



# KPSGA

## NEWSLETTER

---

September 2014

---

### MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Members,

I hope you had a fun-filled peak season. Over the past few months, the newly constituted Tourism Regulatory Authority (TRA) has taken steps to demonstrate that the government is serious about cultivating a culture of responsible and competent guiding in Kenya. The move is long overdue and is therefore highly welcome. We are working closely with the TRA to ensure that the approaches used to achieve their regulatory goals are healthy to the normal functioning of the guiding profession.

The Narok County government is also making plans to improve the overall management and service delivery of the Masai Mara National Game Reserve. A stakeholders forum has already been held and recommendations given to the County government to implement towards this end.

In our commitment to your continued professional development, we held a "Be a Better Guide" coffee morning in August specifically on 'mammals of conservation significance in Kenya' delivered by Dr. Agwanda who is a mammalian research scientist at the National Museums of Kenya.

This month we lost a founding member of KPSGA and an ardent supporter and champion of competent and responsible guiding in East Africa, Lynne Leakey. Lynne passed on in Ngorongoro Crater Tanzania while doing what she loves most – guiding. Her spirit lives on.

***Tom Lesarge***  
***Chief Executive Officer***

---

---

## BUSH MATTERS

---

---

### *Drama on the Ewaso Ng'iro*

Recently, a young bull elephant died of natural causes in the middle of the Ewaso Ng'iro River, in Samburu National Game Reserve. As is protocol, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) officers came to remove the its tusks as soon as they were notified of the death, ostensibly to ensure that poachers do not grab the opportunity and of course deliver the tusks for safe keeping in the government repositories.

A dead elephant is a potentially a huge meal for a host of carnivores. We knew that they would soon come to feast. Though we did not know who would be first, we guessed the crocodiles would be since the pachyderm breathed its last right is their front yard. Due to our particular interest in lions, we were more inclined towards taking note of which prides would come to the carcass and what their interaction would be.



*Lguret* (Maa for “the coward one”), the dominant male in the area, was first on the scene and stayed close to the elephant carcass, guarding it from crocodiles and marabou storks. Eventually, Nanai (Maa for “mine”), Nabulu (Maa for “the maturing one”) and their 5 cubs arrived. All the lions closely guarded the carcass. Nanai and *Lguret* were the most aggressive and fought huge battles with crocodiles, as Nabulu deliberately stayed back with the cubs to ensure their safety.



Joshua, our Lion Watch guide from Larsen’s Camp sent this message:

“The fight was so brutal that the lions pounced on the crocodiles and overpowered them. It took about 10 minutes and the crocodiles ultimately retreated into the deep end of the river. It was amazing. I noticed that Nanai is more fierce than Nabulu. The five cubs were at a distance watching and probably praying. It was wonderful”.

Did the crocodiles give up? Probably not – they may have thought it wise to wait it out and feed when the lions have had their fill!

Working in the field is always full of exciting surprises!

***Shivani Bhala***  
***Bronze Level Member***

## ***Lights and night game viewing***

For years, I have spent time working at Selenkay Conservancy and observing wildlife both during the day and at night. Night game viewing affords visitors opportunities to see nocturnal animals which they would otherwise not see.



*A pride (observed under red light) quenches thirst before a night hunt.*

Motor vehicle headlights and portable spotlights are commonly used to enhance visitor visibility and better observation of the night activities. However, this artificial light impacts on animals in various ways, including blinding and disorienting them, and compromising predator-prey relationships. I have observed that light from a red source does not affect the animals – they go about their businesses as if that light is natural.

The eye's retina has cones and rods as the two fundamental light receptors. Cones need brighter light to form representations of the visual world. Rods on the the other hand are highly photo sensitive and therefore need low light to produce sight. Animal species have varied concentrations and ratios of cones to rods, which is what determines their diurnal or nocturnal tendencies. The point to note is here is that L-cones are responsible for visualization of red when red light is used. Most nocturnal animals have no L-cones and this explains why they do not notice the red light when they are illuminated with it at night. I therefore urge guides who do night game viewing to take up this approach of using light from red sources to minimise our impacts on fauna.

***Wilson Ole Kasaine***  
***Silver Level Member***

## ***The cost of littering***

We all know that rubbish can harm. Some of you might have lost livestock already. Plastic is probably the biggest litter menace in our country. Plastic takes anywhere between 20 and 1000 years to degrade and still remains toxic after degrading.



I found this poor calf wrapped in plastic and tethered in the field. It was disembowelled by dogs. As is apparent in the picture the intestines were full of thin plastics. How painful is it to die like that? The financial loss is about Ksh. 10,000. Wild animals can also fall victims to this slow and painful death caused by ingested plastic trash if we do not take it upon ourselves to responsibly dispose of plastics. A lot of plastic is not needed, so we can avoid using it. Most plastics can be re-used and or recycled. Everyone can play their part in managing this menace. It does not just cause physical harm but is an eyesore.

***Elvira Wolfer***  
***Silver Level Member***

---

## YOUR RIDICULOUS EXAM ANSWERS

---

This section is meant to give you a feel of the answers to our exam questions that we get from members. Some are extremely ridiculous. Enjoy!

Q: Which is the largest African accipiter?

A: Yatta Plateau.

Q: Which monkey is primarily terrestrial?

A: Colobus

---

## EXAM DATES

---

### **BRONZE**

29<sup>th</sup> October      26<sup>th</sup> November

### **SILVER**

23<sup>rd</sup> October      20<sup>th</sup> November

Dates and venues for any exams to be done outside the stated dates due to demand will be announced in advance.