

# MARA MONTHLY

NOVEMBER 2008

The most powerful lion pride within Mara Triangle. Black maned lion with his five sons, soon to take over the Serena pride



## MARA CONSERVANCY

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2008

By Brian Heath

#### GENERAL

We had ten days of very heavy rain at the beginning of November, the rains then eased off for a while before returning in the last week of the month.

The Chief Executive met with the Manager of Kichwa Tembo Camp and the land owners from Oloololo Game Ranch on the 12<sup>th</sup> to discuss the possible management of the Game ranch. Conservation Corporation Africa, the company owning Kichwa Tembo and Batleur Camps has been re-branded and is now called *& Beyond*.

Mr Conrad Thorpe, Executive Director of Salama Fakira, a company involved in security and training visited for two days on the 17-18<sup>th</sup> to assess our training needs for the rangers. We are contemplating using Salama Fakira to run a series of leadership and operational training courses for the security staff early in 2009.

The Chief Executive gave a short presentation to participants of the Eco-Storm meeting held at Base Camp on management of conservation areas on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

The Senior Resident Magistrate from Kilgoris visited the Triangle from the 28-30<sup>th</sup> and we took the opportunity to brief her on the poaching situation and the effects of poaching on wildlife and tourism.

Our "mystery tourists" have been going on game drives with the nominated drivers for the best guide award this year. We should be in a position to announce the winner in December. Again thank you to all those who have assisted in this project and to those who have donated the amazing prize for the winner.

#### WILDLIFE

The wildebeest and most of the zebra had left by the 10<sup>th</sup>, leaving the Reserve with few animals and a great deal of grass.

Dr Dominic Mijele came to the Triangle and took samples from some wildebeest calves with suspected mange. We have not received the results.

A number of lionesses have had cubs in the past month, at least one young cub was killed by a group of



Anatolian Sheperd Dog puppy, Turkish livestock guardian dogs, bred to protect herd from wolf and bears overlooks its future home in the Mara.

Wildebeest calves found dead with skin condition resembling mange. We now await lab confirmation from KWS



## Livestock Guardian Dog Arrives to Mara New Initiative to Control Livestock Depredation

six males that has taken over the area West of Serena. We suspect that these males will also take over the Serena pride in due course, there is only one male remaining in this pride and he is no match for the six – if that is the case they will almost certainly kill three young cubs in that pride.

### COMMUNITY

Dr Asuka Takita received an Anatolian Sheep-dog puppy from the Cheetah Conservation Fund in Namibia for our “Non-lethal Predator Control in Carnivore Conservation” project. The puppy arrived on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and has been placed with a small flock of sheep. This project aims to imprint the sheep on this breed of dog; the dog in turn provides alarm and protection to the flock in case of a predator attack. Asuka received funding from the SeaWorld and Busch Gardens Conservation Fund and the Anne Kent-Taylor fund for the project. She has received the puppy, purchased the sheep, built a demonstration enclosure for the sheep and housing for an employee. We hope that the predator-proof demonstration pens will encourage livestock owners to adopt simple steps used to improve their livestock pens.

### STAFF

The first of two incentive trips left on the 15<sup>th</sup> for Tanzania, the second trip will take place from the 3<sup>rd</sup> December. The first trip was a great success; staff visited the Serengeti, Ngorongoro, Manyara, Tarangire, Arusha and Moshi before returning through Nairobi and Nakuru.

The Chief Executive took 10 days off at the beginning of the month and then another five days from the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

We received six new rangers from the Council; they replace three rangers who are being transferred to the Council in early December.

### TOURISM

As expected, tourist numbers dropped off dramatically from the beginning of November. We still anticipate a 20-30% reduction in numbers through to January. We then hope that visitor numbers will better than for the first six months of this year but do not anticipate a significant recovery through 2009.

The Kenya Wildlife Service is increasing Park fees from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009. The Game Reserves usually follow suit and we can expect Park fees to increase in the Mara in January – Non-resident adult tickets will probably go up to US\$ 60 per person.

### SECURITY

Only two people were arrested in November, bringing the total to 1,111. 108 wire snares were recovered. There were very few signs of poaching in during the month. This could be attributed to a number of factors, including: the migration had moved South; the area was very wet; people were cultivating and there were clan clashed between two wa Kuria

# Very Few Poachers Reported in November

## Wildebeest Migration Leaves the Mara

clans on the Kenya/Tanzania border, these clashes had diverted people's attention elsewhere.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> the Ngiro-are team were asked to assist our Tanzanian counterparts from Kinyangaga. The Tanzanians had just seen three poachers near Miungu – unfortunately they escaped. However, the combined team recovered 41 wire snares. The following day the Ngiro-are team also recovered 44 snares in the same area.

For the remainder of the month there was virtually no sign of poaching, although the patrol teams continued to find a few snares, mainly set days, or weeks, before. On the 16<sup>th</sup> four snares were recovered and on the 17<sup>th</sup> three were found.

The Purungat (Mara Bridge) team, reported torches across Sand River on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The Iseiya team went across and saw signs of recent poaching and collected 16 wire snares. On the 19<sup>th</sup> the same team found six wire snares between Nyakita Pembe and Lima; the set up an ambush but no one returned.

We joined rangers from the Kenya Wildlife Service and Narok in a combined operation from the 29<sup>th</sup>. The combined team of 40 rangers patrolled along the Sand River and the Mara River. They are due to comb an area around Ol Motonyi – in Trans Mara - at the beginning of December. An elephant killed one person in November and it is understood that the local Masai have killed a number of elephant in retaliation.

Two people were arrested on the escarpment on the 29<sup>th</sup> by a combined Oololo, community and Anne Kent-Taylor team. The two, a Luo woman and young man, were transporting buffalo meat on five donkeys, together with three others who escaped. The poachers had killed two buffalo in the Sankuria forest, near Oololo and were transporting the meat towards Lolgorien.

### REVENUE AND ACCOUNTS

We can anticipate a significant drop in revenue for November. Our management accounts for the period ending October showed that we were very close in our estimates for the first five months of this financial year. We were 1% up on expected revenue; at nearly Ksh 47 million against a budget of Ksh 46.5 million. Our direct costs were 3% lower than budget and operating costs were again 3% below budget; at Ksh 34.4 million against a budget of Ksh 36.4 million. We have been helped by the devaluation of the Kenya Shilling against the US\$; the Kenya Shilling is now trading at Ksh 78:1US\$, as opposed to Ksh 61:1US\$ a year ago. However, we can anticipate rising costs, as the cost of imports increases. We are already seeing a very significant increase in staple food prices and saw a huge increase in fuel prices – although these have come down somewhat in the past month.

We are not sure whether the Council will increase Park entrance fees in time for January – this increase would help revenue and hopefully go some way towards meeting our financial obligations. However, we may still have to rely on donor support to see us through the next seven months.

**“Mystery tourist” goes on game drive with nominated driver for Responsible Guiding Contest**

**With increase in park fee by KWS, Mara Triangle fee will also be expected to raise in January 2009**



# Revenue Drops Significantly in November Worldwide Recession Hits the Mara

## REVENUE COLLECTED & DISTRIBUTED FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2008

Collected	Gate Revenue		Balloon Revenue	
	US\$	Ksh	US\$	KSH
Ticket sales	163078	2088767	-	930630.55
Non-ticket sales	7387.00	327700		
<b>Balance for Distribution</b>	<b>170465</b>	<b>2416467</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>930630.55</b>
<b>Distributed</b>				
Trans Mara County Council	62770.9	932191.1	-	511846.80
Group Ranches	30984.8	396865.7		
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>93755.8</b>	<b>1329057</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>511846.80</b>
<b>Mara Conservancy</b>	<b>76709.3</b>	<b>1087410</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>418783.75</b>

## DEVELOPMENT

The small dam that we made from one of the murrum pits near "Bagdad" filled up in the first rains of the month. This should now provide permanent water.

We worked on improving the housing at Mara Bridge. This work should be completed in early December.

We repaired the clutch on one of the tractors and the road team spent most of the month opening culverts and working on flooded patches along the river road..

## REPORT ON FOCUS ON NOVEMBER

Study tour for staff as a reward for arresting 1,000 poachers	First trip completed
Sell old Land Rover and collect new vehicle	Awaiting new vehicle
Collect uniforms	Done
Clean out culverts and drains in anticipation of the rains	Done
CE to take two weeks off from 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Done
Continue with 10 year management plan	Ongoing

## FOCUS FOR DECEMBER

- Complete staff study tour and incentive trips to Tanzania;
- Transfer staff to Kilgoris;
- Sell Land Rover and collect new vehicle;
- Prepare for increase in Park entrance fees;
- Revise and review the Annual Work Plan;
- Continue on road repairs after the rains; and
- Complete work on staff housing at Mara Bridge.



Mara Conservancy  
P O Box 63457-000619  
NAIROBI  
Tel: (02) 3749 632  
Fax: (02) 3749 636