

The Serengeti Lion Project Report September - December 2008

Suddenly it's New Year, and time to let you know the latest from us and the lions! The Migration is popping up here and there all over the southeastern Serengeti, depending upon local rains. Leading up to Christmas, they filled the landscape between Simba Kopjes and Moru Kopjes, packing the shores of Lake Magadi and sending dust clouds up which hovered over them like mist. The lions lucky enough to be nearby are having a pretty good time of it, and a number of prides have reacted with movements to bring them closer to this potential feast.

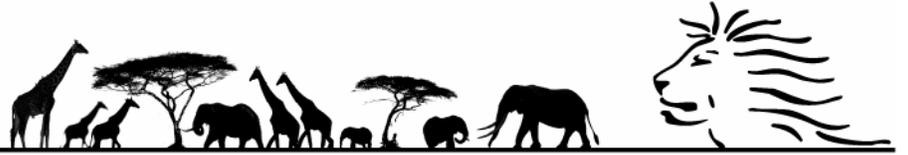


Zara from the Transects pride, with all the young ones I have seen our study of the Transect pride so far.

Following here is an update on all of your favorite lions from the Africa Dream Safaris chosen study prides!

Cub Valley (Sametu Pride)

During the night (or early morning) of 7th September, JB, Valkyrie, Vanilla, Valhalla and Demeter killed an adult female giraffe. This giraffe had a snare around her neck. It is a bit unusual for lions to take down an adult giraffe under normal circumstances. We speculate the giraffe was already weak from her wounds and thus more vulnerable to being killed, although we can't say for certain she wouldn't have been a target anyway. By the time I arrived, the lions had almost finished their meal. The cubs CV87, CV88, CV89, CV90, CV91 and CV92 were all in attendance. Such a big meal for these little lions! Valborg was seen mating with Zeus, not far away from the their feasting friends. The mating lions were busy with their thing, but it is likely they had already eaten a part of the giraffe, and maybe even helped with the kill.



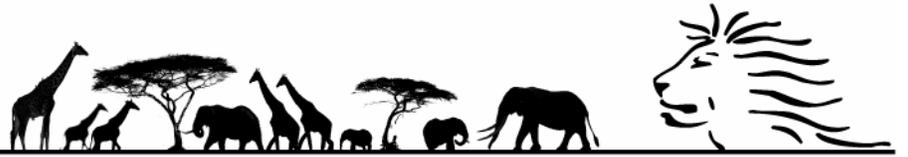
That same morning we found Vallmo alone, approximately 5 km from the rest of her family that were feeding on the giraffe. She was lactating, so she probably had cubs hidden somewhere nearby.

Eleven days later, we found around 30 snares in the woodland north of Ngare Nanyuki river. We took them all with us and reported the activity to the head of the anti poaching team in Serengeti. It is an unfortunate reality that poaching can still be a problem around the perimeter of the park, even today.



This is a picture of one of the 30 snares we found. Most of them were big enough for a giraffe or buffalo to walk into with their heads, but this one a bit smaller. See how it is placed at an animal track, and how well it is set up with thin grass fibers attached to branches.

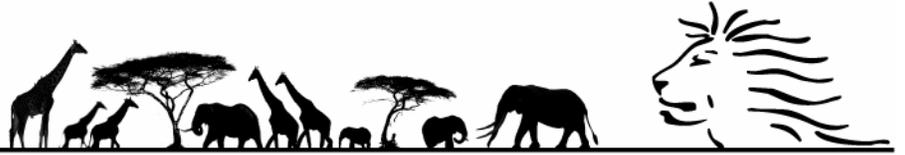
On the 21st September we found another snared animal; this time it was a zebra stallion. On this particular morning I happened to be tracking the Gol Kopjes pride (a.k.a. Simba East pride). When I found Gol Kopjes, I saw they were feeding on something. But as I got closer I became confused; there were too many lions feeding together for all of them to be from Gol Kopjes... odd. And then I saw there were *two* collared females present. It turned out that the Cub Valley pride was there with them! Vivian, Dawn, Dusk and Twilight were all in attendance. By the time I arrived, the lions of Gol Kopjes were just finishing up and getting ready to leave, so I did not see much of the two prides interacting. However, after all the other members of Gol Kopjes walked away, there were still one young lion to watch. It was Sonia from Gol Kopjes, and she was just feeding alongside Vivian from Cub Valley. After a while Sonia went over to Dawn, Dusk and Twilight, who were resting just a few meters away. Eventually all the lions of Cub Valley moved over to the shadow of a tree, and Sonia just followed them and proceeded to rest together with them in harmony. Nobody seemed to care much that there was one “wrong” lion.



Sonia from Gol Kopjes feeding together with Vivian from Cub Valley. You see the snare behind them.



Dawn pulls at the snare.



On the morning of 28th October I saw Vallmo resting alone at Sametu kopjes, lactating, but I could not see any cubs. Maybe she has lost her little cub CV84 (born in March 2008) and got a new set of cubs? Vivian was lying together with Viola at on place. Unfortunately Vivian looks a bit thin, and honestly does not look very healthy. I found Victoria, JB, Vanilla, Dusk and Demeter feeding on an adult male wildebeest nearby.

It was a little bit of surprise to not find *any* cubs. I couldn't tell if Vanilla was still lactating, but maybe she was. And maybe all the cubs were at Sametu kopjes, where Vallmo was. But it was only about 2.5 km between Sametu kopjes and the feeding place, so the cubs should have been at the feeding place with the others. Born 4.5 months prior, these cubs were certainly old enough to join the family for a nice meal of wildebeest. We will have to wait and see if the cubs turn back up over the next several weeks.

The lions of Cub Valley have continued to spend a lot of time in their old stomping-grounds around Sametu Kopjes and the marshes nearby. There nearly always seems to be a bit of resident game there to get them by, and the kopjes provide a good source of shelter for the Cub Valley pride's cubs.

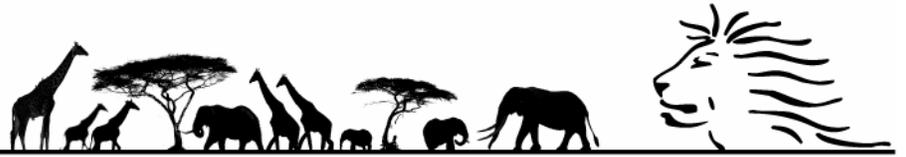
All the adult female lions have been seen over the period: Vivian, Victoria, JB, Valkyrie, Valhalla, Viola, Vallmo, Valborg and Vanilla. And we've seen the sub adults Dawn, Dusk and Twilight. But Vivian's cubs CV81, CV82 and CV83 are most likely dead; we have not seen them since June and Vivian is no longer lactating. It is likely that CV85 and CV86 are dead as well. We are still a bit uncertain if CV84 is still alive, but I have a feeling she is dead as well and Vallmo has new small cubs to take care of. This pride has lost a lot of cubs in Cub Valley over the years for some reason. The males seen with this pride have been Zeus and Demeter. We've only seen Zeus and Demeter consorting with the females here, ever since the "Greek gods" (a coalition of 4 male lions named Zeus, Demeter, Ares and Apollo) took over Cub Valley, with only one exception. Ares was seen with the pride only one time in January of 2008. It seems like this male coalition shares the Cub Valley and Kibumbu prides between them; Zeus and Demeter "take care of" the Cub Valley pride and Ares and Apollo "look after" the Kibumbu pride.

Lately, the pride has also been seen moving about ten kilometers to the southwest of Sametu, possibly drawn to the large herds of wildebeest and zebra which are drifting between Maasai Kopjes and the short grass plains. If wildebeest and zebra get too hard to catch, the pride still has a lot of topi, kongoni, eland and thousands of Thomson's Gazelles that roam conveniently close to "home."

Gol Kopjes Pride (Simba East)

As mentioned above, on the 21st September we spotted Sophie, Sasha, Samantha, Sabrina, Sarah, Sonia and Sammy all feeding on a snared stallion zebra together with some members of Cub Valley. When I drove closer, they were all ready to move on, and did so, but Sonia stayed there and fed together with Vivian and was later also resting with Dawn, Dusk and Twilight.

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Sonia to the left, then Twilight, Dawn, Dusk and Vivian to the far right.

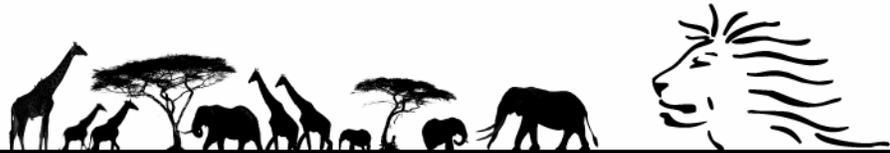


In the shadow under the tree after finishing the meal. Sonia to the left.

The other lions of Cub Valley walked away to the shadow of a tree approx 800 m away. Whether it was Gol Kopjes or Cub Valley or all the hyenas in the area that actually killed the snared stallion, it is hard to tell. Maybe the hyenas killed the stallion, then Cub Valley scavenged it from the hyenas, then Gol Kopjes showed up as well and somehow managed to eat alongside Cub Valley. It would have been so interesting to watch what really happened there that morning! Only one other time have I ever seen two different prides interacting with each other at the same kill, and this time they had behaved more in the manner I would expect, which is not quite so friendly! That time it was three females from the Transect Truants pride who had killed a buffalo cow and had just started to eat, when three adult females and eleven subadults/yearlings from the Transects pride showed up and scavenged the buffalo from the Transect Truants. There was no chance for the Transect Truants to “share” that meal with the Transects, even though these two prides are related to each other. Transects chased away Transect Truants, and one adult female and one sub adult male from the Transects even attacked and fought with the young female Pointless of Transect Truants.

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The next time I saw Gol Kopjes was 6th October. They had just started to move on when I found them, walking south. Sophie, Sasha, Samantha, Sabrina, Sammy and Sonia were there, but Sarah was somewhere else. Wonder what she was doing?

Because the Migration has already reached the short grass plains, the lions of Gol Kopjes are now a bit closer to their normal green season hunting grounds, near the magnificent Gol kopjes for which they are named. On the 26th October, they were hanging out in the easternmost part of Simba kopjes. In more recent weeks they have been hanging out almost exclusively in the Gol Kopjes. Sophie, Samantha, Sabrina can be found gazing at the plains from atop the kopjes, and the siblings Sarah, Sonia and Sammy – all nearly two years old now – are seldom far apart. Sammy will soon, however, approach the age when he leaves the pride and heads out into a big and dangerous world by himself.

Lions not seen during this period are: Splash and her cubs SB112 and SB113, and the resident males Longo-Longo and Ricardo.

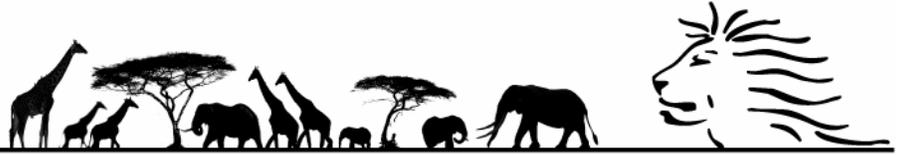
Maasai Kopjes

The solo female Trinity (MK83) has definitely formed a lasting bond with Solo from Maasai. I have seen them together on several separate occasions, but the best proof of their close friendship was when we changed collar on Solo.



Solo affectionately licks Trinity.

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After we tranquilized Solo and she had fallen asleep, Trinity refused to leave her side. She was so tight to her we could hardly chase her away with the cars, as we normally do with the lions who are not immobilized. Finally she walked away, but not more than 70 m. As we were working with Solo (we changed the collar on her, did some body measurements and drew blood samples), Trinity suddenly came closer again! She walked around us, not more than 20-25 meters away. She was obviously more worried about her best friend's wellbeing than about us! I have never seen this behavior before; normally lions run away at least a few hundred meters if they see people free standing outside a car.

Once we left Solo, after she had gotten her antidote, Trinity was back with her in five minutes. The next day when I visited them, they looked like they were in love! Never before have I ever seen lions so happy to be close to each other. It seems these lions do not want to be alone any more!

Otherwise I don't have much news to report from my own sightings of Maasai kopjes, but I heard a rumor that one lion in this pride's territory was seen with some porcupine quills in her face. Apparently some tourists had asked TANAPA if they could help the lion. However, it is against TANAPA's policy to interact with wildlife in any situation that has occurred "naturally." If humans are involved in any incident, such as in the case where an animal's health has been compromised by snares or road accidents, then we will intervene to help the animals. But when we see something like porcupine quills in a lion's face, we just make a note about it. In reality it is not a big thing for the lions; sooner or later they will lose the quills. Think about the poor porcupine instead, who maybe lost its life to this lion!

I also heard another rumor that somebody had seen a female in the same area killing and eating cubs. It could likely be true; although rare, this type of behavior has been observed before. I don't know if the reported killings were of the lion's own cubs, cubs in her pride, or cubs from another pride.

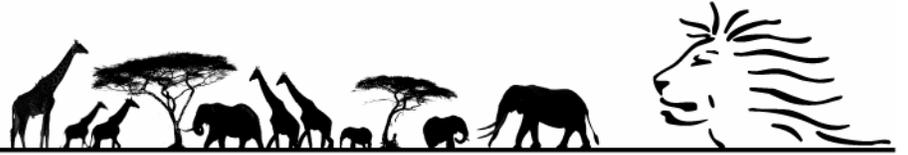
Lions seen during the period include: Kennedy, Madeline, Mutant, Mato Keo, the yearlings Anita, Zeke and Blixten and the cub MK129, as well as the resident male Jello.

Mukoma Gypsies

During the late afternoon of 2nd October, I observed the female lions of the Mukoma Gypsies pride hanging out close to both resident males Jello and Fellow. The lions had recently killed a 2 year old zebra, although they had already fed on it by the time I found them. Immediately I got a feeling that something was a bit strange here. Snork, Little My and Moomin Troll were all laying approximately 60 m from the kill site, where the males were. Suddenly Jello came trotting up in a threatening manner towards the females, followed by Fellow lumbering behind at a more moderate speed. All the female lions fled and spread out. After a while Jello even got into a short fight with one of the females. Fellow never fought, but it was obvious he was also upset.

This is the first time I've ever seen Jello with the Mukoma Gypsies. I don't know why Jello would challenge the females unless he is just not as used to the females as Fellow is, and that's why he acted like he did. Even though Fellow knows the females better, he might have just been mimicking his mate's actions.

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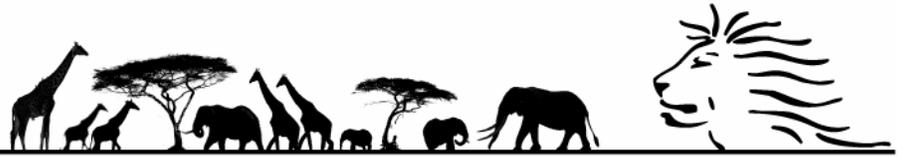
Fellow walking after Jello, deeply concentrated on a skirmish with the Mukoma Gypsies females. You can see the blood in his face left over from the zebra meal.



Fellow coming closer. I never got a good picture of the charging Jello as he was moving too quickly.

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For a week or two, the Gypsies managed to sneak out from under our radar and head south from their favorite area just outside Seronera, further towards the Ngoyongal River. They were probably being drawn to the large migrating herds down around Moru. Now, in early January, they are back to their old stomping grounds, parked near Downey's Dam, watching the zebras go by. Snork – always one of our most recognizable lions due to her unique left ear – is now even more unmistakable. Somebody – most likely another lion – has remodeled her nose. She now sports a very long and deep cut on her muzzle, which, though possibly rendering her somewhat less-likely to win a beauty-pageant, at least lessens her chances of nasal congestion if she gets a nasty cold...

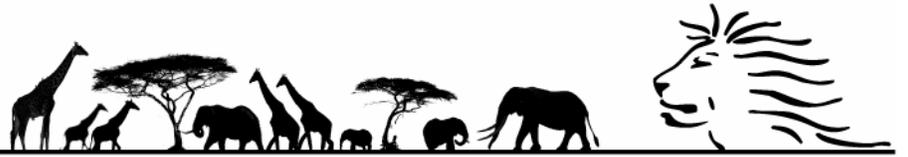


Snork contemplates the savings she'll make on cold and flu tablets.

But there *is* some good news for Snork. It looks like this:



One of Snork's cubs. Bright eyes take in the big, new world.



On the day we found Snork with her injured nose, she was accompanied by five cubs of around two to three months of age. Little My and Moomin Troll were with her too....but not lactating. It appears that all the cubs belong to Snork!

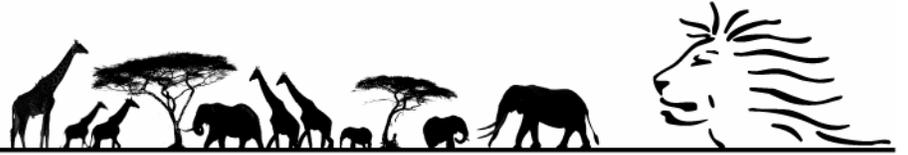
Mukoma Hill

Tat, Mia and Melody all have new cubs again! I saw Mia and Melody both lactating back on 2nd October. The last time I had seen any cubs with Mia was in mid April 2008, then together with her little ones MH96 and MH97 (it was never really clear if Mia had more cubs, because Tat and Nyota also had cubs during this time, and we never managed to sort it all out before the cubs disappeared.) The last time Melody's cubs MH91 and MH92 were seen was in May; at that time they were one year and three months old, so it's hard to tell if they are still alive (lion females do not usually get new cubs until their older offspring reach 1 ½ to 2 years of age).

A report from Balloon safaris early in November suggested that young cubs were appearing in the pride, but this was not confirmed until late November, when Mukoma Hill came up with ten cubs all at once. They would have been born through August to September, and the pride is full of lactating females also, making working out which cub belongs to which mother quite a task. So now Tat, Mia and Melody are all suckling cubs – and it's quite a jumble! Lions seen in the period: Tat, Mia, Melody and Mwezi. The resident male Wallace has not been seen.



Quality Time with Mum. Or Aunty.



Mukoma Mischief

There is not much news in the Mukoma Mischief pride. On the 22nd of September I found them in the area opposite to Fuji, where they have been hanging out regularly. This is where I found the adult females Miranda, Molly and Mugumu, together with the yearlings Uddjaur, Storavan, Hornavan and the cubs MMM and MML. I have not seen the resident male Wallace for some time now.



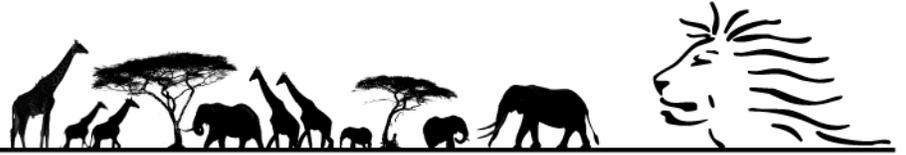
Storavan “enjoying” the flies

In mid-late November, the pride found itself very close to lots of wildebeest – but also besieged by the flies that they bring. We found a lot of lions (Mukoma Mischiefs among them) up in trees a lot during this time. Quite possibly, they were climbing trees to escape the worst of the flies. The little fellow pictured below was just a few feet above Storavan, but as you can see he looks a lot more comfortable...



Ah, that's better.....

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Molly and Mugumu have been the only females from this pride sighted for the past few months, but the surviving 2007 cubs - Uddjaur, Hornavan and Storavan – are usually to be found with one or both of the adults. Storavan still has a very small mane for a male of this size; whether he develops much of a mane or not will remain to be seen. Some males develop later in life, and some males actually never develop a large mane, despite becoming large and powerful individuals.

Two of Mugumu's cubs from April are still alive and developing into strong little cubs. But they still have a long ways to go before the end of their first year of a cub's life, which is always full of danger.

Over the last month or so these lions have spent most of their time south of their typical range – down towards the Ngoyongal River – leaning towards the feasts of wildebeest and zebra down near Moru and Simba kopjes.

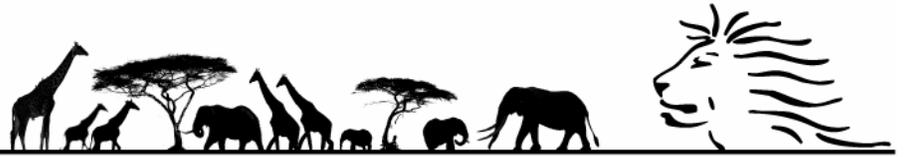
New Naabi

There are baby cubs in New Naabi! The collared female Layla has three cubs (maybe only two today.) I saw them for the first time on 5th September, with just their eyes open, likely around 2 weeks old at that time. I gave them the names NN61, NN62 and NN63. Her den was not a nice protective kopje, a dense deep korongo, or even somewhere up on Naabi hill; it was just a tiny single little bush out on the grass...



Layla's den, just a small single bush a bit out on the plain from Naabi hill.

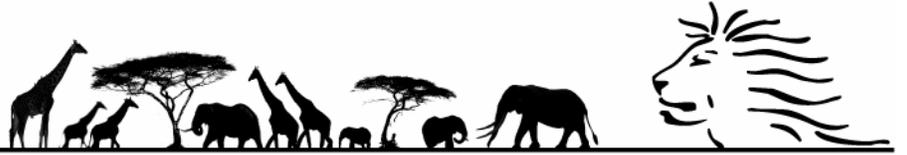
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Layla beside the bush, with one of her very young cubs in the grass under the bush.



Layla warning me, that I'm a bit to close.



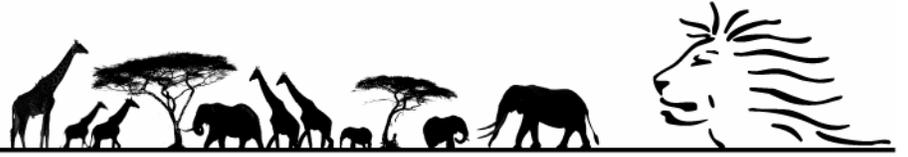
Layla with one of her cubs.

On the 25th of September all three of these cubs were still alive, under another tiny bush. On the 26th October, she had joined her cubs with the rest of the pride who were still out on the plain. The two cubs I saw then were both females.

After losing tenure around the Seronera woodlands, Porky has reinvented himself as an ageing playboy and has been with the Naabis for some months now. Porky's friend, Bad Touch Brad, has also been around as well. It will be interesting to see how well this old lion and his young comrade can succeed as a coalition, if that is indeed what is happening.

I have written before that it is interesting and a bit unusual that the resident male Porky seems to tolerate young Narnia's presence so well. Now there are even more cubs that Porky seems to accept unusually well. I write this because the last time I saw the former resident male, Wales Boyo with this pride, he was consorting Layla. Since Layla gave born to these cubs at the end of August, Wales Boyo is most likely the father, not Porky (from mid May to late August is around 100 days, which are the gestation period for lions.) Of course, we don't follow every footstep of the lions, so maybe Porky was also mating with Layla during mid May, and nobody really knows who the father of these cubs is, or maybe one is Porky's and the other one is Wales Boyo's? ☺

In late December, two large herds of eland, including a lot of calves – totally around 200 individuals – were seen not far from where Layla and Narnia were resting. The migration has occupied much of Naabi's range for a few



months now, and there are a lot of topi and Grant's and Thomson's Gazelles around, too. They may be a small pride, but life does not look too bad at the moment!



Layla wishes she had refrigeration while the migration is in town.

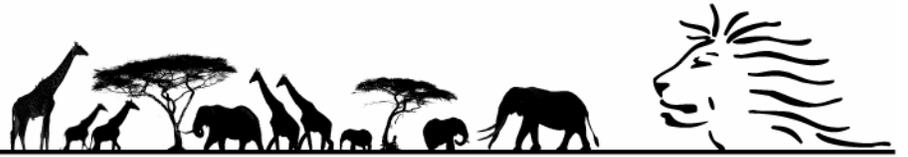
Transects

The lions of the Transects pride are still hanging around Borner's loop. Following all the upheavals of the pride take-over by Nikko and Holger early in the year, the Transects are still a fairly unsettled-looking lot. Many of the bigger cubs and sub-adults have not been seen for a long time. It is hard to know what has become of them: some may have been killed by Nikko and Holger, some may be eking-out an existence by keeping a low profile in the area, and some may have taken up a nomadic lifestyle in a bid to survive.

The cubs of Zico and Zola are still alive. I have seen some of the sub-adult females in this pride again, not really together with the adult females, but around the same general area. They are Madicken (TR137), Ida i Katthult (TR143), Pippi Langstrump (TR144) and Lotta pa Brakmakargatan (TR145). (All the young females are named after characters in Astrid Lindgren's tales. The place where Ida lives in Astrid's tales has the name *Katthult*, which directly translated into English would be *Cat's small forest hill!*) TR151 and possibly TR154, who are both about fourteen months old, have been seen with the adult females too, as well as Zico's three youngest cubs, born in March this year.

In addition to these young Transect ladies and cubs, I have also seen Zamorano, Zola, Zico and Tarragon during this period, as well as the resident males Holger and Nikko.

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I will finish my report with the biggest news – a new lion pride to study! On the 15th September Megan Strauss (she is doing a PhD on giraffes and has stayed in the Lion Project's house for a couple of months) found some female lions, cubs and yearlings in the northern end of Borner's loop. She doesn't know the lions as well as we do, but she got a feeling these could be lions other than the Transects! As it turns out, she was both right and wrong. When I drove over to the place she had seen the lions, I found Zsa-Zsa at one place and a lone cub up in a tree. Zsa-Zsa is one of the young Transect ladies born during 2002 (the period of time that made the Transects really famous to be such huge pride with 42-45 members). During this time in 2002, there were 11 adult females and 5 sub adult females. Ten of these adult females had cubs, altogether 31 cubs! Zsa-Zsa and her then young sisters/cousins left Transect in mid 2004, when they were a bit more than 2 years. Since that time the Serengeti Lion Project has not had a good view of what happened to them. The last time somebody from the Project saw any of them was on the 28th June 2006, when Zeppelin (TR111) was seen. Then suddenly they show up! Or at least you can say we found them.

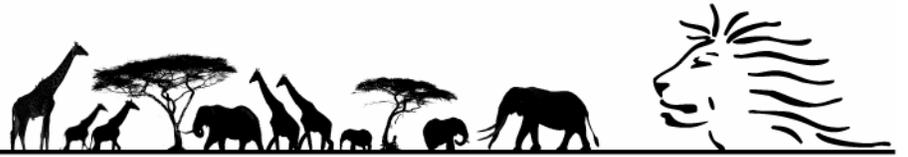
The next day I went out to the same place again. I drove around a good while and then suddenly I saw Holger, and beside him some adult females and their offspring. Present were Zara (TR106), Zircon (TR93) and 6 cubs and yearlings! I have given the young ones the names TSA, TSB, TSC, TSD, TSE and TSF.

We now call these lions *Transect Steady*. Since it is likely that Holger (and Nikko) are fathers for these cubs/yearlings, and they look to be around 10 to 14 months old, it seems Holger and Nikko were the resident males in Transect Steady before they took over Transect from Porky in November 2007. So Holger and Nikko have been close by in this area all along, and nobody really knew!



Zara with all the young ones I have seen in Transect Steady so far.

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This is all for now! This was the last report Patrik will be involved with, since it is time for him to move on. Patrik will eventually be replaced by Candida, a new researcher for the Project who will be arriving any day now (waiting on permits...)

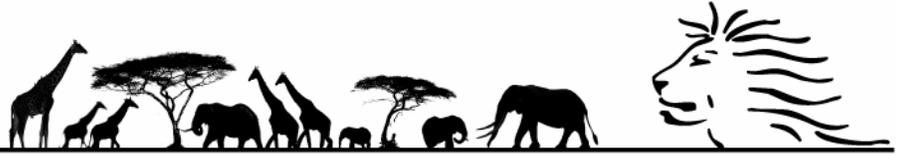


We'll bid you a happy New Year for now and see you down the track...

Till next time...Cheerio!

Patrik, John and the lions

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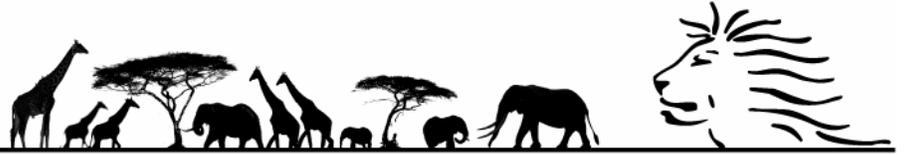


THE SERENGETI LIONS

A BRIEF HISTORY AND KEY

***INFORMATION PROVIDED EXCLUSIVELY FOR AFRICA DREAM SAFARIS
BY THE SERENGETI LION PROJECT***





History of the Simba East Pride (Gol Kopjes Pride)

Many of you already know about our special “adopted” lions in this pride. The Simba East Pride, a.k.a. the *Gol Kopjes Pride*, consists of three females – Sophie (SB69, born June ‘97), Sasha (SB87, born Feb. ‘02), and Splash (SB88, born Feb ‘02), as well as eight adorable lion cubs. Starting in early April of 2007, many of our clients and staff witnessed the playful antics of this special pride first hand and with such tiny cubs it is not surprising we all fell for them.

The eight lion cubs range in size and age: The two older female cubs, Sabrina and Samantha, were born in June 2006; they also had a sister (SB103) which sadly perished around Aug 2006. The three middle cubs were born in early Feb 2007, and are comprised of two females, Sarah and Sonia, and one male by the name of Sammy. The three youngest cubs, Stacia, Sky, and Simone (all females) were born in early March 2007; these 3 cubs regrettably perished in the late dry season of 2007. The fathers of these cubs are a coalition of two magnificent male lions, both born in August 2002; their names are Longo-Longo (S#82; blond mane and a scar on his left hip) and Ricardo (S#84; dark mane and no tail tuft).

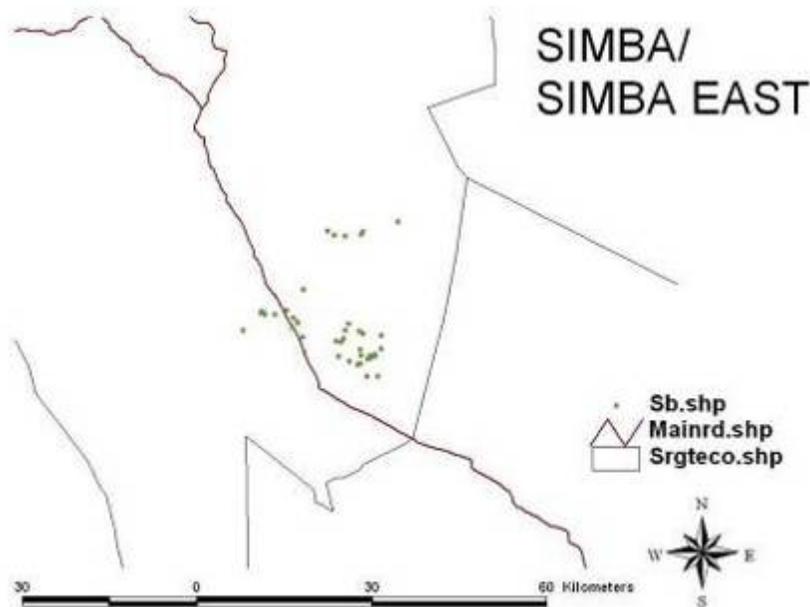
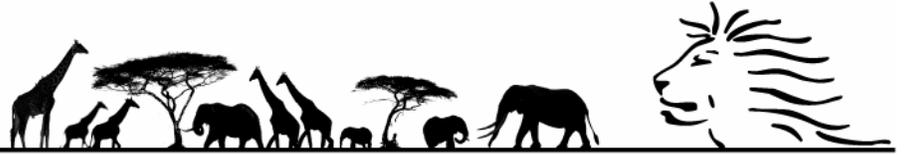


Fig. 1: The observation points of the Simba East pride during one year, 2006. For easier location; the slight bend in the road in the South East is the location of Naabi Hill, the Y-junction of main road in the North is in Seronera area.

As it turns out, the lions of the Gol Kopjes Pride are direct descendents of one of the very first prides studied by the Serengeti Lion Project when it began in 1966. This original pride had split up several times, forming a family tree that branched throughout history in prides such as the Simba Numbers Pride (still living, last seen south of Naabi Hill), the *Sympatica* Pride (now gone, last seen in 1990), the Simba West pride (now gone, last seen in 1987), the Simba Survivors (still living, last seen near Simba Kopjes), and the Simba Ramblers (now gone, last seen in 1996).



History of the Cub Valley Pride (Sametu Pride)

The Cub Valley Pride got their name from Cub Valley where they hang out sometimes during the green season. We often fondly refer to them as the *Sametu Pride*, as we often see them at Sametu Kopjes as well. This is a large pride, thriving mainly in the long grass plains of the Serengeti. They hold their territory in the green season around Sametu Kopjes, and it extends southeast following the valley we call Cub Valley, ending between Zebra kopjes to the north and north Gol kopjes to the south. In the dry season they are still found around Sametu kopjes, but more likely north of Sametu, into Kibumbu kopjes and Ngare Nanyuki river. They are also sometimes around Bomas kopjes and the grasslands into Five hill track.

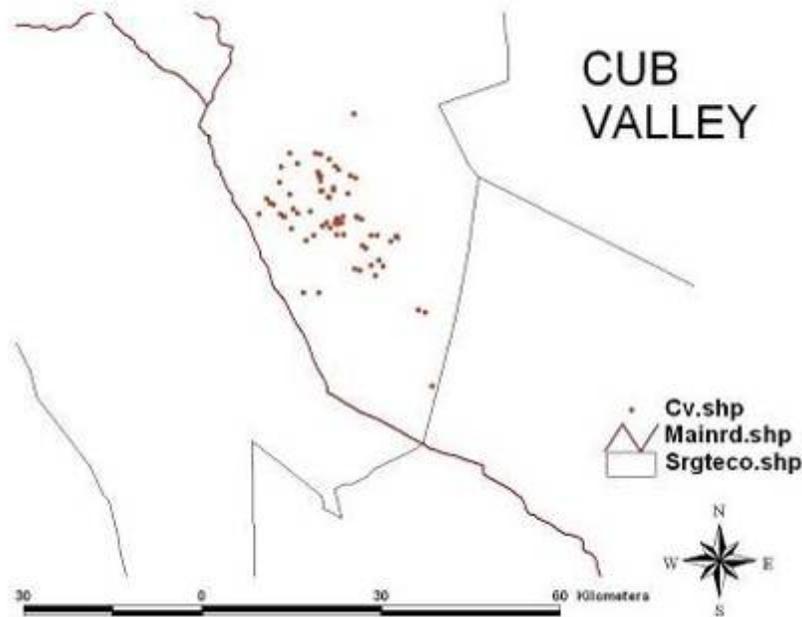
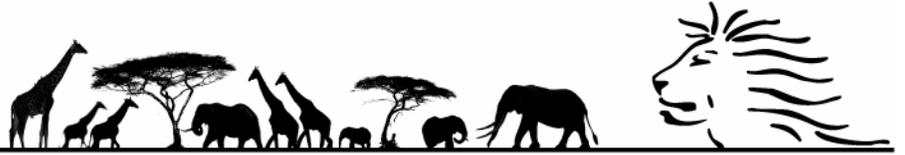


Fig. 1: The observation points of the Cub Valley pride during one year, 2006. The borders between Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and Loliondo Game Controlled Area are in grey/blue. The main road is dark red. Seronera are just a bit south of the Y-junction of the main road.

The origin for the Cub Valley pride began several years ago with the pride Maasai Kopjes. Once a pride gets too large, some members usually leave to establish a new territory for themselves. Somewhere between late 1996 to early 1997 a group of 11 young females, all born between June to September 1993, split up from their mothers' pride Maasai Kopjes and formed the Cub Valley Pride. They found a new territory to the east of where they had grown up. Today only three of the founding ladies who once left the Maasai kopjes pride are still alive... Vivian (with a collar), Victoria and JB. The rest of the core of this lion pride is formed by their daughters Valkyrie, Valhalla, Viola, Vallmo, Valborg, and Triangle Eye, all born between 1999-2001. Dawn, Dusk, and Twilight are newly initiated members, born in mid-year 2006. Up until late 2007, Garth and Dougal were the resident male lions for this pride, but they were getting older.... Garth at 11 years and Dougal at 9. In November of 2007, a fearsome coalition of 4 strong male lions initiated a take over of the pride. These four handsome males are known as the "Greek Gods" and are comprised of the individuals Zeus, Apollo, Ares, and Demeter. These new resident males are young by comparison to the elders they ousted, all born between 2000 and 2001. It will be interesting to observe the activity of this pride in the future with these new males now residing.



History of the Maasai Kopjes pride

This pride has as its base the Maasai Kopjes, in the very heart of Serengeti. They frequently hang out on and among the kopjes themselves. The Seronera River, and to a lesser extent the Wandamu Rivers, are big attractions to these lions, and they are often seen in the high grass along the rivers, stalking prey sometimes, but mostly doing what lions are really great at; just sleeping. Their territory is a rich one in the eyes of a lion. It has many good sites for denning, plenty of fresh water (lions in Serengeti like to drink at least once per day), and prey available year around. The large kopjes offer good shelter and shade, the rivers nearby offer water, and the territory offers good hunting opportunities for stalking prey that is forced to come close to drink from the rivers. Thus the pride can house many members, even though the territory size is relatively small. See below for a map of observed locations of the members of this pride over a year's time. During the rainy season when the migration is down in the South Eastern short grass plains, we now and again see members of the Maasai Kopje pride going SE for a short while to feed on the ample supply of wildebeest and zebras.

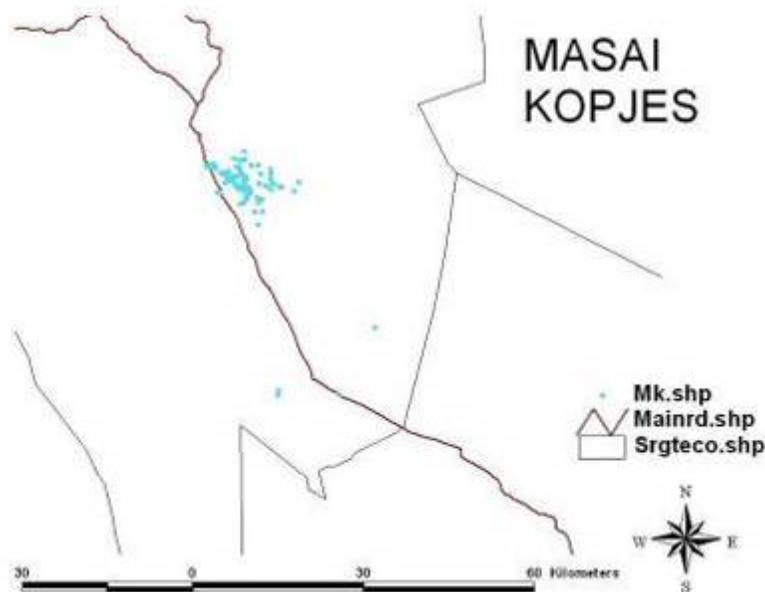
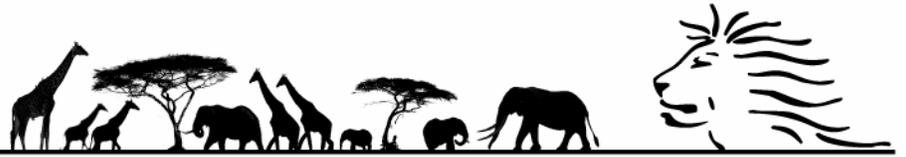


Fig. 1: The observation points of the Maasai Kopje pride during one year, 2006. For easier location; the slight bend in the road in the South East is the location of Naabi Hill, the Y-junction of main road in the North is in Seronera area.

The Maasai Kopje pride originates from a group of 6 sub-adult females (born between Apr-80 and May-81) who split off from the Maasai Pride at the end of 1982 to escape a coalition of four males (BC1, 2, 3 and 4) who had taken over their natal pride. (The Maasai Pride was a primary focus for the original researchers of the Serengeti Lion Project, George Schaller and Brian Bertram, as early as 1963.)

Today the Maasai Kopjes pride consists of 12 adult females: Madeleine, Jezebelle, Trinity, Kennedy, Cordelle, Jordan, Mutant, Jane, Trinity II, Matokeo, and 3 sub adults Mikari, Meosha, and Malick. Sadly Malick passed away at the very end of 2007. The resident males are the aging "Fellow" and "Jello," and they were first seen as the reigning males of this pride in early 2002. They may look quite worn with age, but the old chaps are still doing grand!



History of the New Naabi Pride

The lion pride that is often seen around the Naabi Hill is called the New Naabi Pride. The origin of this pride is unknown, but they were first observed, and henceforth recognized as a pride, in April 1983. The range of this pride is limited to the short-grass plains, with its center being Naabi Hill. The pride ventures away from the hill as far as Hidden Valley, however they do not seem to use the Gol Kopje area (that lies 15 km NE of Naabi Hill).

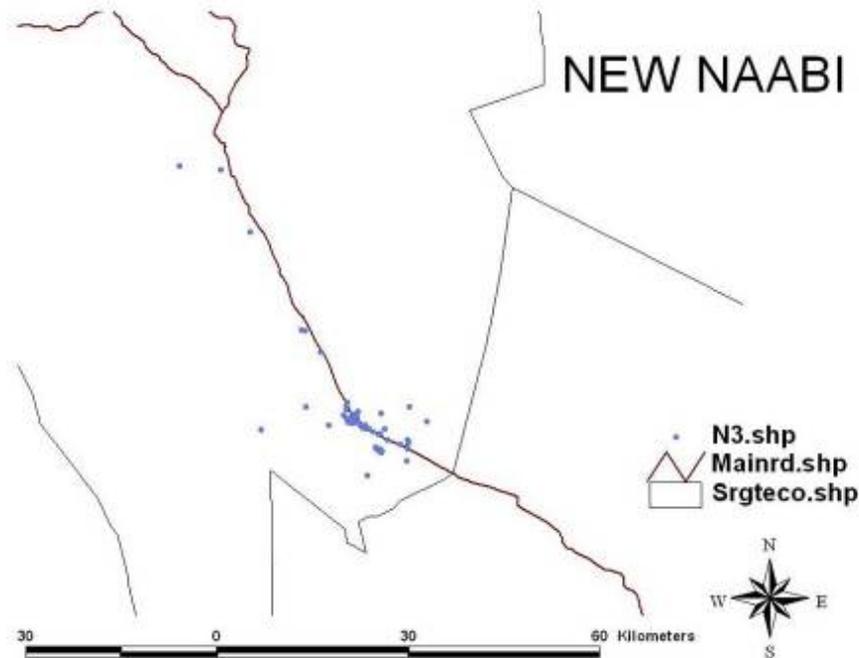
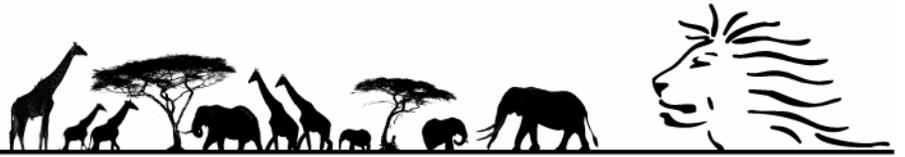


Fig. 1: The observation points of the New Naabi pride during one year, 2006. The coordinates far north of Naabi hill are the observations of NN07 when she was very ill. For easier location; the slight bend in the road in the South East is the location of Naabi Hill, the Y-junction of main road in the North is in Seronera area.

Today the New Naabi Pride consists of 2 adult females, Lea (born Apr. '92) and Layla (born May '98). Both these females wear a radio collar. Until Oct. '06 we still had regular sightings of Lychee, a female member of this pride. Lychee is our all time Grand Old Lady lion, as she was born in early 1987. We suspect Oct. 26th will remain our last sighting of her and that she died shortly after. She was then almost 20 years, and is the oldest lion that we've known of in the wild! Further, in the New Naabi Pride there are another 2 sub-adult females, Caerphilly (born Jan '04) and Carmarthen (born Mar.'04). Carmarthen is easy to distinguish with her broken off tail-tip and her cloudy left eye. Then the pride has 4 sub-adult males; Dafyd (born Jun -03), Llanduduo (born Mar '04), Llanelli (born Mar '04) and finally NN56 (born Mar '06).

Wales Bolo (born 1998-99 from unknown origin, first seen in Nov -03 when he was mating with Lea) is "king" in this pride, a lone male residing in the pride since late 2003. For a single male to hold the reign of a pride for this long, and successfully raise a large number of litters, is quite unusual. Normally a single male gets ousted long before he gets an opportunity to protect his pride until the offspring reach an age of independence. Wales Bolo is a strong lion indeed!



History of the Transects Pride

This is a huge lion pride often seen during the dry season along Seronera River, just opposite Kerr's dam and the Seronera Wildlife Lodge. The origin of this pride is unknown, but the first sightings of this pride were in early March 1981. The Transects' territory includes the open woodlands around Seronera roughly bordered to the West by the Seronera River, to the East SRI, to the South by the Seronera airstrip, and to the North by Nyaraswiga Hill. During the dry season, these lions often just hang out around the Seronera River. In reality, these lions hold a very small territory compared to other lion prides on the plains. They are able to thrive due to the abundant resources of this small but rich territory. Here in the Seronera River Valley they can find prey, water, and good den sites to rear their cubs no matter the season. Everything a lion could wish for! The support offered by these ideal conditions significantly lowers cub mortality and therefore increases the number of members in the pride. Many sub-adults of such a large pride eventually move away to form new prides. So the Transects Pride continues to populate surrounding areas with a healthy supply of lions!

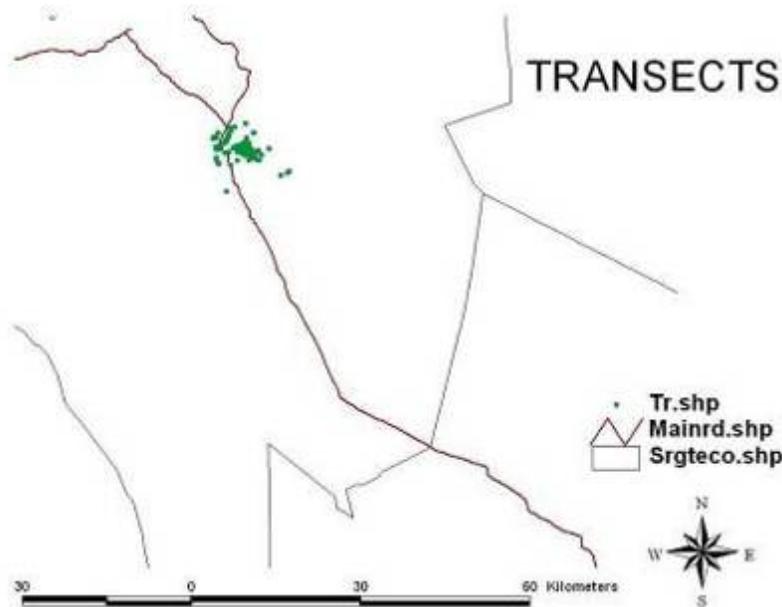
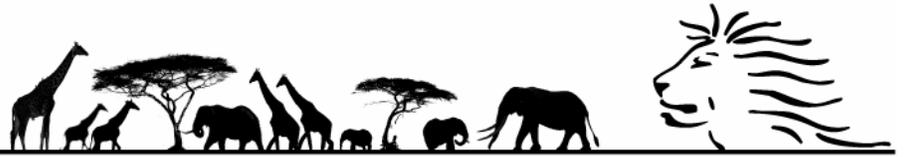


Fig. 1: The observation points of the Transects pride during one year, 2006. You can see the borders to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and Loliondo Game Controlled Area in grey/blue. The main road is dark red. The Y-junction of the main road in the North is in Seronera area.

The *Transects* pride has split up several times, forming various prides that seemingly share similar territories without too many squabbles; they are all “family,” after all. Some of these other prides are the *Young Transects*, the *Transect Troublemakers*, and the *Transect Truants*.

As of late 2007, the core of the Transects pride members include: 7 adult females: ZZ, Zenden, Zamorano, Ziege, Zola, Zico, Ziziphus, and Tarragon. Tagging along are 4 sub-adult females, 3 sub-adult males and 5 older cubs. From March 2006, up until recently, the resident males in Transects today were a coalition of two lions, Porky and Pie. But a male lion's reign only lasts for so long out here in the bush! This pride was recently taken over by two younger lions, Nikko and Holdger. This pride has been famous for its large numbers; during the year 2002 and 2003 there were around 40 members! Today there are well over 20 lions, including all the sub adults and cubs.



History of the Mukoma prides

The Mukoma prides of today are actually split up in three different prides; the original *Mukoma Hill Pride* (which we'll focus on here), and the 2 branch prides that have split apart from them; the *Mukoma Mischief Pride* and *Mukoma Gypsies Pride*. As is common when prides split apart, the newly formed prides have taken up a territory that adjoins their natal pride. These three prides hang out around the Mukoma Hill (hence their pride name).

The Mukoma prides live in good lion habitat. See the below map for the most recent positions of our observations of members of these prides. They have good access to Seronera River – with its water and constant prey availability. At certain times of the year, the grass plains between the river and the Mukoma Hill have big passing herds of wildebeest, zebras and gazelles on them. Denning sites are easily found in the thick vegetation along the River and its tributaries. Some of the lions den inside niches of Mukoma Hill the Thatch Kopjes.

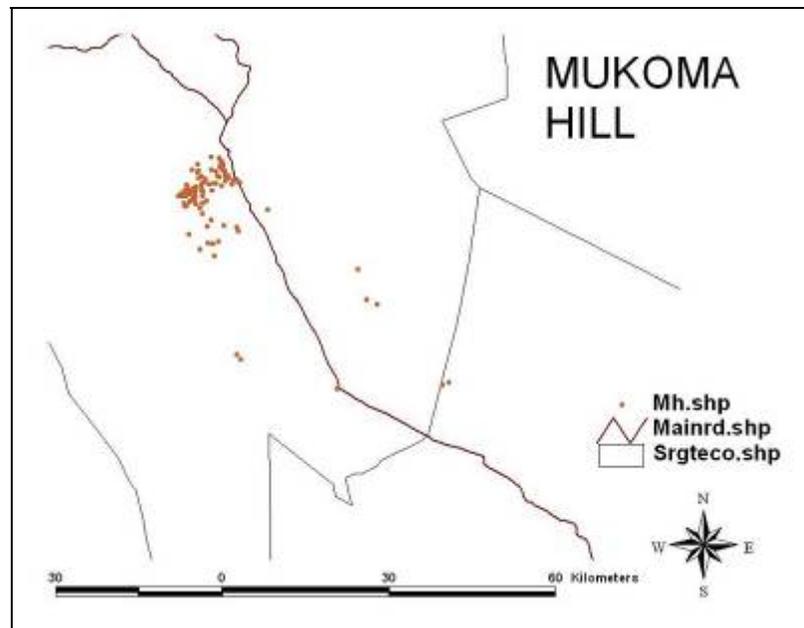
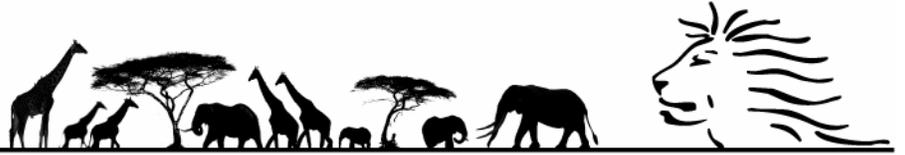


Fig. 1: The map above shows the observation points of the Mukoma Hill Pride during one year, 2006. For easier location; the slight bend in the road in the southeast is the location of Naabi Hill, the Y-junction of main road in the north is in Seronera area. The grey lines are the boundary of Serengeti NP.

The origin of the Mukoma Hill Pride is unknown, and they were first observed and recognized as a pride from early Feb 1986. The lions that were first seen were the 7-year old females “Hatari” and “Hadhari”, the 6-year old female “Hasira” and the 4-year old females “Hamaki” and MHE. In April 1987 they got “Cocktail” and “Truman” (both approx 6-years old) to join as their resident males. It seems that were some young females that had split away from their natal pride and started a pride of their own – which they did successfully.

Today the core of the Mukoma Hill Pride consists of 4 adult females, Tat, Mia, Meg, and Melody, along with their various cubs, plus another female Mint that we now regard as solitary. The resident males, Wallace and William, were first seen consorting with the Mukoma females at the beginning of 2006. Wallace and William still hold the residency of all three Mukoma prides.

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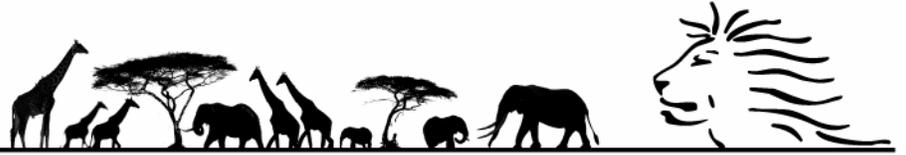
Lion Pride Name Number M or F DOB Other Notes

Lion Pride	Name	Number	M or F	DOB	Other Notes
Gol Kopjes (Simba East)	Sophie	SB69	F	Jun-97	
	Sasha	SB87	F	Feb-02	
	Splash	SB88	F	Feb-02	
	Samantha	SB104	F	Jun-06	
	Sabrina	SB105	F	Jun-06	
	Sarah	SB106	F	Feb-07	named by ADS
	Sammy	SB107	M	Feb-07	named by ADS
	Sonia	SB108	F	Feb-07	named by ADS
	Stacia	SB109	F	Mar-07	missing, presumed dead
	Sky	SB110	F	Mar-07	missing, presumed dead
	Simone	SB111	F	Mar-07	missing, presumed dead
	Not yet named	SB112	F	Feb-08	smaller than brother
	Not yet named	SB113	M	Feb-08	
	Not yet named	SB114	F	Feb-08	missing, presumed dead
	Longo Longo	S82	M	Aug-02	current resident male; blond mane; scar on left hip
Ricardo	S84	M	Aug-02	current resident male; dark mane; no tail tuft	

New Naabai	Lea	NN07	F	Apr-92	collared lion; has been missing since Oct '07
	Layla	NN32	F	May-98	
	Lychee	-	F	Feb-87	Presumed Dead; last seen October 2006
	Caerphilly	NN51	F	Jan-04	
	Carmarthen	NN52	F	Mar-04	
	Dafyd	NN49	M	Jun-03	
	Llanduduo	NN53	M	Mar-04	
	Llanelli	NN54	M	Mar-04	
	TBD	NN56	M	Mar-06	
	Wales Bolo	-	M	Oct-98	current resident male

Cub Valley (Sametu)	Vivian	MK11	F	1993	has a collar
	Victoria	MK19	F	1993	bluish right eye, maybe blind
	JB	MK21	F	1993	
	Valkyrie	CV03	F	1999	
	Valhalla	CV08	F	1999	
	Viola	CV18	F	1999	bluish right eye, maybe blind
	Vallmo	CV24	F	2001	
	Valborg	CV25	F	2001	
	Triangle Eye	CV27	F	2001	
	Vanilla	CV32	F	2001	
	Dawn	CV61	F	Jun-06	subadult
	Dusk	CV62	F	Jun-06	subadult; has distorted facial features maybe from an injury to the head
	Twilight	CV63	F	Jun-06	subadult
	Zeus	PN89	M	Jan-00	current resident male
	Apollo	PN90	M	Feb-01	current resident male
	Ares	PN92	M	Feb-01	current resident male
Demeter	PN94	M	Feb-01	current resident male	

Africa Dream Safaris



Lion Pride Name Number M or F DOB Other Notes

Lion Pride	Name	Number	M or F	DOB	Other Notes
Maasai Kopjes	Madeleine	MK29	F	Mar-96	
	Jezebel	MK30	F	Mar-96	
	Trinity	MK34	F	Jun-96	has 5 teats; normal is 4
	Kennedy	MK37	F	Jun-96	wears a radio collar
	Cordelle	MK39	F	Aug-96	
	Jordan	MK42	F	Sep-96	
	Mutant	MK45	F	Jan-97	
	Jane	MK76	F	Oct-01	
	Trinity	MK83	F	Mar-02	solitary
	Matokeo	MK91	F	Mar-02	
	Malick	MK108	M	May-06	named by ADS - Ms. Eilert's 5th Grade Class
	Mikari	MK109	F	May-06	named by ADS - Ms. Eilert's 5th Grade Class
	Meosha	MK110	F	May-06	named by ADS - Ms. Eilert's 5th Grade Class
	Fellow	-	M	1997	current resident male
	Jellow	-	M	1995	current resident male

Mukoma Hill	Mint	MH19	F	May-96	solitary; blind in left eye
	Tat	MH22	F	Aug-98	
	Mia	MH37	F	May-99	missing tail
	Meg	MH39	F	Jun-99	
	Melody	MH52	F	Aug-02	
	Mwezi	MH80	F	May-04	
	Nyota	MH81	F	May-04	
	Kadoko	MH82	M	Aug-04	subadult; gradually separating from pride
	Moran	MH86	M	Sep-04	subadult; gradually separating from pride
	Wallace	-	M		current resident male
	William	-	M		former resident male coalition with Wallace; probably died in Nov'07

Transects	ZZ	TR28	F		
	Zenden	TR33	F		
	Zamorano	TR37	F		
	Ziege	TR39	F		
	Zola	TR54	F		
	Zico	TR56	F		
	Tarragon	TR132	F		
	Ziziphus	TR52	F		always has a limp, since an incident in 2005
	OTHER	OTHER	-	-	5 subadult females; 3 subadult males; 5 older cubs
	Nikko				current resident male
	Holger				current resident male
	Porky	PN70	M	Dec-98	old resident male, no longer in power
	Pie	PN79	M	Jan-99	resident male who is now missing; may be dead