

Project Update: May 2008

The wet season (Dec –April) is a critical period for Niassa residents as they protect their crops, from warthog, baboon and elephant. It is also the peak period for lion attacks. Research assistant, Euzebio Waiti, radiotracked lions from his field in Mbamba Village throughout the rains in 2008. A radiomarked male lion and a pride of six females were regularly heard.

The male killed a domestic cat in the village in February. Fortunately, no attacks of humans have occurred. 43 interviews were conducted in the fields; 62% of interviewees had seen signs of lions (roars, tracks, sightings), 15 people had seen lions and 10 of these sightings were at night. Five warthogs were reportedly killed by lions in the fields. This supports our hypothesis that lions are entering the fields due to the high prey density. High risk factors were assessed: 38% of interviewees slept in the open with no protection, and 82% walked alone at night.