



The Meerkatter

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

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Outnumbered

During November, we entered the peak of the meerkat breeding season here in the Kalahari. Across our 14 study groups, in addition to the litters born in October, this month has produced a further 7 litters, with another 5 pregnancies now officially confirmed. With remarkably short intervals between reproductive events, the pace of breeding at this time of year reflects an intense drive to raise as many offspring as possible for the next generation.



Babysitting of the Whiskers pups at the sleeping burrow. (Photo Credit: Matthew Shard, Life History Coordinator)

As noted in last month’s article, the breeding season is characterised by elevated hormone levels and increased social volatility. Despite this, maintaining social cohesion is essential, and groups that successfully regulate internal conflict often benefit by producing larger and healthier litters. At Whiskers, October began with both the dominant female Sheila (VWF267), and her sister Bruce (VWF266) confirmed as pregnant once again. Additionally, Kylie (VWF265), the third sister, began showing signs of pregnancy during this period – likely contributing to her subsequent eviction from the group. Although Sheila’s dominance remained uncontested, signs of sustained social tension were evident. All three sisters appeared locked into persistent, unrelenting conflict. A reduction in group size to as few as seven individuals, at its lowest, made it clear that the group as a whole were being adversely affected. Toward the end of October, nearing the final stages of Sheila’s pregnancy, Kylie made repeated attempts to rejoin the group but was constantly war-danced and chased away. Around the same time, Bruce also

departed – likely evicted by Sheila in order to safeguard her own litter from the risk of infanticide. As a result, Sheila was left as the only reproductively viable female at the group. She was therefore solely responsible for meeting the demands of the litter, particularly through lactation. Additionally, the reduced group size left Whiskers increasingly vulnerable to both intergroup competition and predation. Clearly, a shift in group dynamics was necessary, and this transition began with the birth of Sheila’s new litter.

Sheila gave birth on the 28th of October, and just two days later, Bruce had rejoined the group. Within just 3 days of her return, she gave birth to a litter of her own. Immediately following both births, babysitting and lactation commenced, indicating that at least one of the litters was alive. On the 5th, Kylie – now heavily pregnant – was observed foraging approximately 10 meters from the sleeping burrow, in the company of subordinate sub-adult female, Luna (VWF279). For the survival of Kylie’s litter, it was critical for her to re-establish herself within Whiskers. Nevertheless, she was detected by the group and chased away once again. Kylie’s misfortune finally ceased, and on the 11th, she was seen with the group. Importantly, she was no longer pregnant, suggesting three possible explanations: she had given birth at the burrow; the litter has been aborted; or she had given birth away from the burrow, in which case the litter is assumed to have been lost. Nevertheless, she was back with the group.



Pups from Whiskers playing early in the morning. (Photo Credit: Matthew Shard, Life History Coordinator)

Sheila had now enabled the return of her two sisters, and observers noted an upturn in affiliative

behaviours such as grooming, as well as a reduction of competitive behaviours. This shift may indicate a change in the group's energetic focus – from intragroup competition back towards the cooperative rearing of pups. However, it was only toward the end of the month that the full extent of the investment required became apparent.

During a morning weights session on the 25th of November, an observer heard the unmistakable vocalisations of newborn pups. As is typical, high-pitched, frantic chattering echoed from deep inside the burrow, increasing in both volume and intensity as the pups edged closer to the burrow entrance – likely their first exposure to the outside world. After a prolonged hesitation, the first pup – its eyes half-closed and squinting – began to peer out from the darkness of the burrow. After more deliberation, and some gentle encouragement from nearby group members, more pups began to emerge. On the 25th, 8 new pups emerged, causing Whiskers' member count to almost double. But the observer then began to notice subtle inconsistencies in comparison to a typical single-litter emergence. Firstly, even after numerous emergences, the vocalisations emanating from the burrow continued to grow louder. Additionally, a clear size disparity was evident, and whilst the larger individuals' eyes were fully open, some smaller pups remained almost completely blind. It was evident that multiple litters were present, and that some pups were likely born many days before others, and hence were more well developed. Furthermore, persistent vocalisations from the burrow suggested that more pups were yet to emerge. Despite this warning, the observer who visited the group on the 30th was still overwhelmed. Instead of a sustained, incremental emergence of cautious individuals like had been seen previously, this morning saw a disorganised wave of pups sweep from the burrow in a frenzy. The now 12 tumultuous pups jostled past one another, their short limbs and stubby tails protruding from the dusty commotion. The larger individuals, in addition to boasting a clear physical advantage over their smaller littermates, also seemed to exhibit a greater sense of coordination and purpose. These individuals seemed to strive deliberately for egg, whereas others were simply caught in the commotion around them. Although we are unable to determine with certainty which litter each pup belongs to, this provided a snapshot into the different stages of habituation and emphasised how rapidly these altricial mammals develop and gain independence. It is likely that the pups represent three separate litters within the group, and despite being only days apart in age, the differences between them are evident – and highly relevant to their survival.

In April of this year, Dik-Diks experienced a similar scenario to that observed at Whiskers, highlighting the critical nature of early-life competition. Three Dik-

Diks females gave birth within one week of one another, and, similarly to at Whiskers, approximately three weeks later a total of 12 pups emerged from the burrow. Continued monitoring of the litters, in combination with comparing their baseline weight data, demonstrated the significant role of early developmental conditions. Of the 12 pups, 6 out of the 7 with the highest initial body masses (>110g on 24th April 2025) survived their first few months and remain alive today. In contrast, the five lightest pups were outcompeted by heavier siblings and did not survive, either lost or predated. This pattern strongly emphasises how initial competitive disparities can have lasting consequences for survival.



Babysitting of the Whiskers pups at the sleeping burrow. (Photo Credit: Matthew Shard, Life History Coordinator)

Throughout the remaining months of the breeding season, we anticipate the emergence of additional litters both at Whiskers and across our broader study population, accompanied by the inevitable successes and failures associated with raising a new cohort. It will be particularly interesting to examine how the presence of this large, mixed litter influences the social dynamics within Whiskers, and to assess the degree to which early-life competition may ultimately determine the life history of each individual pup.

Pregnancies in November 2025

Females pregnant in November	14
Females who aborted	0
Females who gave birth, litters lost	0
Females who gave birth, litter emerged	2
Females who gave birth, unknown outcome	6
Females still pregnant at the end of the month	6

November 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):

- All 22 members of Alba were present at the group throughout November.
- Dominant female Cleopatra (VALF008) was made officially pregnant this month.
- Alba had 11 encounters observed this month. On the 1st, an unknown adult was chased away by the group. Later that same day, two unknown adult males remained around the group's edge and were ignored by the group – they went below at a different entrance to the same sleeping burrow that night. On the morning of the 4th, an unknown adult male was war-danced by the group causing him to retreat. In the evening of the 4th, two unknown adult males were war-danced and chased away by the group. On the 5th, the group chased away an unknown adult

male. On the 7th, Brussel Sprouts' subordinate adult male Gurke (VHMM036) approached the group – he was ignored and after a short period he left the area. On the 11th, one unknown adult male retreated when the group war-danced towards him. On the 12th, two unknown adult males were war-danced and chased away by the group. On the 13th, an unknown adult male retreated when the group war-danced him. On the 16th, Zulus' subordinate adult male Sweep (VZUM072) was ignored whilst he foraged on the group's edge. On the 19th, the group chased away an unknown individual – who retreated and did not return.

- There were no group-splits or inter-group interactions observed at Alba this month.
- Subordinate yearling female Tress (VALF020) had an injured left forearm which was causing her to limp this month – the injury appears to be permanent. Tress also had an open wound to her left cheek, which appears to have healed this month. Subordinate sub-adult female Florence (VALF031) was observed to have worms. All other individuals appeared to be in good health this month.

Brussels Sprouts (FDC):

- All 14 individuals of Brussels Sprouts were present this month.
- Dominant female Arabella (VMPF035) was made officially pregnant this month.
- On the 3rd, subordinate adult male Gurke (VHMM036) was observed to have left the group – he returned that same day. On the 11th, Gurke left the group and was spotted roving at Zulus – he returned to Brussels Sprouts on the 14th. Gurke also left the group on the 18th, returning the following day. On the 22nd, subordinate yearling male Porcini (VBSM012) woke from a different sleeping burrow entrance and was chased from the group – he was accepted back into the group that same day.
- Brussels Sprouts had one inter-group interaction observed this month. On the 22nd, both Brussels Sprouts and Gold Diggers war-danced towards one another. Initially, Gold Diggers chased Brussels Sprouts, causing them to retreat. Brussels Sprouts then returned and chased Gold Diggers for a short period. Gold Diggers then chased Brussels Sprouts away, causing them to retreat and the groups to separate.
- Brussels Sprouts had 5 interactions observed this month. On the 14th, Hogwarts' subordinate yearling male Buckbeak (VHMM002) approached the group but retreated when they war-danced him. On the 22nd, Brussels Sprouts war-danced an unknown individual, who retreated. On the 22nd, two Gold Diggers' males, subordinate adult Captain Patel (VGDM048) and

subordinate yearling Snackajack (VGDM063) approached the group, who initially alarmed but then ignored them. Soon afterwards, the group war-danced the Gold Diggers males – who retreated. On the 30th, Lazuli's subordinate adult male Tinashe (VLM310) approached the group but retreated when chased by Porcini.

- Brussels Sprouts had no group-splits observed this month.
- Arabella and Porcini were both observed to have worms this month. Gurke still has a broken toe on his left forepaw which is causing him to limp – this appears to be a permanent injury. Gurke also had scratches on his left hindfoot and tail base, both of which appear to have healed by the end of the month. All other members of the group appear to be in good health.

Gold Diggers (FDC):

- Gold Diggers had 23 out of 24 members present at the end of the month.
- Dominant female Goldeneye (VGDF007) was made officially pregnant this month.
- On the 1st, subordinate sub-adult male Bokkie (VGDM067) returned to the group. This month, an increase in the intensity of dominance behaviours from Goldeneye likely caused females departing from the group (though an immediate eviction was not observed). Hence, on the 2nd, subordinate sub-adult female Larkin (VGDF077) left the group. She was accepted back that same day. On the morning of the 7th, subordinate adult female Manchego (VGDF054) left the group. She returned later that same evening. On the 9th, subordinate adult females Peanut (VGDF047) and Serafina Pekkala (VGDF049) were evicted from the group – they rejoined the group that same day. On the 12th, subordinate adult male Captain Patel (VGDM048) left the group and was seen roving at Lazuli. Serafina Pekkala also left the group on the 12th – she was accepted back that same evening. On the 13th, Captain Patel returned to the group, only to soon leave again, remaining absent until the 14th. Serafina Pekkala also left the group on the 13th, remaining at the sleeping burrow with Lazuli's subordinate adult male Tinashe (VLM310) and subordinate yearling male Pot Belly (VLM317) as well as Brussels Sprouts' subordinate adult male Gurke (VHMM036) who were all roving around the group's sleeping burrow. Serafina Pekkala returned to Gold Diggers that same day. On the 17th, subordinate sub-adult female Aapje (VGDF068) left the group – returning the following day. On the 18th, subordinate adult male Tampin (VGDM055) left the group – returning the following day. On the 20th, Serafina Pekkala and Captain Patel left the group but returned that same day. On the 22nd,

subordinate sub-adult male Ashdown (VGDM078), subordinate yearling male Snackajack (VGDM063), and Captain Patel left the group – all returning later that same day.

- There were 2 group-splits observed at Gold Diggers this month. On the 13th, there was an overnight group-split involving Serafina Pekkala and Tampin, and subordinate sub-adults Bubba (VGDM069) and Ares (VGDF075). On the 18th, there was a daily group split involving Captain Patel, Serafina Pekkala, Snackajack, Bokkie, Aapje, Bubba, Ares, Sonskyn, Larkin, Ashdown, subordinate yearling male Broson (VGDM064) and 5 pups (VGDM080, VGDM081, VGDM082, VGDF083, VGDF084).
- There were 7 encounters at Gold Diggers this month. Lazuli's Tinashe and Pot Belly approached the group on the 12th and multiple times on the 13th. The group war-danced and chased them on all occasions except for one, in which they interacted with and sniffed Serafina Pekkala. On the 13th, Brussels Sprouts' subordinate adult male Gurke (VHMM036) also approached the group but remained at a distance, where he was ignored.
- Gold Diggers were observed to have 1 inter-group interaction this month. On the 22nd, the group war-danced and chased Brussels Sprouts – who retreated a short distance before returning and war-dancing back towards Gold Diggers who then in-turn, retreated. Gold Diggers then regrouped and chased Brussels Sprouts away, causing the groups to separate.
- Peanut had an injury to her tail base this month, which appears to be healing. Serafina Pekkala had submandibular lumps around her throat which appear to have healed this month. Bokkie had worms this month, but they have not been observed again.

Jaxx (FDC):

- Jaxx decreased by 1 individual, from 18 to 17 members present at the end of the month.
- Dominant female Jub Jub (VJXF160) gave birth this month. 4 pups (VJXP214, VJXP215, VJXP216, VJXP217) had been identified, but they had not emerged independently from the burrow by the end of the month.
- On the 9th, subordinate sub-adult Trinity (VJXF197) was evicted from the group. On the 11th, subordinate yearling female Pulpi (VJXF189) returned to the group. Following increased dominance assertion behaviours from Jub Jub, on the 19th, subordinate sub-adult female Hurley (VJXF201) left the group.
- There was one daily group-split observed at Jaxx this month. On the 25th, subordinate yearling male Gobi (VJXM194), subordinate sub-adults, TunafishV (VJXM202), Milo (VJXF203), and juveniles Fennel (VJXF208),

Woof (VJXM209), Sprout (VJXM210), Fifi (VJXF211), Matty G (VJXM212), split from the group, but returned that same day.

- There were no encounters or inter-group interactions observed at Jaxx in November.
- Trinity and Hurley remained absent from the group at the end of the month.
- Habituation is classed as in *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.
- Jub Jub had a wound to one of her nipples, which appears to have healed this month. Matty G had a wound to his tail, which appears to have healed. Sprout, Woof, and Matty G all had diarrhea towards the end of this month. All other individuals appeared to be in good health throughout November.

Lazuli (FDC):

- Lazuli decreased by 1 individual, from 16 to 15 members present at the end of November.
- On the 3rd, 2 pups (VLM328, VLM329) emerged from the burrow independently for the first time.
- On the 1st, following a sustained period of deteriorating health, subordinate sub-adult male Scrumpy (VLM323) did not leave the burrow and is assumed to be dead. On the 3rd, subordinate adult male Tinashe (VLM310) left the group and was seen roving at Gold Diggers – he returned to Lazuli the following day. On the 12th, Tinashe, subordinate yearling male Pot Belly (VLM317) and subordinate yearling female Bumble (VLF320) all left the group – Tinashe and Pot Belly were observed roving at Gold Diggers. An observed increase in dominance and submission behaviours from the group's females likely caused Bumble to leave, though the immediate eviction was not observed. On the 13th, Bumble returned to the group in the morning, and Tinashe and Pot Belly returned that evening. On the 20th, subordinate yearling male Fat Belly (VLM316) left the group – returning that same morning. On the 22nd, Tinashe and Pot Belly both left the group – returning that same day. On the 30th, Tinashe left the group and was observed roving at Brussels Sprouts, where he was chased away. Tinashe returned to Lazuli that same day.
- Scrumpy remained absent from the group at the end of the month.
- Lazuli had 2 daily group-splits observed this month. On the 14th, dominant male Rogelio De La Vega (VGDM015), subordinate sub-adult males, Thrutch (VLM324) and Avon (VLM325), and Bumble were separated from the group for approximately half an hour. Later, on the 14th, Rogelio De La Vega, Bumble, Avon, and

subordinate yearling male Petit Bidon (VLM318) were absent from the group upon the observer's arrival at 17:20, and did not return until 18:20.

- There were no encounters or inter-group interactions observed at Lazuli during November.
- Before his disappearance, Scrumpy's health had continued to decline from last month. He showed severe weight-loss and fatigue and appeared to be having trouble breathing. All other group members appeared to be in good health throughout the month.

Side Quest (FDC):

- Side Quest decreased by 4 individuals, from 21 to 17 members present at the group at the end of November.
- On the 21st, dominant female Pumba (VZUF048) gave birth. Lactation and babysitting immediately commenced at the group, indicating that the litter was alive.
- On the 1st, subordinate yearling female Truffle (VSIF040) left the group, likely caused by increased dominance assertions by Pumba, though immediate eviction was not observed. Truffle approached the group again twice on the 7th but was chased away both times. On the 8th subordinate sub-adult females Bunny (VSIF042) and Billy (VSIF043) were evicted from the group by Pumba. Later that same day both Bunny and Billy approached the group again but were attacked and chased away by the group. On the 18th, subordinate yearling male Brioche (VSIM032) left the group – returning that same day. Brioche left the group again on the 20th, not returning until the following day. On the 24th, subordinate sub-adult female Portman (VSIF045) was evicted from the group. On the 25th, Portman approached the group twice but was chased away both times. On the 27th, Portman returned to the group – marking the end of her eviction.
- Truffle, Bunny, and Billy remained absent from the group at the end of the month.
- There was one overnight group-split observed at Side Quest during November. On the 26th, subordinate yearling male Rolo (VSIM039), and juveniles Bibble (VSIF056), Buffy (VSIF057), Beck (VSIM058), and Moro (VSIM059) left the group – returning the following day.
- There were 2 encounters observed at Side Quest this month. On the 9th, an unknown individual approached the group – they retreated when chased by the group. Later, on the 19th, three unknown adults were spotted over 100 meters from the group. The group war-danced and chased the individuals away.
- There were no inter-group interactions observed at Side Quest this month.

- Juvenile male Turnip (VSIM053) had a wound on the inside of his right hindleg, which appears to have healed this month. All other group members appeared to be in good health this month.

Trackie-Daks (FDC):

- Trackie-Daks decreased by 6 individuals, from 18 to 12 members present at the end of the month.
- Dominant female Refilwe (VTDF041) was made officially pregnant this month.
- On the 1st, subordinate yearling females Fishstick (VTDF044) and Hope (VTDF045) left the group – likely caused by a period of pronounced dominance assertion behaviours between the females in the group - though the immediate eviction was not observed at this stage. On the 4th, Fishstick approached the group but was attacked and retreated – supporting the possibility that she was evicted from the group. On the 18th, subordinate sub-adult Kibo (VTDF049) was evicted after being chased from the sleeping burrow by the group. On the 19th, and 21st, subordinate sub-adult females Timone (VTDF051) and Sip (VTDF050) left the group, respectively – though immediate eviction was not observed. On the 22nd, Kibo, Sip, and Timone approached the group's sleeping burrow and retreated when the group war-danced and chased them. On the 24th, Kibo and Sip were chased away by the group. Again, on the 24th, Kibo and Timone approached the group and were initially ignored – Refilwe then attacked them, and the group chased them away. On the 28th, subordinate sub-adult female Meeko (VTDF052) left the group.
- At the end of the month Fishstick, Hope, Kibo, Sip, Timone, and Meeko all remained absent from the group.
- There were 2 encounters observed at Trackie-Daks this month. On the 3rd, 3 unidentified adults approached the group – retreating when the group chased them. On the 7th, 1 unknown adult retreated when the group war-danced and chased them.
- Trackie-Daks had no group-splits or inter-group interactions observed in November.
- 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 on both sides of his muzzle. Dominant male Guido (VWM275) and subordinate sub-adults Meeko (VTDF052) and Paw (VTDM054) had worms this month. All other members appeared to be in good health.

Ubuntu (FDC):

- Ubuntu decreased by 2 individuals, from 14 to 12 members present at the group at the end of the month.
- On the 23rd, dominant female Agazoth (VUBF039) gave birth. the birth was followed by lactation and babysitting - indicating that the litter is alive.
- On the 2nd, subordinate adult female Hotfoot (VUBF071) approached the group – she retreated when the group war-danced and chased her away. On the 6th, subordinate sub-adult female Ursula (VUBF077) was evicted from the group. On the 7th, Ursula approached the group to 30 meters – retreating when the group war-danced and chased her. On the 12th, subordinate sub-adult male Chonky (VUBM078) left the group. On the 23rd, subordinate sub-adult female Moppie (VUBF081) left the group, likely caused by increased dominance assertions by Agazoth, though immediate eviction was not observed. Also on the 23rd, subordinate sub-adult male Koka (VUBM085) left the group. On the 26th, Ursula returned to the group – marking the end of her eviction. Also on the 16th, Chonky, Moppie and Koka returned to the group. On the 28th, Chonky left the group.
- At the month's end, Chonky remained absent from the group.
- Enough time has passed for Hotfoot to be emigrated from the group this month.
- There was 1 encounter observed at Ubuntu this month. On the 10th, two unidentified adults approached the group – they retreated when the group war-danced and chased them.
- There were no group-splits or inter-group interactions observed at Ubuntu in November.
- Ursula and Moppie had scabs to the base of their tails this month. All other members appeared to be in good health this month.

Vetkoeks (FDC):

- All 12 members of Vetkoeks were present at the group throughout this month.
- Dominant female Mooncake (VHMF053) gave birth this month. The birth was followed by lactation and babysitting – indicating that the litter was alive.
- *Male Dominance* was still unconfirmed at Vetkoeks this month.
- There was 1 encounter observed at Vetkoeks this month. On the 25th, an unknown individual approached the group, approximately 100 meters from the sleeping burrow. They retreated when the group war-danced and chased them.
- There were no group-splits or inter-group interactions observed at Vetkoeks this month.
- Juvenile male Louis Cyr (VVKM035) had an injury on his left hindleg which appears to have

healed this month. All other individuals appeared to be in good health throughout November.

Zulus (FDC):

- Zulus increased by 5 individuals, from 17 to 22 members present at the end of the month.
- Dominant female Leona (VZUF070) gave birth this month. The birth was followed by lactation and babysitting – indicating that the litter was alive.
- On the 1st, subordinate adult female Sooty (VZUF071) returned to the group – but was evicted again that same session. Sooty appeared at the group 7 times before her eviction ended on the 21st. On the 6th, subordinate yearling male Catch-A-Mo (VZUM079) left the group and was spotted roving elsewhere – he returned to Zulus that same day. On the 16th, subordinate adult male Sweep (VZUM072) left the group and was seen roving at Alba. Also on the 16th, juveniles Marc (VZUM085) and Soa (VZUF089) were separated from the group during an alarm call but returned to the group that same day. On the 17th, subordinate yearling male Rainbow (VZUM078) left the group and was seen roving at Brussels Sprouts, where he was repeatedly war-danced and chased, before returning to Zulus that same day. Sweep also returned to the group on the 17th. On the 22nd, Sooty and Rainbow left the group – both returning that same day.
- There were 11 encounters observed at Zulus during November. On the 2nd, Hogwarts' subordinate yearling male Buckbeak (VHWM002) approached the group – he retreated when the group chased him. On the same day, an unidentified adult approached the group – they retreated when the group war-danced and chased them. On the 5th, Alba's subordinate adult male Bibu (VALM014) approached the group – he was war-danced and chased away. On the 11th, Brussels Sprouts' subordinate adult male Gurke (VHMM036) approached the group and remained at approximately 50 meters from the group – after an hour he was chased away by Zulus. On the 12th, Buckbeak was war-danced and chased away by the group. Once on the 13th, and twice on the 16th, Bibu approached the group – he was war-danced and chased away each time. On the 16th, Buckbeak approached the group twice, he retreated both times after being war-danced and chased by the group. On the 22nd, an unknown adult approached Zulus – they retreated when the group war-danced and chased them.
- There were no group-splits or inter-group interactions observed at Zulus this month.
- Leona had what appears to be an infection to her left eye, and an injury to her neck which appears

to have healed this month. Juvenile female Lexi had a wound on her left forearm this month. Sooty had a scab to her tail base. All other group members appeared to be in good health this month.

Life History Monitoring Groups:

Dik-Diks (LHM):

- Dik-Diks decreased by 1 individual, from 18 to 17 members present at the end of the month.
- Dominant female Juliet (VGDF009) gave birth this month. The birth was followed by lactation and babysitting at the group – indicating that the litter was alive. Eldest-subordinate female Shelby (VGDF022) was made officially pregnant this month.
- On the 4th, subordinate adult female Shelby (VGDF022) left the group – likely evicted following increased dominance displays at the group, though no eviction was observed. On the 8th, subordinate adult female Ciri (VDDF003) left the group, – she returned on the 25th. On the 25th, Shelby approached the group and foraged approximately 10 meters from group's individuals but was not acting as part of the group and later left the area again – potentially supporting the possibility that she was initially evicted and has not yet been accepted back into the group. On the 27th, Ciri left the group again – returning that same day.
- Shelby remained absent from the group at the month's end.
- There was 1 encounter observed at Dik-Diks this month. On the 6th, an unknown adult approached the group – they retreated when the group alarmed at them.
- There were no group-splits or inter-group interactions observed at Dik-Diks this month.
- Habituation is classed as *Advanced Progress*. Dominant female Juliet (VGDF009) was weighed 6 times – she was drinking water and comfortable with observers sitting at a distance of 1-2m.
- Shelby had a wound to her tail base which appeared to have healed this month. All other individuals appeared to be in good health this month.

Elrond's Council (LHM):

- Elrond's Council decreased by 3 individuals, from 14 to 11 members present at the end of November.
- *Female Dominance* remains unconfirmed at Elrond's Council.
- Yearling female Cadenza (VECF059) was made officially pregnant this month.
- On the 1st, subordinate yearling male Goujon (VECM062) returned to the group. On the 6th,

Goujon left the group again – returning the following day. On the 12th, Goujon and subordinate yearling male Bazooka (VECM065) left the group. On the 21st, subordinate sub-adult female Nalane (VECF067) left the group, likely caused by increased dominance assertions from Cadenza, though there was no eviction observed. On the 23rd, subordinate sub-adult male Rza (VECM066) left the group – returning that same day. On the 30th, Nalane approached the group, but she was attacked and retreated when the group war-danced and chased her.

- Nalane and Bazooka remained absent at the end of the month.
- There were no group-splits, encounters, or inter-group interactions observed at Elrond's Council this month.
- Habituation is classed as *Advanced Progress*. Dominant male Jonsnow (VECM070) has made significant improvement – he has shown some interest in egg and was comfortable with observers standing at a 2-meter distance. He was not weighed this month, but he was comfortable with group follows but will forage at approximately 3-4 meters from the observer.
- Jonsnow and subordinate sub-adult Seven (VECM069) had submandibular lumps and swollen necks this month. All other group members appeared to be in good health throughout November.

Habituation Groups:

Hogwarts (HAB):

- Hogwarts increased by 4 individuals, from 15 to 19 members present at the end of November.
- On the 12th, 4 pups (VHWP018, VHWP019, VHWP020, VHWP021) emerged from the burrow for the first time. The pups foraged with the group for the first time on the 15th.
- On the 1st, subordinate yearling male Buckbeak (VHWM002) returned to the group. Buckbeak then left the group on the 2nd, 12th, 14th, and 16th of this month, each time returning either that same day, or within two days of his departure.
- 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 (VHWM004) has improved. Buckbeak is drinking water and comfortable around the scale – he was weighed 3 times this month. Caraxes approached the observer when lying down, and regularly drank 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 increased by 13 individuals this month, from 8 to 21 individuals present at the end of November.
- On the 4th subordinate adult female Bruce (VWF266) gave birth. Between the 6th and 11th, Kylie also (VWF265) gave birth.
- Between the 25th and 30th, 11 pups (VWP288, VWP289, VWP290, VWP291, VWP292, VWP293, VWP294, VWP295, VWP296, VWP297, VWP298) emerged from the burrow. One more pup was present, but undyed at the end of the month.
- On the 11th, Kylie immigrated back into the group.
- There were 7 encounters observed at Whiskers this month. On the 5th, an unknown adult, accompanied by Kylie, approached the group – they were both war-danced and chased away. On the 6th, 2 unknown adults approached the group – they retreated when the group war-danced and chased them. On the 17th, 18th, 20th, and 22nd, the group war-danced and chased away lone unknown individuals. On the 30th, an unknown adult was ignored by the group and went below in a nearby burrow after the group had gone below.
- There were no group-splits or inter-group interactions observed at Whiskers this month.
- The group's habituation is classed as *In Progress*. Adult subordinate male Agent K's (VWM276) habituation has progressed significantly. He was eating egg in the scale and was weighed 6 times this month. He was comfortable with an observer sitting less than 1 meter from him - we will continue visiting the group and increasing Agent K's comfort with our presence.
- Agent K had a wound to the right side of his mouth, which appears to have healed this month. All other individuals appeared to be in good health throughout November.

The following authors contributed to this report:

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