



## *Linking Communities, Tourism & Conservation*

Ecotourism Kenya promotes responsible tourism practices within the tourism industry. This entails encouraging the adoption of best practices in the use of tourism resources, working with local communities and managing wastes and emissions.

The Ecotourism Kenya Eco-Rating Scheme judges tourism facilities against various Sustainable Tourism Measures and awards either a Bronze, Silver or Gold rating.

## *Porini Mara Camp*



**Porini Mara Camp has been awarded a Gold Eco-Rating.**

See below for Ecotourism Kenya's full report:

### **Environmental Criteria**

#### **Environmental management**

Porini Mara Camp has a comprehensive Environmental policy formulated through a consultative process involving stakeholders, management and staff. Emphasis is put on responsible and sustainable tourism, local community benefits and environmental management of resources such as land, water, energy and waste. The facility has a clear environmental management system with monitoring action plans in resource use (water, and waste). The records are analyzed based on bed occupancy.

#### **Environmental conservation**

Porini Mara Camp is built on low environmental footprint; it blends well with the local surroundings. The guest tents are semi-permanent made of beige canvas tents and erected on wooden platforms. The facility is unfenced which allows wildlife to wander freely. The natural vegetation is relatively undisturbed with pathways sand put on the pathways to demarcate the way. The facility sensitizes and car-pools its clients during transfers and game drives as a measure reduce on its carbon foot print.

Through Gamewatchers Safaris, Porini Mara Camp spearheaded formation of OI Kinyei conservancy. The camp has continued to support the development of the Conservancy. In 2012, the management through the camp established the Environmental and Social Management Master Plan for the Conservancy (2012 - 2017) Growth of the conservancy has been realized through the expansion from 16, 500 acres in 2012 to the current 19,000 acres. In addition the Camp has also employed 18 game scouts and a chief warden to monitor the Conservancy.

The conservancy works closely with Reserve rangers specifically in wildlife monitoring and reporting on any incidences related to wildlife security and protection.

Porini Mara Camp is a partner in Mara-Naboisho Lion Project - a research project in collaboration with the International Research Institute (ILRI), the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and Danish Zoological Society (DSZ) to collar lions in order to monitor and understand their ecology, space utilization, demography and pride compositions. It also involves monitoring mortality and reproduction and documenting the various sources of mortality in each pride area. This initiative is implemented through clients and guests.

The camp also supports the Mara-Cheetah project and Living with the Lions through creating guest awareness on the initiative. The guides sensitize the clients in addition to having room information sheets in the tents information packs.

## **Waste management**

### **Waste water management**

Grey water from the guest kitchen and staff kitchen is managed through a two compartment grease trap to filter fats and oils before draining into a soak pit. The grease traps are cleaned every two weeks. Grey waste water for the staff quarters, guest tents and public areas is managed through soak-pits.

Black effluent from the guest tents and public areas is managed through septic tanks. Biological enzymes are used in the septic tanks to enhance sludge digestion.

### **Solid waste management**

Waste separation (paper, plastics, metals and glass) is conducted at source. The waste is later put in larger waste collection bins for further segregation before final disposal to recyclers through Game watchers in Nairobi. Organic waste is managed through compost system. The section is well enclosed to keep off scavengers. In addition, re-usable 18litre dispensers are used to supply water within the facility. Water for drinking in the guest tents is put in re-used wine bottles decorated with beads.

In efforts to promote waste reduction, water in the guest tents is served in re-used wine glass bottles which are decorated using beads. During game drives guests are issued with refillable aluminum bottles for water drinking.

### **Pollution**

The camp uses low light emitting bulbs in the guest tents and around the facility to reduce on light pollution.

## **Resource management**

### **Energy management**

Porini Mara Camp is powered by low output solar power panels. Each guest tent has a 45watts panel fixed with battery system and specifically used lighting. The restaurant, guest kitchen and offices are fixed with approximately 9 panels totaling to about 400 watts used to run refrigerants and as central charging system.

The camp obtains its firewood for cooking at the staff quarters and lighting its one (1) water heating kuni boiler from *Kakuzi Limited*. The firewood obtained is approximately 5 tones and lasts for 3 – 4 months. Charcoal briquettes are used for oven baking –sourced from Chardust Limited Approximately one (1) bag is consumed in a week. Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is used for cooking at the guest kitchen.

Guests are briefed on energy conservation on arrival and through information folders in the guest tents while staff is sensitized through staff meetings and departmental briefings. Energy saving bulbs and light emitting diodes are installed throughout the facility for power conservation. Further, the camp has a charcoal fridge / cooler for storing its vegetables. Drip irrigation is used to water the fridge – an initiative meant to ensure water conservation.

### **Water management**

The camp obtains its water from a borehole located within the conservancy. The water is pumped and stored in three (3) reservoir tanks with an average capacity of 11,400 liters. Water meters have been installed in the three tanks to monitor the water consumption. Additionally, the facility has 100 liter rain water harvesting tank and obtains fresh water for drinking and cooking from Nkoilale borehole. At least 1,200 Liters of water is obtained on weekly basis. Water usage recording is done on daily basis.

Guests are sensitized about water conservation and limited to using ‘safari showers’ - 20 liters refillable buckets showers - aimed at water conservation. In addition, guests are encouraged to re-use their towels through “towel-talks” as a means of conserve water. Staff is sensitized during regular briefings. The guest toilets are fitted with dual flush cisterns to reduce on water usage.

## **Purchasing and supplies**

### **Environmental consideration**

Purchases for the facility are done centrally and bought in bulk to reduce on packaging while guest food is bought on demand.

### **Chemical use**

LPG is well secured in a contained structure for safety reasons. Gas is bought in 50 kg and 12kg cylinders. Fuel (diesel) storage area is properly contained to prevent accidental spillage to the environment. The fuel is stored in 200 liters reservoirs.

The camp uses biodegradable bathroom amenities from *Ubuntu* in the guest tents. The chemicals are accompanied by Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) records and usage demonstrated by supplier.

## **Health and safety**

### **Environmental Health and Safety**

Porini Mara Camp has a health and safety policy committed to ensuring a safe and healthy work environment for staff and guests and compliance with legal requirements.

The camp has undergone Health Inspection and issued with a Health Inspection Certificate while medical check-ups for food and beverage handlers are up to date in compliance with *Food, Drugs, and Chemical substances Act. Cap 254*. In addition, there are documented emergency procedures to enhance safety preparedness. The facility is linked to Flying Doctors service for emergency evacuations. Staffs are referred to Nkoilale Clinic for medical care. A team of staff has been trained on fire safety and first aid training and well equipped first aid kits are available at the main office and game drive vehicles.

### **Occupational Health and Safety**

Fire-fighting equipment including fire extinguishers and fire blankets at the kitchen are serviced and strategically placed within the facility. Fire assembly point is clearly and conspicuously marked within the facility and a fire alarm is also available. Sand buckets are also available to boost fire-fighting equipment.

The facility has conducted an initial health and safety and risk assessment audit in accordance with section 11 of *Occupational Safety and Health Act 2007* and a fire safety audit to comply with *Factories and other places of work (Fire Risk Reduction) Rules 2007*. The camp also provides PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) such as overall, gloves and boots to the repairs and maintenance staff.

## **Social cultural criteria**

### **Training and education**

The camp has an in-house staff training program where employees are trained on fire safety, health and safety, sustainability awareness, hygiene and housekeeping lessons.

### **Benefits to staff and local community**

Porini Mara Camp purchases from the locals where feasible, milk, honey and meat for staff meals is obtained from the staffs who happen to be the locals. At least six (6) goats are bought from the community on weekly basis. Formal agreements are signed in milk and honey supply.

About 90% of the employees are from the local OI Kinyei area. The employees were sought from the local community and trained on hospitality skills.

Through its corporate social responsibility (CSR), and the Porini Trust, Porini Mara Camp has the following initiatives;

- **Land Lease:** The individual land owners are paid via per acre of their leased land on monthly basis. The lease fee is increased at a rate of 10% per annum. In 2014, the camp spent approximately 35.05 million on land lease payment, bed night fee, village visits, and staff salaries and benefits. In addition, the conservancy management renders loans to the individual land owners on their lease
- **Lion proof Bomas:** Two lion proof bomas have been built at the cost of Kshs. 150,000
- **Bursary:** the camp has started a school bursary kitty for the conservancy land owners' school going children. This year 2015, the facility disbursed 1.1 million paid directly to the land owners children.
- **Sponsor at Koiyaki Guiding:** The camp sponsors local students to the Koiyaki Guiding School. Currently it has sponsored two (2) students and employed them on full time basis.
- **Renovations;** The facility supports local primary schools and in particular Oloiburmut primary school at a cost of Kshs. 90,000 on renovations.
- **Community sensitization;** Engages in community awareness and sensitization on conservation education majoring on tourism accrued benefits. In February 2015, the facility organized a trip of six (6) Maasai Community members to Russia for a week.
- **Park fee;** approximately 3.38million was paid to Masai Mara National Reserve as entrance reserve fee.

### **Cultural preservation**

Porini Mara camp has detailed room information folders with materials concerning the Masai Mara region and ecosystem, people and culture.

The guests are sensitized on the local Maasai culture and engage in traditional activities such as arrow and spear throwing. Clients willing to visit the local villages are charged Kshs. 1,000 invited by the camps staff to have an authentic experience at their homesteads. The monies are paid on monthly basis.

The facility décor replicate the local Masai Culture. Staffs dress in their authentic Masai regalia as a sensitization to clients on their cultural values.

### **Visitor communication and education**

Booklets and room information folders are available at guest tents respectively. Publications such as Africa Geographic magazines, Books on Kenya, Masai Mara National Reserve and its ecosystem, Birds of Kenya, Mammals and bird list are availed at the tents and restaurant section.

Visitors are briefed upon arrival on the camp's operations, and environmental values. Sensitization is also emphasized during meals times both by the management and staff. The guest tents are equipped with room information folders to brief the visitors on environmental conservation activities and initiatives. Room information sheets and flyers are strategically put on guest beds for sensitization / communication purposes.

### **Staff communication and education other recognition.**

The environmental policy is clearly communicated to the staff through, strategically fixed signage, daily briefing from the management and in house sensitization. The facility has staff committee which represents staff issues to the management.