



Wildlife Report

For the month of July, Two Thousand and Fourteen

Crossing season has started

In the June Lamai Wildlife Report we explained how the migration was 'missing in action' from the Lamai area, until the final day of the month when 80 000 wildebeest were seen crossing to the northern side of the Mara River, about 8 km upstream of Kogatende.

The rest is history. Crossings occurred on a regular basis throughout the month of July. Mara River Tented Camp guests saw a total of 16 crossings and 2 crocodile kills. Towards the middle of the month, the migration began to fill up the plains of the Lamai Triangle north of the Mara River.







Disappearing act

It is beyond crazy for anyone to think that us mere humans can accurately predict the thoughts and instincts of 1.5 million wildebeest. No one will ever be able to say for sure where the gnus will be at any certain date, but after decades of observing the phenomenon that is the great migration, a rough timeline of their predicted location throughout the year has been established. But even a 'rough' timeline must be taken with a big spoonful of salt...



After the usual two to three month stationary period in the short grass plains of Ndutu for calving, the wildebeest left the southern Serengeti and headed north within the roughly predicted timeframe, at the end of March. Unfortunately, due to a dry rainy season, they moved quickly through most of the Serengeti and arrived at Singita Grumeti on the 29th of April, over a month earlier than they are usually expected.



They left Singita Grumeti by the end of May and we assumed they would also arrive at Singita Mara River Camp earlier than expected, but they arrived more or less on time. What we still can't seem to figure out is where exactly the herds were during the month of June!

Mating lions



July was also lion mating season, it seems, at Singita Mara River Tented Camp as a total of 11 mating pairs of lions were seen!

The gestation period of a lioness is about 100 days, so hopefully come October and November we will be seeing a lot of little lion cubs in the area.

African wild cat

Unfortunately we were unable to get a photo, but what a cool sighting! Guide Vianney and guests were lucky enough to spot an African wild cat (*Felis silvestris lybica*).

At the first glance of an African wild cat one would think a person's house cat had somehow lost its way and wandered into the bush. Apart from slightly longer legs, a more angular face, and some coat colouring



differentiations on the legs, stomach and ears, they are extremely similar to a typical tabby house cat.

The African wild cat is the ancestor of the domestic cat. Their range covers the Arab Peninsula and parts of the Middle East and Asia, with only slight differences in colouring, and also taking on a different name depending on the region. Recent research theorises that the Middle East wild cats were the first to be domesticated some 12 000 years ago in the 'near east' when humans were first becoming agricultural. The cats were a perfect rodent control for any stored crops.

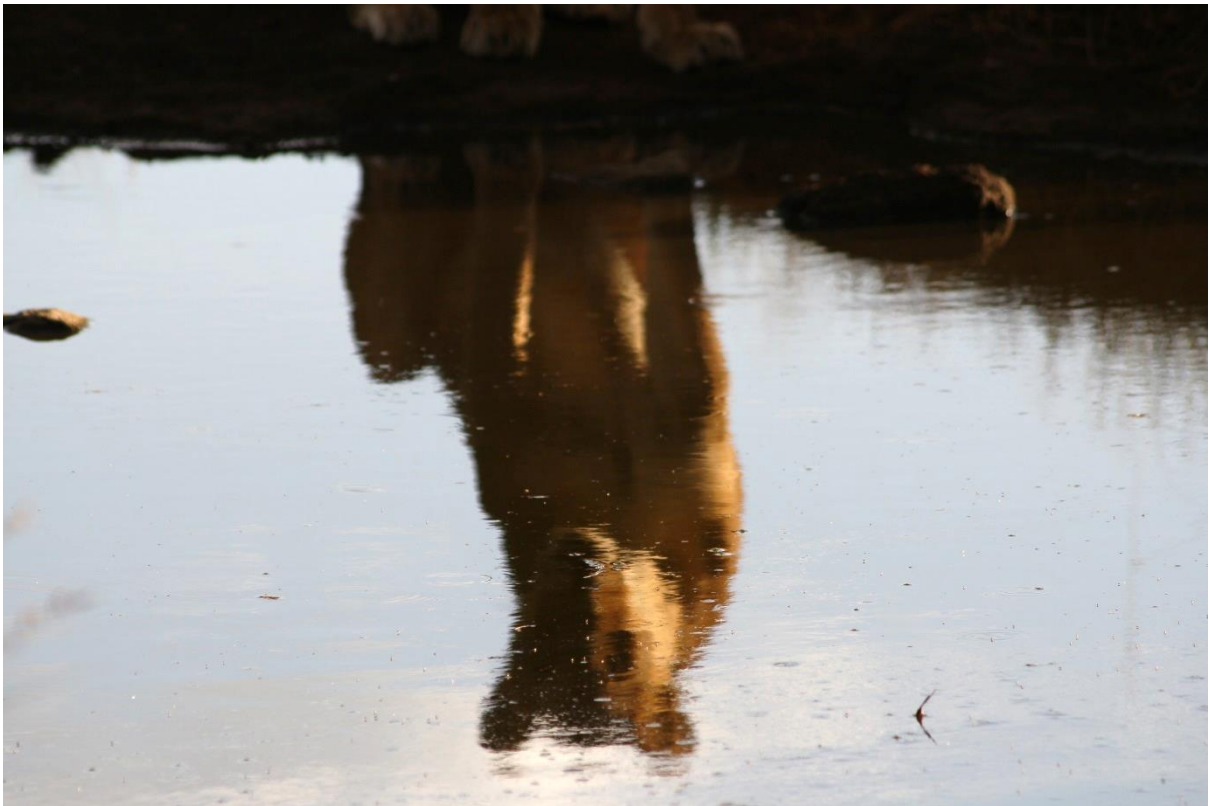
Because of their close genetic relationship, African wild cats will breed with feral domestic cats. The best way to tell a purebred from a hybrid is the reddish tint on the back of the ears.

Sightings report

Lion:	18
Leopard:	5
Cheetah:	7
Elephant:	12
Buffalo:	1
Rhino:	6
Crossings:	14
Croc Kills:	2

Special sightings:

- 1 male African wild cat off Daraja Jenusi Road.
- 1 male roan antelope off Den Site Road.
- Mating pair of leopards upstream of Kogatende airstrip, east of Sayari Camp.



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