

Master of the Plains

Nothing in nature is random, every weed and insect has a role to play in the greater web of life. And so it is with the Master of the Plains, the lion. This drawing is my attempt to sort out his part in the Great Migration on the vast grasslands of East Africa, the Serengeti and the Masai Mara.

The lion is the keystone or apex predator. He preys on the largest of the game, the zebra and wildebeest, which he shares with the Nile crocs and the hyenas which are in the border on the top right. The lion is not really fast enough to catch the fleet footed gazelles like the impala, although he will prey on the babies. The cheetah, which are in the border on the lower left, are fastest land mammals catch the adults, but since they have given up so much strength for speed, the cheetah cannot defend its kill and the mighty lion is often able to steal a tasty meal.

The magnificent male lion, who appears to be six years old, is one which I saw at Lobo (which means "rock" in Swahili) in the Northwest corner of Tanzania's Serengeti plains.