

## Waiting for the Rains

*Equus burchelli*, the most common zebra, forms large herds on the plains of East Africa, based around a harem family structure.

This colored pencil drawing on lupa paper with banana bark depicts one such unit which I encountered in the Massai Mara, the northern (Kenya) extension of the Serengeti. The zebra in the center with his head down is the stallion; he is flanked by the four mares which he controls, and the one remaining foal. Undoubtedly, each of the four mares had dropped a foal, but only the one you see here remained.

The rains had been late and spotty, so it was unusually dry. You can see the dust and the ox peckers on the zebra backs. These grazing animals were getting no moisture from dry grass which they were eating, so they were forced to stay near the waterholes. That meant that the predators knew just where to find them, and the kill rate, especially on the foals, was very high.

Here you see the family unit scanning the horizon in all directions, on the lookout for the predators, and waiting for the rains.