

*The Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat Project Report - www.kalahari-meerkats.com - September/October 2015*

Pe'ahi predated.....1	Changes at Nematoads..2	Evictees giving birth.....3	LH details September....4
Spock Two-Fingers.....1	New dispersal groups... 2	KMP weather.....3	LH details October.....6

## Pe'ahi predated

Volunteer Young about Pe'ahi (VWF177):  
*"She was quite a dominant... always kicking the other meerkats out of the box during weights."*

It was on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September that volunteer Sam was on her way to Whiskers for a baby-sitting stop. She became slightly worried when she did not receive a beep from the radio collar in the area around R09B, Whiskers' current sleeping burrow. After tracking their territory thoroughly without success, Sam decided to drive back to the Farmhouse. However, on her way back she saw a meerkat, sitting alone at a bolthole! Would that be Whiskers? Although it is always exciting to spot meerkats randomly around the reserve, Sam was slightly disappointed that the meerkat she just found was Snowy (VLM147), who had been absent from the group for a while. Once back at the Farmhouse, the news that Whiskers could not be found spread quickly. Whiskers are well-known for their habit of "not moving a lot", so speculations started: what could have happened to Whiskers?

The next day, volunteer Katherine gave it another try and succeeded in finding the group. However, Pe'ahi was not there. Her pups, at the time only two weeks old, made desperate attempts to suckle from Swift (VWF176). The males Pet (VCVM001), Rufio (VLM155) and K-Quob (VWM186) left the group just at that time. The Whiskers group was left behind with only four adult members. With the loss of the mother, the future of the new-born pups did not seem bright; it was after a few days that the group stopped leaving babysitters behind.

Littermates Pe'ahi and Swift, offspring of the yearling Whiskers subordinate Treva (VWF161) along with brother Loredo (VWM175), took over the Whiskers lead at the age of 18 months when the previous dominant female Enili (VWF133) was run over. It took a few months of dominance squabbles between the sisters before Pe'ahi emerged as dominant female, in January 2014. During her rather short life, Pe'ahi became pregnant 8 times, of which only 3 litters were born. Pe'ahi's only offspring that grew up successfully were Jedilah (VWF192) and Candy (VWF196), both currently members of the Whiskers group. The lack of breeding success for Pe'ahi, but also Swift, may have been due to harsh circumstances like the droughts in 2014 and 2015. Another explanation could be that the two females were not very experienced in raising young - Pe'ahi and Swift never experienced how to raise pups, because they



Pe'ahi (right) in 2015 (Photo: Young Ha Su)

themselves were the last successful litter in a very long time.

The loss of her sister was the chance for subordinate Swift to take over the dominant position. Pe'ahi's radio collar was found high up in a tree in an area close by Nematoads's territory. Based on the distance the radio collar has travelled, researchers speculate that it was a rather large raptor that had caught Pe'ahi.

## Pe'ahi (VWF177)

14.03.2012 - 08.09.2015

Last weight (g):	689
No. of times being weighed:	1549
No. of urine/faecal samples collected:	125

## Meet Spock...

Remember Fluffernutter?

Meet Spock – the two-fingered pup! Spock (VUKM025) was born on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, with just two fingers to each of his front paws. He manages to find food same as his siblings, and is doing well – and yes, there's a meerkat named Spock now, finally. Live long and prosper!



Spock, 2.5 months old (Photo: Helen Spence-Jones)

## Changes at Nematoads

Nematoad's founding dominant male Crusty (VBBM025) was last seen on the 30th of July and a week later his radio collar was found intact, with some fur attached to it suggesting that he was predated. After Crusty's disappearance, it looked like the young male HIW (VNMM002) would become dominant. But instead, he left the group with two younger brothers – leaving his mother and dominant female Bernie (VLF152) to look after a newly born litter and the 10 remaining youngsters...

On 25th September, Bernie was seen in the company of a large wild unknown male, 75 meters away from the group. As volunteer Hector was approaching the group, the male ran away. Yet he was there to stay – over the next couple of days, our new wild male was seen with the group again. Thanks to the immigration of VNMM018 or "The new Crusty" – as he is called for now by the volunteers – things became interesting at Nematoads! Volunteers can demonstrate their best "meerkat savvy" in order to habituate the wild male to their presence. So far, the male is often staying behind at the burrow to babysit when an observer is present.

### Crusty (VBBM025)

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2009 – 30<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Last weight (g):	693
No. of times being weighed:	2366
No. of urine/faecal samples collected:	28
Groups he resided in:	Baobab, Friksarmy, Nematoads



Crusty on guard (Photo: Hector Ruiz)

*"Crusty was the best male ever! Always on guard, always feeding the pups... I remember one day that he was guarding on top of a tree for 1 hour and 20 minutes. Oh and his anal marks smelled really bad, even worse than the ones of other dominant males. What a meerkat! What a legend!"*

## New dispersal groups: SA and TU

Two new groups were named in September, both formed by dispersing individuals of our groups: Stumpy's Angels and Tulus. They are examples of the challenges newly formed groups face.

**Stumpy's Angels (SA)** entered the KMP population as the Baobab 2 subgroup in July 2015, after three Baobab females Lekshmi, Bernard and Elsa (VBBF088, VBBF093, VBBF101) left their natal group and teamed up. They were soon joined by rover Drachentöter (VLM189), better known as "Stumpy(tail)" – a Lazuli-born, ex-Chalibonkas, ex-Axolotls male well-known for his short tail. It seems he didn't leave more than his name at the group, as he rapidly left them to join a Rascals evictee. Elsa, too, disappeared before September ended, leaving the group down to two. Lekshmi gave birth, but above ground, and the five pups were abandoned. Let's see what the future brings for Stumpy's Angels!



Stumpy at AX (Photo: Melissa de Bruin)

**Tulus (TU)** are a spin-off from Zulus led by Laurentina (VZUF004). She was the last remaining subordinate founding female of Zulus and had finally managed to reach the beta position in July 2015, immediately below the dominant female Ocho Niplé. After being evicted, she was first observed in the company of Zulus' male member Finnlex (VLM151), visiting Quintessentials. He soon returned to Zulus, but Laurentina "formed" her own group: She was accompanied by four former group mates, Dis-grace, Caleb, Gobbolino and Flammkuchen (VLM175, VLM177, VLM181 and VLM185).



Caleb at TU (Photo: Melissa de Bruin)

Acclaimed rovers, these males have been in each other's company as long as we know, apart from Dis-Grace's brief stint at CaveMen in 2012; born in Lazuli, they emigrated to Zulus in 2013 from where they initiated regular roving expeditions to Quintessentials.

Laurentina gave birth on 26<sup>th</sup> September – yet it seemed that at this point, all males but Caleb left her. They were last visited on 27<sup>th</sup>, but were not found after that date. Two weeks later, Laurentina's remains were found; she was clearly predated. Without a female left, Tulus no longer existed. Caleb and Flammkuchen have now both returned to Zulus.

**Life history feature: Evictees giving birth**

The meerkat is a cooperative species, whereby the subordinates help raising the offspring of the dominants. Thereby, the subordinates can profit from the advantages that come along with living in a group. Occasionally, a subordinate female becomes pregnant. What happens then? This month, the life stories of three subordinate females showed parallels: read about Cloudbreak from Jaxx, Moofles from Pandora and Whiskey from Rascals.

**Cloudbreak (VJXF057)** – It was in the early morning that research assistant Helen was waiting at the sleeping burrow for Jaxx to wake up. The breeding status at the group at that time was a heavily pregnant dominant female, Teahupo'o (VJXF058), and a subordinate female with an only slightly less advanced pregnancy, Cloudbreak. That morning, Helen witnessed a horrifying scene: Cloudbreak came up with her mouth covered in blood, with dominant female on her heels. Teahupo'o was not pregnant anymore and very aggressive towards Cloudbreak – a clear sign that infanticide had been committed by the still-pregnant female, a behaviour likely aimed at raising the odds for her own pups. Cloudbreak's act of infanticide was followed by her immediate exclusion from the group. Once a subordinate female is evicted, volunteers make a radio call to the "dispersal team". The team, consisting of PhD student Nino and his research assistant Peter, follow the evictees in order to find out what happens with them after being excluded from the group. Like many solitary females, Cloudbreak wandered around close by the group, occasionally attempting to rejoin them. However, a couple of weeks later, Cloudbreak gave birth, completely on her own. Although the past shows us that it is very unlikely for the offspring of an evictee to survive, Cloudbreak has a chance to prove the opposite; there are no other pups at the moment in Jaxx, so the group might adopt Cloudbreak's pups. Her story will be continued...

**Whiskey (VRRF159)** – Like Cloudbreak, the pregnant Rascals subordinate female Whiskey had been driven out of the group by dominant Edna May (VRRF137). Whiskey however managed to attract rover Stumpy (VLM189) who had just left his new group Stumpy's Angels. He joined her for a few days, just when she was giving birth. However, the Angels were not far and were seen around the burrow where Whiskey had given birth. This time, there was no observer present to see what happened, but Whiskey's pups did not survive. No longer pregnant, she was able to return to the Rascals, helping babysit Edna May's litter.

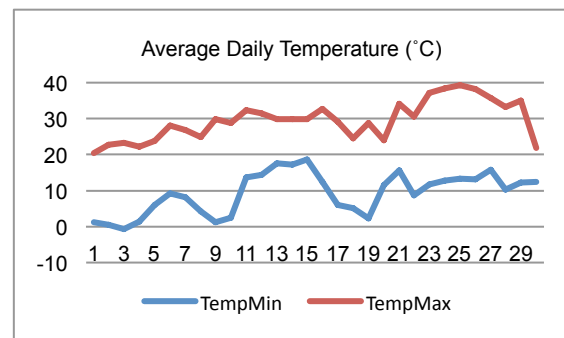
**Moofles (VPAF019)** - It was only a matter of time that dominant female Shoshonna (VPAF009) evicted Moofles from Pandora, since both females had very round bellies. A few days after her eviction, Moofles gave birth. Then, long-term Rascals evictee Mouth (VRRF156) showed up at Moofles' babysitting burrow. Mouth made



Whiskey babysitting Edna May's litter  
(Photo: Melissa de Bruin)

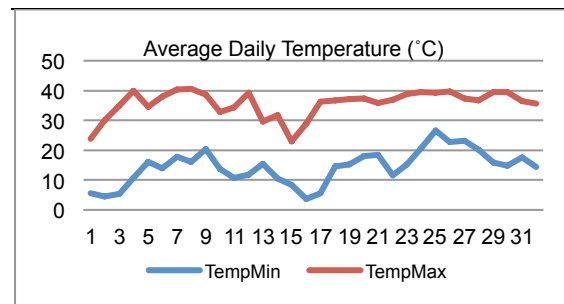
aggressive approaches towards Moofles, who defended herself and the pups by barking loudly. To no avail; the pups did not make it.

**Weather at the KMP – September 2015**



Temperatures were slightly rising this month. The average daily lows 9.3°C and average daily highs were 29.5°C. Rainfall this month was 5.4 mm, of which 5.2 mm fell on one day. The overall rainfall for this year is 166.5 mm.

**Weather at the KMP – October 2015**



Temperatures keep rising and summer is on its way. The average daily lows 14.3°C and average daily highs were 35.7°C. Rainfall this month was 6.2 mm. The overall rainfall for this year is 172.7 mm. With the current longterm weather forecast we are expecting a drought until March.



---

**Life History Details – September 2015**

---

**Axolotls:**

- Dominant female Pug (VKUF007) is pregnant.
- The group is suffering from tuberculosis. Pug (VKUF007), Sifaka (VCKM001) and Eusebio (VCKM006) all have lumps in the area around the chin and neck. Currently, it looks still like an early stage, since none of the lumps are burst.

**Baobab:**

- Amarula's (VBBF069) pups are doing well; all four of them started foraging with the group this month.
- The four oldest males of the group, dominant Bandy (VBBM091) and the subordinates Beans, Sharknado and Blackbriar (VBBM092, VBBM097 and VBBM098) left the group, roving together.
- With the absence of the dominant male and the oldest subordinate males, Franky Brown Bear (VBBM103) and Bubba (VBBM099) started to compete for dominance on several occasions. None of their competitions resulted in a clear winner.

**Drie Doring:**

- Two individuals are removed from the group's mark sheet: Limoncello (VDF178) was euthanized due to an open tuberculosis lump. The other members of the group don't show any signs of TB, so it seems like an isolated case. One of the pups, Winnepesaukee (VDM184), disappeared.
- The remaining six pups are doing well and started to forage with the group this month.

**Ewoks:**

- The newborn litter lost one of its members (VUKP040). The pup was in poor condition the last time that it was seen alive. When the group returned to the sleeping burrow, the pup could not keep up with the group and was carried by one of the adults. The next morning, the pup did not wake up from the sleeping burrow. Although the two remaining pups are small for their age, they seem to do fine.
- Dominant female McDreamy (VKUF005) is pregnant.
- The group was visited by Whiskers male Rufio (VLM155). On one occasion, Rufio was accompanied by 2 unknown meerkats.

**Flaka Flaka:**

- The group seems to consist of 10-15 individuals. Besides Tobermory (VDF149), there is one large wild male, one pup and the others look like adults or sub-adults. The large male has an open wound on his cheek that looks like a burst tuberculosis lump. Another male has an intact lump on his neck. There are no signs of TB at the other members so far. Habituation is slowly improving: the group leaves the burrow in the morning tolerating an observer at 40 meters distance.
- Tobermory (VDF149) gave birth.

**HighVoltage:**

- Rheagal (VHVM003) is removed from the group's mark sheet. He was last seen in August, with an open TB lump on his right cheek. The other members don't have any signs of TB.
- The habituation of the group is going very well! With the exception of Viserion (VHVM002), all members are easily weighable. Viserion is not yet comfortable with leaving the burrow in the nearby presence of an observer. From now on, volunteers will bring visits to the group more frequently; hopefully this will help improve his habituation more quickly.
- Bes 1 (VVHF035) gave birth.

**Jaxx:**

- Dominant female Teahupo'o (VJXF058) gave birth, but the pups were eaten by her subordinate sister Cloudbreak (VJXF057). After this, Cloudbreak was evicted and gave birth on her own. It is yet unsure if her litter will survive. Baloo (VJXF080) is pregnant.
- Cloudbreak was evicted and attempted to rejoin the group on two occasions.

**Lazuli:**

- Dominant female JubJub Bird (VLF194) gave birth, but lost the litter before emergence. Subordinate female Alan Johnson's Beamer (VLF206) is pregnant. Her pregnancy was confirmed by ultrasound and two pups were seen.
- Subordinate male Jazzy Jeff (VLM209) left the group and approached Zulus. He mated with Chapulcu (VZUF009).
- Lazuli had an IGI with Zulus. The dominant couple of Lazuli was chased by Zulus and got split up from the rest. Later, all members of Lazuli rejoined again.

**Nematoads:**

- A wild adult male (VNMM018) immigrated into the group. From a distance, he was seen with the group on a regular basis. Currently, he does not leave the sleeping burrow in the presence of an observer.
- Dominant female Bernie (VLF152) gave birth.
- Male dominance has not been established in the group. It is likely that the new wild male will become dominant, but because of his poor habituation, his behavior cannot be recorded.
- The natal males HIW, Scamp and George W. Bush (VNMM002, VNMM006 and VNMM007) are still missing.

**Pandora:**

- Kokkebenia (VPAF021) and Limpith (VPAM026) are removed from the group's mark sheet due to their prolonged absence.
- Dominant female Shoshonna (VPAF009) is pregnant. Subordinate female Mooffles (VPAF019) gave birth while she was evicted. She was hereby approached by Mouth

(VRRF156), an evictee from Rascals. Unfortunately, Moofles lost her litter before emergence.

- The three pups of subordinate female Himaachal (VPAF023) are doing well and are foraging with the group.

#### **Quintessentials:**

- Dominant female Truffula (VEKF008) gave birth.
- Subordinate female Bar-Ba-Loot (VEKF010) and the males Mm-Mmm and Shandy (VQLM002 and VQLM003) left the group and tried to rejoin multiple times. The males were roving at Van Helsing. On one occasion, Mm-Mmm and Bar-Ba-Loot were trying to return together. The males have returned successfully, but Bar-Ba-Loot is not with the group at the end of the month.

#### **Rascals:**

- The pup Balthazaar (VRRM185) died and is removed from the group's mark sheet.
- Dominant female Edna May (VRRF137) gave birth. Evicted female Whiskey (VRRF159) gave birth on her own, whereby Stumpy (VLM189) approached her. Whiskey lost her litter before emergence.
- Whiskey was evicted; she was attacked by the dominant pair and chased off by the whole group. She tried to return to the group, but was not accepted.

#### **Stumpy's Angels:**

- This sub-group is the former Baobab 2, originally consisting of three evicted females from Baobab: Lekshmi, Bernard and Elsa (VBBF088, VBBF093 and VBBF101) and two males: Sharknado (VBBM0097) and Yippee Ki Yay (VBBM096). However, the Baobab males left and ex-Axolotls member Stumpy (VLM189) joined the females.
- Dominance status is not yet established in the group.
- Lekshmi (VBBF088) is pregnant.
- Elsa left the group twice and Stumpy was roving at Rascals; both have not returned to the group.

#### **Tulus:**

- The former Zulus 2 sub-group. Originally the ex-Zulus members Laurentina (VZUF004) and Finnlex (VLM151) were seen together. Finnlex returned to Zulus and instead former Zulus males Dis-Grace, Caleb, Gobbolino and Flammkuchen (VLM175, VLM177, VLM181 and VLM185) joined Laurentina.
- Laurentina is the dominant female. Male dominance has not been established yet.
- Laurentina gave birth.

#### **Überkatz:**

- The pup Gandhinata (VUKF028) disappeared from the group. Säckan (VUKM010) and Sötnös (VUKM009) immigrated back into their old group, after an absence period of 3 months.

- Überkatz' four pups are doing well. The two-toed pup Spock (VUKM025) starts to find food for himself just as good as his four-toed litter mates.
- Säckan and Sötnös both left the group. Furthermore, Sötnös got attacked by the whole group; he rolled on his back and ran away. On his return, he got attacked by the dominant male and rolled again. In the end, he was accepted.

#### **Van Helsing:**

- Dominant female Egg (VVHF042) gave birth. Subordinate female Spirit Bird (VVHF079) is pregnant; her pregnancy was confirmed by the ultrasound whereby three placental sacs were seen.
- Dolly (VVHF073) was attacked by the dominant female and chased by the whole group. Theo (VVHF072) left shortly after this event.

#### **Whiskers:**

- Dominant female Pe'ahi (VWF177) was predated, her radio collar was found in a three. Her newly born litter was abandoned shortly after that.
- Soon after the loss of Pe'ahi, her sister Swift (VWF176) started to behave dominant.
- The subordinate males Pet, Snowy, Rufio and K-Quob (VCVM001, VLM147, VLM155 and VWM186) all left the group on several occasions.

#### **Xhodes:**

- The group consists of approximately six individuals; of whom two are Nematoads evicted females Sutica (VLF180) and Fran (VLF184). The wild individuals leave the sleeping burrow in the morning only if an observer stays at more than 80 meters distance.
- Sutica is pregnant.

#### **Youma:**

- Mandela (VPAF018), the only remaining member of the Youma group, was again found alone.

#### **Zulus:**

- Gezi (VZUM008) is removed from the group's mark sheet after prolonged absence.
- Dominant female Ocho Niplé (VZUF001) gave birth and three pups emerged. The pups started to forage with the group.
- On a morning, Lazuli male Jazzy Jeff (VLM209) approached Zulus' sleeping burrow. Chapulco (VZUF009) woke up before the rest of the group, and the two were seen mating behind a tree. As soon as the rest of Zulus woke up, Jazzy Jeff ran away.
- The group had an IGI with the dominant pair of Lazuli.

---

**Life History Details – October 2015**

---

**Axolotls:**

- The subordinate males Sifaka, Eusebio and subordinate female Fizzy (VCKM001, VCKM006 and VAXF002) were all euthanized because of burst TB lumps.
- Dominant female Pug (VKUF007) gave birth and four pups have emerged.
- The lump of dominant female Pug (VKUF007) has increased in size, but is still intact. Due to the losses caused by TB, the Axolotls group is unstable. Members of the previous litter (VAX1506) were seen babysitting, even though they just turned into juveniles themselves.

**Baobab:**

- The four oldest males of the group, dominant Bandy and the subordinates Beans, Sharknado and Blackbriar (VBBM091, VBBM092, VBBM097 and VBBM098, respectively) have not returned from their roving expedition and are considered emigrated; they were removed from the group's mark sheet.
- Dominant female Amarula (VBBF069) is pregnant.
- Bubba (VBBM099) is the new dominant male, he is marking a lot.
- Subordinate female Logi (VBBF104) left and was chased by the group, but she returned shortly after that.

**Drie Doring:**

- Nor'easter (VDF182), one of the pups, disappeared and is removed from the group's mark sheet.
- No more TB symptoms were observed at the group.

**Ewoks:**

- The pup Bodger (VEKM041) is lost. Currently, only one pup of the recently born litter is remaining.
- Dominant female McDreamy (VKUF005) gave birth and subordinate female Donny (VEKF021) is pregnant.
- The subordinate evictees Edzna, Donny, The Dude and Sarah-Jane (VEKF017, VEKF021, VEKF022 and VEKF025) all immigrated into Ewoks 2 (read below). They rejoined their original group after a week.
- Sachin II (VEKM012) left the group 9 times this month and was seen roving at Axolotls, Jaxx and Whiskers.

**Ewoks 2:**

- A short-living sub-group consisting of the Ewoks females Edzna, Donny, The Dude and Sarah-Jane (VEKF017, VEKF021, VEKF022 and VEKF025) who were later joined by the Whiskers males Pet (VCVM001) and K-Quob (VWM186).
- Donny (VEKF021) is pregnant.

- Although the Ewoks 2 group existed just for a short term, Pet was behaving very dominant with lots of marking and dominance assertion over the other members.
- The group has disintegrated since all members returned back to their original groups.

**Flaka Flaka:**

- There are no noteworthy improvements on the habituation of the group.
- Two pups have emerged.
- 3 wild adults are known to have TB lumps.

**High Voltage:**

- Four pups have emerged. However, two of them disappeared shortly after their emergence.
- The dominants of the group are clear: Bes 1 (VVHF035) and the wild male Drogon (VHVM004) are asserting dominance over the others.
- The dominant female Bes 1 (VVHF035) is pregnant.

**Jaxx:**

- The pup VJXP090 was predated by an owl. It happened while an observer was present. After the event, the group behaved nervous and the adults carried the two remaining pups.
- Subordinate females Cloudbreak (VJXF057) and Baloo (VJXF080) immigrated into the sub-group Jaxx 2 (read below). However, Baloo rejoined her original group Jaxx again.
- Dominant female Teahupo'o (VJXF058) and subordinate female Baloo are both pregnant. Cloudbreak lost her litter before emergence.

**Jaxx 2:**

- The Jaxx females Cloudbreak (VJXF057) and Baloo (VJXF080) were seen together with two wild males on multiple occasions. However, at the end of the month Baloo rejoined her original group Jaxx again.

**Lazuli:**

- Dominant female JubJub Bird (VLF194) is pregnant. Subordinate female Alan Johnson's Beamer (VLF206) gave birth, but lost the litter before emergence.

**Nematoads:**

- The males HIW, Scamp and George W. Bush (VNMM002, VNMM006 and VNMM007) are still missing and now removed from the group's mark sheet.
- There are no improvements with the habituation of the wild male. He has rarely been seen when an observer was present.

**Pandora:**

- Subordinate females Moofles (VPAF019) and Kokkebenia (VPAF021) are removed from the group's mark sheet, due to their prolonged absence.

- An early stage TB lump is observed at T. Sizzle (VPAM025).
- Dominant female Shoshonna (VPAF009) gave birth and four pups have emerged. The pups are foraging with the group.

**Quintessentials:**

- Subordinate female Bar-Ba-Loot (VEKF010) was removed from the group's mark sheet after her prolonged absence.

**Rascals:**

- Four pups emerged, however one of the new-born pups, VRRM191, disappeared. The others started to forage with the group this month.
- TB lumps were observed at the dominant male Hankson (VKUM059) and subordinate male Bruce (VRRM167).
- Evictee Whiskey (VRRF159) appeared several times before she eventually was accepted by the group.
- The group had an IGI with Stumpy's Angels.

**Stumpy's Angels:**

- Lekshmi gave birth above the ground. The observer present at that time witnessed the birth of five pups. Unfortunately, the pups were not taken care of by the adults and were abandoned above ground.
- The role of dominant female is taken by Lekshmi (VBBF088), she is marking a lot and Bernard (VBBF093) was very submissive to her. Since the only male of the group, Stumpy (VLM189), is still absent, it was impossible to detect any signs of dominant behavior of him.
- Stumpy left the group and was seen roving at Van Helsing.
- At the end of the month, Stumpy's Angels consists only of two females, since Elsa (VBBF101) and Stumpy are both absent.

**Tulus:**

- Dominant female Laurentina (VZUF004) was predated. Her skull and radio collar were found under a tree. Since Laurentina was the only female, the sub-group Tulus is now extinct. The males were frequently seen on their own as well as roving at other groups.

**Uberkatz:**

- Dominant female Frosting (VUKF003) and subordinate female Gyllyngvase (VUKF023) both are pregnant.

**Van Helsing:**

- Five pups have emerged and started to forage with the group.
- Dominant female Egg (VVHF042) is pregnant. Subordinate female Spirit Bird (VVHF079) aborted and was seen eating her own pups.
- Subordinate male Vladamir (VVHM071) left the group several times, of which one time he was chased by other subordinate male Willy (VVHM089). Vladamir was seen roving at Pandora on one occasion. Dolly (VVHF073) was evicted several times, and on one occasion left

the sleeping burrow in the morning while she was limping. Also, the females Theo (VVHF072), Spirit Bird (VVHF079) and Eve (VVHF084) left the group. Theo tried to rejoin the group several times, before she was finally accepted. Spirit Bird was seen with roving Pandora male VPAM028, whereas Eve was seen with ex-Zulus male Gobolino (VLM181).

- Besides the visits from VPAM028 and VLM181, the group was visited by more roving males, namely; ex-Baobab dominant VBBM091, Stumpy (VLM189), VLM209, VQLM002 and Zulus male VLM185. Also an unidentified meerkat approached the group.

**Whiskers:**

- The subordinate males Pet (VCVM001) and K-Quob (VWVM186) joined the short-living sub-group Ewoks 2. Pet even behaved dominant in his new group. However, Ewoks 2 came to an end and the males returned back to Whiskers.
- Dominant female Swift (VWVF176) is pregnant.
- The group encountered the two Ewoks males Sachin II (VEKM012) and Bon Marche (VEKM019). The subordinate female Jedilah (VWVF192) was seen running away from her group together with Sachin II.
- There was an IGI with Ewoks. On one evening, both groups intended to return to the sleeping burrow R03B. This burrow was frequently used by Whiskers in the past, but more recently used by Ewoks. On this evening, Ewoks won the battle over the sleeping burrow and Whiskers ran off.
- The males Snowy (VLM147) and Rufio (VLM155) continued in their absence.

**Xhodes:**

- There are no noteworthy improvements on the habituation in the group.
- Former Nematoads female Sutica (VLF180) gave birth. The pups have not emerged yet.
- Other ex-Nematoads female Fran (VLF184) continued in her absence. Madi (VXHF001) returned, but left again and now also Dani (VXHF002) is absent at the end of the month.

**Youma:**

- Mandela (VPAF018), the only remaining member of the Youma group, was found dead. The group thus ceases to exist.

**Zulus:**

- Subordinate male Gezi (VZUM008) is removed from the group's mark sheet after his prolonged absence. The former Zulus males Caleb (VLM177) and Flammkuchen (VLM185) immigrated back into the group again.
- Dominant female Ocho Niplé (VZUF001) is pregnant.
- There was one group split of uncertain duration.

**The following authors contributed to this report:**

Melissa de Bruin, Life History Volunteer

Helen Spence-Jones, Research Assistant

Young Ha Su, Volunteer

Hector Ruiz, Volunteer

Constance Dubuc, Post-doc

Evi Zehntner, Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat  
Project

---