



Game Report January 2008

The wonderful wildlife viewing that we experienced in January carried on well into February. The sheer amount of wildlife along Rhino Ridge and the adjoining plains was astonishing. There were large numbers of Wildebeest accompanied by Zebra, many with very young foals, plus herds of Topi, Coke's Hartebeest (Kongoni), Grant's and Thompson's Gazelle and surprising numbers of Eland, which is always a lovely sight. A large herd of more than two hundred Buffalo have also become resident in this area. Towards the end of the month many of the Zebra and Wildebeest crossed the Mara River and headed south towards the Serengeti (most have since returned during February). On the 24th our guests witnessed a dramatic crossing of the Mara River by Zebra and Wildebeest. This provided an unexpected bonus to the resident crocodiles when one Zebra was taken by a very large crocodile.

Along the edge of the riverine forest and close to the Musiara Swamp, Giraffe, Impala, Waterbuck, and, of course, Elephant were seen daily in good numbers as usual. A feature of the Elephant herds at the moment is the large numbers of very young babies, which is always a delight to see.

Normally guests at Little Governors are treated to the sight of elephant in the swamp in front of Little Governors but this month our guests were delighted one morning in January when two black Rhinos also visited the swamp. Quite a sighting from the morning breakfast table!

With this large amount of wildlife it is no surprise that cat sightings have been so good. The Marsh Pride and Ridge Prides were seen most days and a female with two small cubs has been seen on a number of occasions. Cheetah sightings have also been extremely good with sightings every day. The three brothers have provided guests with lots of photographic opportunities, with guests getting great shots of them hunting. On at least two occasions they have successfully killed fully grown Topi. Topi are quite a large antelope, reputed to be the fastest antelope, so for the brothers to be successful with such a large antelope is quite an achievement. It is a good illustration that co-operative hunting is so much more successful. Other Cheetahs seen in our area are a female with two male cubs and at least two other lone females. Leopard sightings again were good during the month and a particular highlight for our clients on walking safaris was large male, seen in the walking area.



We were delighted to welcome back Brian and Annabelle Jackman to Little Governors' in January, and they had some wonderful predator sightings and general game viewing during their two day stay . For those of you who don't know Brian, he is the doyen of safari travel writers in the UK and a great friend of Little Governors' . On a game drive together with Aris (our Managing Director) and his wife Romi, they witnessed the three brother cheetahs succesfully hunt a young wildebeest, then came across a beautiful black - maned lion lying across a mound surveying his territory and six female lionesses who were hunting in it. One of these females spotted the three brother cheetahs and stole their kill. The black - maned lion produced a impressive roar, and Brian and Aris duly named him "Pavarotti" . The naming didnt stop there; Brian also named the resident male leopard "Kijana" (which translates from Swahili as " young man"), because despite the fact that he is fully grown, he shares his mother's territory between Il Moran, Governors' Camp and the Musiara Swamp ("Lake Nakuru") and they are often seen together. Indeed we have had regular sightings of them this month. On the Jackmans second afternoon game drive, after the privilege of watching a Serval Cat hunting rodents on Rhino Ridge, they were heading back to camp at sunset when they came across a very large male leopard which had not been seen before, according to Stanley, our head driver-guide at Little Governors' . The leopard was sitting on a large rock over looking the Mara plains and as the light was fading fast they couldn't identify any special features to gives this magnificent animal a name. We will keep this naming priviledge for Brian and Annabelle 's next visit. One afternoon whilst the Jackmans were enjoying an afternoon siesta a black rhino was seen browsing near their tent at Little Governors'. What Brian does not know is that we have now named the rhino " Jackman " and requested Mara Conservancy , whose area Little Governors' is situated in , to adopt this name as well. After fantastic game viewing on the safari Brian remarked to Aris that "the area of the Masai Mara in which we did all our game drives must be the predator capital of the world" , a quote he was happy for us to use. He also commented that it was such a pity that so many people, who had planned a holiday of a lifetime, had to cancel their visits to this beautiful country, particularly as no tourist had been harmed in any way during these sad times for Kenya.



We have had wonderful bird sightings in January. On the open plains we have seen Pallid and Montagu's' Harriers flying low over the grass, hunting large insects and small rodents. Among the Wildebeest and Zebra herds were many Yellow Wagtails. These migrants from Europe love to forage at the feet of the herds, where they feed on insects disturbed by the many hoofs. Other migrants feeding in the grass with the herds were Caspian Plovers and some of the males were in partial breeding colour. These Plovers, as their name suggests, breed in the Caspian Sea area and winter in Africa as far south as South Africa.

We hope to share the magic of our corner of the Mara with you soon,

From all the staff of: Governors' Camp, Little Governors' Camp, Il Moran Camp and Governors' Private Camp.

Dave Richards
Manager Governors Camp



Drawing by Jonathan Kenworthy

Governors' Camp Collection
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