

CHEETAH UPDATE

IMANI, KISARU, SILA SUBS, RUKA & RAFIKI



Updates by the Mara Predator Conservation Programme on cheetahs in the Greater Mara Ecosystem

Imani

Imani is a female cheetah born approximately in July 2012 by the famous female Amani and was part of a litter with two other males, one called Hodari and another one that disappeared soon after. Her brother Hodari is still around but covers a very large territory.

We previously placed a GPS collar on him and tracked his movements all the way to the Serengeti. Imani is one the more well-known cheetahs of the Mara who is seen frequently in the National Reserve can be easily identified by the local guides because of a very dark distinct coat which is heavily spotted. Up until now, we have been able to document Imani with six litters with a total of 22 cubs.

She however has not been lucky with her litters, and we have only been able to see her raise one litter of cubs to independence. This was her 2015 litter which consisted of four cubs. She lost one female cub soon after bringing them out of the lair but the remaining three cubs, two males and a female, made it to independence. After dispersing, the two males formed a coalition

and were named Lemara & Leteipa by the local guides and they established a territory that covers parts of Naboisho and Ol Kinyei Conservancies.



The female went her own ways and was named Selenkei by guides and she is a common sighting in Olare Motorogi, Naboisho and Ol Kinyei conservancies.

Kisaru

Kisaru is another one of Amani's daughters who many people know because of her six cubs she brought out of the lair in 2019 and raising them all to independence. Kisaru was born in March 2016, and she was part of a litter of just two, and her sister was called Anashe by some and Busara by others.

Amani raised them almost entirely in Mara North Conservancy, but she would occasionally pop up in Olare Motorogi Conservancy as well with her two daughters. After dispersing from their mother in July 2017, the girls stayed together until February 2018 before finally going their separate ways to start their solitary adult life. Kisaru travelled to Enonkishu Conservancy and in August 2019, she had her first litter of six cubs, five females and one male. It is usually overwhelming for a mother to raise such a big litter to independence, but she defied all odds.

It is however important to note that three of the juvenile females separated from Kisaru and the remaining offspring for unknown reasons when they were only 12 months old and therefore their chances of survival were low. The other three stayed with their mother and successfully dispersed in

late October 2020. We are happy to report that Kisaru recently brought her second litter of four cubs from the lair, also in Enonkishu Conservancy



in August this year although she has already lost two cubs.

The other excellent news is that one of her daughters from her first litter was recently seen with seven tiny cubs but they were barely a month old at the time of the sighting so fingers crossed she will bring them all out of the lair soon.

Sila Subs

Sila is Selenkei's daughter, Imani's granddaughter and Amani's great granddaughter. She was born in January 2018 and was part of a litter of four cubs as the only female. Selenkei raised the litter between Olare Motorogi, Naboisho and Ol kinyei conservancies and she successfully raised them all to independence as they dispersed in June 2019.

After dispersing, Sila and her brothers were joined by a young male we could not identify but their union did not last very long. After dispersing, the young cheetahs ventures into community areas bordering Olare-Motorogi Conservancy (OMC) and Pardamat, occasionally going into fenced plots and sometimes MPCP was called to intervene. The youngsters then disappeared for a spell, but Sila was later seen alone in August of 2019 back in OMC while we never ever saw her three brothers again. After about a year of her absence, Sila showed up again in OMC with three seven months old cubs, a male and two females.

To make it more interesting, Sila and her cubs were joined by a brother from Selenkei's 2019 litter, who had recently dispersed from her mother. The group were frequently seen in

OMC and would occasionally go back to the community area in Pardamat. Selenkei's son from the 2019 litter was the first to leave the group and



Sila's own cubs dispersed soon after, in August this year.

We are still seeing them around doing some exploration on their and have even been sighted in the National Reserve. Sila on the other hand seems to be enjoying the break without cubs and is frequently sighted in OMC.

Ruka & Rafiki

The female Rosetta gave birth to a litter of five cubs in the Sand River area of the National Reserve in September 2018. She lost two of the cubs in early January 2019, but the other three cubs managed to survive.

Rosetta is one of the females we have in the Mara whose home range overlaps with the Serengeti. Rosetta crossed the border to the Serengeti with three very small cubs and for a long time we did not see her again. She eventually returned to the National Reserve, still with her cubs but now much bigger. She was able to raise the three cubs, two males and a female, to independence and they dispersed towards the middle of March 2020.

They were together for around three months before the female, who the guides named Raisi, went her separate way while the boys, who were named Ruka and Rafiki, stayed together to form a coalition. They quickly established a territory north of the Talek River around the Topi plains, Paradise and Marsh areas and stayed there for almost a year.

In the middle of this year though, they crossed the Mara River into the Triangle and have seemed



settle there. Ever since the disappearance of a coalition called the Lemai Males in the Mara Triangle there has been territory vacancy and so these boys might just be looking to establish themselves there.

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