

# MONTHLY REPORT

MARCH 2011

Photograph  
taken by Asst.  
Warden  
Naigruan.



## MARA CONSERVANCY CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT FOR MARCH 2011

By Brian Heath

### GENERAL

The long-rains started on the 15<sup>th</sup>, with widespread, but not very heavy, storms. These showers and storms continued for the remainder of the month, making the whole of the Triangle green.

The Chief Executive met with Dr Iain Douglas-Hamilton and Save the Elephants on the 8<sup>th</sup> to discuss a project on collaring, monitoring and protecting elephant in the Mara ecosystem. Mr Richard Roberts and Save the Elephants have raised funds for a two-tiered

project that will provide a vehicle and rangers for a rapid-response anti-poaching unit and will also provide 10-15 radio collars to monitor key groups of elephant in the region. This is an exciting project and we look forward to working with Save the Elephants on this.

We held a meeting with the Clerk, Chairman, Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance Committee of the County Council of Trans Mara on the 9<sup>th</sup>, to discuss a meeting that they had held with Narok County Council in February and to plan a

strategy for the way forward in dealing with revenue from Little Governor's. It was a very useful meeting and reflects the great improvement in relations between the Council and Conservancy.

We had two groups of journalists visit the Triangle in March – Ms Cheryl Lyn Dybas will write three articles for Africa Geographic and Mr Ted Katauskas will write an article on the dogs for a New York Times supplement.

Mr Simon Trevor came down to the Triangle for two

**GENERAL CONT.**

days and brought 100 copies of each of the five films he had made on the Mara Conservancy for the African Environmental Film Foundation's (AEFF) "Inspiration" series. We are most grateful to Simon and AEFF's contribution, not to mention the enormous amount of work it took to put together five films in three languages – English, Kiswahili and Maa.

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**WILDLIFE**

Thousands of zebra crossed back into the Triangle within the first two weeks of March – brought in by the dry conditions elsewhere in the Mara. The zebra spread throughout the Triangle, with concentrations near Egyptian Goose and the Salt-Lick areas. However, by the last week of March the zebra were all moving back North across the river.

Naishuro, the female rhino left her large calf in the middle of the month and a few days later, was seen with a newborn calf. She has been very secretive and has only been fleetingly spotted on one or two occasions. This is Naishuro's fourth calf.

Lion and leopard sightings were excellent throughout March. We are concerned that the Oloololo pride have started climbing the escarpment and will probably be a target for the local livestock owners.

**Poachers Camp found at Salt Lick.**

Photograph taken by Asst. Warden Joshua Naiguran.

**RESEARCH**

We received a report on the fish die-off in early February. The Government Chemist ascertained that the fish had been poisoned with "Karate" an agricultural pesticide.

**DOGS**

John Lutenberg joined his wife Linda in training the puppies and they also spent a good deal of time in refresher training for the adult dogs. The training has been extremely beneficial and we can't express enough gratitude to Linda and John for all their work.

**VET**

We have started vaccinating local dogs against Canine Distemper and rabies – so far over 450 dogs have been vaccinated around the Olonana manyattas and Kawai.

A number of people have been very generous in supporting the vaccination campaign. The vaccines, 10,000 doses, were donated by Intervet International

and we would not have received them without the support of Dr Jon Geller and Dr Elayne Williams for organising the donation from the United States and for transporting the vaccines to Africa.

Felix Lankester of the Serengeti Programme (Lincoln Park Zoo) facilitated the movement of vaccines to Kenya. We also received support from Dr Uno and Tyco/Kendall, who donated 4,500 and 3,000 syringes respectively.

**STAFF**

Mr William Deed has resigned and will be leaving us on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. William has been invaluable in assisting the Chief Executive – not to mention the wonderful job he has done with the Mara Triangle website and communications.

William has been happy to take on a number of very important, albeit not very glamorous jobs, and will be sadly missed. We are hoping that he will still be able to manage our website and he has agreed to continue assisting projects through the UK charity, the Mara Trust.

**STAFF CONT.**

The Wardens held their monthly meeting and most of the discussions revolved around ensuring adequate protection for the rhino and lions.

**TOURISM**

Tourist numbers dropped considerably in March and will remain low until June.

**SECURITY**

Twelve poachers were arrested during March; five of them in the Triangle on the 31<sup>st</sup>. This brings the total number of people arrested to 1,572.

Illegal cattle grazing became a major problem as the dry season extended into March. There were numerous incursions into the Triangle and at least 15 people were arrested. The wardens held a meeting with members of the community on the 17<sup>th</sup>, to discuss this illegal grazing. Livestock incursions into conservation and protected areas are becoming an increasing problem – mainly caused by increased agriculture in traditional pastoralist grazing areas, and the formation of conservancies – which restrict grazing.



Photograph taken by Warden of Tourism, Joseph Kimojino.

In the Mara Triangle there appears to be a political element and some of the worst offenders have been local Administration Officers and leaders. We did try and open a section of the escarpment to cattle for a limited period of time to help the locals – it did not work. We were immediately overrun with cattle way beyond the boundaries we had set and had to cancel the arrangement.

We are concerned about the vulnerability of our rhino in the Triangle and will be establishing a ranger post at Ol Kurruk. This will give us the ability to patrol along the top of the escarpment and give us the “eyes” to watch out for any potential threat against rhino and lions – the new warrior age-set will soon be wanting to prove themselves by killing lions and we have to be extra vigilant.

The Ngiro-are rangers arrested three, of four poachers, as they entered the Lemai Wedge at Olaro Onoiyke area. This area seems the main entry point for poachers entering the Lemai Wedge and is where most of the recent arrests have been made.

The Ngiro-are rangers arrested one person on the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup>, as he, and two others entered the Lemai Wedge on the Masanga route. They were armed with spears and were accompanied by dogs – presumably with the intention of hunting warthog.

The Ngiro-are rangers arrested two, of three, poachers as they were setting snares near the Olaro Onoiyke area on the night of the 16<sup>th</sup>. Three snares were recovered, two days later a further three snares were also recovered.

The Ngiro-are rangers arrested one, of three, people as they entered the Lemai Wedge on the Masanga route on the evening of

the 24<sup>th</sup>. The poachers had spears and were accompanied by dogs.

Linda Porter showed the Chief Executive a photograph of a hyena carrying a piece of hippo skin near the salt-lick on the 31<sup>st</sup>. It was immediately realised that the skin was from a butchered animal. Both anti-poaching teams were mobilised and we managed to arrest all five of the poachers in a thicket downstream from the salt-lick swamp.

They had killed the hippo the previous night and were still in the process of butchering the meat into slabs for drying. At least one of the poachers had been arrested before and all were from a village called Kangriani in Tanzania.

**REVENUE & ACCOUNTS**

The Kenya Shilling has been very volatile over the past month – reaching Ksh 85:1 US\$ by mid-March. However, the situation is stabilising and we expect the Shilling to return to around 82 – 83 by early April. We did a forward trade when the Shilling hit 85 and will be selling US\$ 80,000 at 85.50 between 15<sup>th</sup> July and 28<sup>th</sup> October.

**DEVELOPMENT**

We completed the installation of a drift – made of two culvert lines and sandbags on the Sabaringo Lugga, near Little Governor's. This is part of the new road between Sankuria and Little Governors and goes a long way towards making the road all-weather.

We completed the installation of a new culvert near “Kilo Two”

We completed painting the new

**DEVELOPMENT CONT.**

toilets at the Hippo Pool.

We purchased two new uni-huts for the ranger post at Ngiro-are. These will be erected in early April.

The electrician connected existing uni-huts at Ngiro-are to a solar

system and now all the buildings have light.

CMC engineering made us a new chassis for our eight-ton trailer. Unfortunately, the chassis is unusable and will have to be returned to, and altered in, Nairobi.

**Revenue collected and distributed for the month of February 2011**

Collected	Gate Revenue		Balloon Revenue	
	US\$	Ksh	US\$	KSH
Ticket sales	254,066.00	2,010,150.00	-	-
Non-ticket sales	6,025.00	3,152,200.00		
<b>Balance for Distribution</b>	<b>260,091.00</b>	<b>5,162,350.00</b>	-	-
<b>Distributed</b>				
Trans Mara County Council	94,777.51	2,457,364.00	-	-
Group Ranches	48,272.54	381,928.50		
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>143,050.05</b>	<b>2,839,292.50</b>	-	-
<b>Mara Conservancy</b>	<b>117,040.95</b>	<b>2,323,057.50</b>	-	-

**Report on Focus for March**

Start road works on drift and swampy sections of the new Sankuria - Little Governor's road using the Japanese sandbag technique.	Started - we completed one drift/ culvert.
Complete six-month evaluation of KAPS	Ongoing.
Resurface threshold on Serena Airstrip.	Done.
Install three more culverts.	Done.
Complete railing around hippo viewing point.	Not yet done.

**Focus for April**

1. Renovate three houses at Ol Kurruk and establish a ranger post.
2. Install new uni-huts at Ngiro-are.
3. Continue with sandbag technique on flood prone sections of the road near Little Governor's.
4. Complete Annual Work Plan.
5. Continue vaccination programme.
6. Work on railing around hippo pools.

