

# NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK NEWS

22nd Edition April 2021



*Photo by Tanvir Ali*

Friends of Nairobi National Park [ April 2021 ] 22nd Edition



## CONTENTS

### Articles & Section Pages

**Chairman's Report by Jonathan Pereira- 3**

**Introduction of the FoNNaP Board- 4 & 5**

**Lions in March by Trish Heather-Hayes- 6, 7 & 8**

**Waste free parks, key to Nairobi National Park well being by Viviane Kemboi- 9**

**In Praise of Nairobi's Brown House Snakes by Stephen Spawls - 10 & 11**

**Photo of the Month by Jon Bryant - 12 & 13**

**Leopard of Nairobi National Park by Olga Levari Ercolano -14, 15, 16 & 17**

**Unusual Hippo behavior in NNP by Olga Levari Ercolano -18**

**Cheetah Updates April 2021 by Olga Levari Ercolano- 19**

**Migrants in Nairobi National Park by Sidney Shema- 20 & 21**

**Sightings at Nairobi National Park -March 2021-22 & 23**

**Nairobi National Park Game Count by Anita Gitonga (12yrs) and Joshua Gitonga (8yrs)-24**

**Bird Sightings-25**

**Wild Flowers of NNP by Trish Heather-Hayes -26**

**Kids Column and Corporate Members Recognition -27**

Content, articles & photos sourced, edited and compiled by Olga Levari Ercolano.  
Presentation in collaboration with Janet Kavutha



Olga Levari Ercolano

## Chairman's Report | April 2021



**Jonathan Pereira**  
**Board Chairman**  
**FoNNaP**

Dear Members,

The Covid 19 pandemic has taken a dramatic turn with the new strain discovered in India. It has sadly claimed so many lives in a short period of time. I pray that India may overcome this soonest. I urge all members to continue taking the necessary recommended precautions as this is our first line of defence.

On the 11 April 2021, a number of FoNNaP members assembled at 5.30am at the National Park gate to participate in the second game count of this year in conjunction with KWS. It was quite a challenge for some people with road closures in the park. Some counting blocks were not accessible due to the very wet conditions caused by the previous night rains. It was encouraging to have a number of young children participate in the event. The take away from this event was that the game count is not being done correctly. To ensure that the game counts are done correctly and yield correct results, we will, in the near future, be having a series of presentations by KWS on how to participate in a game count.

On 27th April, the Community and Advocacy committee hosted a discussion via zoom about the Task Force. It was well attended and a number of good points were made that will be included as recommendations from FoNNaP for the Task Force. I sincerely thank the members who took part, for their time and contributions.

Early this month, the long rains started and this has had both positive and negative impacts on the park. The positives are that we have seen the park turn a beautiful green in many places. Also many of the water pans and dams that were drying up are now regaining their water volumes. The negatives are that the roads that have not been upgraded were a serious challenge to drivers resulting in vehicles getting stuck. This kept the FoNNaP patrol team and KWS busy especially on weekends towing cars out of the mud. The other negative has been that a good number of the herbivores have moved out of the park to the neighbouring land. This means that the predators also follow them out of the park and pose a great threat to the livestock in these areas.

On 30th April, my vice chairman, Jim, and I, went to the dispersal area south of the park on a fact finding mission. We met the local Maasai leaders and had good discussions on their challenges with visits from predators from the park. We visited bomas that had Predator Deterrent systems and got practical first hand information on the three different systems that have been used in the area. My board has unanimously agreed to come up with a comprehensive methodology to prevent predator attacks. We want to adopt the "prevent the fire rather than putting out the fire" approach. We will be launching a major fundraising campaign for this purpose in the near future.

Please stay safe and keep well.

Regards  
Jonathan Pereira  
Chairman



## INTRODUCING THE FoNNaP BOARD 2021/2022



**Jonathan Pereira**  
Chairman

Jonathan is a veteran tour operator having been in the industry for over 35 years. He has served on various committees of the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife and the Kenya Tourist Board. Jonathan has travelled extensively in Kenya and Tanzania and has a passion for wildlife and photography.

He has been actively involved in the Nairobi National Park since being a member of the Park Patrol in conjunction with KWS. This has enabled him to be more actively involved in the conservation of the park which has a special place in his heart. He is a regular contributor to the FONNAP newsletter.



**Jim Kinyany**  
Vice Chair

Jim also leads the Community Engagement & Advocacy Sub Committee. Recently returned to Kenya, Jim has been close to conservation all of his adult life. He is a past Chair of Uvumbuzi Club with whom he toured widely in and

out of Kenya. Past director at AFEW and is passionate about Flora, Fauna, Wildlife, Communities and environment conservation done in a sustainable way!



**Daljeet Kaur**  
Treasurer

A graduate in finance and management with a working experience of over 10 years. Daljeet is a nature lover. She has immense passion for wildlife photography and conservation. Having visited almost all reserves and national parks in Kenya, she keeps Nairobi National Park very close to her heart. She also takes part in the patrol programme.



**Gaye D'Costa**  
Board member

Gaye is an experienced event planner and culinary expert. This is her second term on the board of FoNNaP. She loves the park and is passionate about conserving this precious natural resource on the doorstep of the city. She is an active participant of the Patrol team which is run in close collaboration with KWS.

She has used her expertise and skills to successfully run various events for FoNNaP last year despite the challenges faced by the pandemic. She handles the Kids Column of the newsletter and would like to see more children and youth participate in FONNAP events.



**Nkamunu Patita**  
Board member

Patita holds a BA in Integrated Community Development. She has over 14 years experience working with indigenous communities. She is a passionate community led conservation and indigenous knowledge leader.



**George Ochenge**  
Board member

Serving in the Wildlife and Habitat Committee, George has been a member of the Park Patrol and has particular interest especially in the large ungulates and flora of the Park. A clinical researcher by profession, he shares his spare time between the NNP and travel. George is interested in helping promote the Park as a place that families should visit, including children.



**Dr. Elizabeth Migongo-Bake**  
Board member

Dr. Elizabeth Migongo-Bake is a Terrestrial Ecologist/Conservation Biologist, with a passion for Drylands ecology, use and management, as well as the inclusion of local communities in conservation efforts and benefits. She has an MSc in Biology of Conservation and a PhD in Rangelands Science. She recently left the UN where she worked globally over two decades on policy issues related to environment protection and conservation. She is also a member of the EAWLS Board. At FoNNaP Board she is the chair of the Habitat & Wildlife Committee.



**Fizan Chaudhry**  
Board member

Fizan leads the Marketing and Education Committee. From a young age, Fizan has formed a strong bond with the Nairobi National Park. He knows almost every part of the park. Through his photography, he wishes to bring out the beauty and importance of conserving the Park.



## ADVERTISE WITH US

### FoNNaP Newsletter advert rate card

Monthly 5000/=

semi annually 24000/=

Annually 36000/=

Payment to Mpesa Buy Goods Till  
No 275211

cheques to Friends of Nairobi  
National Park

[fonnaip@gmail.com](mailto:fonnaip@gmail.com)  
0723090680

FONNAP MEMBERS  
DISCOUNT  
10% OFF

## PORINI SAFARI CAMPS

PORINI AMBOSELI CAMP, Selenkay Conservancy, Amboseli.

PORINI MARA CAMP, Ol Kinyei Conservancy, Masai Mara.

PORINI CHEETAH CAMP, Ol Kinyei Conservancy, Masai Mara.

PORINI LION CAMP, Olare Motorogi Conservancy, Masai Mara.

PORINI RHINO CAMP, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Laikipia.

NAIROBI TENTED CAMP, The Nairobi National Park, Nairobi.

RHINO RIVER CAMP, Adjacent to the Meru National Park, Meru.

From Kshs 9,450 Per Person Sharing Half Board Basis

\* Kshs.14,450 Per Person Sharing on Fully Inclusive Basis (Ground Package)

www.porini.com

Call Jackie on 0733 888 570 | 0774 136 523/4/5 | 0722 509 200

0733 718 902. info@gamewatchers.co.ke



# LIONS IN APRIL 2021

by Trish Heather-Hayes

With the onset of the rains during April, the game started moving out on to the Kitengela plains, and this is the cue for the lions to start following. Always a dangerous time for the lions and residents with the constant threat of boma invasions with the livestock being easy pickings. A time when the Lion Lights are most needed. Funds have been really low in coming in and more are desperately needed so that "Lights For Life" can buy sufficient stock to enable Dave Mascall to move on attacked bomas and also to safeguard bomas which are weakly constructed to help save the lions and leopards from retaliation by the livestock owners.

The MF family, together with Mpakasi and Kitili have been spotted on a few occasions outside the park and a couple of predations have been made, also in the areas closer to Tuala. The lions have on all occasions returned to the park but it is a worrying time for all for the safety of the stock and the lions.

Apart from making visits outside the park, Mpakasi and Kitili have been active in the Athi and Middle park area (Athi basin to SGR) on their own or in the company of either the MF ladies, Solo and Nala or the KF7 ladies, most popular this month being Namunyak, who seems to be a firm favourite, especially with Mpakasi. It has not been so active with the mating, a couple of days now and then each of the males have been seen mating, but it doesn't seem to last more than a day and then they are all found just enjoying each others company. All are looking in good condition, although no signs of pregnancies?!



Mpakasi with Namunyak Credit : Steven M Mwaura

On that note, though Serena is reported by the rangers to still have her 3 cubs, now around 8 months old. They have been kept well out of sight most of the time, Rangers have seen them on numerous occasions, as have those at Emakoko but otherwise there have been very few sightings of them and no photographs that I have seen to date. Not being able to get into the park as often as before I have not seen them either .

Half sister Safi has been seen mostly around the dam to cheetah gate and on the 17th was spotted walking down towards No 11 looking heavily pregnant and I expect that she is due to give birth any time soon , if not already born.



Safi looking due any time soon.  
Credit Ankole Tours & Travels

The MF family of Solo, Nala and their 5 sub adults are still thriving. Both ladies have been seen mating with both Mpakasi and Kitili, so maybe a new family on the make. In the meantime, the 5 sub adults, two males and 3 females are now fending for themselves and from reports and photos are doing well., although guilty also of excursions out of the park into the Kitengela plains.



Kitili and Nala Credit Sonia Varma

The other two males Quntai and Leshan are now in their 5th year and suddenly blossoming into very handsome lions. Their coverage over the park from 14 to the forest is amazing and you are never sure which corner they will appear around.

On the night of the 2nd, the two of them brought down a juvenile (not baby) hippo which had probably been out grazing from the Nagoloman dam. An incredible kill, although I hate to think how they managed to kill it between just the two of them! They fed on this for 3 full days, joined on the following evening by the two KF females Alamaya and Leboia who enjoyed their share without any hassles from the boys. On the third day, completely unable to eat another mouthful the boys retreated to a small tree on the No 2 plains and slept for the next two days.



Quntai feasting on hippo kill.: Credit T H Hayes



Leshan going for water : Credit T H Hayes

Meanwhile Sirikoi came to see what, if anything was left, accompanied by Alamaya and Leboia again, They ate whatever they could in competition with the hyenas and jackals, moved to the Nagoloman dam for a drink and went off to sleep it off somewhere near 22



Alamaya ; Credit Kenyaone

Alamaya killed an adult zebra near Kingfisher, where Leboia joined her, to be joined later by Sirikoi. Then only a couple of days later, there was a commotion on the No 2 plains and Sirikoi, Alamaya and Leboia were seen stalking young buffalo calves in the herd and being chased off by angry mum and aunts, but sadly one newborn calf was not so lucky and Sirikoi had a small snack, which he did generously share with the two ladies then after a long drink, disappeared round to the back of the dam and probably slept off the rest of their day in the cool of the forest.



LIONS IN MARCH 2021

Continued.....



Sirikoi chased off by an irate mother buffalo  
Credit Gareth Jones



Sirikoi, Alamaya & Leboia drinking at Nagolomon dam  
Credit Festus Musili

Sadly the younger KF4 family has not been so well recently. Three of the sub adults are alarmingly thin and Johari, one of Morana’s adult daughters was on the 22nd looking extremely thin, limping very badly and seemingly not able to put her right back leg on to the ground and also had other cuts and bruises. Possibly been hit by whatever they might have been hunting? The thinness is very worrying as they are feeding but not looking at all well. The vet dept have been informed and asked to check on the cause.



Johari and Lenana at Ivory site : Credit Olga L Ercolano

EXTEND YOUR  
GAME DRIVE  
... make it your home

[airbnb.com/h/KAMPI-YA-KARIN](https://airbnb.com/h/KAMPI-YA-KARIN)

YOUR VACATION RENTAL OVERLOOKING  
NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK

[airbnb.com/h/KAMPI-YA-KARIN](https://airbnb.com/h/KAMPI-YA-KARIN)

Friends of Nairobi National Park  
Merchandise Catalogue  
(Available on Order)

Umbrella  
Ksh 900

FoNNaP T-Shirt (Green & Beige)  
Ksh 850

Caps  
Ksh 500

Aluminium Water Bottle  
Ksh 800

Thermal Mugs  
Ksh 800

Fleece Hoodies (Jungle Green)  
Ksh 3000

Thermal Flasks  
Ksh 1500

Key Holders  
Ksh 200

Payment Details  
MPESA TILL No: 275211  
Cheques and Credit Card Accepted  
Cheques to: Friends of Nairobi National Park  
(FoNNaP Members get a 10% Discount)  
Email: [fonnap1@gmail.com](mailto:fonnap1@gmail.com)  
+254 723 690 686

WASTE FREE PARKS KEY TO NAIROBI  
NATIONAL PARK WELL-BEING.

by Vivian Kemboi



In normal times, Easter is a memorable holiday season – a time to spend quality time with loved ones at home – and a great time to go out and discover the world. One of the prime destinations for many during the Easter break is a trip to the world famous Nairobi National Park, located at the heart of Nairobi City.

Parks such as the Nairobi National Park also facilitate social interactions that are critical in maintaining family cohesion, a golden chance to combine many different types of activities, both activity and leisure, in such a way that both children and adults are comfortable and satisfied. The Nairobi National Park is a meeting place where visitors can develop social ties, ideas and explore a serene setting.

The Nairobi National Park plays a huge role in preserving and purifying the city environment. Air pollution is a significant human health hazard as it leads to respiratory diseases. Park vegetation moderates temperatures by providing shading and cooling the area and subsequently to animals.

The park is not only habitat for animals but also a great social space for humans. We are therefore beholden with the responsibility of protecting and conserving it. Over the years, plastic waste has remained a lethal challenge hurting the ecosystem of the Nairobi National Park. Wastes are unpleasant for plants, animals as well as visitors. Plastics and other forms of waste greatly hinder biological development.

How often have you gotten inside a park with packaged snacks? Where do you drop the packaging paper? Well, despite regulations that ban carrying single use plastics into national parks, there are still lapses. The need to educate the public on the significance of protecting our parks cannot be underestimated.

As an organization, 3Es Experience has joined hands with other partners who are greatly concerned about natural conservation at the frontline, in an initiative dubbed Waste Free Parks. Through collaborations with Apex Steel, YouTube Channel: “Where is Vivienne?” and Kenya Wildlife Service, the 3Es Experience family has camped inside the Nairobi National Park this Easter, starting from Friday 2nd April, way through Saturday to Sunday -- as early as 6:00am to as late as 5:00pm-- providing litter bags to over 2500 visitors.

3Es Experience staff members also took time sensitizing over 20,000 visitors on the importance of a clean, waste-free park. The visitors used the litter bags distributed by 3Es Experience to responsibly dispose of litter while inside the park, dropping them into the recycle stations in the park on their way out. Better still, some of the visitors carried their waste home to dispose them responsibly.



This is an alternative solution modelled to complement the government’s efforts to enforce environmental conservation. I would like to call for consolidated efforts from like minded stakeholders to embrace and support such environmental conservation initiatives to make National Parks a better home for animals and greater places for humans to visit.

Vivian Kemboi is the Founder and Executive Director,  
**3Es Experience Organisation**



# In Praise of Nairobi's Brown House Snakes

By Stephen Spawls ([stevespawls@hotmail.com](mailto:stevespawls@hotmail.com))

Between 1966 and 1974, Glenn Mathews and I actively collected snakes in and around Nairobi. Some years later, I analysed our collection, and also looked at the Nairobi snakes preserved in the herpetology collection in the National Museum. Between our efforts, and the museum specimens, we had recorded just fewer than 550 snakes, of 26 different species. Of these, 85 (so over 15%) were harmless Brown House Snakes (*Boaedon fuliginosus*). They were the second most common Nairobi species, surpassed only by Battersby's Green snake (*Philothamnus battersbyi*), a harmless tree snake, the only bright green snake found in and around Nairobi).



Typical Brown House Snake from parklands



Big adult Brown House Snake from parklands

The Brown House Snake, as presently defined (of which more later) is one of the most common snakes in Africa. It is found virtually throughout the semi-desert, savanna and woodland of sub-Saharan Africa, and in the past, when the Sahara was savanna, it extended even further north; a relict population exists in Morocco. The Brown House Snake is a medium sized snake, reaching a length of over 1 m, although most specimens are between 50 and 80 cm. They are harmless, although they will bite rapidly and freely when first handled, often drawing blood with their very sharp little teeth. They feed on a wide variety of small vertebrates. Juveniles eat a lot of lizards, but the adults largely eat rodents, and are thus the farmer's friends. In remote country, Brown House Snakes are not particularly common, but they are very adaptable, and in urban and semi-rural areas they thrive, rather like the black kite, which is equally uncommon in undisturbed country but becomes abundant around towns. In suburbia, Brown House Snakes rapidly become the most common species, due to their secretive nocturnal way of life and wide choice of diet. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, I did a lot of snake collecting around Naivasha, particularly along the south shores of the lake.

At the time, there was little development, the area was mostly farms, and I only ever found one Brown House Snake, but on a return visit to the Naivasha area in 2012, I spent a few days looking for snakes in the now heavily urbanised south lake region, and found ten snakes, seven of which were Brown House Snakes. A similar situation exists around Nairobi, in 1971 a team from Nairobi Snake Park did some surveying in the National Park, and we collected over 50 snakes, only one of which was a Brown House Snake (which was sliding across the tarred road at dusk, just as we turned by Nagolomon Dam towards the gate). But at the same time a bit of intensive collecting in the suburbs of Lavington, Karen and Langata produced 20 snakes, 8 of which were Brown House Snakes. If you live in Nairobi and want to find a house snake, turn over some rocks, logs, and other debris lying on the ground.



Adult House Snake without head stripes

On our Facebook forum, 'East African Snakes and Other Reptiles', the snake we are most often asked to identify is the Brown House Snake. They can be fairly easily identified with a little care; a combination of size, shiny and relatively small scales, and a head shaped like that of a python, are all useful field clues. As you might expect, they are usually brown, although their colour can vary a lot; some are yellow, orange, black, even dull olive green. They also usually have two light stripes on the head, and in some specimens the upper lines extend down the body, particularly those from low-altitude dry areas. However, these head stripes are not always present. People who know little about snakes, confronted with a dark Brown House Snake, often misidentify it as something dangerous.



Distinctive head stripes of a Brown House Snake

The Facebook group 'Digital Farmers Kenya' has over 440,000 members, who debate all things farming. Recently, a farmer posted a picture of a dead snake, asking for identification. It was clearly a harmless Brown House Snake. Within an hour, literally dozens of people had confidently identified it as a black mamba. Bizarrely, some attempted to justify their identification by posting pictures from the internet of real black mambas, which obviously looked quite unlike the house snake. Some of those who tried to inject some sense into the debate were abused by other posters, although this probably says more about the nature of social media than about farmers.



Nice orange House Snake from the Fairview Hotel

With such a huge range, some taxonomists (scientists who study evolutionary relationships) have suggested that the Brown House Snake represents a 'species complex', with hidden forms, and have suggested that the group should be split (a similar debate exists about that status of the African elephant). However, these proposed splits have not been widely accepted. Even within Nairobi, several colour phases exist, most are brown, but some orange ones occur and some are very dark. I once found a yellow one, dead on the road at the top of Valley Road, this colour phase has recently been called *Boaedon subflavus* by the noted French herpetologist Jean-Francois Trape. Further splits may be on the cards.



Yellow colour phase of the Brown House Snake

As the Swahili saying goes, 'nyoka ni nyoka'. Snakes are often killed; the average person fears snakes because they might be a dangerous species. However, being very common and so adaptable, Brown House Snakes are not in danger of extinction. They are snakes that we should all get to know, tolerate and appreciate; because they eat the rats that destroy our stored food.



Brown House Snake doing its job, swallowing a striped grasshopper



Long stripes on a House Snake from low altitude



## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



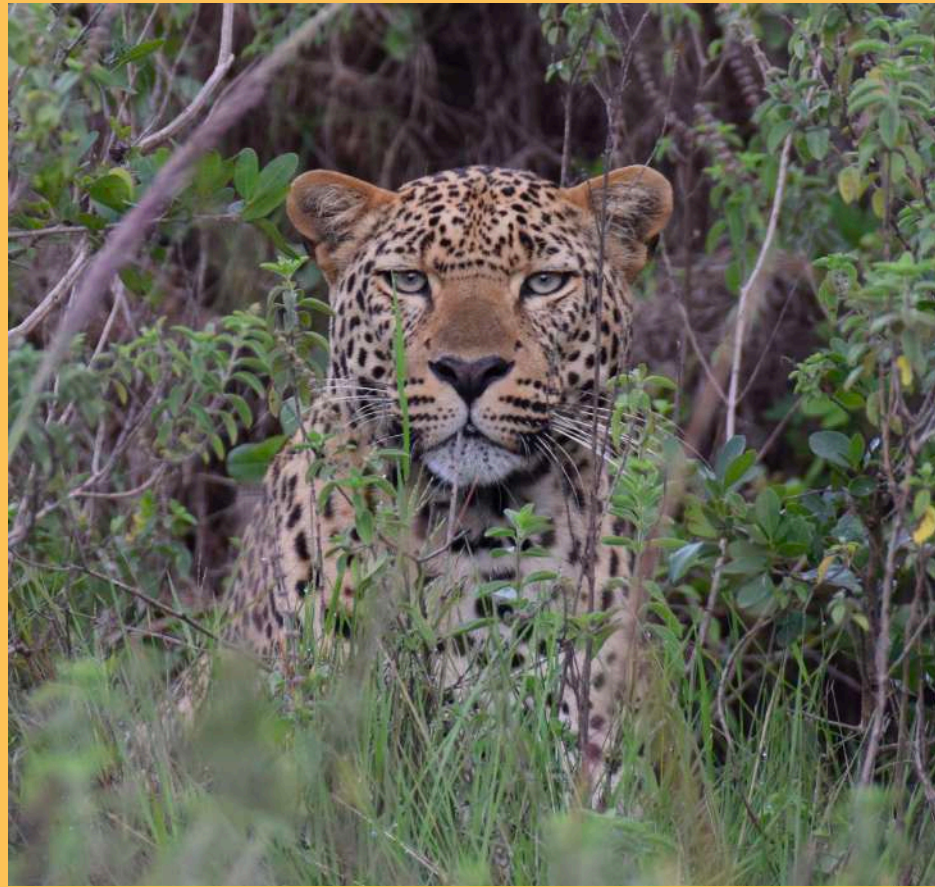
*SOSIAN, the leopard, as seen in the forest in Nairobi National Park, close to Langata gate  
Photo by Jon Bryant*



# LEOPARDS OF NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK ABUNDANT LEOPARD SIGHTINGS DURING APRIL 2021

compiled by Olga Levari Ercolano

## SOSIAN



SOSIAN – photo credit Jon Bryant

On Sunday, 18th April, 2021, **Jon Bryant** was indeed blessed to see the leopard called **Sosian**, (son of Nguruman and Mokoyieti), who seems now to have moved to the upper Langata/Kisembe forest, where his father, Nguruman, used to roam before being translocated to Tsavo. He was seen around the 24b area of the forest.

Sosian previously resided in Sosian Valley, Mokoyiet area, hence his name.

He is becoming a splendid leopard, with piercing pale eyes, similar shaped face and stout body, as his father, Nguruman. His resemblance is uncanny.

Herewith a quote from Jon Bryant, who has kindly shared his exquisite photos of Sosian with us.

*“I have been a guest in Kenya for two years working in an international school. We are leaving Kenya for the USA soon and I was hoping to have an encounter with a leopard before leaving. Around 8am I noticed a Crowned Crane preening near a pond. I panned over and couldn’t believe my eyes. We spent about five minutes together before Sosian walked back into the bush. This is a gift from Kenya that I’ll always cherish”.*



SOSIAN – photo credit Jon Bryant

## KOKO



KOKO – photo credit Abdalla Islam

On Sunday, 18th April, 2021, there was also a second leopard sighting of none other than **KOKO**. This time, **Abdalla Islam** was kind enough to share his photo sighting of Koko, who was seen walking around the small pond on the 23c to 24a road in the top forest. She caused quite a stir whilst walking along the road, hunting and hiding.

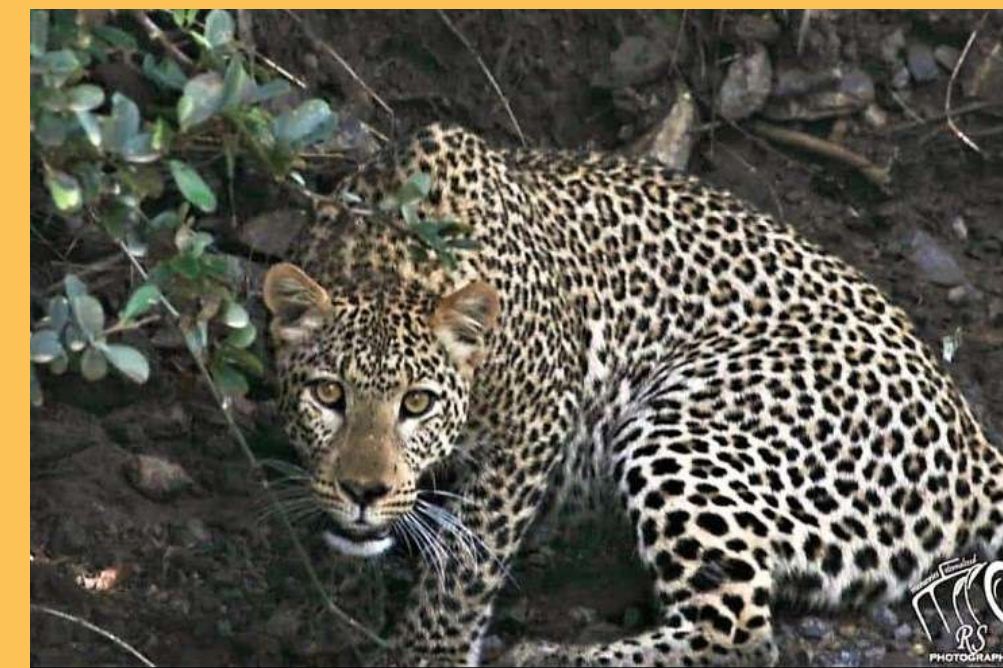
## KOKO & daughter, MARIDADI (aka KISEMBE)



MARIDADI & KOKO - Photo credit Rizwan & Shaheen Jin

On Sunday, 11th April, 2021, **Koko** was seen with her daughter, Maridadi (aka Kisembe), between 23c and 24a in the Langata/Kisembe forest, by **Rizwan** and **Shaheen Jin**, who kindly shared their photos with us.

This was a very special sighting in that Maridadi, Koko’s daughter, had not been seen, or at least not reported as seen since August 2020, and we had started worrying about her whereabouts. Instead we were so incredibly surprised to see these photos of her and noting that she has grown so much, she is now larger than her mother, Koko.



MARIDADI – photo credit Rizwan & Shaheen Jin

She certainly has become a beautiful, healthy young leopard and we hope to see her more regularly. It was 7 months since her last reported appearance.

Maridadi is the daughter of Koko and Nguruman. She was first seen as a cub along the Kisembe circuit (26c area) in 2019. We believe she and her brother, Kichaka, were born around April 2019, when we saw Koko making a fuss around some bushes and rasping near the KWS Club House. This would make Maridadi 2 years old and a fine leopard.



MARIDADI –photo credit Rizwan & Shaheen Jin

## KICHAKA

On 19th April, 2021, early in the morning, **Vishal Shikotra** and **Sonia Varma**, briefly came across Koko’s son, **Kichaka**, whilst driving in the forest between 23c and Langata gate. Kichaka is also Nguruman’s son. No mistaking the similarity. Another stunning young leopard. Nguruman has certainly scattered his prized genes around the park.



KICHAKA – photo credit Sonia Varma.

During the month of April, visitors to the forest have had some incredible encounters with leopards.

Nairobi National Park is truly a haven amidst a busy congested city.



# Leopards of Nairobi National Park

Continued.....

On the morning of 23rd April, 2021, **Surat Nur** had a fascinating encounter with **SOSIAN**, at the Ivory Burning site. Sosian came down from the forest for his morning snack and set his sights on a warthog. Warthog was lucky and managed to escape. However, Surat captured some great action photos of Sosian while creeping with his belly on the ground, across the road on to the grass, stalking the warthog.



SOSIAN eyeing his prey – photo credits, Surat Nur



Sosian stealthily creeping on the grass, positioning himself in a good hiding place – Photo credit Surat Nur



Sosian found a good bush under which to hide- Photo credit – Surat Nur



SOSIAN hiding under the bush ready to pounce on the Warthog – photo credit Surat Nur



The warthog escaped – no breakfast for SOSIAN, so back he goes to look for food elsewhere. Photo credit Surat Nur

Thanks to **Surat Nur** for kindly sharing this sequence of photos, of this magnificent sighting, with us.

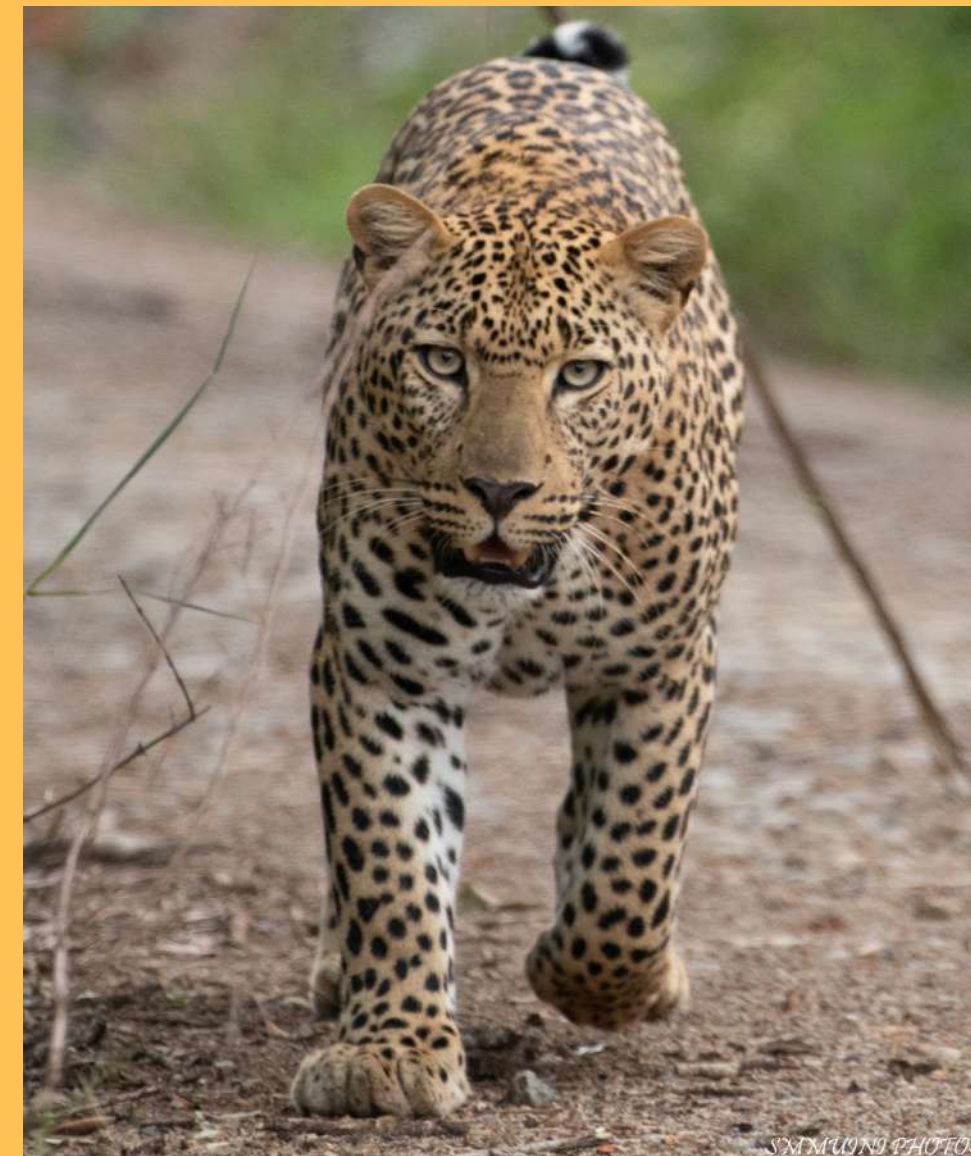
## SOSIAN

by Steve Muini Mwaura

It's Thursday afternoon and we've wound up our day's businesses with my office mates; Allan and Graham. It's agreed Allan will drive. One of many random game drives since Covid 19 protocol measures of social distancing and cessation of movement in and out of DIZ. Now that we are in the park, it is not initially clear where we will start sighting and photographing the beauty of the wild animals, then someone suggests why not look for the ultimate prize? The leopard! Thus agreed, the forest! We have previously spotted a leopard in the Nairobi National Park, but never as spectacular as the 30 minutes that was ahead of us; no one could ever guess what would happen. A slow drive, a right turn here and a left turn there...then boom! Here's a leopard! He gives us a glare that no-one can forget; then unceremoniously dashes into the nearby bush across the windy route, 23c road.

Leopards can be skittish and elusive but thank God, to the mutual judgement of where the leopard could reappear, with the help of Olga Levari; with whom we had chatted about leopards of Nairobi National Park, just a few minutes into the sighting.

So we drove slowly zeroing in at our location of interest (150m from 23c block) and again the leopard dangles out his head and we were all taken away by the moment. We switch off the engine and we wait...he comes out and gives us a majestic “cat walk” that I thankfully managed to capture on camera.



SOSIAN cat walk – photo credit Steve Muini Mwaura

The thing with leopards is that you never know when and where you can see one, but when you do, the memory is so special and precious, you won't forget it. That is how we met SOSIAN in the forested circuit of Nairobi National Park.

In Kenya, we are truly blessed to have a National Park within the Capital city that you can dash in for those slow afternoons or slow mornings and catch a glimpse only nature would tell.

#tembeakenyaujionee

**Steve Muini Mwaura**

22nd April 2021



SOSIAN licking his lips – photo credit Steve Muini Mwaura



SOSIAN - photo credit Steve Muini Mwaura

April 2021 has been an exceptional month for numerous leopard sightings in Nairobi National Park.



## UNUSUAL HIPPO BEHAVIOUR IN NNP

By Olga Levari Ercolano

There are a couple of hippos in the Park which have demonstrated extraordinary behaviour.

Hippo no. 1, whom we have nicknamed Fred (we understand he is a male), has the habit of going out to graze in the fields during the day time, when all other hippos are back in the various ponds and dams. He will often be seen between nos. 2a and 2b, quite happily munching away at the grass, with no care for whatever else surrounds him. He has become a regular, much loved feature on the cut grass plains. One day when the lion brothers, Quntai and Leshan killed a hippo on those plains, we feared it may be Fred, but it turned out to be a young hippo that had come out to feed before daybreak. Of course, Fred is too big and bulky to be caught by a lion. Sad, life cut short for the young hippo.



*Fred the Hippo, photo credits Edwin Muchemi Kanumbi*

Another hippo that caught my attention on Sunday, 18th April 2021, was again a solitary hippo, but playing in the water in a small pond tucked away amongst shrubbery, up in the forest on the 23c to 24a road. As I drove past, I saw this lone hippo splashing in the pond, so I drove on the narrow track as far as possible to watch it. It was spectacularly entertaining. The hippo stretched and yawned and rolled in the water, splashing and flicking his ears and watching me. I managed to film a great little video of him doing a “Western roll” in the water, with his chubby little legs up in the air and then him contentedly turning round to face me and rearrange himself, as if to say “aren’t I clever”!



*Hippo rolling upside down in pond – photo credit Olga L Ercolano*

This photo, above, was captured while he was rolling, with his legs in the air!

The most intriguing part of this spectacle is when he got up and walked to the edge of the pond. I was curious as to what he was going to do. It turned out that this hippo does not like to mess the water he plays in, so he stood against the edge with his rear end towards some bushes and defecated in the bush. Usually they simply spread it all over the water and in other hippos’ faces. He then returned to the deeper water and started rolling around and was very pleased with himself. What a well-mannered hippo!



*Photo credit – Olga Levari Ercolano*



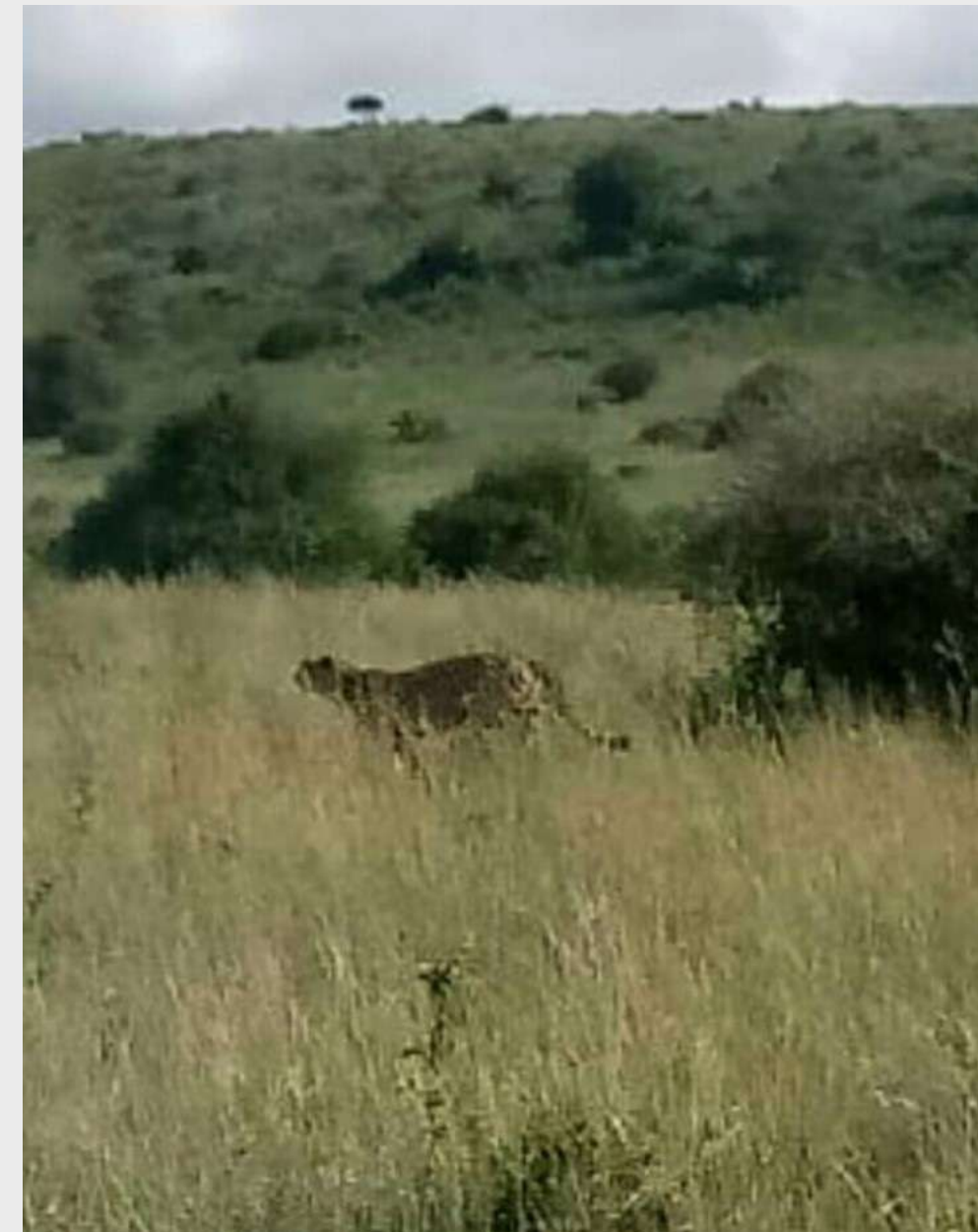
*Photo credit – Olga Levari Ercolano*

## CHEETAH UPDATES – APRIL 2021

compiled by Olga Levari Ercolano

The cheetahs are still playing hide and seek in the Athi Basin, and although are seen, they are difficult to capture on camera. They are always running and hiding.

This first photo we received, was taken by “Kiptich” on 17th April, 2021, on his mobile phone, of one of the cheetahs running away in the Athi Basin.



*Photo by Kiptich*

On the same day, at the same time (10am), Ankole Tours & Travel reported four cheetahs running across the plains in Athi basin, but he was unable to take any photos – they were moving so fast.

On 19th April, 2021, Emakoko guests saw 3 cheetah cubs between Athi dam and the pipeline. No photos available.

What we can deduce from this is that the cheetah family is still thriving in the Athi Basin. We can only hope that they will one day soon, become less camera shy.

On Thursday morning, 22nd April 2021, a report was received of 4 cheetahs with a kill between no.9 & 10. We eventually found the kill being eaten by two jackals on the 10b road just past the 10 waterhole, close to the silos. In the meantime, Lara Bhola and Harry Nauranga drove up towards the silos, on the track leading to the Rangers’ camp and found the cheetahs moving away from the area after having abandoned their kill.

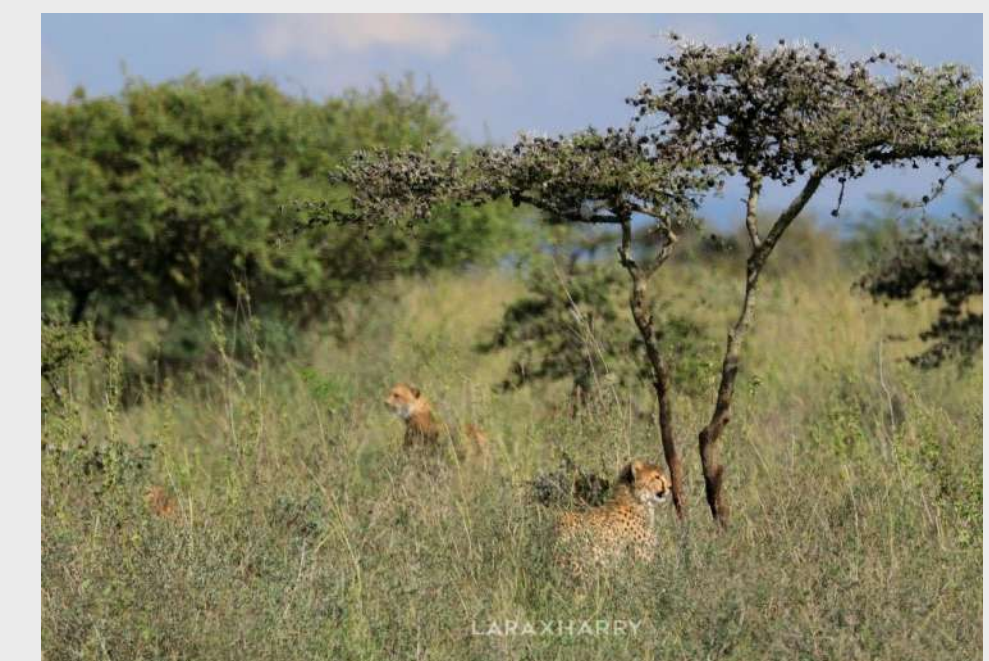
They did, however, manage to eat a substantial amount. Their bellies were quite full.



*Cheetah mother with 3 cubs – Photo credits Lara Bhola and Harry Nauranga - Instagram @laraxharry*



*Cheetah family – Photo credits Lara Bhola and Harry Nauranga – Instagram @laraxharry*



*Cheetah family – Photo credits Lara Bhola and Harry Nauranga – Instagram @laraxharry*



# MIGRANTS IN NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK

Sidney Shema

Jagi Gakunju and I did the Nairobi National Park wildlife census on April 11th, and of course we also birded along the way. We went down to Athi Dam and Cheetah Gate, and then made our way back to the main gate via Hippo Pools, Mokoyeti, Hyena Dam, and Nagolomon.

Most notable was the number of migrants that were around. The shrikes were in their hundreds! Seemed to be one on every bush. Surprisingly though, none that we saw were Isabelline or Turkestan. All were Lesser Grey and Red-backed Shrikes. We did not do an exact count but we estimate AT LEAST 300 individuals seen, with about 2 Lesser Grey Shrikes for each Red-backed Shrike. Never had I seen so many Lesser Grey Shrikes in my life. They were so omnipresent we almost got bored of them. With other birders reporting good numbers of them in other areas around Kenya, there was clearly a large wave of Lesser Grey and Red-backed Shrikes passing through Kenya on their way to their breeding grounds in Europe and Asia.



Red-backed Shrike, female – Photo by Sidney Shema



Lesser Grey Shrike – Photo by Sidney Shema

Above the Athi Basin we also enjoyed a great sighting of a mixed flock of about 20 Lesser Kestrels and 10+ European Rollers, along with one Eurasian Hobby, feeding on flying insects (likely termites).



Lesser Kestrel, female – Photo by Sidney Shema



European Roller – Photo by Sidney Shema

A small flock of Eurasian Bee-eaters was seen. Small groups of Barn Swallows were associating with swifts (mostly Little), feeding low over grassland. 2 Willow Warblers, 1 Whitethroat, 2 Whinchats, 1 Isabelline Wheatear, 1 Wood Sandpiper, 2 Common Sandpipers, 1 Ruff, 1 Little Stint, 1 Steppe Buzzard, 1 White Stork, 1 Jacobin Cuckoo, 1 Common Cuckoo, 1 Great Spotted Cuckoo, and many Spotted Flycatchers were the other migrants seen. It Was also nice to see two Rosy-breasted Longclaws.



Rosy-breasted Longclaw – Photo by Sidney Shema




Whinchat – Photo by Sidney Shema

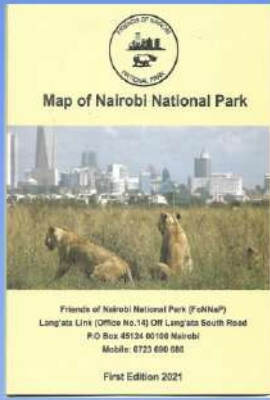


Spotted Flycatcher – photo by Sidney Shema

We were not birding intensively as that was not our main focus, so we must have missed some things. Especially small warblers and whatnot in the bushes and trees. Despite only birding casually, we still ended up with 104 bird species on our list for the day (and we only did a half day, as we left the park around 2 pm). Never a dull day in Nairobi National Park



## New Updated Maps of Nairobi National Park



Available for 500/=  
at the FoNNaP office  
Lang'ata Links (office No.14), opp Kenya  
School Law  
Along Lang'ata South Road

contact 0723690686  
Mpesa Paybill 275211



Friends of Nairobi National Park  
Member's Webinar Series

JOIN FoNNaP

and get a chance to participate on various  
webinars on topics regarding Nairobi National  
Park and the surrounding ecosystems

Visit our Website - [www.fonnap.org](http://www.fonnap.org)  
or email [fonnap1@gmail.com](mailto:fonnap1@gmail.com) on how to  
become a member.

Email: [fonnap1@gmail.com](mailto:fonnap1@gmail.com) | +254 723 690 686 | [www.fonnap.org](http://www.fonnap.org)



# Sightings at Nairobi National Park

## Junior Sightings



Fareed Gulamhussein – 15yrs



Seyan Hirani – 14 years



Serval Cat crossing road behind lion –  
Seyan Hirani – 14yrs



Dung beetle - Seyan Hirani – 14yrs



Veer Sikand – 12yrs



Khush Hirani – 16yrs



Khush Hirani – 16yrs



Seyan Hirani – 14 years



Veer Sikand – 12yrs



Fareed Gulamhussein – 15yrs



Khush Hirani – 16yrs



Adarsh Nagda – 12yrs



SIRIKOI by Ofir Drori



Mayur Shah, Simba photography



LESHAN by Komal Lachani



Hitesh Kalyan



Harsh Gutka



Jonathan Pereira



Jackson's Centipede Eater on forest  
track by Anthony Childs



MPAKASI by Steven Mwaura



Rufus Kim



Festus Musili



KICHAKA by Vishal Shikotra



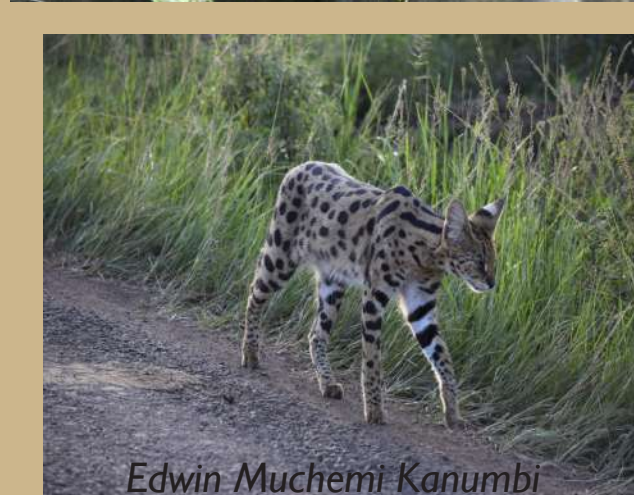
Shazir Virji



Anubhav Dhingra



Areef Admani



Edwin Muchemi Kanumbi



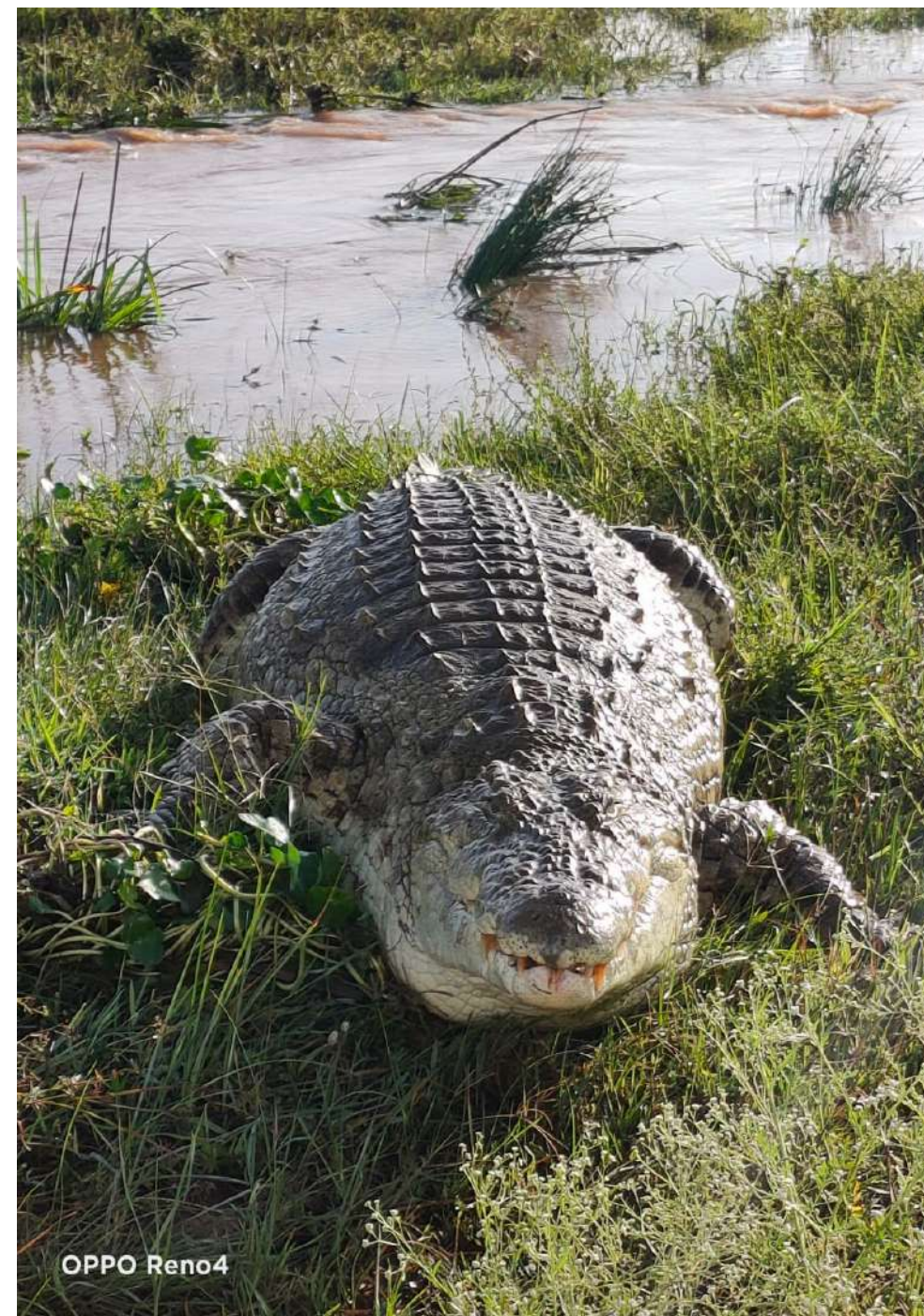
Hitesh Kalyan

Please send photos to  
fonnapnewsletter@gmail.com to be featured in the NNP sightings column

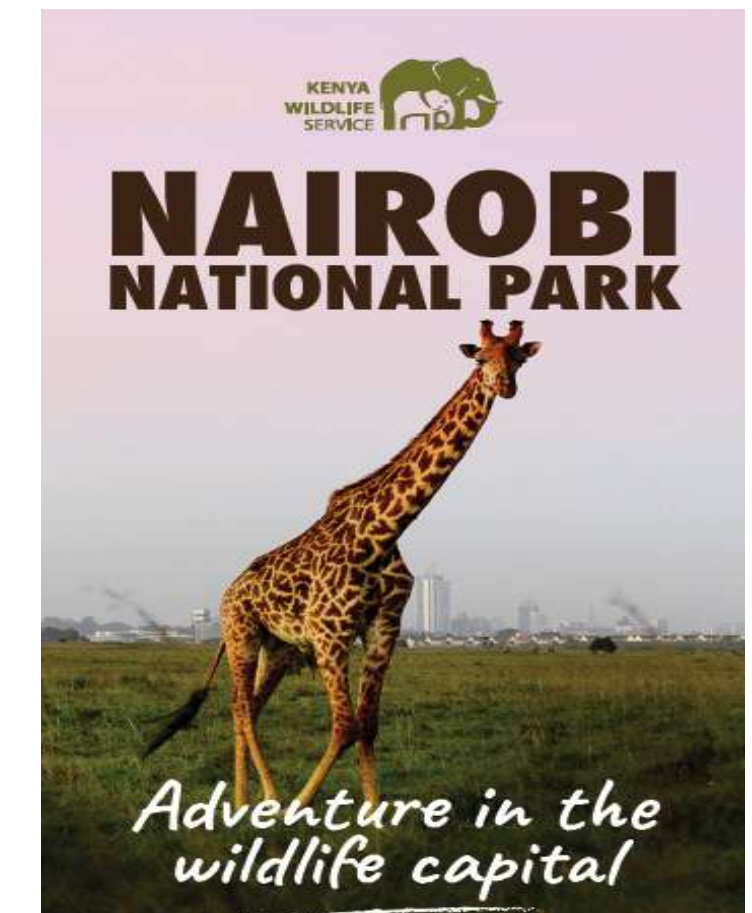


by Anita Gitonga (12yrs) and Joshua Gitonga (8yrs).

We therefore explored other sections of the park but did not take a count of the animals since other people were assigned to these sections. Using the map, we went to hyena's swamp. We saw many animals like Buffaloes, Grant's Gazelles, Masai Giraffes, one Crocodile, Coke's Hartebeests, Guinea fowls and birds. By staying calm, we were able to take photos and videos of these animals.



We look forward to the next animal count, hoping that the weather will be favourable to access all parts of the park. We look forward to learning more about animals, their conservation and how they can live in harmony with human beings.



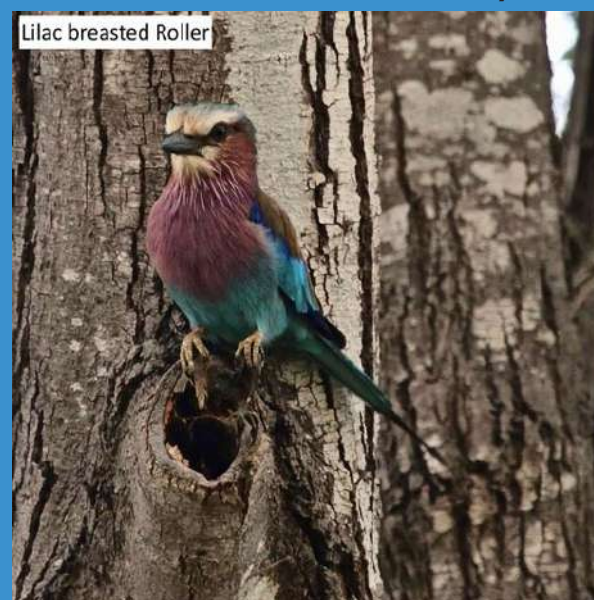
# Bird Sightings



Scarlet Chested Sunbird –  
Rajesh Shah



African Darter - Hitesh Kalyan



*Lilac Breasted Roller – Trish H Hayes*



Marsh Owl - Rajesh Shah



Spotted thick-knee –  
Olga L Ercolano



*Fish Eagles - Hitesh Kalyan*



Ruppel's vulture - Mike & Chantel Watts



### Purple Grenadier - Anubhav Dhingra



Red billed Teal - Olga L Ercolano



# WILD PLANTS OF NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK

Collection By Trish Heather-Hayes



Zornia setosa



Nesaea Kilimandscharica



Lippia ukambensis



Leonotis nepetifolia



Barleria eranthemoides



Ipomoea kituiensis



Indigofera nairobiensis



Gladiolus dalenii



Datura stramonium



Craterostigma alatum



Carduus nyassanus (kikuyorum)



Bothriocline calycina



Abutilon mauritanum

## FoNNaP

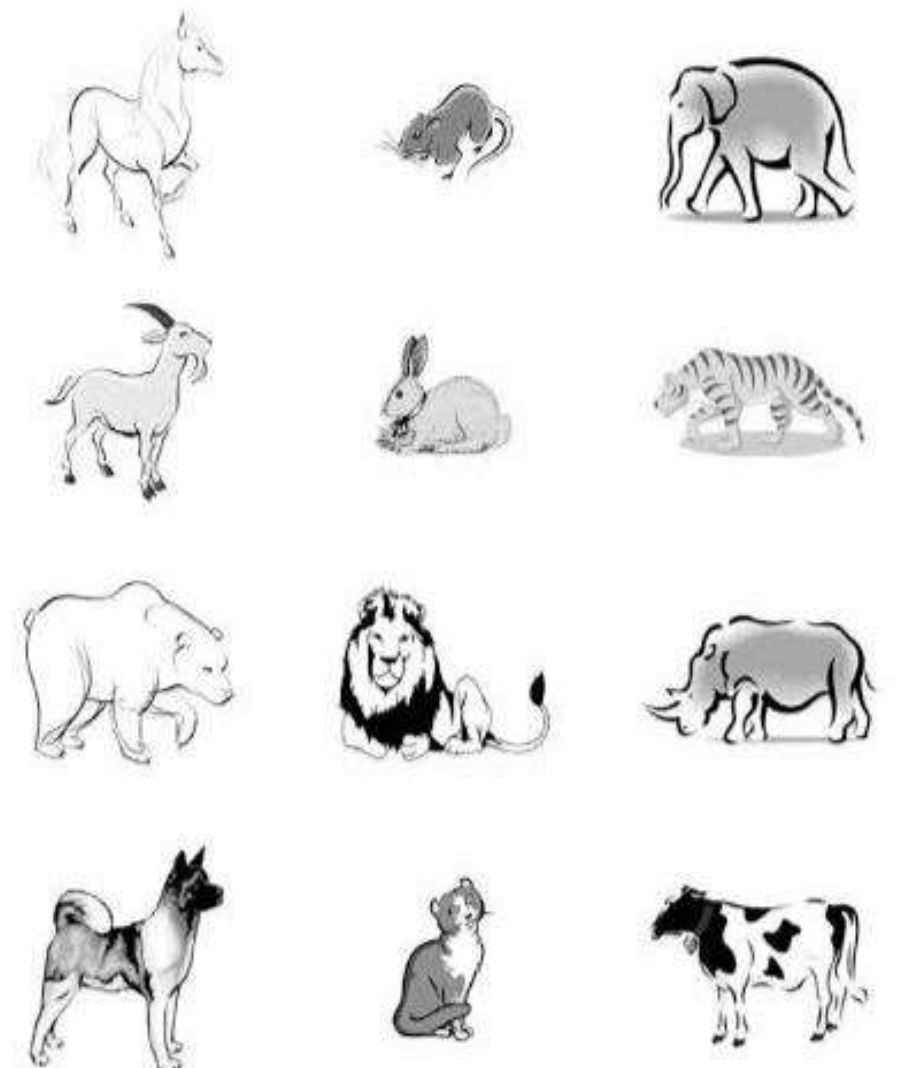
Kids Column

**ANIMALS**

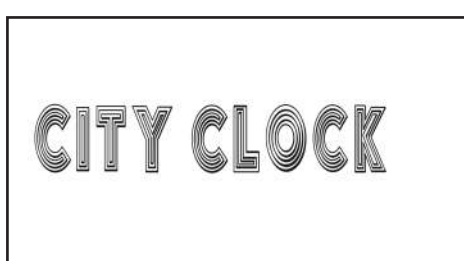
Find the word of the animal in the wordsearch and circle it.

	WPRPLELEPHANTSGPEM
	LIAEFGZWXOBLIONVXPY
	SPMTIGERZXPSLNCQUD
	GORGIRAFFELNPODZLLK
	YSNWAMONKEYASSPEFH
	RHODENBEARHYPOMLYE

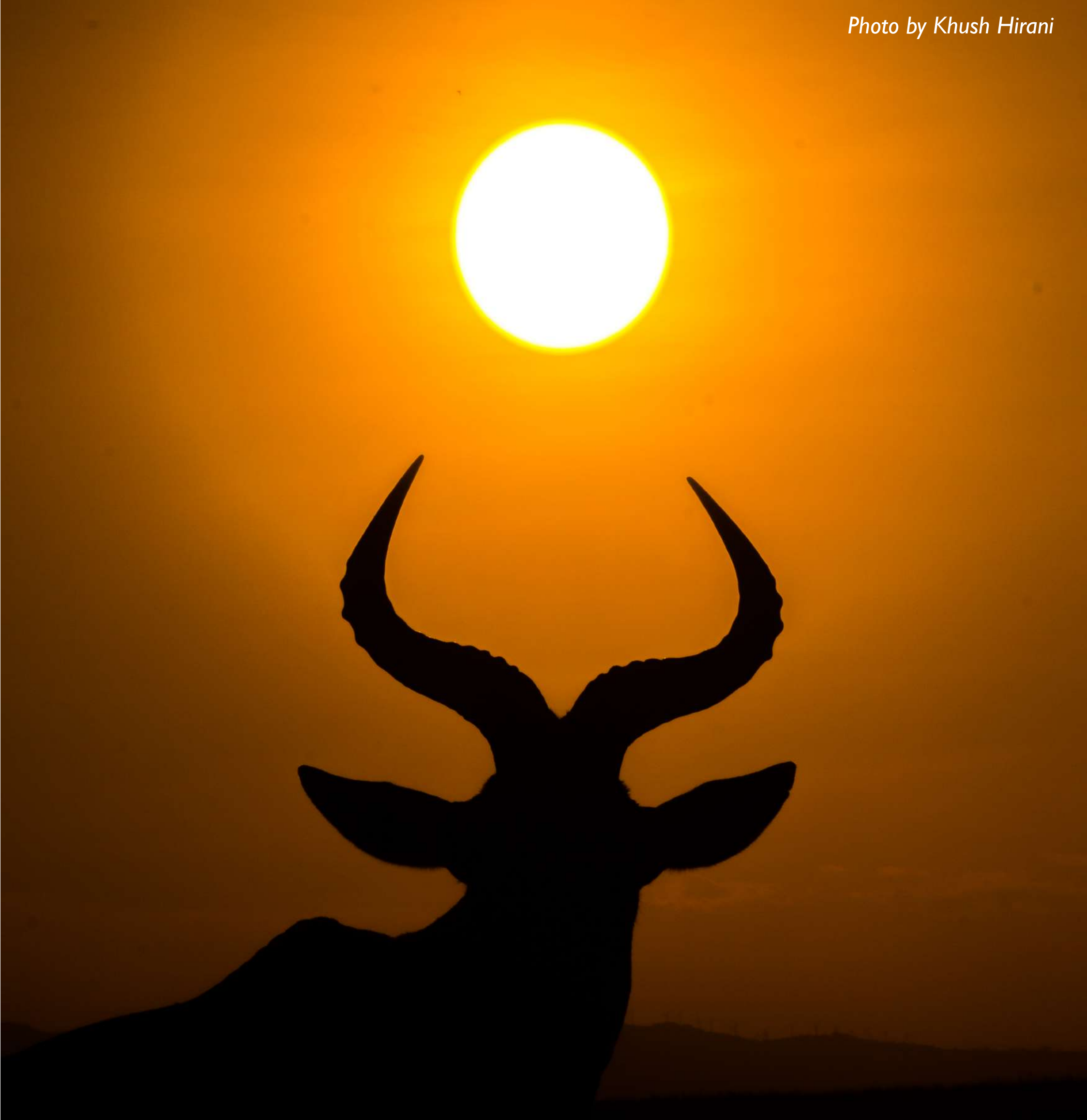
Draw a green circle around domestic animals and red circle around wild animals:



## OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS







### Friends of Nairobi National Park

FoNNaP is a non-profit membership society founded in 1995, dedicated to assisting the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to nurture and protect biodiversity within Nairobi National Park, and the broader ecosystem to which the park belongs.

Join today and be a friend of the Park

### CONTACT US

Office No.14, Lang'ata Links I off Lang'ata South Road  
Opp, Kenya School of Law  
P.O Box 45124-00100. Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: +254 (0) 723 690 686 | Email: [fonna1@gmail.com](mailto:fonna1@gmail.com)  
Website: <https://fonna.org>