

Ewaso Lions Quarterly Update

April - June 2015

Wildlife Monitoring & Research – Lion Update



Naramat, a 6 year old lioness who is resident in Westgate, has recently given birth to two cubs

Our lion monitoring activities have continued over the last three months; the field team out patrolling on foot and by vehicle each day. Here are some of the latest lion stories from the field:

Having taken up residence within the Core Area of Westgate Conservancy in December, pregnant lioness **Naramat** and her 2 year old son, **Lentim**, remained in the area until April. With the arrival of the rains, Naramat headed off towards the hills and away from the safe refuge of the Core Area. She headed into a part of the Conservancy where there are many settlements and lots of livestock. Concerned for her welfare, several of our Warriors and Scouts set up a temporary camp in Loijuk, close to her location. Each day the team followed her tracks on foot to ensure she remained safe. Whilst out tracking, the Warriors also discovered that Naramat had given birth to two cubs!

Since the arrival of her new cubs it is unlikely that **Lentim** has stayed with his mother. Instead, he will either have joined up with other dispersing young males in search of a new home range or remained alone. The team is monitoring the area around Loijuk and along the river but have yet to sight the young male. **Loiwotwa** and **Lbolei**, two other young males who left their pride, are also constantly moving between community areas in search of safe habitat. They recently killed a donkey in the Ngare Ndare area.

Nanai and **Nabulo**, 5 year-old females from the Koitogor Pride, used to move frequently into Westgate but since giving birth to cubs in 2013 they have remained resident in the Reserve. One of their cubs, a young male, is recently thought to have separated from his mother. The cub, who is now old enough to survive away from the pride, is suspected to have followed his father, **Lguret**. In June, the team received a report that Lguret, accompanied by a younger lion, had killed a donkey in Kalama.

Naserian and **Nadala**, two young females also of the Koitogor Pride, are believed to have had cubs in the area between Kalama and Koitogor.

Lion Kids Camp

In April, we held our 4th Lion Kids Camp. This camp brought together 27 children from 4 Conservancies for five days of conservation education and fun. We were especially excited to engage with four new schools who had not previously been involved in one of our camps, namely: Kiltamany, Learata, Kipsing and Ngare Mara. All the children who attended the camp were selected through a creative arts competition with the theme, "Our Wildlife, Our Future."

During the course of the week, children participated in a range of activities from bird walks and game drives to conservation themed presentations, drama, games, and more. As always, taking the children on a game drive inside Samburu National Reserve proved to be one of the highlights of the Camp and this year all the children were lucky enough to see a leopard and to witness lions stalking a herd of Grevy's zebra.



27 children participated in our fourth Lion Kids Camp held in April 2015

At the end of the camp, we held a closing ceremony in which the children performed a series of entertaining wildlife dramas depicting what it is like to live as lions, elephants, wild dogs and Grevy's zebra. All the students received certificates and prizes were awarded to the best student (Benard Letupukwa Lenakwawi from Learata Primary School) and school (Kipsing Primary School) in the arts competition and the best student of the camp (Rose Lokale from Ngare Mara Primary School).

We are excited to be hosting a special reunion camp in August for all 118 former Lion Kids!

Running for Lions

On May 30th, dozens of community members attended the 6th annual Running for Lions event. In total, more than 40 runners - including elders, warriors, women, and children - took part in the race. At the end of the run, there were speeches by the organisers and partners highlighting the importance of conservation, with a special focus on protecting lions.

Ewaso Lions conceived Running for Lions, five years ago, as a way to bring together the local community under the banner of conservation, to create unity, and have fun. This year, in line with our goal of putting conservation back in the hands of the local community, we were very proud to handover Running for Lions to Westgate Conservancy - making this a 100% community-owned event.



The 6th Annual Running for Lions event was organised by Westgate Conservancy

We congratulate Westgate for putting on a fantastic race this year, and look forward to seeing the future of Running for Lions in your hands!

Support for local schools



Ewaso Lions donated 60 new desks to Lorubae Primary School

Under our education programme, Ewaso Lions supports local schools that cannot always provide resources required to meet their students' needs. Given the strong ties between youth education and wildlife conservation, we support schools as a way of building capacity for Kenya's future wildlife leaders. Recently, thanks to a generous gift by one of our donors, we were able to provide 60 much needed desks to Lorubae Primary School.

The school was established in 1991 and, with no renovations having been made since, its infrastructure had deteriorated significantly over time. Termites, dust and strong winds had destroyed much of the school's furniture, leaving the children with nothing to sit on and the teachers with nowhere to secure confidential records.

Ewaso Lions worked with the school to develop an agreement with a conservation angle. A condition of this agreement was that parents of pupils attending the school had to agree not to graze their livestock within the boundaries of the National Reserves. Livestock encroachment can result in a decline in wildlife numbers and escalate human-lion conflict when livestock stray into lion habitat. The school were also required to cover the costs of constructing the desks and provide written assurances that they would be well maintained.

We recently visited Lorubae Primary School and we were delighted to see that the children are already making good use of the new desks. Of the 60 desks provided, Standard 8 students received 30 desks with a lockable compartment for book storage and Standard 7 students received 30 bench-style desks designed to seat two children each. As a bonus, the older desks have filtered down to lower Standards - so everyone now has a desk to use!

New Ewaso Lions Camp Opening



Hundreds attended the opening of the new Ewaso Lions Conservation Camp and enjoyed a fantastic day of celebrations

On April 25th, close to 400 people turned up for the official opening ceremony of the new Ewaso Lions Conservation Camp. Community members, partners, donors, and friends all gathered to mark this huge milestone for Ewaso Lions, and were both thankful and humbled by such a turn out.

It was a fantastic day of celebration that commenced with the cutting of a ribbon and a wonderful blessing led by Mzee Lalmaoi. Our Mama Simba ladies, accompanied by women from other locations, performed a series of vibrant welcoming songs and students from Lpus Leluai put on a lovely play which incorporated several of Ewaso Lions' community programmes and a poem, encouraging their communities to join in with local conservation efforts. After the speeches, everyone enjoyed a feast of *nyama*.

Having grown from a team of 4 in 2008 to a team of 32 full-time staff today, the new camp has already had a dramatic impact on our lives and work. No longer do we have to drive for 30 minutes to send an email, fear that the camp is going to collapse from a single drop of rain or gust of wind or worry about porcupines raiding the kitchen – meaning we can devote more time to lion conservation.

We thank those who have made the new camp a reality and look forward to spending many years here continuing our work for the people and wildlife of northern Kenya.

World Environment Day 2015

June 6th was World Environment Day. To mark this occasion, Ewaso Lions participated in a clean-up in Archers Post together with NEMA, other conservation partners, school children and more. In addition to participating in the clean-up event, Ewaso Lions also sponsored all the tree seedling that were planted during the closing ceremony held in Wamba that same day. We were delighted to work with NEMA on this initiative.

About Ewaso Lions

Ewaso Lions is an independent non-profit wildlife conservation organisation in northern Kenya. Our mission is to conserve Kenya's lions and other large carnivores by promoting coexistence between people and wildlife. Since 2007, Ewaso Lions has used sound science, education, and capacity building to foster support for and guide the long-term conservation of lions. For more information on our community and research programmes, please visit www.ewasolions.org

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