



THE  
KAFUE LION  
PROJECT

**MONTHLY REPORT**

**NOVEMBER 2011**

## Summary

With the onset of the rainy season, fieldwork in November was limited. We spent some time in the Busanga Plains tracking radio-collared lions and had a few days with Dr David Squarre, ZAWA veterinarian, when we tried to capture and collar 2 more male lions. These attempts were unfortunately unsuccessful. The remainder of the month was spent in camp completing data capture and administration for the end of the field season.

## Fieldwork

### Collared lions

We spent the first few days of November on the Busanga Plains, hoping to locate the Papyrus male, but once again were unsuccessful in this endeavour. We did, however, locate and view the Papyrus Pride, Busanga Pride, Busanga males and Treeline Pride, with their 3 cubs. Although the KLP did not get to observe the 3 young cubs in the Busanga Pride, they have been regularly seen and photographed by guests and staff of Shumba Camp, which has allowed us to monitor their progress remotely. At the end of the first week of November the cubs were moved away from Shumba for the first time, and, by the end of the month, had been seen in various locations within a few kilometers of camp.



Figure 1. Busanga cub feeding on a lechwe carcass. Photo: Gilmour Dickson.

On the morning of 25 November, the cubs were seen feeding on a lechwe carcass with their mother – possibly one of their first meat-eating experiences (See Figure 1). The lechwe was one of 4 killed by the 4 Busanga females during a severe nocturnal storm. According to reports from Shumba, the cubs are 2 males and 1 female. Sadly, one of the Busanga females, F019, who was collared in 2010, has a severely injured and infected paw, and is struggling to keep up



with the pride. It remains to be seen whether she and the young cubs will survive the wet season.

On a more positive note, all 8 of the satellite GPS collars deployed in October are functioning and providing us with useful data on the movements of the collared lions involved. These movements are presented in Figures 2 and 3, with Figure 2 showing the lions in the Busanga Plains area, and Figure 3 those using the Lufupa area.

The Busanga female, Busanga male, Papyrus female and Treeline female have not rendered any surprises compared to last year's data. However, the movements of the newly collared Lushimba male are interesting, as he is covering a far wider area than the Papyrus male did in the same territory.

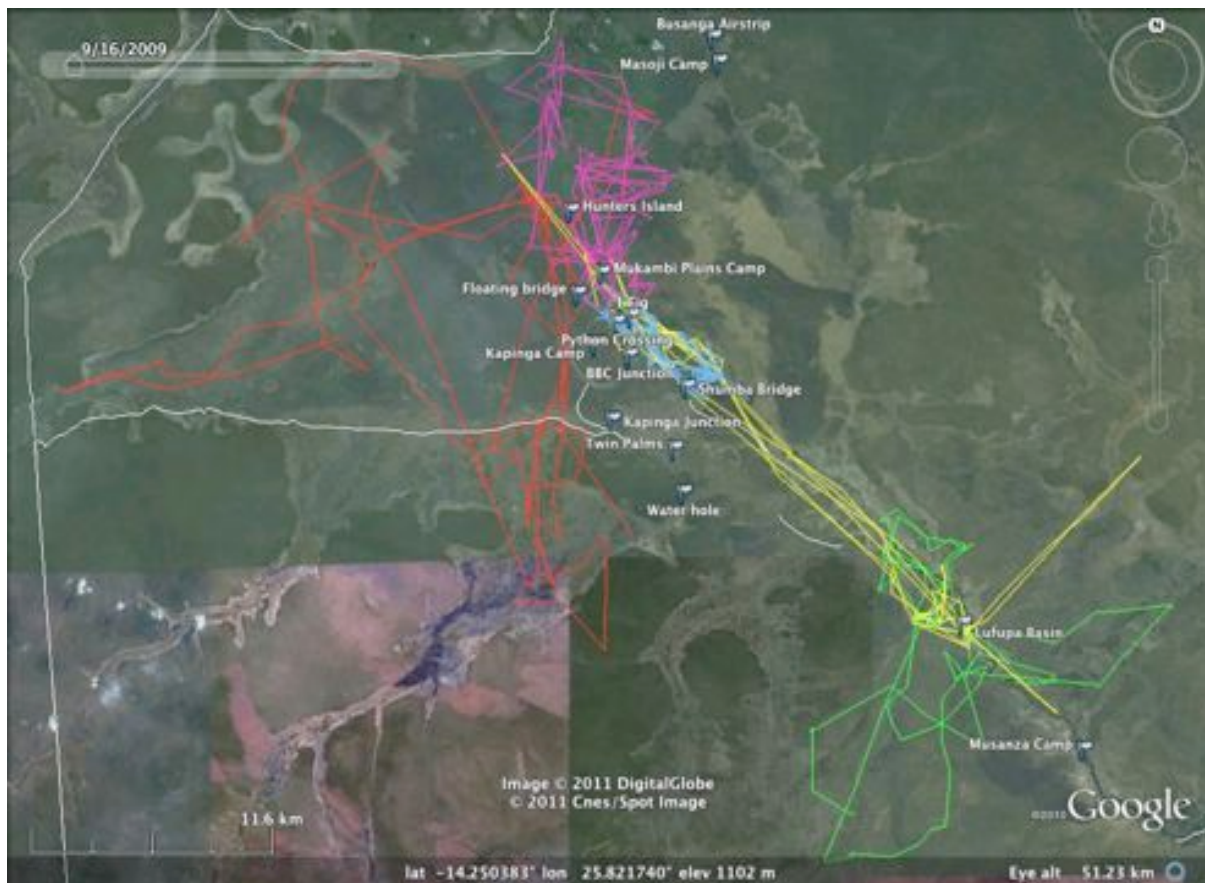


Figure 2. Movements of lions in Busanga area, October & November 2011. Red, Lushimba male; Pink, Papyrus female; blue, Busanga female; Yellow, Busanga male; Green, Treeline female.

In the Lufupa area, the collared male behaved as expected, spending most of his time within a few kilometers of the Kafue and Lufupa Rivers. However, we had a major surprise when we downloaded the data from the 2 collared females. Instead of being concentrated around the rivers, they had moved as far as 30km to the west of these permanent water sources, and, at times, were closer to the Busanga Plains than they were to Lufupa Camp. This brought them within 10km of the range of the Treeline female, something that we would never have





expected. Not only did they move into this area, but they spent more than 2 weeks between 20 and 30km from the river systems. Satellite imagery does not show anything remarkable about the area they were utilising, so the attraction remains a mystery at this stage. We plan, in the 2012 dry season, to try and drive to this area to get a better understanding of why these lions spent time here, and what they were feeding on while they were there.

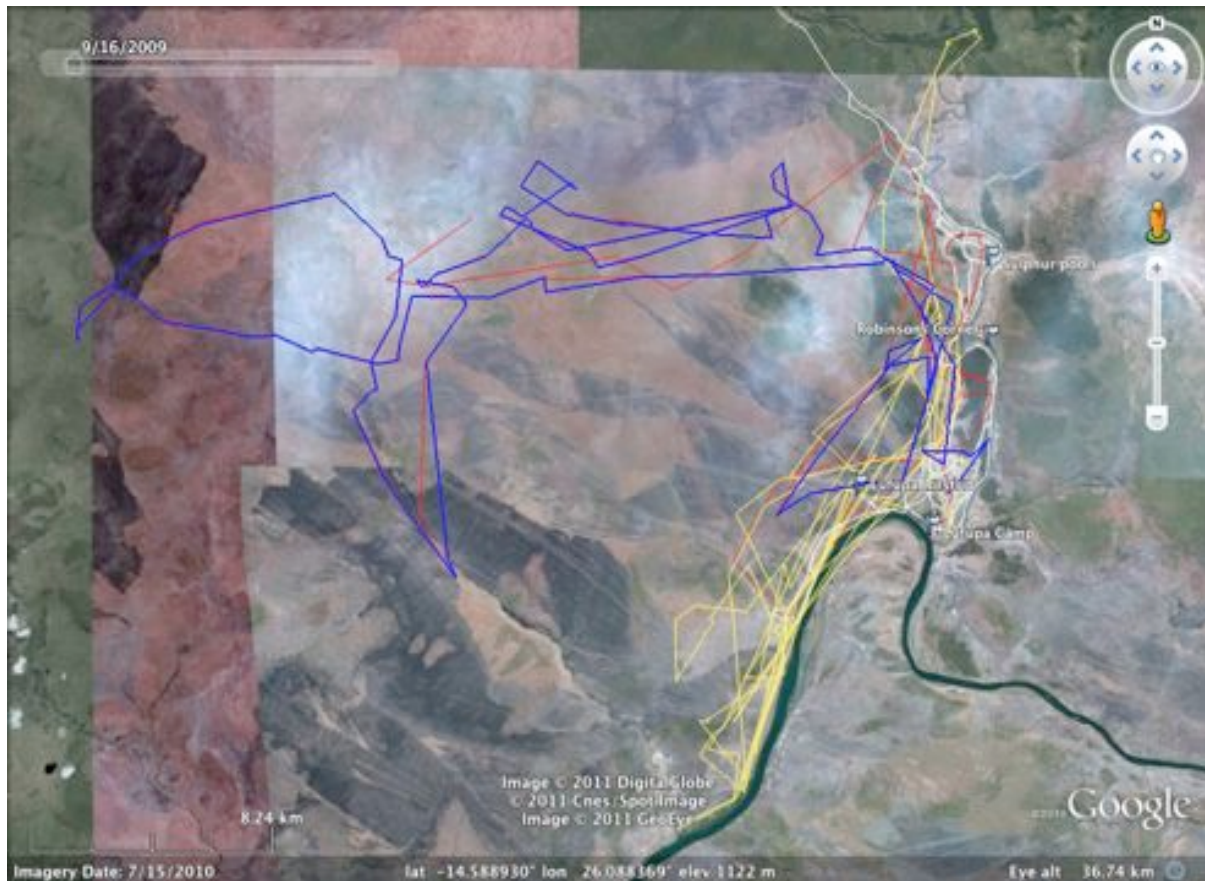


Figure 3. Movements of lions in Lufupa area, October and November 2011. Blue, old Lufupa female; Red, young Lufupa female; Yellow, Lufupa male.

### Snared lions

Sadly, we had reports in the last week of November of another snared lion, a male in the Mayukuyuku area of the KNP. ZAWA was alerted of the problem, and attempted to arrange a veterinarian to attempt to locate and treat it, but as far as we are aware, as of 30 November, the lion had not been treated.

### Work for December

With the wet season now in full swing, the KLP will cease fieldwork until the first week of May 2012. During this time, the lead researcher will be in South Africa attending courses at the University of Cape Town, as well as conducting data analysis on data collected during the 2011 season.

