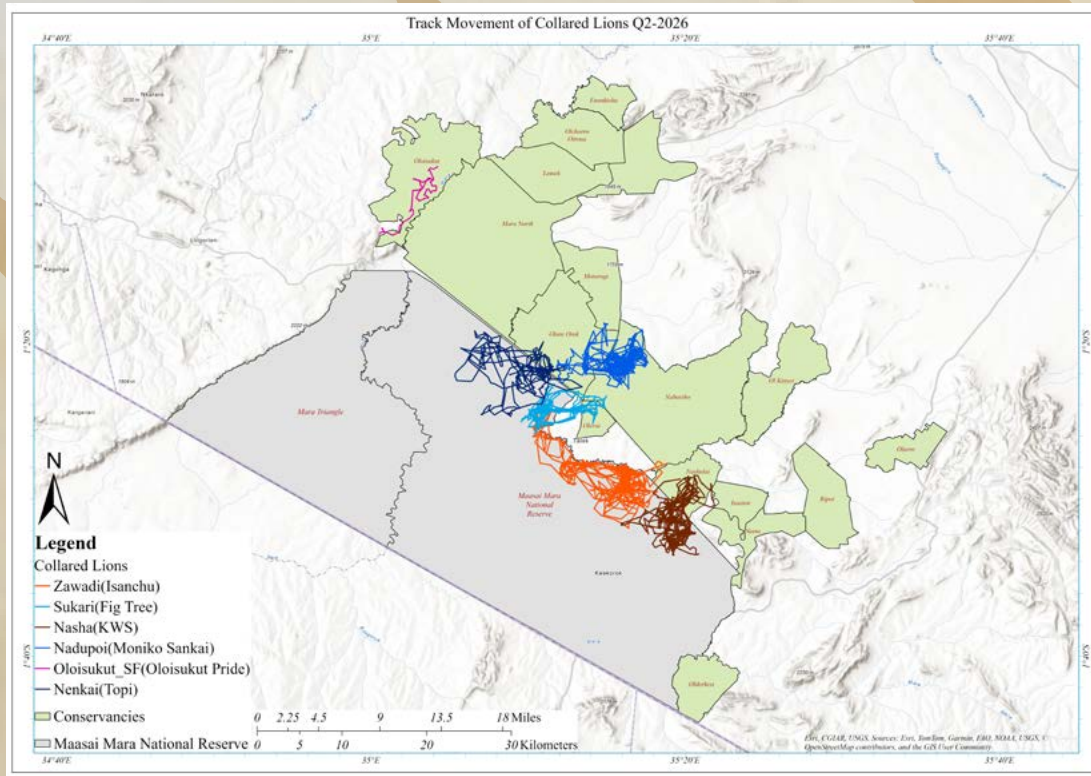


Figure 2. Tracks of the collared lions

During the reporting quarter, six GPS-collared lions were monitored across the Greater Mara ecosystem. Zawadi (Isanshu Pride) expanded from Nashulai Conservancy into the Maasai Mara National Reserve, while a sub-adult female from the KWS Pride ranged between the KWS Research Station, Nashulai, Sekanani, and Olochura. Sukari (Fig Tree Pride) extended her movements from Mpuai into Olerai and Naboisho Conservancy, and Nadupoi (Moniko Pride) expanded her territory from Naboisho into Olare Orok Conservancy.

In April, a new GPS collar was deployed on Nen kai of the Topi Pride, which has already demonstrated extensive movements within the first two months of monitoring. Monitoring of the Oloisukut subadult female, collared after a prior poisoning incident, concluded successfully in mid-April when the programmed mechanism dropped the collar. Rangers and local stakeholders maintained strong coordination throughout the process.

Lion Mortalities

Kiminati

During the second quarter of 2026, the Mara ecosystem lost Kiminati, one of the dominant Koka coalition males, following a severe encounter with a hippopotamus in Naboisho Conservancy. The research team responded after receiving reports of an injured lion and joined conservancy rangers at the scene while awaiting the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) veterinary team. Kiminati had sustained catastrophic injuries, including a severely ruptured abdomen and a shattered hind leg.

Despite the rapid response by the veterinary team, his injuries were deemed untreatable, and the difficult decision was made to euthanise him to prevent further suffering. Evidence at the scene, including a nearby hippopotamus carcass and hippo remains recovered during the post-mortem examination, strongly indicated that the injuries resulted from an encounter with a hippopotamus.



Photo © Fernando Faciole/Governors

Cheetah Updates

Cheetah Collars

Nalala, the collared subadult male cheetah, continued to provide valuable insights into movement patterns throughout the second quarter as he ranged widely across the Greater Mara landscape. During the reporting period, he was recorded moving through Naboisho, Olkinyei, Olarro, and Ripoi conservancies, while also making regular use of the surrounding community lands.

His extensive movements highlight the importance of maintaining connectivity between protected areas and adjacent community landscapes.

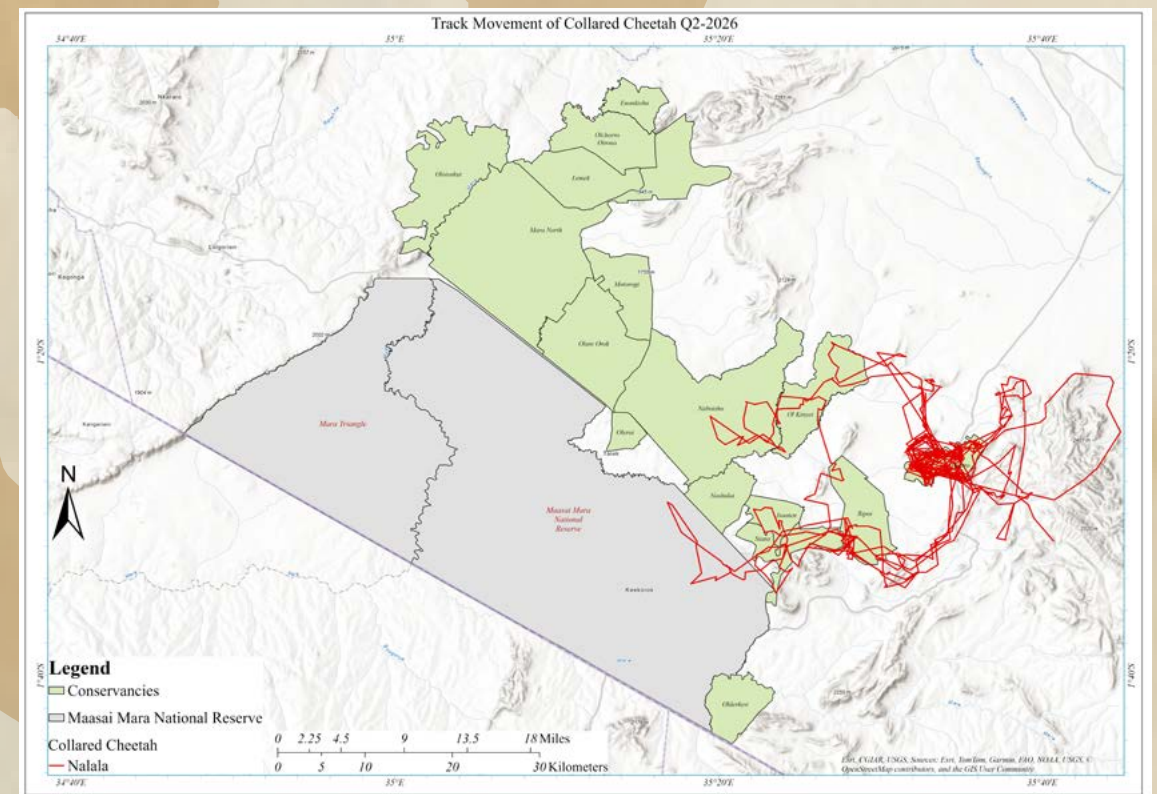
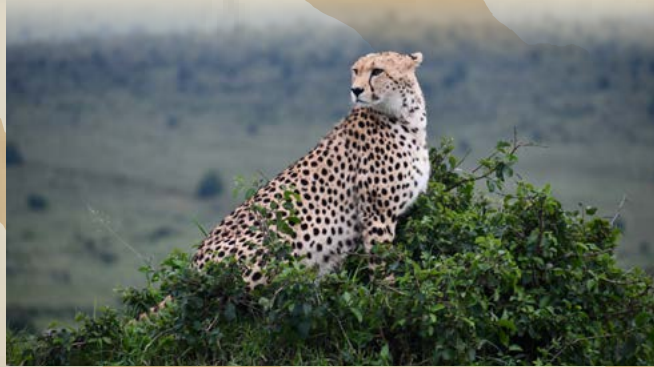


Figure 3. Movement of the collared cheetah Nalala

Births Nasieku

During the last quarter, adult female cheetah Nasieku gave birth to her first litter in the southern Maasai Mara National Reserve, with her den located near Daraja ya Pili. She was observed making regular hunting trips away from the den before returning to nurse her cubs during the denning period, indicating that she was actively caring for her cubs.

Unfortunately, Nasieku lost her entire litter while the cubs were still in the den before they emerged. Following the loss, she resumed normal movements across the southern Reserve, with sightings recorded around Daraja ya Pili, Enkewa, Sand River, Oloolaimutia, and the Keekorok area.



Nabaya



Nabaya, the resident female cheetah in Olarro Conservancy, has recently brought her four cubs out of the den, estimated to be born in March. Since emerging from the den, she has been regularly observed moving with her cubs throughout Olarro Conservancy, providing attentive maternal care while hunting and avoiding potential threats.

We are encouraged by the cubs' successful emergence from the den, a period when mortality is particularly high. Nabaya's experience as a mother and the relatively secure environment within Olarro Conservancy may give the cubs a better chance of surviving to independence than in more heavily disturbed areas, and we will continue to monitor their progress closely.

Dispersing Males

Over the past several months, we have documented two new coalitions of dispersing male cheetahs entering the Mara ecosystem. The first coalition, consisting of two males, was first sighted in November last year around the Simba area. During their initial encounters, they were extremely shy, retreating into bushes whenever vehicles approached, suggesting they had dispersed from an area with very little vehicle activity. By the time we saw them again in early February, they had become noticeably more tolerant of vehicles as they gradually became increasingly habituated to vehicles.

The second coalition of two males recently appeared in Naboisho Conservancy and has since been moving between Naboisho and Olkinyei conservancies. Like many newly dispersed males, they are still exploring the landscape as they search for suitable areas to establish themselves. The arrival of these young coalitions is encouraging and highlights the continued movement of cheetahs into the Greater Mara ecosystem. However, while new males introduce new genetic lineages into the population, the persistently low number of breeding females remains a major challenge to overall population growth.



Hyena Updates

This quarter marks the launch of our first dedicated hyena research programme in the Greater Mara ecosystem.

Hyenas are among the Mara's most abundant large carnivores and play a vital role in maintaining healthy ecosystems, yet surprisingly little is known about how they use the landscape or interact with lions, cheetahs, and people. To help address this, we initiated our hyena research project, which kicked off in Mara North Conservancy.

The project will investigate how hyenas use space, how their movements are influenced by human activities, and how they interact with other large carnivores. Understanding these patterns will improve our knowledge of predator ecology and help identify opportunities to support coexistence between people and wildlife across the Greater Mara ecosystem.



Working in collaboration with Aarhus University, the Mara Hyena Project and the Mara Conservancy's Kenya Wildlife Service veterinary unit, we successfully deployed GPS collars on three hyenas from three different clans. We deliberately selected clans that experience different levels of human activity, allowing us to compare how hyenas respond to varying degrees of human presence.

Although monitoring has only recently begun, the first movement data have already revealed striking differences among the three clans. The collars show remarkably little overlap in their home ranges, while one individual has spent considerable time close to a nearby community centre. As more data are collected, the project will provide the first detailed picture of hyena space use in the Greater Mara and how it is shaped by both ecological and human influences.

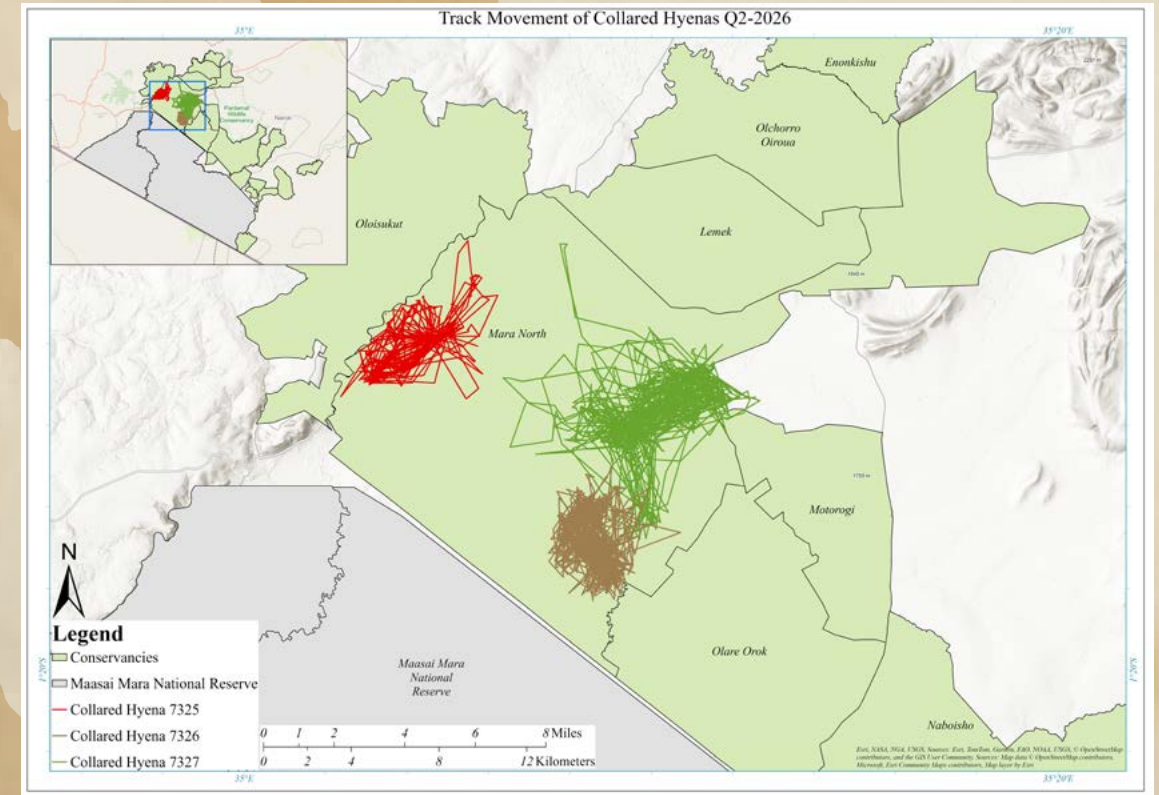


Figure 4. GPS movements of three collared hyenas during Quarter 2. Note the minimal spatial overlap among the three clans.

COMMUNITY UPDATE



The Maasai Mara Ecosystem stands among the world's most celebrated conservation landscapes, renowned for its wildlife populations, vast savannahs, and the annual migration that attracts global attention. Yet beyond this landscape lies a complex reality where people and wildlife share the same space, resources, and future.

Thousands of pastoralist families depend on livestock for their livelihoods, while the ecosystem supports globally significant populations of lions, cheetahs, hyenas, leopards, and other wildlife. As human populations grow, settlements expand, and climate variability intensifies competition for land, pasture, and water, interactions between people and wildlife have become increasingly frequent and, at times, conflict-ridden.

Lion Ambassadors Program

Predator–livestock conflict across the landscape continued to fluctuate throughout the reporting period, reflecting the dynamic nature of human–wildlife interactions. Compared to the first quarter of 2026, reported conflict incidents decreased by 14.5%. This decline was likely influenced by seasonal climatic conditions, particularly the reduced rainfall experienced between April and June, which affected vegetation, water availability, and consequently predator movements and home-range patterns. The availability of wild prey also remained an important contributing factor. In areas where natural prey was limited, predators were more likely to prey on livestock as an alternative food source. The long-term decline in wild prey populations across parts of the landscape continues to influence predator behaviour and the occurrence of livestock depredation.

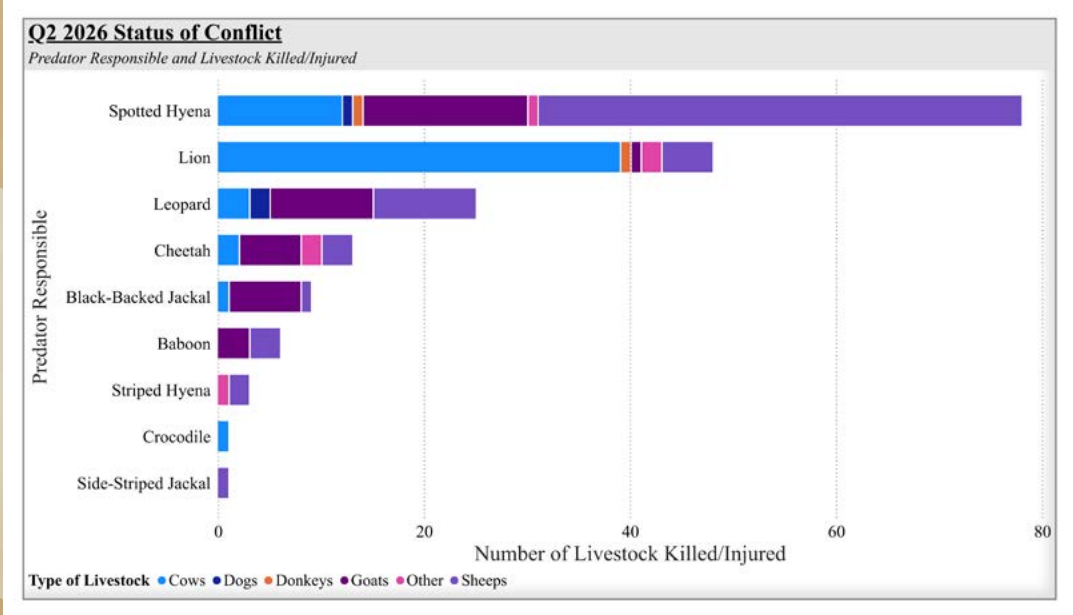


Figure 5: Status of Conflicts Predator Responsible and livestock Injured/Killed

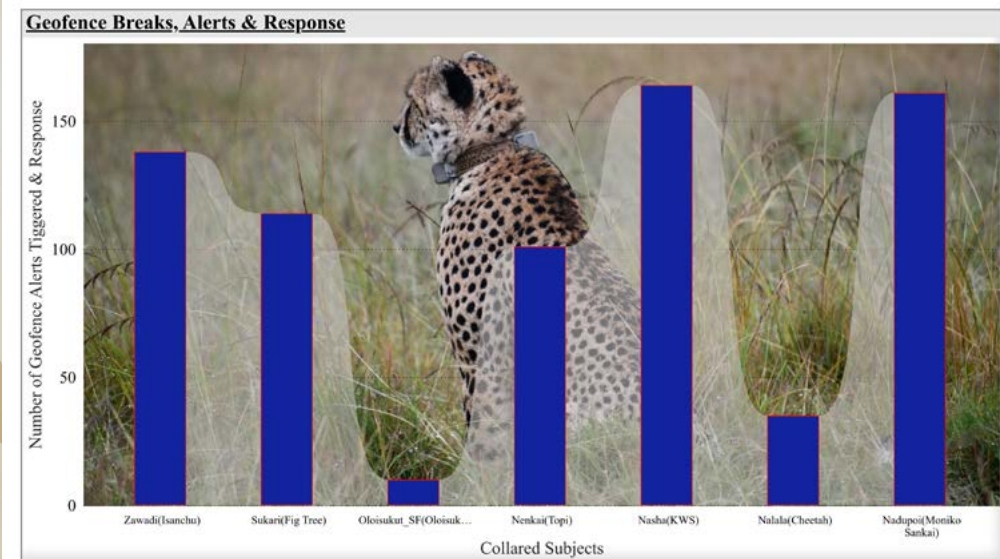


Figure 6: Geofence alerts and response

During the reporting quarter, more than 750+ geofence breach alerts were recorded and successfully responded to. A notable case involved the KWS Pride, which continued moving across multiple protected areas, from the national reserve to Nashulai Conservancy through the olochura corridor, demonstrating extensive movements across different territories.

These movements prompted intensified monitoring and coordinated response efforts, contributing to a reduction in predation incidents and improved human-wildlife coexistence within the affected areas.

Q2 2026 Community Outreach & Engagement

Number of People reached through the Lion Ambassadors program

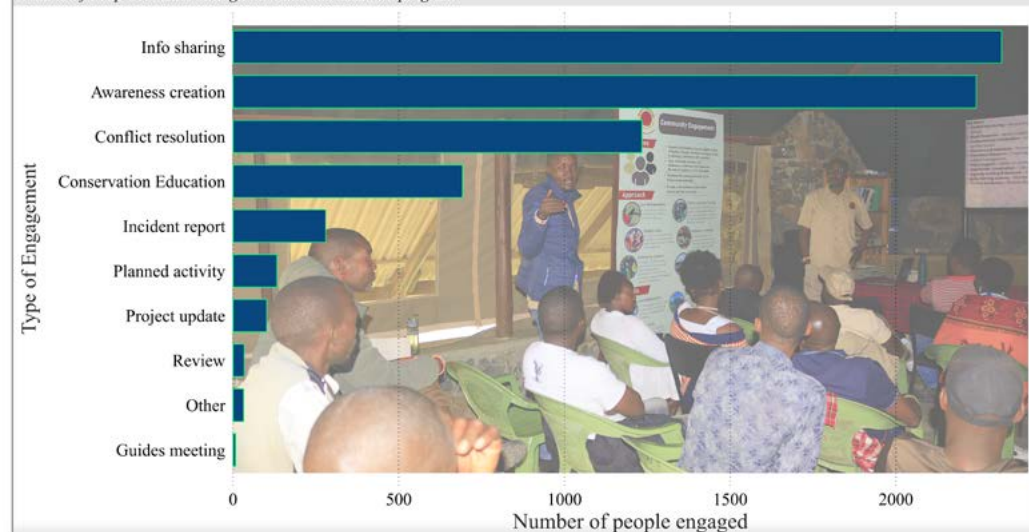


Figure 7: Lion Ambassadors Community Engagement.

The Lion Ambassadors Programme remained at the forefront of community-driven conservation, empowering local communities to play an active role in promoting human-wildlife coexistence across the landscape.

Through targeted awareness campaigns on conflict mitigation, conservation education, wildlife incident reporting, and information sharing, the programme reached more than 7,000 community members during the reporting period. By strengthening local knowledge and encouraging community participation, these efforts continue to foster positive attitudes towards wildlife and build lasting support for conservation at the household and community levels.

Lion Ambassadors De-Snaring Efforts

Summary of Lion Ambassadors De-snaring Efforts

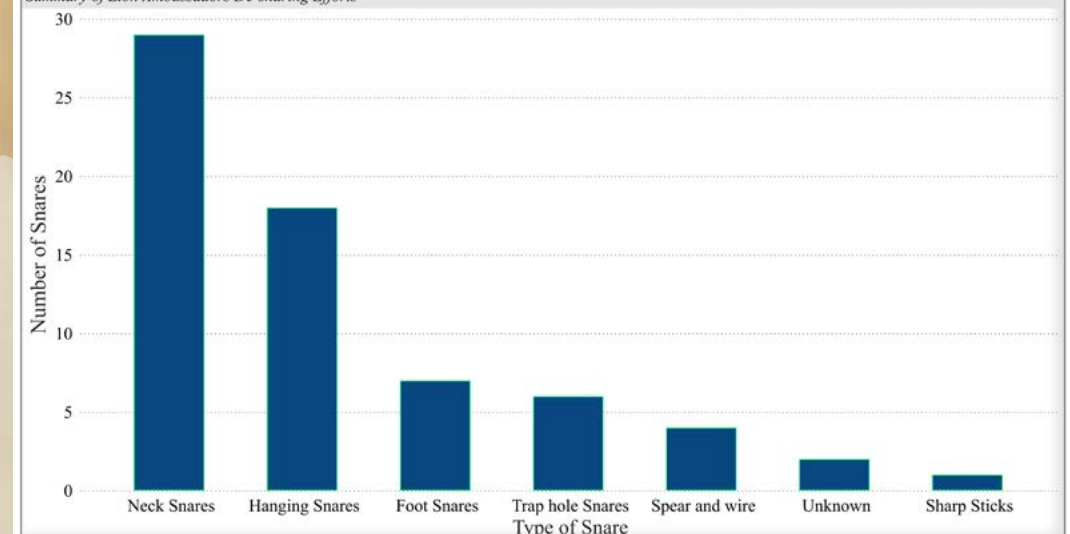


Figure 8: Lion Ambassadors De-Snaring Efforts

De-snaring continued to be a key component of Lion Ambassadors' regular patrol activities. During the reporting quarter, patrol teams recovered and removed over 120 snares, including neck, hanging, and foot snares primarily intended for species such as impalas, elands, gazelles, and spotted hyenas.

These field operations were reinforced by focused community sensitization efforts designed to increase awareness of the ecological impacts and legal implications of snaring. The engagements also explored the socio-economic factors contributing to the practice, helping to support longer-term behaviour change and strengthen community-led conservation outcomes.

HUMAN-PREDATOR CONFLICT MITIGATION

Human-wildlife conflict remains one of the most significant conservation challenges in the Greater Maasai Mara, where livestock predation, competition for natural resources, property damage, and occasional human injuries or fatalities place immense social and economic pressure on pastoral communities.

These losses can reduce tolerance for wildlife and increase the risk of retaliatory killings, threatening both biodiversity and livelihoods. However, our efforts continue to demonstrate that coexistence is possible. Through strong collaboration among communities,

Herder's training

Five herder trainings were conducted across key cheetah high-use areas of Enkiu, Emurua Dikirr, Meguara, and Oloolaimutia to strengthen community capacity in reducing human-wildlife conflict and promoting coexistence. A total of 156 herders participated in practical sessions on improved herding practices, predator awareness, cheetah conservation, non-lethal conflict mitigation, and environmental stewardship.

The training responded to the alarming decline of cheetahs in the Greater Maasai Mara, where only 16 individuals remain, by addressing the root causes of retaliatory killings and livestock predation.

Through participatory discussions and practical demonstrations, herders gained knowledge and skills to better protect their livestock while safeguarding wildlife.

conservancies, the Maasai Mara National Reserve, the Kenya Wildlife Service, county government, and conservation partners, innovative interventions have strengthened conflict mitigation, improved wildlife monitoring and response, and enhanced community stewardship.

This quarter, we delivered the following key conservation activities, made possible through the invaluable support of our donors and partners, to safeguard wildlife while improving community livelihoods.



The initiative strengthened collaboration between communities, conservancy rangers, and the Mara Predator Conservation Programme (MPCP), promoting greater community ownership of conservation and laying the foundation for long-term coexistence between pastoral livelihoods and wildlife in the Maasai Mara Ecosystem.

Conflict Resolution Baraza

A Human-Wildlife Conflict community meeting brought together 226 community members, conservation partners, local leaders, and government agencies in Mpuai-Talek to address the escalating conflict between people and predators along the Maasai Mara National Reserve boundary.



Triggered by increasing lion incursions into community grazing areas and the suspected retaliatory killing of a lion, the meeting provided a platform to identify key challenges, including delayed conflict response, weak coordination, inadequate consolation mechanisms, and limited community engagement.

Participants collectively developed practical recommendations, including strengthening community-led conflict response structures, improving communication and incident reporting, enhancing lion monitoring through collaring, and establishing regular multi-stakeholder dialogue.

The meeting strengthened trust among stakeholders, increased community commitment to coexistence over retaliation, and reinforced the importance of collaborative, community-centred conservation approaches that safeguard both pastoral livelihoods and the long-term survival of wildlife.

Lion Ambassadors Recruitment and Induction Training

To strengthen community-based predator conservation and improve human-wildlife conflict response, the Mara Predator Conservation Programme (MPCP) recruited seven Lion Ambassadors through a transparent, community-led process targeting high-conflict and previously underserved areas of the Greater Mara Ecosystem.



Lion Ambassadors Training at Talek

The newly recruited ambassadors subsequently underwent an intensive induction and capacity-building training, equipping them with practical skills in predator monitoring, species identification, GPS collaring technology, data collection and reporting, patrol tracking, conflict mitigation, and community engagement.

This investment significantly expanded conservation coverage, enhanced local capacity for early conflict detection and rapid response, and strengthened community ownership of conservation efforts. By empowering frontline conservation champions with the knowledge and tools to monitor predators and promote coexistence, the programme has established a stronger, community-based conservation network that will improve the protection of cheetahs and lions while supporting long-term coexistence



MPCP's Community Liaison Officer leads a training session with one of the Lion Ambassadors.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION Ecosystem Showcasing

Members of the wildlife clubs delivered conservation awareness messages to more than 350 community members across six villages, enhancing understanding of ecosystem interdependence and the importance of wildlife conservation. Through stories highlighting human-wildlife coexistence, community participation, and locally driven conservation initiatives, the project emphasized the critical role communities play in safeguarding biodiversity.

These stories helped build public awareness and support for conservation efforts while providing an avenue to share lessons learned, encourage positive behavioural change, and showcase the effectiveness of community-led conservation in protecting natural resources.



Irbaan school wildlife club members engaging with community members on the ecosystem showcasing

Annual Game-Drive

In June, conservation awareness and environmental education activities were conducted in five newly registered schools in the Olkinyei and Olderkesi areas, reaching 226 participants (210 learners and 16 adults).

The program aimed to enhance learners' understanding of wildlife conservation, environmental stewardship, and biodiversity through conservation talks and guided game drives.

Participants observed wildlife in their natural habitats, gained a greater appreciation of the role of protected areas, and demonstrated increased interest in conservation, with participating schools expressing appreciation for the initiative.



Wildlife club members on a visit to Maasai Mara National Reserve

Despite challenges posed by tall grass and smoke from controlled burning, the activity successfully promoted environmental awareness, strengthened links between schools and conservation partners, and laid the foundation for continued conservation education, active wildlife clubs, and future educational visits to nurture the next generation of conservation champions.

Stakeholder Engagement

Mara Implementing Partners

The Mara Implementing Partners Workshop, held on 17 June 2026 at Basecamp Enjoolata in Talek, brought together over 20 conservation organizations, government institutions, tourism partners, community-based organizations, and development agencies to strengthen coordination and collaboration across the Maasai Mara landscape.



Stakeholders at the Mara Implementing Partners Workshop, Basecamp Talek.

The workshop provided a platform for partners to share updates on ongoing programmes, review collaborative initiatives, identify opportunities for joint planning and resource sharing, and discuss a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to guide future partnerships.

Key discussions emphasized improved information sharing, coordinated implementation to reduce duplication, fundraising and donor collaboration, sustainable waste management, stronger engagement with tourism stakeholders, investment in innovative and sustainable community development initiatives, and expanded community outreach to enhance the overall impact of conservation and development interventions across the Mara ecosystem.

One Mara Cheetah Network

One of the quarter's most significant achievements was the establishment of the One Mara Cheetah Network, a collaborative platform that brings together key stakeholders in cheetah conservation across the Greater Mara ecosystem.



The inaugural meeting brought together representatives from the Maasai Mara National Reserve, Mara Triangle, conservancies, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Mara-Meru Cheetah Project, Narok County Government, and other conservation partners to address the alarming decline in cheetah populations.

The meeting provided an important opportunity to identify the key threats to cheetahs across the landscape, including human-wildlife conflict, habitat fragmentation, predation, disease, and the impacts of mass tourism. Stakeholders agreed on several priority actions, including establishing

a landscape-wide communication network for cheetah updates, developing standardised monitoring protocols, strengthening ranger capacity, promoting community engagement through the Predator Ambassador Programme, and holding biannual network meetings.

By establishing a shared framework for communication, monitoring, and conservation action, the One Mara Cheetah Network lays the groundwork for more coordinated, science-based cheetah management across the Greater Mara ecosystem, strengthening collective efforts to improve the long-term survival of this threatened species.



One Mara Cheetah Network stakeholders

MPCP as Scientific Consultant for National Geographic's 'LION'

MPCP's long-term predator research received international recognition at the Wildscreen Festival Kenya, where our team attended a special pre-screening of the National Geographic and BBC Earth documentary series LION at Emara at Ole Sereni on 15 June 2026.

We are proud that MPCP is officially recognised as the Scientific Consultant for this landmark series, recognising the value of our long-term research, lion identification database, and field expertise.



Post-screening panel discussion moderated by Dibblex Lesalon

The production of LION is an unprecedented undertaking, with the film crew spending more than four years and over 1,400 days in the field following the life of a male lion, Kiongozi (Kio), from just two weeks of age to adulthood.

To ensure documentary accuracy and confirm that every scene featured the correct individual, the production team relied on MPCP's long-term lion identification catalogues and scientific records.

This collaboration highlights the international importance of MPCP's long-term monitoring programme and demonstrates how rigorous field science can contribute not only to conservation management within the Greater Mara but also to globally recognised wildlife storytelling that inspires audiences worldwide.

It's a drama with documentary truth, meaning every time you see Kio, that's actually Kio. We learned very quickly how to identify these lions, following the Mara Predator Research ID format - photographing portraits, recording markings, and updating them as scars changed over time.

Alice Owen, Field Producer



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