

Project Update: March 2017

The research was carried out in two distinct phases. The first was preparatory work, which was conducted at Salama conservancy area in mid-January 2017. This consisted of reviewing the existing academic literature on human-cheetah/wildlife conflict and community conservation, as well as available grey literature on the Athi Kapiti area. Communication with local contacts in entire Kapiti region was initiated during this period. We also contacted various institutions including Africa Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and Action for Cheetah Kenya (ACK).

Secondly, discussions and interviews were conducted with staff and members of these organisations, and through this process the research became localised and focused on the Kapiti region/ outside Nairobi National Park (NNP). With further consultation, more local contacts for Athi Kapiti were established, and interviewed accordingly.

To assist in conflict mitigation we conducted 30 random interviews with key informants, elders and the staff of conservation and development organisations in the area between January and February 2017 in the community to test perception vs actual predator visitation. We found that people's perception of the frequency of visitation is correct. Half of livestock killed by predators in the past year were attributed to night time losses. Larger frequencies of daytime losses were related to high numbers killed by wild dogs on four occasions.

Many of the new settlers in the area plant crops - primarily maize and beans. The crop raiding species also most frequently invade the shamba (property on which crops are planted). We investigated 25 shambas that reported frequent threats by predators and loss of crops. Interestingly, even though we did not receive reports of livestock loss from these people in 2016 18 of the interviewees responded that they had indeed incurred livestock loss to predators in the past year. Three of the interviewees believed the responsible predator was a cheetah, two of which believed the cheetah came to the boma at night (figure below). Despite several years of intense KWS/community work in the area, and near extirpation of cheetahs, people still perceive the cheetah as a great threat to livestock in the boma.

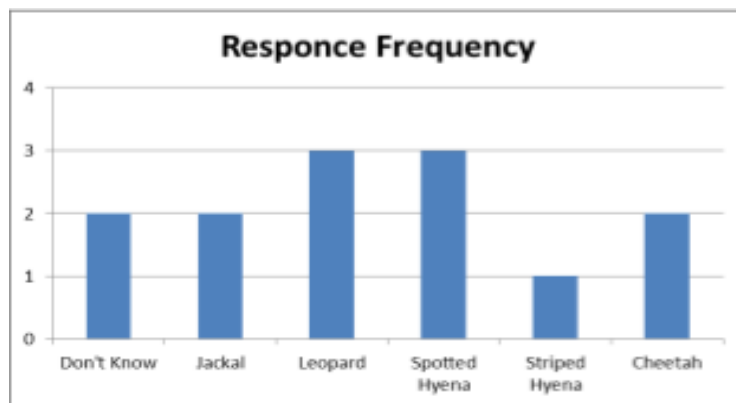


Figure : Reported Livestock Loss in Past Year: Predators believed to have caused livestock loss inside boma in past year. Ten respondents had livestock losses in the boma, but one stated both cheetah and spotted hyena and another stated jackal, cheetah and striped hyena. None of these conflicts were previously reported to ACK or verified by Field Officers.

Note : We shall continue with more field surveys before we hold a training workshop in the following months.