



The Meerkatter

The Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat Project Report - www.kalahari-meerkats.com - August 2022

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|--------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>The End of a Reign</i> | 1-2 | <i>Pregnancies in September</i> | 3 |
| <i>A New Trackies Timeline</i> | 2-3 | <i>Weather at the KMP</i> | 3 |
| | | <i>Life History Details</i> | 3-8 |

The End of a Reign

The Whiskers morning session on the 9th of September started out as normal. The observer tracked the group to the sleeping burrow and collected morning weights as the group woke up. However, as the group started to leave, they realised they had not seen the radio-collared individual; dominant female Swift (VWF176). Following the group, they unpacked their telonics hoping a beep from the radio collar would point them in the direction of Swift. However, the direction of the beep just turned them right around and led them back to the sleeping burrow. It was then that they realised Swift had not woken up with the group and something may be wrong with her. At the end of the session her beep was still coming from the burrow and that evening the group went below at a different sleeping burrow just under a kilometer away. Things were not looking good for Swift. For subsequent sessions the beep from her radio collar kept coming from the same sleeping burrow but we saw no sign of her. The group also did not come back to the sleeping burrow. At the end of this month, Swift has still not been seen and her radio collar is still emitting from the same sleeping burrow. Sadly, it is most likely she has died.



Photo of dominant female Swift (VWF176), one of the most successful and famous meerkats of the Kalahari Meerkat Project. Photo taken by Laura Salomone (Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat Project)

Swift lived to be ten and a half years old, which is very impressive for a meerkat, almost reaching 13 years old, which is the maximum age we've seen for a dominant female. She has had 52 confirmed offspring in her life. Some of these have gone on to become dominants themselves, such as adult females Bel-Hurricane (VWF231) and Fly (VWF237) and adult males Jay-A-Rod (VWM216) and Scuzi (VWM213). On the 22nd of September 2015, Swift became the dominant female at Whiskers after the previous dominant female went missing. This reign went unchallenged until the 4th of July 2020. Fans of *Meerkat Manor* probably already know this story; however, I only heard it when I met Swift for the first time. This story really showed me what a 'badass' she was so I will share it with you again.

On the afternoon of the 4th of July 2020, Swift was found with horrific injuries. In our records they are described as: '2cm hole in middle of chest with hanging skin', 'messy gash on left cheek going under chin' and 'swollen right cheek and chin'. During this session Swift was also seen competing fiercely with subordinate yearling females Pandi (VWF222), Epsilon (VWF224) and Mercy (VWF230). Due to these competitions, dominance at the group was taken away from Swift and a period of dominance challenges began. These competitions went on until the 15th July. During all this time Swift still fought with these devastating injuries, with the hole in her chest only being reported as starting to heal on the 13th of July. A testament to her strength. On the 15th of July she was seen asserting her dominance over the other females and on the 22nd of July she received direct submissions from the other mature females, which indicated she was the dominant female again. Since this event Swift has reigned unchallenged, right up until her disappearance.

Swift did not reign alone. Dominant male Brea (VLM157) joined Whiskers in May 2013, though he did not properly assume the position of dominant male within the group until the 4th of October 2014 when he returned to Whiskers after an extended roving period. The pair have ruled Whiskers together for 7 years. It shall be interesting to see what happens to him as all the females currently in the group are likely his offspring and it is expected that they are unlikely to mate with one another to avoid



inbreeding. Usually in this scenario the dominant male will leave the group and go in search of a new group to join. However, Brea might be too old to go roving. He is currently 13 years old and the oldest meerkat we have ever had in our population! At the end of this month he was still with the group and their dominate male. But, as ways we shall keep you up to date, should the situation change.



Photo of dominant female Swift (VWF176) alongside dominant male Brea (VLM175). Photo taken by Laura Salomone (Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat Project)

Even though Swift's presence shall be missed at Whiskers, life in the meerkat world goes on. In her absence, her adult daughter Luna (VWF235) was asserting her dominance over the other mature females and received submissions from some of them. Luna is currently the oldest female meerkat within the group, which would explain why she was able to assume dominance. On the 19th Luna received direct submissions from the majority of the eligible females and was made the new dominant female of Whiskers. This was not the only new beginning in Whiskers. On the 16th subordinate adult female Laika (VWF236) and yearling female Flake (VWF247) gave birth. After the birth the group left babysitters and many of the females started lactating. This gives us hope that the pups from these litters have survived. They will be the first pups from Whiskers to do so since March of this year and we are excited to see Whiskers grow after such a long time.

A New Trackies Timeline

One year ago, we published an article in the November 2021 edition of the Meerkatter detailing the events and happenings at our beloved habituation group Trackie-Daks, or Trackies as they are affectionately called by us observers. At the time, their numbers had fallen to a paltry 10 members within the group. Since then, their numbers have seen a resurgence, and they are now a respectably sized group of 19 meerkats. Here are all the updates over the past year of the always amazing Trackie-Daks.

The start of Trackies' numbers boost came on the 6th of December when yearling subordinate females Bel-Hurricane (VWF231), Fly (VWF237) and Hachi (VWF238) were found to have immigrated into the

group. The former Whiskers females had left their previous group three days earlier and were luckily accepted into Trackies, who were missing a dominant female. Little time passed before all three females were officially declared pregnant by the 23rd of December. Bel-Hurricane took the vacant position of dominant female on the 28th of December when she was seen to receive submissions from the other two adult females. Life was finally stable again for Trackie-Daks.

On the 27th of January 2022, all three females were reported to have given birth, introducing ten little bundles of joy to the group. This left Trackies with an immense challenge. At the time, there were ten adults in the group, faced with the task of raising ten pups to adulthood. The odds that all ten pups would make it to adulthood were extremely slim yet amazingly the group managed to work together and all ten pups, now sub-adults, are still alive to this day. Habituation work started on the pups once they emerged, with extremely positive results, as all the individuals are now easy to weigh. Sub-adult subordinate female Sassy Pants (VTDF016) was the hardest individual from the litter to habituate, but the observer team collectively focused on her, and now she is just as good as the rest of her littermates.

It has not been all smooth sailing though for Trackies as they have lost a few individuals since the end of last year. Yearling subordinate female Fergalicious (VTSF020) and sub-adult subordinate female Tara (VTDF001), who had been competing for the position of dominance prior to the arrival of the Whiskers females, both left the group on the 12th of December, presumably evicted by the new immigrants. Yearling subordinate male Petit Lu (VTSM011), one of two radio-collared individuals within the group, was last seen with the group on the 4th of February before leaving and not being seen again. Yearling subordinate male Marvin Gaye (VTSM021) was next to leave on the 27th of May. Adult subordinate male Jiminy Cricket (VTSM007), the second radio-collared individual of the group disappeared from the group on the 17th of September. Observers have been able to consistently get a beep from a singular spot towards a tree, leading us to conclude that he has sadly been predated. This leaves Trackies, at the time of writing, without a trackable individual, but observers have still been able to find them consistently.

The most surprising meerkat to leave though was Bel-Hurricane, who left the group on the 18th of June. She was seen alone on the 2nd of July, and then went 2 months without being seen before resurfacing on the 12th of September. For her to have survived so long without the group while still staying close to them is quite remarkable, and her not rejoining them could be a sign her departure was not done willingly, as soon after her disappearance, Fly took up the position of dominant female within the group and was confirmed to be pregnant a few weeks later. Her litter was confirmed to be born on the 29th of August, with four pups emerging as part of the litter. Unfortunately, one of the pups has not been seen since the 29th of



September, with observers believing it has probably perished.



Dominant male Coquillet (VTSM014), one of the more skittish individuals at Trackie-Daks. Photo taken by Zurich Manager Bieke Maxx,

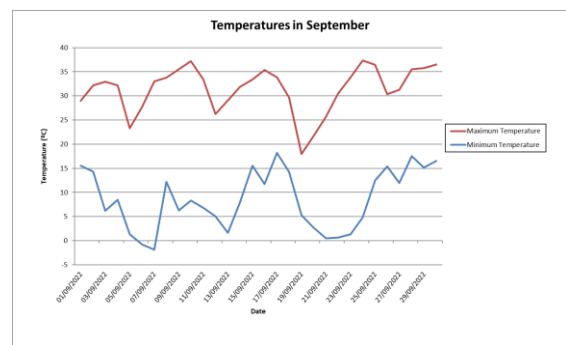
Current habituation efforts are focused mainly on the group's dominant male Coquillet (VTSM014) as well as on Fly's newly emerged pups. Coquillet has both good and bad days, with days where he will drink water and allow for grooms, and days when he wants nothing to do with the observers. Observers are still working on getting him into the scale, as he was only weighed twice in the month of September. However, given he has only been weighed eight times over the past two years, this is a sign of progress being made! Our current main goal is to get him accustomed to follows, as group follows have been ongoing since mid-August. Follows currently last up to an hour and a half, with the rest of the group unperturbed by our presence. The pups are also a priority as it is crucial to habituate them to our presence in this early stage of their life. Observers so far are reporting on the pups successfully eating egg during egg frenzies, which bodes well for the group's habituation status. The next step now is to get them into the scale for an egg snack.

And that is everything ongoing at Trackie-Daks! With group follows usually being the last stage in a group's habituation timeline, we are optimistic that they become an official data collection group within the next few months. Regardless though of whether they are a habituation group or a data collection group, they are well-loved here at the KRC, and we hope this insight into their past year gives you a similar appreciation for them.

Pregnancies in September 2022

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Females pregnant in September | 11 |
| Females who aborted | 1 |
| Females who gave birth, litters lost | 3 |
| Females who gave birth, litter emerged | 1 |
| Females who gave birth, unknown outcome | 5 |
| Females still pregnant at the end of the month | 1 |

Weather at the KMP



The average maximum temperature was 31.4 °C and the average minimum temperature was 8.5 °C. On the 24th temperatures rose to their highest of 37.4 °C. The coldest morning was on the 7th, with temperatures dropping to -1.9 °C. It did not rain at all in the month of September.

September 2022 Life History Details

Recently the way in which we collect data at the groups changed. Due to this we created different categories, for each of the different ways data was collected at each group. These categories were:

Full data collection group (FDC)

We collected LH data at the group and regularly visited the group for full adlib and weights sessions.

Life History monitoring group (LHM)

Observers tended to visit these group for shorter amounts of time. We collected LH data and increased our visits when new pups needed to be habituated. We did not collect adlib data at these groups but collected morning and evening weights a few times per week.

Habituation group (HAB)

Habituating meerkats to our presence was the main goal at these groups. As the group's habituation progresses, we started collecting LH and weights data as well. In a later stage, we tried to follow the group after morning weights, introduced lunch weights and started approaching the group in the afternoon.



Sub-group (SUB)

The amount of data we collected at these groups depended mainly on whether a radio-collared individual is present. If that is the case, we tried to collect LH, weights and adlib data, as it is very interesting to witness group dynamics within these newly formed groups. However, we did not always have a radio collar at these groups. In these cases, we focused on collecting LH data during opportunistic sightings.

Full Data Collection Groups (FDC)

Elrond's Council (FDC):

- There were 15 out of 16 individuals present at the end of September.
- Only adult subordinate male Untitled (VECM025) was absent at the end of the month. He has not been seen since the 20th.
- On the 16th female Snoop Kat (VECF039) finally received direct submissions from the only other eligible female in the group and became dominant.
- On the 14th yearling subordinate female Mojo Jojo (VECF038) gave birth. We are yet to see any pups emerge. On the 18th Snoop Kat had bloody discharge coming from her genitals and was seen eating the remnants of an amniotic sac. A pregnancy was both created and classed as aborted in our recordings on this date.
- At the end of the last month a group split occurred and Mojo Jojo, yearling subordinate male Kuzco (VECM040), yearling subordinate male Shisharka (VECM041), sub-adult subordinate male Survivor (VECM042) and sub-adult subordinate male Karadoc (VECM049) became separated from the group. This group split ended on the 2nd, with all individuals being accepted back into the group. Dominant male Palestrina (VLM211) and adult subordinate male Pavlova (VECM022) also returned on the 2nd. The full group was together again for the first session of the month.
- Many of the males have been leaving and returning to the group this month. Thus far the departures have not been long lasting or permanent. Pavlova and Palestrina left the group an additional three times and returned two twice. Untitled and adult subordinate male Charlie (VECM031) both left the group twice with Charlie returning twice and Untitled once. Subordinate males: adult Pucky (VECM023), yearling Ozzie (VECM033), and subadults Survivor and Chabal (VECM047) all left and returned to the group once.
- Elrond's Council had no encounters, inter-group interaction or group splits this month.
- All individuals at Elrond's Council seem to be in good health.

Gold Diggers (FDC):

- All 21 members were present at the end of the month.
- Subadult subordinate male Shen Long (VGDM041) was given his last seen on the 25th.

- Four pups emerged from the dominant female Goldeneye's (VGDF007) litter on the 10th and 13th.
- Yearling subordinate female BMO (VGDF020) immigrated back into the group on the 17th.
- On the 22nd, whilst the observer had to leave the group for 45 minutes, something happened that caused the group to spook badly, and they ran far across their territory. In this confusion adult subordinate female Juliet (VGDF009), yearling subordinate female Tuna Fish II (VGDF026) and male pup VGDM044 all got separated from the group. The next morning, towards the end of the session the group returned to the sleeping burrow. It was when the pup was seen with the group. There is a possibility the females were below and just not seen. The session after, on the 24th both females had returned. Adult subordinate male Beatrice (VGDM014) was not found with the group on the 17th, however, he returned just after the group went below.
- Gold Diggers had 5 encounters this month. They had one with BMO and an unknown female on the 7th. Two more encounters on the 13th with an unknown adult and then with adult subordinate male Gurke (VHMM036). The final encounter for the months was on the 22nd with an unknown adult.
- The group had no inter-group interaction or group splits this month.
- Habituation at Gold Diggers is considered *Advanced Progress* as habituation work is being done on Fleabag and Yearling subordinate female Ricky Baker (VGDF031). Juliet has now also been added to this due her sudden decline in habituation last month. We have been able to dye her this month. At the end of the month Fleabag can be followed at distances between 1.5-3 meters, Ricky Baker 1 meters and Juliet 1.5-2 meters.
- All individuals seem to be healthy.

Jaxx (FDC):

- There were 13 out of 23 meerkats present at Jaxx at the end of the month.
- Yearling subordinate females Scully (VJXF149) Queen Jane (VJXF158), yearling subordinate male Mr Jones (VJXM155) and juvenile female VJXF171 were all absent at the end of the month.
- Subordinate adult males Rincewind (VJXM131), Nibs (VJXM137), Tootles (VJXM139), yearling male Oliver (VJXM144) and juvenile male Vince Noir (VJXM166) were all given their last seen on the 6th (the 15th for Vince Noir).
- Dominant female Baloo (VJXF080) remained pregnant all throughout the month.
- This month: Scully, Queen Jane, Mr Jones and VJXF171 all left the group once and did not return. Yearling subordinate male Cigarette Smoking Man (VJXM153) left and returned to the group three times this month. Yearling subordinate female Gray (VJXF150) left and returned to the group twice this month. Adult subordinate male The Dude (VJXM142), yearling subordinate male Fred (VJXM146) and



sub-adult female Quetzal (VJXF163) all left and returned to the group once this month.

- The group had one encounter with an unknown meerkat on the 2nd.
- No inter-group interactions or group splits were observed at Jaxx this month.
- All individuals at Jaxx seem to be in good health.

Lazuli (FDC):

- All 19 individuals were present at the end of July.
- Three pups from dominant female Sigma's (VLF230) litter emerged on the 18th.
- On the 29th yearling subordinate female Dumpling (VLF272) did not wake up with the group. She returned later that day with blood on genitals. Adult subordinate male Moteck (VLM261) left and returned on the 22nd.
- The group had no encounters or inter-group interaction this month.
- Two daily group splits occurred this month on the 13th and 29th.
- All individuals seem to be in good health.

Namaqua (FDC):

- All 8 members were present at the end of August.
- On the 8th, pups VNQP038, VNQP039 and VNQP040 were given their last seen. Yearling adult subordinate Sidney (VMPM059) was given his last seen on the 23rd, while adult subordinate male Umfana (VZUM034) was given his last seen on the 28th.
- Namaqua had 8 encounters with sub-adult male Love (VBSM003) on the 1st, 6th, 7th, 13th and 30th and a singular encounter with yearling male Fredi (VNQM028) on the 30th alongside Love.
- No inter-group interactions or group splits were noted in September
- We suspect that the sub-adult subordinate female Luisa (VNQF031) and dominant female Manzai (VNQF013) are both showing symptoms of TB, with Luisa in particular looking extremely emaciated.

Side Quest (FDC):

- All 11 meerkats were present at the end of September.
- Yearling subordinate female Sky (VSIF003) was given her last seen on the 21st after opportunistically being sighted the previous month. Pup VSIM018 was reported as missing from the group on 18th and was given their last seen on the 28th.
- There were no individual encounters, inter-group interactions, or group splits observed during the month.
- All individuals appear to be healthy.

Ubuntu (FDC):

- All 20 individuals were present at the end of September.
- 4 pups emerged from dominant female Daisy's (VBBF111) litter and have been foraging with the group since the 20th.
- Adult subordinate female Cthulhu (VUBF035) returned to the group on the 1st, while adult

subordinate male Captain Barbosa (VLM265) left the group on the 19th but returned the following day.

- Ubuntu had 5 encounters with yearling subordinate male Barone (VWM248) on the 1st, with further encounters on the 7th, 8th and 19th. Barone was joined by adult subordinate male Lupin (VWM234) for the encounter on the 7th, while Lupin encountered Ubuntu alone on the 12th and 13th.
- No inter-group interactions were observed this month.
- Ubuntu had one overnight group split.
- Daisy has been reported as looking skinny since the 12th, and the condition has not improved since. All other individuals within the group appear to be healthy.

Whiskers (FDC):

- There were 18 out of 19 members present at the end of the month.
- Dominant female Swift (VWF176) has not been seen with the group on the 9th, starting a period of unsettled dominance at Whiskers. A beep from her radio collar at the same burrow leads us to believe that she has died.
- Dominant female Luna (VWF235) assumed the position of dominance on the 19th, when she received submissions from more than half the eligible females in the group.
- Luna and yearling subordinate female Crunchie (VWF250) both gave birth to litters on the 1st-3rd and the 4th respectively that were both lost before emergence, while adult subordinate female Laika (VWF236) and yearling subordinate female Flake (VWF247) both gave birth between the 15th-16th.
- Lupin and Barone returned to the group on the 1st. They then proceeded to leave the group 3 more times to have encounters at Ubuntu, before returning each time, and were still with the group at the end of the month. Laika and Emily Bronte (VWF243) both left and returned to the group on the 12th. Crunchie left the group on the 15th before returning on the 17th. Oscar Wilde (VWM245) joined Lupin and Barone when they went roving on the 4th before returning on the same day.
- Laika was evicted from the group on the 22nd, but the eviction was ended the following day.
- They had no observed encounters or inter-group interactions in September.
- There were 3 daily group splits recorded this month on the 12th, 18th and 19th, and 2 group splits of an uncertain duration recorded on the 7th and 15th.
- All individuals at Whiskers seem to be healthy.

Zulus (FDC):

- There were 9 out of 11 individuals present at the end of the month.
- Adult subordinate females Salazar (VZUF051), Helga (VZUF052) and Rowena (VZUF054), who



had emigrated out of the group in July, immigrated back into the group on the 14th of September.

- Helga gave birth to a litter of pups while away from the group. Salazar, Helga and Rowena were raising Helga's pups in a nearby burrow to where Zulus woke up on the 14th. Adult dominant female Spruddel (VZUF028) brought up 2 pups and killed them, and the body of a third pup, V-1U001, was recovered the next day by an observer. We believe no other pups survived.
- Salazar, Helga and Rowena all left the group on the 25th. Helga and Rowena returned to the group on the 28th, with Helga leaving the group again on the same day.
- Zulus had one encounter on the 14th with Salazar, Helga and Rowena, prior to letting them immigrate back into the group.
- There were no inter-group interactions or group splits observed in September.
- All individuals at Zulus appear to be healthy.

Life History Monitoring Groups

Alba (LHM):

- All 9 individuals were present at the end of August.
- On the 17th dominant female Pippin (VECF003) was given her last seen. On the 3rd dominant male Jay-a-Rod (VWM216) was presumed dead. He was not found with the group on the 5th and his radio collar was subsequently tracked and found in a bird of prey's nest on the 6th.
- With the death of Jay-a-Rod the position for dominant male became available. As there were no other eligible males to compete with at the group and after showing dominance behaviours dominant male Godric (VZUM053) became dominant male on the 7th.
- On the 28th subadult subordinate male Nigoni (निगनि) (VALM004) was not found with the group but returned later that session.
- No encounters, inter-group interaction or group splits were observed this month
- All individuals appear healthy.

Brussels Sprouts (LHM):

- There were 8 out of 8 individuals present at the end of September.
- The adult subordinate female Vivienne (VMPF038) gave birth on the 17th. We have not seen any pups emerge yet.
- On the 22nd subadult subordinate female Minnow (VBSF004) was given her last seen.
- Adult subordinate male Gurke (VHMM036) left and returned to the group twice this month, once on the 6th and 8th and once on the 13th and 14th to go roving at Gold Diggers. Vivienne left the group on the 2nd but had returned on the 5th.
- No encounters, inter-group interactions or group splits were seen this month.
- Habituation at Brussels Sprouts is considered *Advanced Progress*. We are focusing our habituation efforts on Jack. With the group being visited less, his habituation has not changed much. He is comfortable with observers

approaching him to 1.5 meters and following him at 2 meters. He is still very keen for his egg reward.

- All individuals at Brussels Sprouts seem to be in good health.

Hakuna Matata (LHM):

- Hakuna Matata have not been seen at all this month.
- Due to this we cannot say if any of the meerkats that left last month have returned to the group.
- We have changed the 'Dominant at end of month' section to currently unknown as we cannot confirm the dominant individuals were still dominant female Sencha (VHMF030) and dominant male Finnick (VLM234).
- We have changed the groups habituation status to 'Incomplete' as the individuals from litters VHM2104, VHM2201 and any subsequent litter that may have been born, will need habituation work.

Runaways (LHM):

- All 18 members were present at the end of the month.
- 4 pups emerged on the 18th as part of dominant female Bigwig's (VMPF022) litter.
- Yearling subordinate female Elsa (VRWF002) gave birth between the 14th and 17th. We are currently still collecting babysitting information for her litter though it is believed that they have been abandoned as the group moved 700m away to a different burrow a few days after their birth was reported. Until the babysitting information confirms it, we can only speculate on the outcome of the litter.
- No encounters, inter-group interactions or group splits were seen this month.
- All individuals seem to be in good health.

Habituation Groups

Make-e-Plan (HAB):

- There were 22 out of 24 individuals present at the end of September.
- At the end of the month, juvenile male Jude (VMPM071) was absent. Multiple times, observers had seen an individual that they believe was it bolt into the burrow when approached, and due to the individual's skittishness, it lacks a distinguishing dye mark. Male juvenile Ranger (VMPM073) left the group on the 17th and has not been seen since.
- Dominant female Bridget (VQLF011) gave birth on the 6th. 5 pups have emerged so far this month but we believe there are more pups in the litter..
- Adult subordinate female Millewa (VMPF048) and yearling subordinate females Cassie (VMPF050), Bonxie (VMPF054), Sophie (VMPF055), Archie (VMPF057) and Hollie (VMPF058) all immigrated back into the group on the 19th. Hollie had given birth but given she was not with the group, we concluded her pups were lost before emergence.



- Make-e-Plan had 1 encounter this month on the 11th with an unknown adult.
- There were no inter-group interactions or group splits observed this month
- Habituation at the group is classed as *In progress* and habituation work now focuses on individuals in the litters: VMP2201, VMP2202, VMP2203, VMP2204, and VMP2205. At the end of the month:
- We have just had a bit of a breakthrough with subadult subordinate female Stinky (VMPP063) as she can be led into the scale with water.
- Subadult subordinate male Wonky (VMPP062) is one of the individuals who needs the most work. He ran away from us when we approach any closer than 2m at the sleeping burrow and as he was not interested in any rewards, he cannot be enticed closer to us.
- Subadult subordinate male Woozy (VMPP066) can be led into the scale with egg. He was doing very well so had stopped being one of our main focus individuals.
- Subadult subordinate male Oozy (VMPP067) was previously not interested in any rewards offered to him. At the end of this month, he was taking egg and water and our goal now is to get him into the scale.
- Juvenile males (VMPP068), Shen (VMPP069) and Snapdragon (VMPP074) had made huge improvements this month and can be led into the scale with egg and water. They stopped being one of our main focus individuals.
- Juvenile male Shrimp (VMPP070) had done very well this month and can be led into the scale with egg and water. However, he was incredibly nervous of hands, meaning he often jumped out the scale before we could get an accurate weigh. We shall be working on his hand habituation.
- Juvenile male Jude (VMPP071) was the other individual who needed the most work. At the beginning of the month, he did not come up from the burrow when observers were present. For this reason, he had no identifying marks. Through out the month he had been occasionally seen from between 5 metres to 40 meters and ran in terror if we approached him. He had shown no sign of liking egg so far.

Phoenix (HAB):

- 15 unmarked individuals were present at the end of the month, including 3 pups.
- 3 pups were first seen on the 27th.
- No encounters or interactions were witnessed this month.
- The group's habituation status was still *In Progress*. We were trying to focus habituation on the newly emerged pups but getting close to them was proving difficult due to the sketchier individuals. We were able to approach the group to within 5 meters before they retreated back down. There was one adult female meerkat that ate egg at Phoenix.
- We did not have a radio collared individual at the group and were still focusing on cage habituation.
- All individuals at Phoenix appeared to be healthy.

Trackie-Daks (HAB):

- 19 out of 20 individuals were present at the end of September.
- 4 pups emerged as part of dominant female Fly's (VWF237) litter. Sadly, pup VTDP024 was not seen when the group was visited on the 29th and the 30th, leaving them absent from the group at the end of the month.
- Adult subordinate male Jiminy Cricket (VTSM007) left the group on the 17th. Since then, observers had been able to get a strong beep from his radio collar from the exact same location, leading us to believe he had been predated on with the radio collar stranded up a tree, and he was thus declared dead on the 17th. This currently left Trackie-Daks without a radio collared individual.
- No individual or group encounters were observed this month.
- There were no group splits observed this month.
- The habituation level was currently *In Progress*. Our habituation efforts were mainly focused on the dominant male Coquette (VTSM014) as well as the newly emerged pups from Fly's litter. Coquette was still very wary of people and constantly barked at anyone approaching him within 3-5m. He could, however, be increasingly coaxed into the scale using water, and had even allowed grooms while drinking water. Habituation on the pups was showing mixed results. VTDP022 ate egg and drank water, while VTDP023 and VTDP025 were much more skittish and required more focus. Observers had now been able to conduct 1.5 hour follows with the group, with most of the group excluding Coquette seeming unfazed by our presence.
- All individuals appear to be healthy.

Sub-Groups

Gold Diggers 2 (SUB):

- On the 6th yearling subordinate male Roger (VRWM005) left and was seen approaching Alba.
- On the 7th yearling subordinate female BMO (VGDF020) was seen waking up near Gold Diggers and had encounters with them later that morning. She was joined by an unknown female meerkat, who we suspect was yearling subordinate female Shelby (VGDF022). Later that day yearling subordinate male Meenu (VRWM001) was seen having encounters with Alba.
- From the encounters it was clear that the males and the females were no longer together. On the 7th the the subgroup was disintegrated. All individuals were moved into the group unknown on this date.
- All individuals at appeared to be healthy.

Make-e-Plan 5 (SUB):

- There were 7 individuals present at the beginning of the month.
- On the 3rd subordinate yearling female Bonxie (VMPP054) was found acting as part of the



group. Her last seen was undone and she was recorded as immigrated into the group on this date.

- On the 19th subordinate adult female Millewa (VMPPF048) and subordinate yearling females Cassie (VMPPF050), Bonxie, Sophie (VMPPF055), Archie (VMPPF057) and Hollie (VMPPF058) were emigrated out of the group as they were found waking up, back at Make-e-plan.
- Hollie's litter was given the outcome of 'born and lost before emergence' on the 19th.
- With the emigration of all the females out of the subgroup, the subgroup was disintegrated on the 19th. Yearling subordinate male Fredi (VNQM028) was moved into the group unknown on this date.

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