Relationship between Leopards (*Panthera pardus*) and Communities around Nairobi National Park

● Research background

Nairobi National Park is located just 10 km from the central city of Nairobi. Around this National Park there a lot of conflicts between wildlife and communities. From my previews study, livestock predation by leopards is very serious in Kenya. The lion, hyena and leopard were responsible for over 75% of the predation problem for the years 2000-2007. The leopard has not been studied yet in this context due to their solitary and nocturnal behavior. Moreover the number of leopards in NNP is not known. For communities, the leopard is a problem animal however for tourist it is a very attractive animal.

Leopard cub (about 10 days old),
His mother was killed by a community.

● Research purpose and aim

To identify leopard predation behavior, their food preference and their movement, which can hopefully lead us to new ideas for the mitigation and solution of conflicts.

The park faces Nairobi city, has a boundary with an urban style residential area and the southern part is not fenced and surrounded by both traditional Maasai land and commercial ranches. The number of livestock predation is increasing. In one example, on September 2006, a leopard cub was brought to Nairobi Animal Orphanage because her mother had been killed by a community. In addition since 1977 Kenya banned wildlife hunting such as trophy, subsistence hunting and culling. It makes for more serious challenges in finding mitigations of human-wildlife conflicts. It is important for all stakeholders around NNP to know about the behaviour of the leopard.Results and achievements by fieldwork

At the beginning, the idea of wildlife conservation in Kenya was imported from Western Countries. The issue of
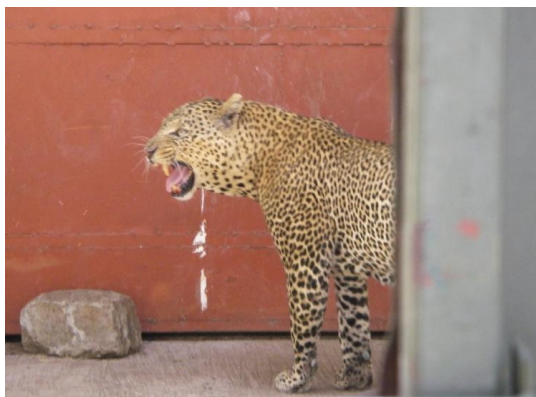
Human-Wildlife Conflicts become a serious problem and people realized the importance of Conservation Education for the people who share the area with wildlife (co-existence) in same ecosystem. In this study I captured a leopard in NNP and put a GPS collar on it. The leopard was a young female and from this we suppose that her parents and at least a sibling continue to inhabit somewhere close by. And from the GPS collar we will be able to track the positioning and movement of the leopard. It is very useful information for both KWS and communities. Moreover I visited sites of livestock predations. I conducted interviews and it was possible to know the status of the problems. It is difficult to observe leopards directly however they do give us some direction through the observation of spoor, scratches on trees and the left over of their baits.

Box trap at Nairobi National Park

Putting GPS collar on

An old leopard which was captured at Nakuru was recognized as a problem animal. It was brought to Nairobi.

● Implications and impacts on future research

To capture leopard makes clear a lot of the characteristics and behavior of leopard. Hereafter it is possible to monitor and pursue it from its GPS collar. Data analysis makes it clear how the leopard comes close to communities, as well as their predation pattern and behavior. Also by analyzing their feces and hair I can know the ratio of predation between wildlife and livestock. And form interviews of communities, I would like to discern their attitude towards the leopard, and how they adapt their life and relationship to contact with wildlife.