



The Meerkatter

The Friends of the Kalahari Meerkat Project Report – www.kalahari-meerkats.com – October 2025

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A Matriarch Dethroned

October officially marks the beginning of the breeding season for our meerkat study population here in the Kalahari. During this period, however, we can expect to experience far more than just an increase in pregnancies and the emergence of pups. October is also characterised by elevated concentrations of females' sex hormones, namely androstenedione (A_4), which in-turn, increases testosterone (T) (Davies, C. S, *et al.*, 2016). These hormonal changes often intensify social dynamics, leading to greater instability within group dominance hierarchies. Thus, whilst the breeding season offers valuable reproductive opportunities, it also represents a phase of pronounced conflict and social volatility. During this period, social tensions can drive shifts in rank, and while some individuals advance within the hierarchy, others are displaced.

This October, it was Snoop Kat (VECF039), from Elrond's Council, who was unable to capitalise on the reproductive opportunities available and instead succumbed to the heightened pressures of the breeding season. Snoop Kat was born in July of 2021, to Galadriel (VECF032), in a litter of five. In 2023, Snoop Kat rose to dominance within Elrond's Council, prevailing over her sister, Mojo Jojo (VECF038). From this position, she has boasted 7 litters over the last 2 years, all of which have been successful. In fact, excluding dominant male Jonsnow (VECM070), the entirety of Elrond's Council's current group members, 15 individuals in total, are offspring of Snoop Kat. In contrast to Snoop Kat's success, eldest-sub female, Cadenza (VECF059), aborted two litters this year, and in April, Mojo Jojo had a litter lost before emergence. Since Snoop Kat attained dominance, no other female has mothered a successful pregnancy within the group – emphasising the impressive reproductive monopoly that dominant females are able to maintain. It is therefore unsurprising that subordinate females will risk serious injury, the threat of eviction, or even death, in pursuit of these reproductive privileges. This October, when the opportunity presented itself, it was Cadenza who took the leap and challenged her own mother for the position of dominant female.

June brought an unexpected blow for Snoop Kat. She suffered an injury that, though its significance was not immediately apparent, would prove to be the first crack in the foundation of her dominance, and would ultimately bring her reign as dominant female to an end. She was reported to have a deep, clean cut to the left side of her chest, the cause of which has remained a mystery. This injury, although unpleasant to see, did not appear to significantly

influence her behaviour. For a period, Snoop Kat was able to forage with the group seemingly unfazed. In the weeks that followed, her weight remained within a healthy range of approximately 680-750 grams. By comparison, during this time, Cadenza remained substantially smaller, at approximately 600-660 grams. However, as July turned to August, the injury showed no signs of healing, and it became evident that it was taking a more serious toll on Snoop Kat's health than initially expected. Snoop Kat was often seen limping and, at times, appeared to struggle to forage with the usual intensity that is typical of an adult meerkat. This period, therefore, marked the onset of a steady decline in her body weight, with Snoop Kat losing around 60-100 grams throughout August and a further 140 grams throughout September, occasionally dropping below 500 grams – a seriously worrying decline. In contrast, Cadenza, still only a yearling, had gained around 100 grams, rising to over 750 grams by the end of September.



Cadenza on guard at a bolthole (Photo Credit: Matthew Shard, Life History Coordinator)

Body weight statistics can often prove reliable indicators for not only an individual's overall health, but also their reproductive condition too. Reproductive condition may exert an even stronger influence regarding social cohesion, given that a well-nourished subordinate female represents little reproductive threat as long as her own breeding remains suppressed. Thus, it is important to consider the timeline of attempted pregnancy events for Cadenza this year. Both litters were aborted, the first in April, and the second in September. These pregnancy events coincided with periods of steady weight gain for Cadenza, supporting the notion that her reproductive condition was rapidly developing, and, in hindsight, foreshadowing the inevitable social turbulence with Snoop Kat, which was fast approaching. Despite this growing weight discrepancy and Snoop Kat's declining health, it is important to note that Snoop Kat continued to display dominance within the group at this time. She

continued to assert dominance over Cadenza, hip-slamming and chinning her despite her own vulnerable condition. Additionally, she often received submissions from all of the group's females, in the form of grovelling and grooming. Her influence within the group remained strong, and this was further displayed by the group's obedience when foraging sessions were forestalled due to her fatigued condition.

The 5th of October marked an important turning point for the individuals at Elrond's Council. On this day, Snoop Kat and subordinate sub-adult female, Nalane (VECF067), were left behind whilst the rest of the group foraged. This incident highlighted the growing fatigue and decline of the dominant female, as well as the breakdown in the social cohesion of what had once been a stable group. Additionally, Snoop Kat's absence in this instance gave Cadenza an opportunity to strengthen her dominance over the remaining females, without the interference of the dominant female. Later that same day, when the group returned to the sleeping burrow, Snoop Kat and Nalane rejoined them. However, this would not be Snoop Kat's only separation from the rest of the group. She was left behind again on the 7th of October and, following another departure on the 10th, remained absent for an entire week, reappearing on the 17th. Upon her return, Snoop Kat faced continuous aggression from Cadenza, who hip-slammed, chinned, and sat on her – behaviours typically associated with dominance assertion. By submitting to Cadenza, Snoop Kat vacated the position of dominant female, letting the group slip into a state of instability. The following day, on the 18th, she departed once more and by the end of October she had not returned, potentially marking her permanent absence from the group.



Cadenza sheltering from the afternoon sun with the rest of Elrond's Council (Photo Credit: Matthew Shard, Life History Coordinator)

It is noteworthy that no clear dominance competition was observed between the two females – only displays of dominance assertion by Snoop Kat to Cadenza, and then a dramatic reversal in October. Cadenza appeared to establish precedence over her mother without eliciting any resistance or observable aggression in return. It is plausible that such interactions have occurred when observers have been absent, or alternatively, that Snoop Kat's rapid decline in health forced her to relinquish her dominant position without contest. Additionally, it remains unclear to what extent Snoop Kat's declining health and successive departures from the group

were influenced by unobserved aggression from Cadenza.



Juvenile male Noah (VECM076), resting in the shade (Photo Credit: Matthew Shard, Life History Coordinator)

In summary, Snoop Kat's loss of dominance appears to have resulted from the combined effects of her severe and worsening injury, alongside the heightened hormonal activity and social instability that is characteristic of breeding season. Her injury likely reduced her ability to maintain authority within the group and suppress reproductive and dominance behaviours in subordinates, providing opportunity for a growing Cadenza to assert herself. Ultimately, the task of maintaining dominance proved too much for Snoop Kat, leaving female dominance within the group unsettled, and, although it was Cadenza who was cause for this disruption, she has yet to gain submissions from the remaining females, which are needed if she is to become the group's new dominant female. As breeding season progresses, we shall pay close attention to the unfolding interactions and developing relationships between the female individuals at Elrond's council. Whilst it is likely that Cadenza will be the one to capitalise on this opportunity, the unpredictability of this period means that nothing is guaranteed.

References

- Davies, C. S. et al., (2016). Exceptional endocrine profiles characterise the meerkat: sex, status, and reproductive patterns.

Pregnancies in October 2025

Females pregnant in October	15
Females who aborted	1
Females who gave birth, litters lost	1
Females who gave birth, litter emerged	3
Females who gave birth, unknown outcome	2
Females still pregnant at the end of the month	8

October 2025 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):

- Alba increased by 8 individuals, from 14 to 22 members present at the end of October.
- Dominant female Cleopatra (VALF008) gave birth on the 8th of this month. On the 27th, 5 pups VALP041, VALP042, VALP043, VALP044, and

VALP045 emerged from the burrow for the first time.

- On the 10th, subordinate yearling female Chia (VALF023) returned to the group – marking the end of her eviction. On the 10th, subordinate yearling female Bachue (VALF025) also returned to the group. Subordinate yearling female Tress (VALF020) approached the group on the 15th and 23rd, without rejoining the group. Tress rejoined the group on the 25th, marking the end of her eviction and immigration back into the group.
- All group members were present at the end of October.
- Enough time has passed for subordinate yearling males, Merlin (VALM016), Kronk (VALM018), and FunnyLittleGuy (VALM019), to be given his last seen events.
- Alba had 8 encounters this month. On the 14th, two unknown adults approached Alba multiple times, retreating each time when the group war-danced and chased them. On the 15th, subordinate adult male, Gurke (VHMM036), from Brussel Sprouts, was roving at Alba, but was chased away by the group. On the morning of the 22nd, Alba chased away an unknown male, and that same afternoon were approached by another unknown adult who also retreated when the group war-danced and chased them. On the 24th, Renegades' sub-adult male, Do Bronx (VRGM003), approached the group, accompanied by another unknown adult male – both individuals were chased away by Alba. On the 26th, Gurke was roving at Alba again – he was ignored at the burrow by babysitters but chased away upon the group's return. On the 30th, an unknown individual retreated when the group war-danced and chased them. On the 31st, an unidentified adult male approached the group – he interacted with Bachue and spent over two hours on the edge of the group before being chased away.
- Alba had 1 inter-group interaction observed in October. Alba encountered an unknown group on the 24th, and immediately war-danced towards them, causing the unknown group to retreat.
- Alba had no group-splits observed this month.
- Tress had wounds on the left cheek and left forearm, causing her to limp. Subordinate sub-adult male, Yibo (VALM030), and Disco (VALM029), had small bumps to the left side of their muzzles – which appear to have healed by the month's end. All other individuals appeared to be in good health through October.

Brussels Sprouts (FDC):

- Brussels Sprouts increased by 4 individuals, from 10 to 14 members present at the end of the month.
- On the 9th, 4 pups, VBSM020, VBSM021, VBSF022, and VBSM023, emerged from the burrow for the first time. They had their first move on the 9th, and first forage on the 16th.
- Subordinate adult male Gurke (VHMM036) left the group 8 times this month. On the 12th, 15th,

22nd, and 31st, he left the group and returned on the same day. On the 3rd, 6th, 26th, and 30th, he left the group and returned the following day. On the 7th, dominant male James Sawyer (VGDM011) and subordinate sub-adult male Bubek (VBSM019) left the group – returning the following day.

- Brussels Sprouts had no encounters, inter-group interactions, or group-splits this month.
- Gurke had a limp caused by a broken toe and swollen left forepaw – although the swelling and limp seems to have disappeared by the month's end, the broken toe appears to be a permanent injury. All other members of the group appeared to be in good health throughout the month.

Gold Diggers (FDC):

- Gold Diggers increased by 8 individuals, from 15 to 23 members present by the end of the month.
- Dominant female Goldeneye (VGDF007) gave birth on the 1st. Pup VGDP083 emerged for the first time on the 23rd, and 4 more pups, VGDP080, VGDP081, VGDP082, and VGDP084, emerged for the first time on the 24th. All pups foraged with the group for the first time on the 31st.
- Subordinate yearling male Snackajack (VGDM063) left the group 5 times this month. On the 3rd, he was seen roving at Lazuli and returned to Gold Diggers that same evening. On the 8th, he left the group in the morning and returned after the group had gone below. On the 12th, Snackajack and subordinate adult male Captain Patel (VGDM048) chased a rover away from the group – they had returned by the following morning. On the 25th, he was roving at Zulus, along with subordinate adult male, Tampin (VGDM055) – they returned to Gold Diggers that same day. Later, on the 25th, Snackajack left the group alone, and was seen roving at Zulus again, returning to Gold Diggers the following day. On the 5th, subordinate adult female, Manchego (VGDF054), woke up with the group – marking the end of her eviction. On the 8th, Manchego left the group, returning the same day. On the 11th, she left the group with subordinate yearling female, Shambles (VGDF066) – they were spotted with Zulus' subordinate yearling male, Catch-A-Mo (VZUM079). Manchego returned to Gold Diggers on the 12th, and Shambles returned on the 13th. Manchego also left the group on the 21st, returning that same day. On the 5th, subordinate adult females, Peanut (VGDF047), Serafina Pekkala (VGDF049), and Shambles, all returned to the group. On the 7th, Peanut was evicted from the group – which lasted until the 11th. On the 16th, Peanut, Serafina Pekkala, and Shambles left the group, returning the following day. On the 18th, Peanut was evicted again, returning to the group the following day. On the 6th, Serafina Pekkala was evicted from the group, until her return on the 12th. On the 20th, Serafina Pekkala was seen leaving the group with Lazuli's subordinate yearling male Pot Belly (VLM317) – she returned to Gold Diggers on the 22nd. Shambles was evicted from the group on

the 6th but was accepted back into the group the following day. On the 8th, she left the group once again, returning the following day. On the 27th, Shambles was seen leaving Gold Diggers with Lazuli's subordinate adult male, Tinashe (VLM310) – she returned to Gold Diggers that same day. On the 15th, Captain Patel left the group, and was seen roving at Lazuli, where he used a sleeping burrow close to where Lazuli slept. He returned to Gold Diggers on the 17th. On the 30th, subordinate sub-adult female, Aapje (VGDF068), was seen leaving Gold Diggers with Brussels Sprout's subordinate adult male Gurke (VHMM036) – she returned to Gold Diggers that same day. On the 31st, subordinate sub-adult male Bokkie (VGDM067) left the group.

- Bokkie was still absent at the end of the month.
- Gold Diggers had 19 encounters this month. On the 3rd, 4th, 12th, 15th, 17th, 20th, 24th, and 30th Lazuli's Pot Belly approached the group and was chased every time. Before being chased away on the 17th, he mounted Peanut and, on the 20th, he was seen away from the group with Serafina Pekkala. Twice on the 5th, and once on the 6th, Zulus' Catch-A-Mo approached the group but retreated all three times when chased. Catch-A-Mo also encountered the group on the 15th, when he stayed at the burrow with Peanut, and on the 18th, when the group ignored him. On the 6th, 12th, 22nd, and 30th, Brussels Sprout's Gurke approached the group – he was chased away during the first and second interaction, ignored during the third, and Aapje followed him away from Gold Diggers on the fourth. On the 24th, Lazuli's Tinashe encountered the group but kept his distance and then left. Tinashe returned on the 27th and was ignored by Peanut and subordinate sub-adult female Dottie (VGDF071).
- Gold Diggers had one inter-group interaction this month. On the 4th, they war-danced towards Zulus – a fight occurred, and the groups split and headed in opposite directions.
- Gold Diggers had no group-splits observed in October.
- Aapje was limping due to a swollen right knee, which seems to have healed by the month's end. Peanut has a scab at her tail base, which has almost fully healed by the end of the month. All other members of the group appear in good health.

Jaxx (FDC):

- Jaxx decreased by 3 individuals, from 21 to 18 members present at the end of the month.
- Dominant female Jub Jub (VJXF160) was made officially pregnant this month.
- On the 13th, subordinate yearling male, Gobi (VJXM194), left the group – he returned the following day. On the 24th, Gobi and pup Alvin (VJXU213) did not wake up with the group, and that same morning subordinate sub-adult males, Icetruck (VJXM196), and Doomsday (VJXM198), also left the group but returned the following day. On the 27th, subordinate yearling females, Pulpi (VJXF189), and Dexter (VJXF190), left the group. On the 29th, Gobi

returned to the group. On the 31st, Gobi left the group again, returning that same day.

- Alvin, Pulpi and Dexter were still absent at the end of the month.
- There were no encounters, group-splits, or inter-group interactions observed at Jaxx during October.
- Enough time has passed for subordinate sub-adult male Freddie (VJXM204), to be given his last seen.
- Habituation is classed as *Advanced Progress*. Habituation of the Dominant male Mr Worldwide (VJXM200) is going well, he has not yet shown interest in egg or water but is comfortable with observers sitting at 1 meter distance at the sleeping burrow and follows at a 5-meter distance.
- Pulpi had a wound on her tail base and small wound on her left forepaw this month, which appears to have healed by the end of the month. Pup Matty G (VJXM212) had a small wound to the left of his tail. All other members of the group appeared to be in good health by the end of the month.

Lazuli (FDC):

- Lazuli increased by 6 individuals, from 10 to 16 members present at the end of October.
- Dominant female Masiwa (VLF308) gave birth on the 11th. Pup VLP326 emerged for the first time on the 27th, and 2 more pups, VLP328 and VLP329, have been given their first dye-marks but are yet to emerge at the month's end.
- On the 1st, subordinate adult male Tinashe (VLM310) returned to the group. On the 3rd, subordinate yearling male Pot Belly (VLM317) left the group. He appeared on the edge of the group on the 6th, but did not rejoin the group until the 9th. Tinashe and dominant male Rogelio De La Vega (VGDM015) left the group on the 4th, both returning on the 6th. Rogelio De La Vega and subordinate yearling male Petit Bidon (VLM318) left the group on the 8th, and encountered Dik-Diks, who chased the two males away. Tinashe left again on the 9th, along with Pot Belly, shortly after Pot Belly's return to Lazuli – both individuals returned to the group on the 11th. On the 13th, Tinashe and subordinate yearling male Petit Bidon (VLM318) were sighted roving at Vetkoeks, before returning to Lazuli that same evening. On the 13th, subordinate yearling females, Pataud (VLF319), and Bumble (VLF320), returned to the group – marking the end of their evictions. On the 15th, Tinashe left the group again, along with subordinate yearling male, Fat Belly (VLM316) – both individuals returned that same day. On the 17th, Pot Belly was sighted roving at Gold Diggers, where he attempted to mount subordinate adult female Peanut (VGDF047) before being chased away – he returned to Lazuli on the 18th. On the 20th and 30th, Pot Belly was seen roving at Gold Diggers alone, before he returned to Lazuli on the same day he had left. On the 24th, Tinashe and Pot Belly were sighted roving at Gold Diggers – Tinashe returned on the following day, and Pot Belly

returned on the 26th. Tinashe left the group again on the 26th and was seen roving at Gold Diggers, before returning on the 28th. On the 31st, Pot Belly left the group alone and was sighted roving at Gold Diggers – he returned that same day.

- Lazuli had 2 encounters this month. On the 15th, Gold Digger's subordinate adult male Captain Patel (VGDM048) approached the group but retreated when the group war-danced towards and chased him – he kept his distance from the group until they went below, before following them below down another entrance to the sleeping burrow. On the 16th, after emerging from another entrance of the same sleeping burrow, Captain Patel was chased away by the group.
- Lazuli had no group-splits or inter-group interactions this month.
- Petit Bidon had a cough and diarrhoea as well as trouble eating – subsequently he was displaying signs of fatigue and significant weight-loss. His health continued to decline rapidly towards the end of the month. All other members of the group appeared to be in good health.

Side Quest (FDC):

- All 21 members were present at Side Quest throughout October.
- On the 10th, subordinate sub-adult female Mrs HS Balls (VSIF047) was observed aborting an underdeveloped foetus without displaying any previous signs of pregnancy. Dominant female Pumba (VZUF048) was made officially pregnant this month.
- Side Quest had no observed encounters, group-splits, or inter-group interactions observed this month.
- Subordinate sub-adult female Portman (VSIF045) had a scab on her right hindleg, which appears to have healed this month. Male pup Moro (VSIM059) had scabbing and hair-loss to his face, which appears to be healing. All other individuals appeared in good health by the end of October.

Trackie-Daks (FDC):

- Trackie-Daks increased by 4 individuals, from 14 to 18 members present at the end of the month.
- On the 15th, 3 pups, VTDF058, VTDF059, and VTDF060, emerged for the first time, and VTDF061 emerged on the 18th. All 4 pups moved burrow for the first time on the 19th and foraged with the group on the 28th.
- Enough time has passed for subordinate adult female Chinchilla (VTDF029), subordinate yearling female, Mulan (VTDF046), and subordinate yearling males, Tsodiyo (VTDM042), Raisibe (VTDM043), and Jonesy (VTDM047), to be given their last seen events.
- Trackie-Daks had 2 encounters this month. on the 3rd, 3 unknown adults approached the group – they retreated when chased by the group. On the 20th, Whiskers' subordinate adult male, Agent K (VWM276), approached the group and retreated when the group war-danced towards him.

- The group had no group-splits or inter-group interactions observed in October.
- The habituation level is currently classed as *Advanced Progress*. Dominant male Guido (VWM275) drinks water and was weighed 5 times this month. He is comfortable with 2m follows for 15 minutes.
- Subordinate yearling male Peely (VTDM048) had small bumps to the left of his muzzle, which had healed by the month's end. All other individuals appeared to be in good health at the end of the month.

Ubuntu (FDC):

- Ubuntu decreased by 2 members, from 16 to 14 individuals present at the end of October.
- Dominant female Agazoth (VUBF039) was made officially pregnant this month. Subordinate adult female Hotfoot (VUBF071) ended her pregnancy whilst away from the group, and the litter is assumed lost.
- On the 3rd, subordinate sub-adult male Chonky (VUBM078) left the group, returning that same day. On the 7th and 10th, subordinate yearling male Wors (VUBM075) left the group – but returned on the same day that he had left. On the 18th, Wors and Chonky both left the group.
- Wors and Chonky were still absent from the group at the month's end.
- Ubuntu had no encounters, group-splits, or inter-group interactions observed in October.
- Enough time has passed for juvenile female Zuzu (VUBF086) to be given her last seen.
- Hotfoot had a wound on her tail base this month. All other individuals in the group appeared to be in good health.

Vetkoeks (LHM):

- Vetkoeks decreased by 1 individual, from 13 to 12 members at the end of the month.
- Dominant female Mooncake (VHMF053) was made officially pregnant this month.
- *Male Dominance* remains unconfirmed at Vetkoeks this month.
- On the 5th, pup VVKP032 was found dead at the sleeping burrow – the cause of death is unconfirmed, however, Ubuntu are possibly the cause as they were present when the body was found.
- On the 24th, pup VVKP031 had been lost from the group – but had returned the following day.
- Vetkoeks had 3 encounters this month. On the 3rd, an unidentified adult approached the group – retreating in response to the group war-dancing towards it. On the 13th, Lazuli's subordinate adult male Tinashe (VLM310), and subordinate yearling Petit Bidon (VLM318), were continuously chased away from the group when attempting to approach.
- Vetkoeks had no group-splits or inter-group interactions observed this month.
- Pup VVKP031 had a scabbed wound on their shoulder, which healed by the month's end. Pup VVKP034 had a scab on their back, which appears to have healed. Pup VVKP035 had a scab on her tail base, as well as a wound to her

inner left hindleg. All other individuals appeared healthy at the end of the month.

Zulus (FDC):

- Zulus decreased by 1 individual, with 16 out of 17 members present at the end of October.
- Dominant female Leona (VZUF070) was made officially pregnant this month.
- On the 4th, subordinate yearling male Catch-A-Mo (VZUM079) left the group – returning on the 10th. On the 11th, Catch-A-Mo left the group and was sighted roving at Gold Diggers and he returned to Zulus on the 13th. On the 13th, he left the group again and returned the following day. On the 15th, he left the group in the morning and returned in the evening of that same day. On the 18th, Catch-A-Mo was sighted roving at Gold Diggers again, where the group ignored him. He had rejoined Zulus again on the 20th. On the 25th, Catch-A-Mo left Zulus, but returned that same day. On the 31st, subordinate adult female Sooty (VZUF071) left the group.
- Sooty was still absent from Zulus at the end of October.
- Zulus had 5 encounters observed this month. On the 4th, Gold Diggers' subordinate adult male Tampin (VGDM055) and one unknown adult, approached Zulus and continuously retreated when the group war-danced towards them. On the 4th, two unknown adults approached the group – they retreated when chased by the group. On the 18th, one unknown adult approached the group – Zulus war-danced towards them, causing them to retreat. On the 26th, Tampin and Gold Diggers' subordinate yearling male Snackajack (VGDM063) approached the group – after a fight occurred which resulted in Zulus chasing the two males away. On the 31st, Hogwarts' subordinate yearling male Buckbeak (VHWM002) approached the group – the group chased Buckbeak, who was forced to retreat multiple times.
- Zulus had one inter-group interaction observed this month. On the 4th, Zulus encountered Gold Diggers – a fight occurred between the groups which resulted in the groups splitting and moving in opposite directions. There were no significant injuries resulting from the encounter.
- Zulus had no group-splits observed this month.
- Dominant female Leona (VZUF070) was noticed with a partially closed gunky eye this month. Catch-a-Mo was observed to have a small wound to the left side of his muzzle, which appears to be in the process of healing. All other individuals in Zulus appeared to be healthy by the end of the month.

Life History Monitoring Groups:

Dik-Diks (LHM):

- All 18 individuals remained present at Dik-Diks throughout October.
- Dominant female Juliet (VGDF009) was made officially pregnant this month.

- Dik-Diks had one observed daily group-split on the 1st of this month. The group-split included subordinate sub-adults, Sobhuza (VDDM013), Sibani (VDDF015), Sneh (VDDF016), Mugen (VDDM020), Lexa (VDDF024), Kovacs (VDDM027), Stripe (VDDF028), and pups, Tiko (VDDF030), Dash (VDDM031), Heidi (VDDM032), and Margo (VDDF033).
- Dik-Diks had no encounters or inter-group interactions observed this month.
- Enough time has passed for subordinate adult males, Scramble (VDDM007), and Jaivyn (VUBM048), and subordinate yearling male Braveheart (VDDM011), to be given their last seen events this month.
- Habituation is classed as *Advanced Progress*. Dominant female Juliet (VGDF009) has made improvements but has not been weighed this month – she is drinking water and comfortable with observers sitting at a distance of 1-2m.
- Eldest-sub, Shelby (VDDF022), had a wound on her tail base this month, which appears to have healed this month. All other members of the group appeared to be in good health at the end of the month.

Elrond's Council (LHM):

- Elrond's Council decreased by 4 individuals, from 17 to 13 members present at the end of October.
- *Female Dominance* is unconfirmed at Elrond's Council – as the previously dominant female Snoop Kat (VECF039) was observed submitting to dominance assertion behaviours from yearling female Cadenza (VECF059).
- On the 5th, Snoop Kat and sub-adult female Nalane (VECF067) were left behind by the group, but rejoined the group later that same day. On the 7th, Snoop Kat left the group, returning that same day. On the 10th, Snoop Kat left the group and did not return until the 17th. On the 15th, subordinate yearling male Bazooka (VECM065) left the group, until he returned on the 22nd. On the 18th, Cadenza and yearling female Romanov (VECF063) left the group. On the 21st, Cadenza returned to the group, and yearling female Furiosa (VECF061) left the group. On the 29th, yearling male Goujon (VECM062) left the group.
- At the month's end, Snoop Kat, Romanov, Furiosa, and Goujon were all still absent from the group.
- Elrond's council had 1 group-split of uncertain duration observed in October. On the 14th, Goujon, Furiosa, and Bazooka left the group together. Bazooka returned on the 15th and Furiosa returned on the 17th. Goujon had not returned to Elrond's Council by the month's end.
- Elrond's Council had one inter-group interaction observed in October. On the 21st, a group of 6 unknown individuals approached the group – retreating when the group war-danced towards them.
- There were no encounters observed at Elrond's Council this month.

- Habituation is classed as *Advanced Progress*. Dominant male Jonsnow (VECM070) has shown significant improvement – he has shown some interest in egg and is comfortable with observers standing at a 2 meter distance. He has not yet been weighed. He is comfortable with group follows but will forage at a distance of 4-5 meters from observers.
- Snoop Kat had been suffering from a long-term injury, a wound to the left side of her chest – this injury appeared to worsen throughout this month. Snoop Kat developed a severe limp and displayed increasing fatigue, limiting her ability to forage with the group – subsequently causing significant weight-loss. Additionally, Snoop Kat had an abscess on her left eye which appeared to be infected. Romanov, Goujon, and Cadenza all had small bumps on their muzzles this month. All other members appeared to be in good health throughout October.

Habituation Groups:

Hogwarts (HAB):

- Hogwarts decreased by 1 individual, from 15 to 14 members present at the end of October.
- Dominant female Salazar (VZUF051) gave birth on the 23rd of this month. The birth was followed immediately by lactation and babysitting, indicating that the litter is alive.
- On the 31st, subordinate yearling male Buckbeak (VHWM002) left the group and was sighted roving at Zulus.
- Hogwarts had no encounters, group-splits, or inter-group interactions observed this month.
- Habituation is classed as *In Progress*. Habituation of Buckbeak and dominant male Caraxes has improved. Buckbeak is drinking water and comfortable around the scale – he was weighed once this month. Caraxes will approach the observer when lying down, and regularly drinks water – he was not weighed this month. Habituation of pups has been mostly successful, with little interference from the habituation individuals.
- All individuals appeared healthy at the end of the month.

Whiskers (HAB):

- Whiskers decreased by 2 individuals, from 10 to 8 individuals present at the end of October.
- Dominant female Sheila (VWF267) gave birth on the 28th of this month. The birth was followed immediately by lactation and babysitting, indicating that the litter is alive. Subordinate adult females Bruce (VWF266) and Kylie (VWF265) remained pregnant throughout October.
- On the 5th, subordinate adult male, Agent K (VWM276), and subordinate sub-adult female Luna (VWF279), left the group. On the 6th, subordinate adult female Kylie (VWF265) was evicted from the group. On the 10th, Agent K

returned to the group. On the 20th, Agent K left the group again and was seen roving at Trackie-Daks – where he was chased away. Agent K returned to Whiskers on the 23rd. On the 28th, Bruce left the group, returning on the 30th.

- Luna and Kylie were still absent from the group at the end of the month.
- Whiskers had no encounters, group-splits, or inter-group interactions observed this month.
- The group's habituation is classed as *In Progress*. Adult subordinate male Agent K (VWM276) is eating egg and is comfortable with a 1-2m distance when the observer remains seated. We will continue visiting the group and increasing Agent K's comfort distance as well as potentially getting his weight.
- Agent K had an open wound on his mouth this month. Bruce had scabbing to her tail-base, which appeared to be healing. All other members of the group appeared to be in good health.

The following authors contributed to this report:

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