

Rapid Assessment of Masai Giraffe Greater Masai Mara Ecosystem, Narok, Kenya September 2024

Background

Kenya's Masai Mara Ecosystem is an international flagship conservation landscape supporting globally significant wildlife populations and ~22% of the Masai giraffe population in the country. In the absence of detailed historical and current data, it remains a challenge to action effective conservation management measures for giraffe. Hence, there is a need to conduct regular giraffe surveys to assess and guide conservation efforts. Repeat and systematic surveys allow for a more accurate conservation status that can feed into the national and global IUCN Red List assessment.

As a follow-up to the ground-based surveys that were supported by GCF and completed in 2021, this project seeks to update the population status of Masai giraffe.

This is a summary of the preliminary results of a ground-based photographic survey conducted in September 2024 as a reconnaissance in preparation for more structured and intensive giraffe surveys.

Objectives

- Understanding the requirements for conducting a survey across the ecosystem.
- Establishing working relationships with the management of the Reserve and the Conservancies.

- Collecting data on giraffe abundance, distribution and threats.

Results

Total Distance Covered: 1,202 km
 Total Giraffe Recorded: 1,106
 Individual Images Captured: 1,056
 Highest Recorded (Mara Naboisho): 150
 Lowest Recorded (Olarre Motorogi & Ol Chorro Oiuwa): 22
 Largest Herd: 34
 Mean Herd Size: 6
Age Distribution:

- Adults: 816
- Subadults: 208
- Calves: 82

Gender Distribution:

- Female: 747
- Male: 350
- Unknown: 9 (7 calves, 2 subadults)
- Female to Male Ratio: 2:1

Next steps and recommendations

The collected images have been uploaded to GiraffeSpotter and are awaiting further analyses. The next survey is scheduled to start in June 2025. It will be systematic, with each survey path surveyed at least three times. As such, larger Conservancies and the Reserve will have larger survey tracks and more time will be spent in those areas. As a result, this upcoming survey will take longer than this reconnaissance survey.

Giraffe numbers by age class

Conservancy/ Reserve	Adult	Sub adult	Calf	Total
Mara Naboisho	115	20	15	150
Masai Mara NR	106	24	7	137
Ol Kinyei	92	25	12	129
Pardamat	84	19	9	112
Mara North	84	12	3	99
Mara Triangle	58	19	6	83
Oloisukut	52	24	4	80
Nashulai	57	11	8	76
Isaaten	33	14	4	51
Enoonkishu	30	9	1	40
Lemek	31	2	3	36
Siana	22	12	2	36
Siria Plateau	22	9	2	33
Ol Chorro	14	3	5	22
Olarre Motorogi	16	5	1	22
Total	816	208	82	1,106

Giraffe numbers by sex

Conservancy/ Reserve	F	M	U	Total
Mara Naboisho	124	24	2	150
Masai Mara NR	83	52	2	137
Ol Kinyei	85	44		129
Pardamat	67	45		112
Mara North	67	32		99
Mara Triangle	46	35	2	83
Oloisukut	63	17		80
Nashulai	62	13	1	76
Isaaten	21	30		51
Enoonkishu	28	12		40
Lemek	28	8		36
Siana	12	22	2	36
Siria Plateau	26	7		33
Ol Chorro	18	4		22
Olarre Motorogi	17	5		22
Total	747	350	9	1,106

F: Female; M: Male; U: Unknown

Acknowledgements

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