

MARA MONTHLY

NOVEMBER 2010



Leopard leaves
a balanite tree.

Photograph taken
by Asst. Warden
Joseph Kimojino.

MARA CONSERVANCY CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2010

By Brian Heath

General

Most of November was relatively dry – unusual for this time of the year. However, there were one or two storms at the very end of the month – this should signal the start of the rainy season.

We had a good meeting with KAPS and Deloitte on the 8th, to discuss progress on revenue collection. KAPS have met most of their targets and the meeting was useful in reminding us all on what still needs to be done. Another, six month, review will be done in January 2011.

We have had good support for rehabilitating a drift just outside the Reserve, as the road approaches Oloololo Gate. Little Governors, Mara Serena, Kichwa Tembo (&Beyond), Mpata, Kilima Camp, Mara West, Olonana, Phoenix Safaris (Mara Siria Camp), and Transworld Balloons have all contributed. We hope to start work on this drift in December – weather permitting.

The County Council of Trans Mara elected Councillor Ole Keiuya as Chairman to the Council on the 30th November. We congratulate Councillor Ole

Keiuya on his election; he replaces Councillor P Nkoidillah, with whom we have had a difficult relationship for the past two years.

Charity Cheruiyot, driver guide at &Beyond and winner of this year's Born Free Most Responsible Guide Competition, is back from her all expenses paid trip to South Luangwa National Park in Zambia. Charity's report on her trip, posted on our website, is full of useful lessons learned and we hope to be able to implement some of her observations.

WILDLIFE

What a week for predators in the first week of November. A leopard was caught in a snare on the escarpment and broke free on the 1st, before it could be darted and released. The cheetah cubs reported on the 29th were killed by hyena on the 3rd, before they could open their eyes and a lioness was killed in a fight with a male on the 4th.

Most of the wildebeest had moved out during the month, leaving a few hundred. We still have a reasonable number of zebra but expect them to move off in the coming weeks.



Small herds of zebra and wildebeest still to be found in the Mara Triangle, although we expect most to have moved off by the next couple of weeks.

Photograph taken by Asst. Warden Joseph Kimojino

DOGS

Anna had 10 puppies, two of them died and the remaining eight are thriving. Linda Porter will return in January – to start evaluating and training the puppies.

Memusi died on the 22nd, after being ill with a mixed, trypanosoma bruceii and babesia infection. He seemed to recover after his initial treatment for babesia, but then relapsed – it was at this stage he was found to have trypanosomiasis. He was treated, but it would appear that the infection had crossed the blood/brain barrier and had lodged in his brain.

STAFF

The Chief Executive returned on the 29th – after taking three weeks leave.

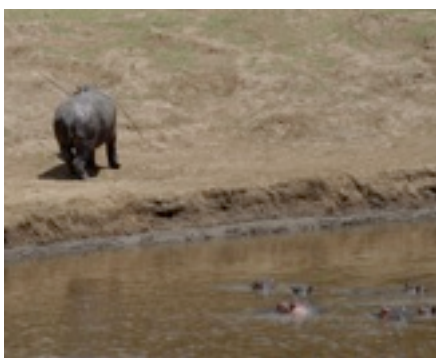
Eighty-nine staff members have been tested and vaccinated against typhoid.

Joshua Saitoti has completed his six month industrial attachment. He will now finish his studies in Kisii before returning to the Mara Conservancy as a qualified electrician.

TOURISM

Tourist numbers were well down in November. This is to be expected at this time of year. However, for those that did make it to the Mara, the weather was wonderful and, with the migration still here, the game viewing was excellent.

We are currently working on new maps and brochures to be given to guests when they arrive at the Mara Triangle, which we hope will be ready by the beginning of the new year.



Hippo with two poacher spears in back.

Taken by Asst. Warden Joseph Kimojino

**Security
Anti-Poaching**

A total of 10 poachers were arrested during the month, five of them in the Triangle and one on the escarpment. This brings the total arrests to 1,521. 259 wire snares were also collected during the month.

A total of 63 wire snares were collected on the 1st. The Iseiya team found nine, in which two wildebeest and one topi were found dead. The Ngiro-are team found 42 and rescued one wildebeest. All

these snares were recovered in the Lemai Wedge – near Nyakita Pembe and along the escarpment. The remaining twelve were recovered by the Care for the Wild and Conservancy rangers in the area we had found the snared leopard on the 31st October.

15 snares were recovered on the 2nd by both teams. Six of the snares were found in the Triangle, in a belt of young acacia trees near the Kishanga crossing. The other nine were recovered in the Lemai Wedge, near the Ngiro-are swamp.

Security cont.

32 wire snares were recovered on the 3rd, all of them in the Lemai Wedge. One topi was rescued and one wildebeest found dead in the snares. A total of 43 wire snares were collected between the 8th and 12th – 10 of them in the Triangle near Kampi ya Mungu.

Three poachers were arrested by the Ngiro-are rangers on the 13th; as they entered the Lemai Wedge from Kigonga. On the 14th the Iseiya rangers patrolled along the escarpment after receiving reports of poachers hunting and killing warthog. They missed the poachers and it was subsequently reported that the poachers had killed seven warthog.

The Iseiya rangers found one dead zebra in a snare and recovered two

snares near Nyakita Pembe in the Lemai Wedge.

On the 16th the Oloololo rangers, in conjunction with the Care for the Wild scouts, arrested one person and recovered 26 wire snares back from the escarpment. The following day it was reported that six zebra had been killed in the same area.

Both anti-poaching teams laid an ambush near Kishangaa – in the Triangle and managed to arrest three of seven poachers. They had found 10 snares during a routine patrol. The following day a further 34 snares were recovered along the Kenya/Tanzania border.

A speared hippo was reported on the river on the 22nd. All our rangers combined to check out the island – a favourite poacher hideout. They recovered 11 wire snares and

arrested two, of three poachers. The poachers had killed one hippo, one impala and several warthog. One of our sergeants, David Bett, had a narrow escape from a buffalo that knocked him down.

On the 25th a driver reported poachers hunting hippo on the Narok side of the river, opposite the island – a combined patrol was organised but the poachers had left the area.

The Ngiro-are rangers arrested one poacher near Masanga in the early morning of the 27th and they recovered three snares on the 28th – one zebra had been killed.

20 snares were recovered in the Lemai Wedge on the 29th – one wildebeest and one young zebra were rescued.



Rhinos have been spotted frequently this month, one male was even spotted by guests in a hot air balloon as they flew over the Salt Lick.

Photographs by Asst. Warden Joseph Kimojino.



Revenue collected and distributed for the month of November 2010

Collected	Gate Revenue		Balloon Revenue	
	US\$	Ksh	US\$	KSH
Ticket sales	289,770.00	2,420,400.00	-	4,062,346.00
Non-ticket sales	43,300.00	246,500.00		
Balance for Distribution	333,070.00	2,666,900.00	-	4,062,346.00
Distributed				
Trans Mara County Council	128,132.20	1,006,919.00	-	2,234,290.30
Group Ranches	55,056.30	459,876.00		
Sub-total	183,188.50	1,466,795.00	-	2,234,290.30
Mara Conservancy	149,881.50	1,200,105.00	-	1,828,055.70

Revenue & Accounts

October is the last month that we can expect significant revenue until the onset of the high season in July 2011. There may be a slight increase in February. However, we can now expect that expenditure will exceed revenue in the coming months – this has been compounded by the very significant salary increases awarded by the Ministry of Local Government in September 2010. This was not budgeted for and will wipe out the US\$ 200,000 reserve that we were aiming for. Indeed, the salary increase has meant additional expenditure of Ksh 18 million (US\$ 225,000) in the year and is made worse by the fact that it is retroactive to April 1st 2010.

Development

We have completed the new kitchen and mess at Oloololo.

The road team installed three new culverts on the road to Ngiro-are, there is still a small amount of work to be done on these before they become functional.

The camp-site toilets at Oloololo were refurbished. We have been having problems with baboons and they had broken basins and pulled out pipes.

The grader worked on some drainage on the road to Ngiro-are and then put in a new collection drain for the dam at Bagdad.

We worked on the trailers and replaced their hinges, and the hitch on the eight-ton trailer.

We have received some funding for road works – using the plastic bag technology that we used near Maji ya Ndege in the past. It was agreed that we would use the funds to work on a flooded area near Little Governors – an area known as Nyaroro (Chain).

The tents have all been repaired and the tailor is now working on canvas covers for vehicles.

Report on Focus for November

Complete mess and kitchen at Oloololo Gaet.	Done.
Continue with road works on road to Ngiro-are.	Done.
Hold meeting with KAPS and Deloitte to complete three month review.	Done.
Install two culverts.	Done.

Focus for December

1. Install one new culvert.
2. Paint houses at Oloololo.
3. Complete raising funds for repairing the drift after Oloololo Gate.
4. Complete canvas work.
5. Build and install new notice board for Purungat.
6. Design new brochures for guests.
7. New ID cards for all staff.

