

# Naibor

## Newsletter - February 2011

### Notes from the bush...

A very Happy New Year to you all! We do hope you had a lovely Christmas and New Year break, even though it probably feels much longer than seven weeks ago! Here at Naibor, we certainly celebrated in style with a sumptuous Christmas turkey dinner accompanied by all the trimmings - even Santa managed to find us! New Year's Eve was also a corker; with the kids roasting marshmallows around the fire followed by a wonderful BBQ under a breathtaking display of nature's fireworks – the shooting stars!

The New Year has certainly started with a bang with fantastic sightings throughout January and February; game is all around us! We have regularly recorded Leopard, Lion and Cheetah all **within** a 20 minute drive of Naibor. Serval have been seen hunting and large herds of Elephant, Eland and Topi are frequently on top of our hill. The local Bat-eared Foxes and Jackals have also had young recently, so it's definitely the place to be!

If we have had the pleasure of hosting you, come back soon as it's as magical as ever; if we are yet to have that pleasure, what on earth are you waiting for?!

*Karibu sana,*

*Adam, Vicki & the Naibor Team*



*Photographs above: Christmas dinner at Naibor (left); our New Year's bush BBQ (middle) and roasting marshmallows around the campfire (right).*

### New addition to the Naibor Team



Naibor is proud to welcome Matthew Lalaigwanani to our team of first-class guides. Born and raised in the Samburu region, Matthew has extensive travel and guiding experience across Kenya and we are delighted he has chosen to join the Naibor team, as of December 2010. Previous visitors to Naibor may be interested to know that Matthew is the uncle to our other Samburu guide, Daudi Lolotuno, and there is no shortage of “family rivalry” when it comes to finding the best of the big game in the Masai Mara.

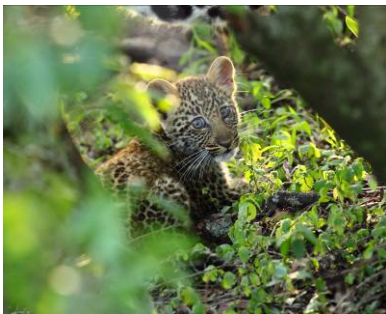
Matthew is particularly interested in birds so will be working closely with manager Adam to hone his skills, especially on the Eurasian migrant species and LBJ's (little brown jobs!).

## Baby Boom in the Masai Mara

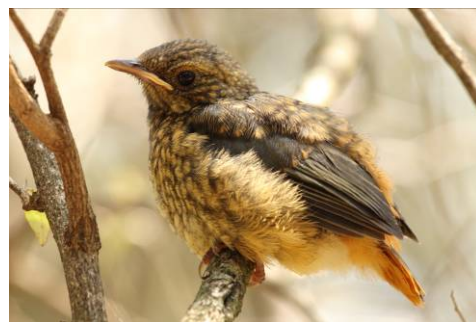
There can be few natural sights more adorable than seeing a mother with her cubs, kittens or pups, and our guests have been thoroughly “*oooh-ing*” and “*aaah-ing*” in the Mara since mid-December. Our guides have been able to track not just one but TWO Leopards, each with two cubs, and despite several nervous days when the cubs had “disappeared”, all are present and accounted for at the time of writing.

The Mara is home to good numbers of Lions and it is always great to see new cubs playing around with their older siblings and parents – so cute! One can barely imagine any harm coming to them but two of our guests witnessed that shocking phenomenon where a rogue male comes into a pride and kills another male’s cubs. Obviously a shocking experience for those involved but it just goes to show how precarious life can be in the wilds.

Hyenas have also done well locally in recent months with one female nursing two adorable pups, which look more like little bears than anything else, and another female is ready to birth any day now.



Naibor Camp itself is home to several new births this month, especially in the bird department, with Yellow-vented Bulbul, Emerald-spotted Wood Dove and White-browed Robin Chat (*pictured*) all feeding young right now. Many others are busy building nests including the Yellow-spotted Petronia in the skull of a giraffe – see Managers’ Nature Notes below!



### What do our guests say about us...

“A totally Utopian environment; tents, staff, guides, food, company, setting...all completely amazing. Thank you so much for making us feel so welcome and for giving us 5 days we will never forget. Hope to see you again.”

*Tom & Rosie, London, UK*

“Couldn’t have had a nicer time, everything was perfect! David was a brilliant guide and helped us to get the photo’s we have always wanted: a leopard dragging a kill up a tree and then falling asleep on a branch. Adam & Vicki, we couldn’t have asked for better hosts, you definitely made our stay very special. Thanks to everyone.”

*Gavin & Susan, Scotland & Saudi Arabia*

“Not enough words to express such beauty and happiness ”

*The Borenstein party, Belgium*

## Managers' Nature Notes

While taking breakfast at the camp mess in mid-January, we noticed a pair of Yellow-spotted Petronia (*Petronia pyrgita*), a nondescript sparrow-like species with a yellow spot under the chin, showing a particular interest in the skull of a Maasai Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis tippelskirchi*) that has been on display at Naibor Camp for several years. After a brief foray, the birds returned with nesting materials and disappeared into the rear of the skull. Once they had left for another foray, Adam inspected the skull to check out what was occurring and, sure enough, the birds had begun to line a nest in the brain cavity of the skull with a collection of small twigs, mosses and Helmeted Guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*) feathers.

The entrance to the cavity was via the *foramen magnum* (Latin for "great hole") which is the large opening at the base of the skull through which the *medulla oblongata* (an extension of the spinal cord), along with other blood vessels and tendons, enters and exits the skull vault. Surely this must be the first time a bird has nested in such a place?



There is also an interesting story behind how the giraffe skull came to arrive at Naibor. Several years ago, previous Naibor managers Jamie Cocker and Sophia Spyropolous discovered a dead giraffe in a forest patch close to camp but rather than lying prostrate on the ground, the animal was suspended from a tree and had in fact hung itself. Further investigation revealed that the Giraffe had slipped while browsing at a great height and its neck had become lodged between some heavy branches, no doubt causing a slow and unceremonious death. After several days, various predators and scavengers attended the carcass but even to this day there are still patches of skin on the skull that were never removed; something that would never happen if the corpse has been on the ground. Eventually the skull was extracted from the tree and brought to Naibor to complement the ever-growing collection of skulls we have on display for educational purposes.

Unlike the other bones we have on display, the giraffe skull has always remained in a tree, just like it was found, which is clearly to the liking to the petronia pair. At the time of writing, the birds have yet to lay eggs but you can check on progress via the Naibor Facebook page or via the next Naibor newsletter.

**Honeymooners *Rosie and Tom Clare* from the UK get "up close and personal" with a pride of Lions who decided to take shade under their vehicle, just minutes after a close encounter with a magnificent Black Rhino!**



## Naibor

*Hidden in a grove of riverine woodland on the banks of the Talek River, this luxury tented camp combines contemporary style and comfort in the heart the world-famous, wildlife-rich Masai Mara.*

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