



The Meerkatter

The Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat Project Report - www.kalahari-meerkats.com - October 2023

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An Ode to Brea

Brea (12-15.09.2009 - 02.10.2023) oldest recorded meerkat at the KMP, dominant, father, and movie star.

Brea is the oldest ever recorded meerkat at the Kalahari meerkat project so far. In his 14 years in the Kalahari, Brea (VLM157) has been a constant in the comings and goings of researchers, volunteers, and meerkat manor fans everywhere. I first came across him in *Meerkat Manor: Rise of the Dynasty* and just a couple of years later, I had the pleasure of meeting Brea in person with his characterful and distinct face of 14 years' worth of experiences and his unquenchable thirst for water. Here we look back on his lifetime of adventures from his humble beginnings at Lazuli, to his roving days with his older brothers, through to his long reign of Dominance at Whiskers alongside dominant female Swift (VVF176).

Brea was born between the 12th and 15th of September 2009 to the then-dominant female of Lazuli, Young (VLF111). In his litter, he had one brother, Buter (VLM156), and two sisters Griene Tsiis (VLF158) and Grutte Pier (VLF159). All the pups emerged on the 8th of October and were first observed foraging with the group on the 19th of October. Sadly, Buter only lived to be six months old and was assumed predated on the 21st of March 2010 and Grutte Pier died at 10 months old. His sister Griene Tsiis remained in Lazuli until the 26th of October 2013 when she was separated from the group in a group split. Although she appeared to the group six times after this she was not accepted back into the group and was last seen on the 30th of November 2013.



Photo of Brea at just six months old! Photo credit: Laura Salamone (Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat Project)

At almost 2 years old, Brea's roving days began in 2011 when he was seen approaching Jaxx. Jaxx seemed to be Brea's favoured roving group during this year. Whilst he was often chased away by the group, this did not deter him, and he had 7 encounters at Jaxx between the 8th of August and 16th of October 2011. Following more than two months of absence from his natal group Lazuli he was officially emigrated out on the 13th of October 2011, free to roam wherever his paws took him. And it was not long before he found himself a new group...



Photo of Brea just before his roving days began. Photo credit: Laura Salamone (Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat Project).

On the 26th of October 2011, Brea and his older brothers, Lazuli males Rufio (VLM155) and Franz (VLM149) joined Jaxx females Dikkop (VJXF008), Gene (VJXF017), Megan Fox (VJXF018) and formed a new group, Cavemen. However, Gene and Megan Fox did not stay in the group for long and immigrated back into Jaxx on the 9th and 11th of November 2011 respectively. This left Dikkop as the only female remaining and therefore dominant female by elimination on the 12th of November. Another male

joined the group on the 21st of December 2011 and was named Pet (VCVM001) as he was well habituated and thought to possibly be a pet meerkat from a nearby farm.

Male dominance at the group remained unsettled until on the 12th of January 2012, when Franz became the dominant male. He remained dominant until the 28th of May when he was last seen with several injuries, after which Rufio took over as dominant. However, Rufio was overthrown by Snowy (VLM147) when he immigrated into the group on the 19th of September 2012 and evicted Rufio. It is uncertain whether Brea threw his hat into the ring during these periods of unsettled dominance as he was the youngest of his brothers and likely smaller than the other males.

During the roving seasons of 2011 and 2012, Brea left the group on several occasions and had many encounters with Jaxx on the 19th of November 2011, 16th of December 2011, 5th of July 2012, 17th of September 2012, and most of October 2012. During these encounters, Brea was often seen with Rufio, much like today we often see Rogelio De La Vega (VGDM015) with Beatrice (VGDM014) roving together.

Cavemen had four litters which were all unsuccessful as none of the pups survived to three months. Dikkop was last seen on the 9th of February 2013 in poor condition and was assumed to have passed away not long after this. As she was the last female in the group, this meant the end of Cavemen as a full-functioning group by our definition of three or more individuals of mixed sex and became a same-sex coalition of the remaining males; Brea, Rufio, Pet, and Snowy.

On the 11th of March 2013, observers witnessed Brea, Rufio, Pet, and Snowy encounter Whiskers for the first time. These males were also observed together at other encounters with Whiskers on the 28th of March 2013, Lazuli and Toyota on the 2nd of April 2013, Jaxx on the 29th of April 2013, and Uberkatz on the 9th of May 2013. On the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th of May 2014, Brea along with his companions Rufio, Snowy, and Pet relentlessly appeared to Whiskers until on the 15th of May, when they were accepted by the group. Cavemen ceased to exist and became integrated into Whiskers.

The males arrived with a bang and Snowy overthrew the dominant male at the time Bearslayer (VWM151) the day after Brea, Rufio, Snowy, and Pet immigrated into Whiskers on the 16th of May 2013. On the 20th of November 2013, Snowy left Whiskers and on the day that he was gone, violent competitions for dominance broke out between the subordinate males in the group. This could have included dominance assertion and competition behaviours that we observe such as chinning, hip-slaming, or on the more severe end rearing, fighting, and sitting on one's opponent. By the time Snowy returned to Whiskers the following day, 21st of November 2013, there was a new dominant male in town, betrayed by his very own, Rufio. Snowy was a very well-travelled

rover and he left Whiskers for the final time on the 6th of September 2015 and was not sighted again.

Following Brea's immigration into Whiskers, his roving days continued with different groups; specifically, at Ewoks and Drie Doring. On the 11th of December 2013 Brea and Snowy hung around Ewoks after an intergroup interaction with Whiskers earlier that day, where Ewoks war-danced and chased the Whiskers into retreat. He was observed roving at Ewoks again on the 28th of December with Pet and Snowy. Between the 2nd and 14th of February 2014, Brea had six encounters at Drie Doring joined by Pet. During their encounter on the 8th and 9th, they were joined by evicted Drie Doring female Saoirse (VDF155). In July 2014 on the 7th, 8th, and 9th Brea went roving at Drie Doring once more, taking Pet with him. Between August and October 2014, he had four more encounters with Drie Doring and two encounters at Ewoks. His last ever recorded individual encounter roving at another group was on the 1st of October at Drie Doring.

On the 4th of October 2014, Brea was ready to hang up his roving paws and settle down. He returned to Whiskers and asserted his dominance over all the other group members including the current dominant male Rufio. Rufio submitted to him and so began the longest recorded tenure of a dominant male. After becoming dominant, Brea remained loyal to Whiskers and was not seen roving at any other group over a period of 9 years until the day he was last seen!

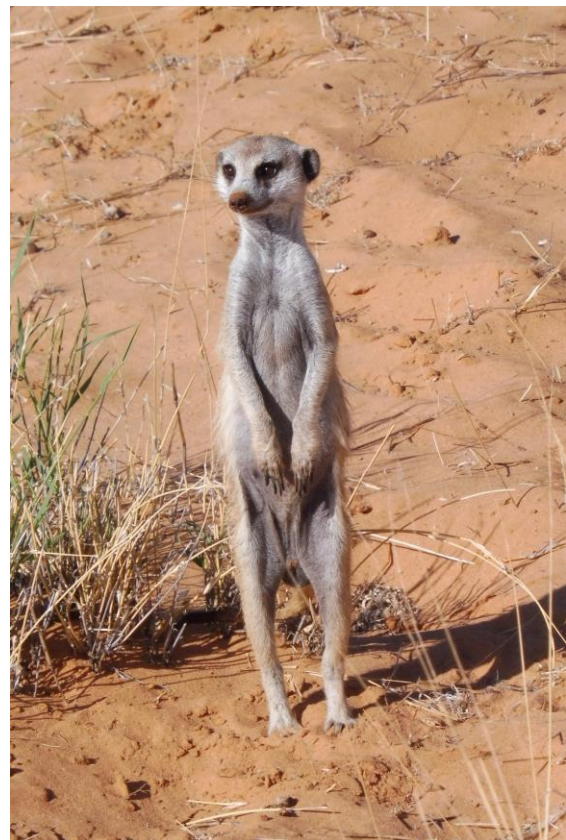


Photo of Brea in 2019 at the age of 10. Photo credit: Laura Salamone (Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat Project).

The dominant female at the time when Brea became dominant was Pe'ahi (VWF177). However, she disappeared on the 8th of September 2015 and was assumed predated after her radio collar was later found up a tree. This led to Swift (VWF176), Pe'ahi's sister and great-granddaughter of Flower (VWF026), taking over as the new dominant female on the 22nd of September 2015. Together Brea and Swift led Whiskers for almost 7 years. During this time Swift successfully gave birth to 15 emerging litters, and from genetic analysis we can confirm that 27 of those pups were sired by Brea, as well as a possible 25 more which have not yet been genetically assigned. Therefore, his reproductive success is truly impressive, and his dynasty is well-established.



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

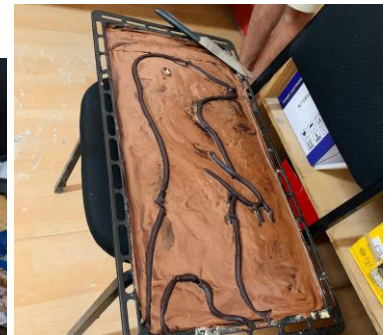
Swift was last seen on the 7th of September 2022 and was assumed to have died after observers got a beep from her radio collar at a sleeping burrow, but she never re-emerged. She too lived a very long life reaching 10.5 years and survived after sustaining severe injuries following a possible encounter with a snake in July 2020. Following Swift's passing it is unlikely that Brea sired any more offspring, as the next and current dominant female is Swift's (and possibly Brea's) daughter Luna (VWF235). Instead, it seemed like he settled into his more senior role as "granddad".



Brea with his possible grandchildren, Mya VWF268 (centre), Cricket VWM270 (left) and Pintabeen VWM269 (right). Photo credit: Laura Salomone (Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat Project).

Not only is Brea the oldest recorded meerkat at the Kalahari Meerkat Project, but he also holds the record of longest recorded tenure (both total cumulative and for a single dominance period) of 3285 days from the time he became dominant until the day he was last seen on the 2nd of October. Throughout his time as dominant Brea was only observed to be challenged on one occasion by subordinate male Pixie (VWM210) on the 3rd of July 2020. There was no clear initiator, however, they rubbed noses and Brea came out on top as the clear winner securing his dominant position.

On the 15th of September this year we had a special Life History meeting to celebrate Brea's birthday, which of course included cake and a Brea statue made by current meerkat observer Whitney Fourie in which his spirit lives on.



Photos of Brea's birthday cake (above) and a statue of Brea made by Meerkat Observer Whitney Fourie (left). Photo credit: Meerkat observer Nolutho Makwati

Throughout Brea's lifetime his weight has also been recorded an impressive 3520 times. On the day he was last seen on the 2nd of October observers noted that Brea had steadily lost weight and was last recorded at 470g. This is approximately 50% of his highest ever recorded weight of 947g on the evening of the 10th of January in 2014! He had also sustained an injury to his left rib and was struggling to keep up with the rest of the group when they were foraging. At the time of writing, the roving season had begun and therefore we allow males 2 months before giving them their last seen. However, in Brea's case, it is unlikely that he is roving, and given his advanced age and degrading body condition it is likely that he has passed away leaving his remarkable legacy behind. Brea left his mark on many of us and will be remembered by many more, rest in peace Brea.

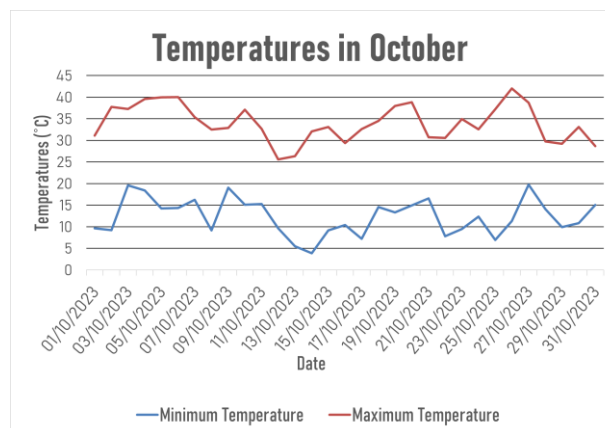


Photo of Brea pancaking on a hot day. Photo taken by Zurich Masters Student Livio Flueeler.

Pregnancies in October 2023

Females pregnant in October	10
Females who aborted	1
Females who gave birth, litters lost	1
Females who gave birth, litter emerged	0
Females who gave birth, unknown outcome	2
Females still pregnant at the end of the month	6

Weather at the KMP



The temperature has been steadily heating up as we enter the summer months, with a slight dip around the 14th of October. The average minimum temperature was 12.3°C and the average maximum temperature was 34.0°C. The hottest day was on the 26th of October, at 42.0°C. The coldest day was on the 14th, and was a cool 3.9°C. It did not rain this month.

October 2023 Life History Details

Due to the large number of groups we are covering, we have made some changes to the way we are collecting data at the KMP. There are four different levels of data collection, that we will briefly introduce here.

Full data collection group (FDC)

We collect LH data at the group and regularly visit the group for full adlib and weights sessions.

Life History monitoring group (LHM)

Observers tend to visit these groups for shorter amounts of time. We collect LH data and increase our visits when new pups need to be habituated. We do not collect adlib data at these groups but collect morning and evening weights a few times per week.

Habituation group (HAB)

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

Sub-group (SUB)

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

Full Data Collection Groups:

Alba (FDC):

- 11 of 15 individuals were present at the end of October.
- Adult male Palestrina (VLM211) can now be confirmed as the dominant male of Alba from the 9th of September 2023, as he has received direct submission from more than half of the eligible males in the group. Dominance behaviours have subsided over the last month allowing us observers to confirm that male dominance at Alba has once again been settled.
- The outcome of dominant female Tolkien's (VECF019) litter consisted of pups Shifu (VALP013) and Bibu (VALM014). However, Shifu did not wake up with the group on the 12th of October.
- Bibu's habituation is going well, he is eager for egg and water and willingly comes into the scale.
- Emigrated yearling subordinate females Maya (VALF003) and Madhubala (VALF006) were given their last seen this month.
- Yearling subordinate females Rani (VALF002) and Ganga (VALF005) left on the 11th of

October. Yearling subordinate male Nigoni (VALM004) left on the 9th of October, after an encounter with Lazuli males, and returned to the group on the same day. He left again on the 12th of October and was sighted later at Gana Vlake (the other farmhouse on the reserve) with adult female Magali (VUBF023). Adult subordinate male Ozzie (VECM033) left on the 13th of October (and returned the same day), and again with adult subordinate male Charlie (VECM031) on the 22nd of October and returned on the same day. Charlie was then evicted on the 23rd and was accepted back on the 25th. He left and returned twice on the 27th and left again on the 28th.

- Charlie, Rani, Ganga, and Nigoni were absent at the end of the month.
- Shifu was given their Last Seen this month.
- Adult subordinate female Kilie (VECF036), along with yearling subordinate females Maya (VALF003) and Madhubala (VALF006) have been emigrated out of the group as they have been given enough time for them to be considered not part of the group.
- The group encountered the Lazuli roving males, dominant male Odin (VLM266), adult subordinate males Moteck (VLM261), Taco (VLM273), Phar Lap (VLM275), yearling subordinate males Lord Escort (VLM282) and Monster (VLM290) on the 9th of October. Nigoni saw the males approach the sleeping burrow and he retreated, and the roving males war-danced and chased him away. Thereafter they left.
- Alba had no inter-group interactions or group splits this month.
- All individuals appeared healthy at the end of the month.

Brussels Sprouts (FDC):

- All 7 individuals were present at the end of the month.
- Dominance at Brussels Sprouts became unsettled on the 22nd of October when previous dominant male Gurke (VHMM036) was not acting as dominant and submitted to both adult male James (Sawyer) (VGDM011) and yearling male Chili (VBSM005). Many injuries were sustained due to the dominance assertions. On the 26th, Chili received submissions from both Gurke and James, making him the dominant male of his natal group.
- Dominant female Arabella (VMPF035) gave birth on the 21st of October, but her litter was lost before emergence on the 26th, as there was no lactation reporting, the sleeping burrow was moved and there were no babysitters.
- James left with Chili on the 6th after an encounter with Gold Diggers adult subordinate male Baymax (VGDM028). They returned on the same day. James, yearling subordinate female Totoro (VBSF001), and Chili left on the 9th. James returned on the 9th and Chili returned on the 10th. Chili left with yearling subordinate female Lyra (VBSF002) on the 11th along with James. Chili and James returned to Brussels

Sprouts on the 22nd. Totoro and Lyra only returned on the 24th. Totoro and Lyra were evicted on the 26th, as it was observed that they were chased away. They both returned to the group on the 26th. Chili, James, and Lyra left on the 28th and returned on the same day.

- Brussels Sprouts encountered Baymax on the 6th of October. On the 9th, Totoro, and James appeared to the group. Totoro also appeared to the group on the 10th and the 23rd. Brussels Sprouts also had one appearance from Lyra on the 23rd and one from Chili on the 10th of October.
- There was one inter-group interaction between Brussels Sprouts and Zulus on the 28th. The groups war-danced towards each other, and Brussels Sprouts retreated.
- There were no group splits observed this month.
- Due to the dominance change and continuous dominance assertions, Chili, James, and Gurke have sustained serious injuries. Arabella and Lyra also sustained injuries from an unknown cause. These injuries are healing well. Yearling subordinate female Sien (VBSF008) appears to be the only one who has not sustained injuries.

Elrond's Council (FDC):

- 11 of 14 individuals were present at the end of October.
- *Male dominance remains unconfirmed* at Elrond's Council.
- Dominant female Snoop Kat (VECF039) gave birth on the 17th of October, and the outcome of the litter was unknown at the end of the month.
- Adult male Milo (VECM034) left the group on the 11th of October, along with adult male Survivor (VECM042) and yearling male Petit di Gio (VECM046). Adult males Kuzco (VECM040), Shisharka (VECM041), and yearling male Perceval (VECM048) left on the 13th and returned on the 29th.
- Milo, Survivor, and Petit di Gio are absent at the end of the month.
- Elrond's Council encountered two unknown meerkats on the 20th, one on the 29th, and two separate encounters on the 31st with two unknown individuals. They also encountered yearling subordinate female Adolin (VRWF012) on the 30th of October. She had not been seen since the 6th of October, and so had travelled a long way from her natal group, Runaways. Elrond's Council repeatedly chased her away and she continuously retreated and returned.
- Elrond's Council had no inter-group interactions or group splits this month.
- All the individuals at Elrond's Council appeared to be in good health.

Gold Diggers (FDC):

- 15 of 16 members were present at the end of October.
- Adult subordinate males Beatrice (VGDM014) and Rogelio De La Vega (VGDM015) returned to the group on the 1st of October.
- On the 2nd of October adult subordinate female Yorke (VGDF033), yearling subordinate females

Maya II (VGDF039), Dizle (VGDF040), Mikasa (VGDF042), Fernet Branca (VGDF046) and sub-adult subordinate females Serafina Pekkala (VGDF049) and Panash (VGDF052) were temporarily separated from the group but returned the same day.

- On the 5th of October, adult subordinate female Ricky Baker (VGDF031), Yorki, Maya II, Dizle, Mikasa, sub-adult subordinate female Peanut (VGDF047), and the three pups; Rosy Posy (VGDM053), Manchego (VGDF054) and Tampin (VGDM055) were briefly left behind but soon caught up and re-joined the group. During the same time period, Fernet Branca also left and returned to the group, possibly looking for the pups and the rest of the group.
- Rogelio De La Vega left again on the 1st of October and encountered Zulus before returning on the 2nd of October. Beatrice left Gold Diggers on the 3rd of October and returned later that day. On the 4th of October, Rogelio along with yearling subordinate male Vegeta (VGDM038) left and returned to Gold Diggers late that day. Rogelio left again on the 7th and had an encounter with Lazuli before returning on the 8th of October. On the 9th of October Rogelio, Beatrice, and Vegeta were emigrated out of Gold Diggers and were consistently seen roving around Lazuli.
- Ricky Baker was seen leaving the group on the 16th of October and has not returned since.
- Adult subordinate male Baymax emigrated out of Gold Diggers on the 8th of October and joined Zulus. He immigrated back into Gold Diggers on the 20th of October. On the 27th of October, he emigrated out of Gold Diggers and re-joined Zulus.
- Ricky Baker was absent at the end of the month.
- The group had four encounters with Lazuli adult subordinate male Moteck (VLM261) on the 4th of October, the group war-danced and chased him away. On the 9th, 11th, and 20th of October, Gold Diggers encountered Brussels Sprouts dominant male Chilli (VBSM005). Gold Diggers had two encounters with Baymax on the 16th of October and another encounter on the 18th before accepting him back into the group.
- On the 16th of October Zulus yearling subordinate male Rain (VZUM067) had three encounters with Gold Diggers. Rain encountered the group twice more on the 17th and 18th of October. From the 20th to the 23rd of October Gold Diggers had seven encounters with Trackie-Daks yearling subordinate male Guardy McGuardface (VTDM012). On the 29th of October, the group had an encounter with an unknown female.
- Ricky Baker appeared to the group four times on the 20th, 23rd, 30th, and 31st of October.
- They had no inter-group interactions this month.
- They had a group split on the 6th of October, most of the individuals returned later that day whereas Rogelio and Vegeta returned the next day.
- All members of the group appeared to be in good health.

Jaxx (FDC):

- 14 out of 21 individuals were present at Jaxx at the end of October.
- Yearling subordinate female Jub Jub (VJXF160) was made officially pregnant on the 1st of October and aborted on the 6th of October following observations of weight loss and no lactation or babysitting.
- Dominant female Baloo (VJXF080) was made officially pregnant on the 15th of October and remained pregnant at the end of October.
- Pup Iggybuff (VJXP186) was given his last seen on the 1st of October and assumed predated. Pup Cleffa (VJXP187) was given his last seen on the 10th of October and assumed predated. Adult subordinate male Cigarette Smoking Man (VJXM153) was assumed predated on the 29th of October when his radio collar was found under a nest.
- Sub-adult subordinate female Brave (VJXF178) left and returned to the group on the 3rd of October. Yearling subordinate female Old Greg (VJXF167) and Cigarette Smoking Man left and returned to the group on the 10th of October. Cigarette Smoking Man left on the 14th and returned on the 15th then left again on the 21st and returned the same day. The eldest subordinate females Scully (VJXF149) and Queen Jane (VJXF158) left on the 13th of October. Adult subordinate male Fred (VJXM146) and yearling subordinate males Stan (VJXM161), Pretzel (VJXM162), Hank the Tank (VJXM164), Howard Moon (VJXM165), and Sneaky (VJXM170) left on the 14th of October. Howard Moon and Sneaky returned the next day. Adult subordinate female Gray (VJXF150) and Cigarette Smoking man left the group on the 24th of October.
- Fred, Scully, Gray, Queen Jane, Stan, Pretzel, and Hank the Tank remained absent at the end of the month.
- Jaxx had three encounters with unknown individuals on the 10th, 12th, and 20th of October.
- Jaxx had no inter-group interactions or group splits this month.
- All individuals at Jaxx appeared to be in good health.

Lazuli (FDC):

- 23 out of 34 individuals were present at the end of October.
- Dominant male Odin (VLM266) relinquished his dominant position when he left to go roving on the 7th of October. At the time of writing, there is no dominant male at Lazuli.
- Of dominant female Dumpling's (VLF272) litter, five pups have emerged.
- Adult subordinate male Moteck (VLM261) left on the 4th of October, encountered Gold Diggers, and returned to Lazuli on the same evening. Moteck left again early on the morning of the 7th and returned an hour later. Odin then left Lazuli on the same morning, along with Moteck, and adult subordinate males Taco (VLM273), Phar

Lap (VLM275), Lord Escort (VLM282), and yearling subordinate male Monster (VLM290). They have not returned to the group at the end of the month. Yearling subordinate male Girdle (VLM287) left with yearling subordinate female Brynhildr (VLF293) on the 5th of October and returned to the group on the same day. He left again with yearling subordinate female Chicken (VLF289) on the 30th and they are both still absent at the end of the month. Yearling subordinate male Fergus (VLM286) left with sub-adult subordinate female Za'atar (VLF305) on the 24th and did not return to the group at the end of the month. Yearling subordinate male Thor (VLM292) left on the 23rd of October and did not return to the group. Sub-adult subordinate female Coffee (VLF297) left Lazuli on the 27th of October and was found foraging with the group on the afternoon of the 28th. Newly immigrated yearling subordinate male Vegeta (VGDM038) left on the 27th and returned on the 28th of October. Thor returned to the group on the 31st of October.

- Lazuli encountered Ubuntu yearling subordinate male Subigubi (VUBM050) 21 times this month and encountered Gold Diggers adult subordinate male Rogelio De La Vega (VGDM015) 19 times. They both started roving around Lazuli on the 6th and 7th respectively and consistently stayed around Lazuli until they were accepted into the group on the 21st of October, where they were allowed to go below with the group and forage with the group for whole sessions. Gold Diggers adult subordinate male Beatrice (VGDM014) and yearling subordinate male Vegeta (VGDM038) encountered Lazuli 25 and 24 times respectively. It took them longer to be accepted into the group because they started roving around Lazuli on the 9th of October. When Rogelio de la Vega and Subigubi were accepted into the group, they would anal mark everywhere and assert dominant behaviour to possibly intimidate Beatrice and Vegeta into leaving. However, Beatrice and Vegeta were accepted into Lazuli on the 26th of October.
- Odin, Moteck, Taco, Phar Lap, Lord Escort, Monster, Girdle, Chicken, Fergus, Za'atar, and Thor were absent at the end of the month.
- Lazuli had no intergroup interactions this month.
- Lazuli had six daily group splits on the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 31st of this month. They also had two overnight group splits on the 3rd and 27th of October, as well as one group split of uncertain duration on the 7th.
- All individuals seemed to be in good health.

Side Quest (FDC):

- 12 meerkats were present at the end of this month.
- Dominant female Pumba (VZUF048) gave birth on the 19th of October and the outcome of this litter is still unknown at the end of the month.
- Yearling subordinate female Motoko Kusanagi (VSIF013) left on the 11th of October and returned to the group on the 25th. Yearling subordinate male Deltron Zero (VSIM015) left on

the 24th of October and was seen with the group the next morning. He was also evicted on the 31st and was accepted back into the group on the same day.

- Side Quest encountered four unknown meerkats on the 20th, two on the 24th, and single individuals on the 22nd and 25th of October. On the 24th, one of the individuals encountered was one of the unknown Cape Crusaders males (who has been marked consistently with a left thigh). Motoko Kusanagi also appeared to the group seven times this month, at various times on the 13th, 14th, 17th, 18th, 23rd, and 25th.
- Side Quest had no inter-group interactions or group splits this month.
- The group appears to have contracted ringworm again but is still considered physically fit.

Trackie-Daks (FDC):

- 9 out of 15 individuals were present at the end of the month.
- Adult subordinate female Hachi (VWF238) left on the 14th with yearling subordinate female Futret Minor (VTDF019). They returned on the same day. Hachi and yearling subordinate female Sassy Pants (VTDF016) were evicted on the 17th. Yearling subordinate female Flatsen (VTDF018) left on the 18th and returned on the same day. Yearling subordinate female Mr Peanutbutter (VTDF020) left on the 18th and returned, and then left again with Flatsen on the 19th. Futret Minor and yearling subordinate female Jackie (VTDF021) left on the 24th. Yearling subordinate male Guardy McGuardface (VTDM012) left and returned on the 5th, left on the 6th, returned on the 9th left on the 10th, and returned on the same day. He then left on the 17th, roved at Gold Diggers, and returned to Trackie-Daks on the evening of the 25th.
- Hachi, Sassy Pants, Flatsen, Futret Minor, Mr Peanutbutter, and Jackie were absent at the end of the month.
- Adult subordinate males Moon Moon (VTSM022) and Frida (VTDM005), and yearling subordinate males Princess Carolyn (VTDM013), Hamish (VTDM014), Trimazz (VTDM015), and Raclette (VTDM017) were emigrated out of the group as enough time has passed for them to be considered not part of the group.
- Trackie-Daks had one encounter with Ubuntu yearling subordinate male Beans (VUBM053) on the 5th and two encounters on the 6th of October. The group repeatedly war-dance at him. Whenever he approached a Trackie-Daks female, they would chatter and chase him away. On the 17th, the group encountered Ubuntu adult subordinate female Masekind (VUBF037) and yearling subordinate female Muffin (VUBF052). The group chased them off, and Guardy McGuardface joined the females. On the 26th, the group encountered an unknown individual and chased them off, with dominant female Fly (VWF237) and dominant male Coquillette (VTSM014) frenzying. Hachi and Sassy Pants appeared to the group on the 17th and they

chased the females off. Yearling subordinate female Flatsen (VTDF018) appeared to the group on the 19th.

- Trackie-Daks had one intergroup interaction with Ubuntu on the 5th. There were a lot of attacks on individuals, but the interaction petered out because the weather was too hot to continue fighting, so the meerkats dispersed.
- Trackie-Daks had no group splits this month.
- The habituation level is currently *Incomplete*. Dominant male Coquillette (VTSM014) has been weighed quite consistently throughout the month. He will eagerly come into the scale for water, except at lunchtime when he is slightly more wary. Coquillette is most comfortable at the sleeping burrow or if observers stay around 1m away while he is foraging.
- All individuals appear to be healthy.

Ubuntu (FDC):

- 12 out of 15 individuals were present at the end of the month.
- Dominant female Agazoth (VUBF039) was made officially pregnant on the 7th of October.
- Adult subordinate female Masekind (VUBF037), yearling subordinate female Evikutty (VUBF051) and adult yearling subordinate male Beans (VUBM053) left on the 5th of October following an intergroup interaction with Trackie-Daks. Masekind returned to the group on the 11th and left again on the 15th of October. Beans returned to Ubuntu on the 7th of October following multiple encounters with Trackie-Daks. He left and returned the same day on the 16th and 19th of October. Beans left for the final time on the 31st of October and returned later that day.
- Yearling subordinate male Subigubi (VUBM050) emigrated out of Ubuntu on the 6th of October.
- Yearling subordinate female Muffin (VUBF052) encountered the group on the 4th and 5th of October. The group had one encounter with yearling subordinate male Guardy McGuardface (VTDM012) on the 5th and two encounters on the 6th of October following an intergroup interaction. Ubuntu encountered Zulus adult males Willow (VZUM063) and Tazara (VZUM064) on the 13th of October. On the 16th of October Ubuntu encountered an unknown individual and on the 25th they encountered two unknown individuals.
- Evikutty appeared to Ubuntu on the 5th of October. Beans made an appearance on the 6th of October. Masekind appeared to the group on the 15th of October.
- Ubuntu had one inter-group interaction with Trackie-Daks on the 5th of October, both groups repeatedly war-danced and chased each other.
- Masekind, Evikutty, and Beans remained absent at the end of the month.
- All members of Ubuntu appeared to be in good health at the end of the month.

Whiskers (FDC):

- 12 out of 19 meerkats were present at Whiskers at the end of October.
- Dominant male Brea (VLM157) left the group on the 2nd of October and was not seen again. This

brought his time as dominant male of Whiskers to an end. The position was taken over by newly immigrated adult male Zuma (VZUM059) on the 24th of October by default as he was the only eligible male present in the group.

- Dominant female Luna's (VWF235) last litter of pups; Litwick (VWP271), Phantump (VWP272), and Pumpkaboo (VWP273) were given their last seen on the 5th of October and assumed predated.
- Evicted adult subordinate female Virginia Wolf (VWF244) was given her last seen this month.
- Brea returned to the group on the 1st of October and left again on the 2nd of October. Adult subordinate females Flake (VWF247) and Crunchie (VWF250) left the group on the 3rd of October and returned later that day. Flake and Crunchie left again on the 9th of October. Adult subordinate male Rollo (VWM240), yearling subordinate males Scrabble (VWM253), Clue (VWM255), and Battleship (VWM257) left the group on the 16th of October.
- On the 5th of October Whiskers encountered adult female Laika (VWF236). On the 7th of October Whiskers encountered adult female Chomp (VWF251) with two unknown males as well as Laika and adult female Emily Bronte (VWF243). On the 10th of October, the group encountered Trackie-Daks males Moon-Moon (VTSM22), Frida (VTDM005), Princess Carolyn (VTDM013), Hamish (VTDM014), Trimazz (VTDM015), Raclette (VTDM017). Whiskers encountered Frida again on the 11th of October. On the 13th and 14th, the group had encounters with Zulus adult males Willow (VZUM063), Tazara, and yearling male Robin (VZUM066). Whiskers encountered Trackies males Moon-Moon, Frida, Hamish, Trimazz, and Raclette again along with Zulus males Willow, Tazara, and Robin on the 14th of October. Moon-Moon, Frida, and Princess Carolyn had another encounter with Whiskers later on the 14th of October. On the 23rd of October Whiskers had two encounters with adult male Zuma. Whiskers had seven more encounters with unknown adult males on the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 9th of October and two encounters with unknown individuals on the 6th and 10th of October.
- Zuma immigrated into Whiskers on the 24th of October.
- Whiskers had one daily group split on the 3rd of October.
- Whiskers had no intergroup interactions this month.
- Brea, Rollo, Flake, Crunchie, Scrabble, Clue, and Battleship remained absent at the end of the month.
- Observers noticed that Brea had lost a lot of weight and had sustained an injury to his left rib and was struggling to keep up with the group. However, all other individuals at Whiskers seem to be healthy.

Zulus (FDC):

- All 13 individuals were present at the end of October.

- There is still no dominant male at Zulus.
- Of dominant female Sprudel's (VZUF028) latest litter, three pups have emerged; Sooty (VZUF071), Sweep (VZUM072) and Soo (VZUM073).
- Two new unknown individuals; Fritzl Rösti (VZUM073) and Nac Mac Feegle (VZUM075) were observed to join Zulus. They were first seen and added to the database on the 20th of October.
- On the 9th of October adult males Willow (VZUM063) and Tazara (VZUM064) left the group after chasing away adult subordinate male Baymax (VGDM028), they returned the next day on the 10th. Willow and Tazara left Zulus again on the 13th of October along with yearling subordinate male Robin (VZUM066). Yearling subordinate male Rain (VZUM067) left Zulus on the 16th of October and returned on the 18th after multiple encounters with Gold Diggers. Adult subordinate females Salazar (VZUF051), Helga (VZUF052), and Rowena (VZUF054) left the group on the 22nd of October and returned on the 23rd. Adult subordinate male Nac Mac Feegle (VZUM075) left the group on the 24th of October and returned later that day. Salazar left on the 28th of October with Rain and returned the same day. On the 28th of October sub-adult subordinate female Leona (VZUF070) left the group with two pups Sooty and Soo but returned later that day. Adult subordinate male Fritzl Rösti (VZUM073) also left on the 28th of October and returned later that day.
- Baymax was accepted by the group and immigrated into Zulus on the 13th of October. He emigrated out on the 16th of October and then immigrated back into the group on the 28th of October.
- The group had an encounter with Rogelio De La Vega on the 1st of October. Zulus had ten encounters with Baymax on the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 27th of October. On the 14th of October, the group encountered adult males Kuzco (VECM040) and Shisharka (VECM041) from Elrond's Council. On the 28th of October, the group encountered Chilli and James Sawyer from Brussels Sprouts following an intergroup interaction. Throughout October Zulus had thirteen encounters with unknown individuals on the: 7th, 13th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 23rd, and 24th of October.
- Salazar, Helga, and Rowena appeared to the group on the 22nd of October.
- Zulus had three inter-group interactions with unknown groups on the 17th, 19th, and 31st of October. On the 28th of October they had an inter-group interaction with Brussels Sprouts, Zulus war-danced, chased, and fought Brussels Sprouts who retreated.
- Zulus did not have any group splits this month.
- All individuals in Zulus appear to be healthy.
- 11 out of 14 members were present at the end of this month.
- Dominant female Fleabag (VGDF005) was not seen with the group from the 27th of October, and the dominance position of the group has been considered unsettled, as she has not returned to the group at the end of the month.
- Fleabag gave *birth* on the 14th of September and four pups emerged from this litter.
- Adult subordinate female Tuna Fish II (VGDF026) along with sub-adult subordinate male Regis (VDDM004) were separated from the main group on the 12th and returned on the evening of the 13th. Adult female Shelby (VGDF022) was confirmed absent from the group from the 12th as she had six bouts of babysitting-by-elimination. Adult subordinate female Juliet (VGDF009) was evicted on the 12th.
- Fleabag, Juliet, and Shelby are absent at the end of the month.
- The group did not have any encounters, inter-group interactions or group splits this month.
- Habituation at this group is considered *Advanced Progress*. Fleabag, Juliet, and Shelby are still wary of fast movements but have improved with follows. Subadult male Jaskier (VDDM001) is getting better with hand habituation and is very eager for water but is still skittish with follows. We will continue to follow habituation with Jaskier since the females that require habituation are still absent at the end of the month.
- All individuals appear to be healthy.

Runaways (LHM):

- 7 out of 9 members were present at the end of October.
- We are allowed limited access back onto the farm The Heights, and therefore we have been able to see the group more often and follow their movements.
- Dominant male Shiraz (VJXM122) left between the 15th and 19th of October and is still absent. Therefore, the dominant male position of Runaways is unsettled.
- On the 5th of October, yearling subordinate female Féora (VRWF010) did not wake up with the group. On the 14th of October, yearling subordinate Adolin (VRWF012) did not wake up with the group, and on the 19th, dominant male Shiraz (VJXM122) did not wake up with the group.
- Adolin was sighted at Elrond's Council on the 30th of October.
- Adolin and Shiraz are still absent at the end of the month.
- Yearling subordinate male Coco (VRWM019) and Féora were given their Last Seen this month.
- Runaways had no encounters; inter-group interactions or group splits recorded this month.
- The individuals of this group appear to be healthy.

Life History Monitoring Groups:

Dik-Diks (LHM):

Vetkoeks (LHM):

- All 5 individuals were present at the end of the month.
- Dominant female Mooncake (VHMF053) was made officially pregnant on the 28th of October and was still pregnant at the end of the month.
- Adult subordinate male Zuma (VZUM059) left his group around the 23rd of October, as he had an encounter with the group Whiskers. He was accepted into Whiskers on the 24th of October and is not considered part of Vetkoeks anymore.
- Vetkoeks had no recorded encounters, intergroup interactions or group splits this month.
- All individuals appear healthy at the end of the month.

Habituation Groups:

Cape Crusaders (HAB):

- There were 8 individuals consistently seen at this group.
- *Male dominance* at this group remains *unknown*.
- Dominant female Sky (VSIF003) was made officially pregnant on the 21st of October and was still pregnant at the end of the month.
- Cape Crusaders had no encounters, intergroup interactions, or group splits.
- The habituation of this group is classed as *In Progress*. Observers can get as close as 3 meters while standing to the unknown adult males of this group, and at 1 meter while laying down. We will continue movement habituation at the sleeping burrow.
- The individuals of this group appear to be healthy.

Hakuna Matata (HAB):

- Hakuna Matata were not seen this month.

Make-e-Plan (HAB):

- 12 out of 15 individuals were present at the end of October.
- Dominant female Bridget (VQLF011) was made officially pregnant on the 13th of October and was still pregnant at the end of the month.
- On the 1st of October, adult subordinate females Millewa (VMPPF048), Cassie (VMPPF050), Bonxie (VMPPF054), and Sophie (VMPPF055) did not go below with the group. Yearling subordinate male Jude (VMPPM071) left on the 4th and an observer saw him rejoin the group again on the 5th. On the 9th, Jude, along with adult female Archie (VMPPF057), yearling males Sticky (VMPPM064), Oozy (VMPPM067), Patrys (VMPPM068), and Shrimp (VMPPM070) left at different times on the 9th, and Jude, Sticky, Oozy, Patrys, Shrimp were seen waking up with the group on the 12th of October. Yearling subordinate female Stinky (VMPPF063) was evicted on the 19th after being attacked by Bridget. Yearling subordinate male Snapdragon (VMPPM074) left and returned on the 20th. Yearling subordinate female Stoney (VMPPF065) was also evicted and attacked by Bridget on the 24th.
- Archie, Stinky, and Stoney were still absent at the end of the month.

- Stinky and Stoney appeared to the group on the 24th. Make-e-Plan also had an encounter with adult male Rollo (VWM240) and yearling male Clue (VWM255) on the 31st of October. The group saw and war-danced chased them away and the males retreated.
- Millewa, Cassie, Bonxie, and Sophie were given their Last Seen this month.
- Make-e-plan had no intergroup interactions or group splits this month.
- The group's habituation is classed as *Incomplete* as there are only specific individuals at this group that require habituation. Yearling subordinate male Jude (VMPPM071) is still the focus of habituation at this group. He will forage at 15 meters from observers. He still drinks water from observers and eats egg. We will continue with scale habituation as well as follow habituation on specific individuals, and general hand habituation.
- All individuals in the group appear to be healthy.

Phoenix (HAB):

- Phoenix was not seen by observers this month. They were captured on a camera trap in their usual territory, but when we went out to look for them, they were absent.

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