



Governors Guide to March in Masai Mara

March is a quieter month in the Mara, less people about mean you have more wilderness to yourself to explore. With the first few drops of rain the Mara springs into life. The rain falls in late afternoon and evenings, making for cosy evenings in camp. The changing weather patterns bring spectacular sunrises and sunsets making for some wonderful photographic opportunities.

Whilst out on the plains the first **wildflowers** like these beautiful fireball lilies begin to bloom.



In camp the Warburgia trees are fruiting which draws many **elephant** families into the camps and the woodlands around the camps to feast on this fruit. We also see good numbers of elephant in the marshes. These family groups often have young calves amongst the herds and the males are often in musth looking for females in oestrus. We also see troops of **Sykes monkeys** foraging for Warburgia fruit up in the tree canopy above the camps. With the elephant passing through camp the resident **mongoose** families spring into action scratching about in the elephant dung looking for insects to feed on.

There is a plethora of baby animals about from **warthogs** to, **elephants**, **hyenas** to **zebras** and lots of **eland** calves amongst the big herds. **Giraffe** also give birth at this time of year. **Hippos** give birth and from camp we often have sightings of mothers and tiny hippo calves on the riverbanks and quiet bends of the Mara River. There are literally babies everywhere even the **genet cat** who took up residence at Il Moran had kittens in March last year which she hid near the bar tent and we had sightings of **Serval kittens** out on the plains.



March is the month for the first big **annual migration** of the year when **zebra** and **wildebeest** arrive in large numbers (approx. 300,000) from the Loita hills and conservation areas and cover the plains around the Masai Mara. Wildebeest are also calving or have just calved by this time.



The **topi** and **hartebeest** calves are around 4 – 5 months old and the **hyena** begin their annual specialist topi hunt. We have been known to have sightings of **aardwolfs**, shy nocturnal creatures; this is a rare and special sighting.

With the start of the rainy season the marsh fills up with water and small rivers appear in the grasslands leading to the Marsh. **Catfish** come out of their mud burrows and find their way along waterways to the marsh and rivers. Fish eagles and storks feast on the fish. This phenomenon has also brought about some unusual sightings like one year when we saw a sub adult male **leopard** catch a catfish, rather proud of himself he laid the fish down and took a moment to adjust his whiskers, the catfish sensing his chance made a heroic leap for the nearest stream and made a way to safety pursued by the surprised leopard who never caught up with the clever little fish!

Marsh pride of lion often has cubs at this time of year and we have good sightings of them around the Marsh feeding on topi, warthog, buffalo and waterbuck. Before the mini migration arrives there is fierce competition between lion and hyena for prey. We continue to have good sightings of **cheetah** and **leopard**.

Birds

It's a great time of year to see the **European migrants** before they head off on their long journey back north. Migrant birds include **Abdim Storks**, **Woolley Necked Storks** and one year some **lesser flamingos** were seen in the Musiara Swamp.