



Governors Guide to May in Masai Mara

The grasses on plains are fantastically long, with the red oat grass in seed there is a red tinge to the plains in preparation for arrival of wildebeest migration. The days are warm with temperatures ranging from 15 – 31 degrees Celsius, rain falls mostly in late afternoon and evenings.

We tend to go out with picnics for longer game drives at this time of year.

We have good sightings of **lion, cheetah, leopard** and **serval cats**. Good sightings of cheetah up on the short grass plains where the Thomson and Grants Gazelles are found.



With the long grass in the reserve, the prey species disperse and lions have to travel further afield for a meal. The lions are feeding on eland, buffalo and hippos. There tend to be cubs in the prides and the Paradise pride focus their efforts on hippos.

Big herds of **elephant** spread out in Musiara and Bila Shaka grasslands with lots of calves in these family herds feeding on grasses. Elephants feed and bathe in Musiara Marsh. There is a large presence of Males some a little testy and in musth but mostly happy to eat alongside the females and families, there is some mating occurring.

Giraffe are present in the woodlands between the camps with lots of calves in the family units. Giraffe are frequent visitors to all the Governors Camps.



There are **waterbuck** with young calves, **impala**, **bushbuck** and **baboons** in the forest margins close to the Marsh. **Warthog** seem to be everywhere with males busy sparring for females. Sows have piglets of 7 months old.

Good numbers of **eland** in herds of 10 – 40 individuals are seen out on plains with calves in breeding herds and large bulls flanking the breeding herds.

Good numbers of **topi** with their 6 month old calves out on plains. The large resident **buffalo** herd spends its days on the grasslands of rhino ridge where the grass is long and well suited to buffalo.

On Topi Plains there are lots of **spotted hyena** and their cubs, they compete with lion for prey and will also hunt topi at this time of year.

Birds

Great birding in the month of May. A few species hatch young chicks and teach their fledglings to gather the abundant insects. Hundreds of **open billed storks** around (they are inter African migrants) as well as small flocks of **white storks** stocking up before their long flight back to Europe.

We see **Woolley necked storks** (inter African migrant) and **green shanks** Eurasian migrants are seen on the banks of the Mara River. **Jackson widow birds** display their breeding plumage to females by jumping up and down around a specific tussock of grass trying to attract a mate, **red collared widow birds**, **white winged widow birds**, **fan tailed widow bird** and **yellow bishop** are seen in the long grasses of marsh, **blue flycatchers** are back within camp grounds breeding and **striped swallows** nest around camp if rains are late. And we often have sightings of the less common birds such as the **Leviellants Cuckoo**, **Marshal Eagle**, **Dark Chanting Goshawk** **Grey Headed Bush Shrike** breeding, calling and feeding their young and **Double Toothed Barbet** breeding. We see lots of **Grey Kestrels** on the termite mounds eating termites.

There are lots of beautiful **butterflies** around including swallowtails in the woodlands around the Mara River, and African Monarchs in the grasslands.