

MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – MAY 2015

AREAS COVERED: MARTHLY / EYREFIELD / MALAMALA / FLOCKFIELD / CHARLESTON

WEATHER SUMMARY – MAY

	Celsius (°C)	Fahrenheit (°F)
Maximum temperature	34	93.2
Minimum temperature	12	54
Mean maximum	29.9	85.8
Mean minimum	15.3	59.5
Rainfall (mm)	16	
Days of rain	1	

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF MAY 2015

LIONS

STYX PRIDE = 11

1 ADULT FEMALE	12 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	7 YEARS 4 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	4 YEARS 4 MONTHS
2 ADULT MALES	4 YEARS 4 MONTH
2 SUB ADULT FEMALES	1 YEAR 6 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT MALE	1 YEAR 6 MONTHS
2 CUBS	±1 MONTH

MALA MALA, EYREFIELD
(11 sightings)

A very different month for us as far as sightings of the Styx pride go. During the month of May, members of the Styx pride were seen on 11 different days. The first sighting of which, was two days into the month when the five members of the core pride were found in the Mlowathi River, south of Lower Mlowathi crossing. The lions were moving south in the river, when they noticed two porcupines scurrying up the eastern bank. The lions followed suit and shortly thereafter a lioness captured one of the individuals within a guarri thicket.

The two young males were seen the following day, and rejoined with the core pride on the forth of the month in the lower reaches of the Matshapiri River. They were not the only lions in the river, as the seven members of the Eyrefield pride were located in close proximity to the Styx pride. The members of the

Styx pride stood their ground and ended up chasing the Eyrefield pride around during the morning drive.

This interaction between prides resulted in the prides both moving off, as well as splitting up. The two young males from the Styx pride were seen the following day around West Street pans, who then joined up with the core members of the pride, who were only seen two days after the interaction, as far north as Piccadilly triangle. After which they moved back south, to around Buffalo bush dam. This was the last time these seven members of the pride would be seen for month of May. It was also reported, by our neighbours to the north that the young subadult male was killed by the Clarendon males three weeks into May. The core pride will now consist of four females: two adults and two subadults.

The 21st of May, was a significant day on MalaMala for the Styx pride. With the recent news of the subadult male meeting his demise still fresh, the first sighting of the newest cubs of the Styx could not have come at a better time. These two cubs were seen with their mother and aunt, close to MalaMala main camp, in the Sand River. There was one more sighting of the cubs again during May, this time a bit further north on Gowrie Trust road, north of Track Past Stwise. On both of these occasions the cubs were seen with the two young females from the Styx pride, who were seen on three more occasions during May, two of which were in the company of the Clarendon males.

EYREFIELD PRIDE = 7

2 ADULT FEMALES	7 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	7 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 SUB-ADULT MALE	3 YEARS 3 MONTHS
1 SUB-ADULT FEMALE	3 YEARS 3 MONTHS
1 SUB-ADULT MALE	3 YEARS 0 MONTHS
1 SUB-ADULT MALE	2 YEARS 8 MONTHS

MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD

(9 sightings)

Keeping true to their seasonal presence on MalaMala, the Eyrefield pride were seen nine times during the month of May. More than double any of the recoded sightings of these lions in 2015 thus far. In April there were three recorded interactions between this pride and other lions - ranging from mating to being chased around. This interaction continued into May, as the members had a run-in with the Styx pride five days into the month, which sent them packing with their tails tucked between their legs. By the end of the first week of May, the seven members of the Eyrefield pride had all reunited with one another, after a brief stint where two of the males spent some time around West Street bridge and the rest of the pride in the Sand River south of the causeway.

Less than a week later five of the individuals were seen, three females and two males, around the old airstrip. The forth female was seen on the same day, in the company of the Jakkalsdraai males. The female was seen mating with these impressive male lions. The pride were seen two more times during May, around the middle of the month, one of which included seeing them on a sub-adult female impala kill, around the Tamboti thickets.

FOURWAYS PRIDE = 2

1 ADULT FEMALE

UNKNOWN AGE

1 SUB ADULT FEMALE

4 YEARS 11 MONTHS

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD

(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings of this pride.

MARTHLY PRIDE = 7

2 ADULT FEMALES

12 YEARS 9 MONTHS

1 SUB-ADULT FEMALE

4 YEARS 1 MONTH

3 MALE CUBS

1 YEAR 11 MONTHS

1 FEMALE CUB

1 YEAR 11 MONTHS

MARHTLY

(2 sightings)

All seven members of the Marthly pride were seen during May, in the last ten days of the month. Our first encounter was with the pride on the northern bank of the Sand River, around Matumi rocks. During this sighting the pride captured an adult male impala. The second sighting of this pride was the following day, in the Manyalethi River - at Paraffin drift.

CHARLESTON PRIDE = 3

1 ADULT FEMALE

10 YEARS 4 MONTHS

2 SUB ADULT MALES

4 YEARS 0 MONTHS

2 MALE CUBS

+/- 2 MONTHS

CHARLESTON

(6 sightings of the female; 4 sightings of the two male cubs; 3 sightings of the two males)

The first sighting of any of the Charleston pride for the month was of the two males in south west Charleston. These two males were seen twice more during the month, in the company of their aunt. The lioness from the Charleston pride was not only found with her two nephews in May. In the latter half of the month, all of our waiting finally, as we were introduced to the two newest additions to the Charleston pride. The Charleston lioness was seen with her two cubs, for the first time in the Sand River at Calabash crossing on the 22nd of the month. This new mom and her two sons were seen a further three times during the remainder of May, on both the eastern and western bank of the Sand River around Trollip's hippo pools. The last encounter found this trio feeding on the remainder of a kudu carcass, south of the aforementioned hippo pools.

TJELLAHANGA PRIDE=9

2 ADULT FEMALES

1 SUB-ADULT FEMALE

6 SUB-ADULT MALES

UNKNOWN AGES

± 3 YEARS 4 MONTHS

± 3 YEARS 4 MONTHS

EASTERN CHARLESTON, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, EASTERN MALAMALA
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings of this pride.

JAKKALSDRAAI MALES = 2

2 SUB ADULT MALES

4 YEARS 11 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN CHARLESTON

(4 sightings)

There were two less sightings of these two male lions during May, than in the month prior. These males are testing the waters in terms of dominance of the area, as over the last few months they have been moving fairly freely around the property. This month, of the four sightings of these young males - their overall presence was between Dudley crossing and Skukuza road, south of the airstrip.

During their last sighting of May, which was on the tenth, these two were seen north of Rattray's camp. They were not alone, and were found together with a lioness from the Eyrefield pride. During this sighting, on numerous occasions one of the male was seen mating with this female.

CLARENDON MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES

±10 YEARS 5 MONTHS

NORTHERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN MARTHLI

(3 sightings)

There were no sightings of the Clarendon males in the first half of the month, while during the later half they were seen three times. The first of which saw these two killing an adult male impala south of Mlowathi dam. The second and third sighting of these males were both in the last week of May, and with one of the young lionesses from the Styx pride.

MANYELETHI MALES = 4

± 10 YEARS 8 MONTHS

MATRHLY, EYREFIELD, MALA MALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

DOMINANT OVER THE STYX, EYREFIELD, FOURWAYS, MARTHLI AND
BREAKAWAY MARTHLI PRIDES

(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings of the Manyalethi males.

MATSHAPIRI PRIDE = 3

2 ADULT MALES

±5 YEARS 0 MONTHS

1 ADULT LIONESS

±3 YEARS 0 MONTHS

(11 sightings)

Introducing the Matshapiri pride, one which was first seen during April, with a total of five sightings during the month. Making their way onto the property from the Kruger National Park (KNP), which could explain their initial awareness to the presence of vehicles. This limited us to one at a sighting at quite some distance. The pride is very quickly becoming accustomed to vehicles, and definitely not wasting any time making their presence clearly known in May, during eleven sightings. They were named the Matshapiri pride on May 24th, as they were initially seen most frequently around the northern parts of their namesake river.

Other lions encountered

There were no unidentified lions seen during May.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIONS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

May	37
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LEOPARDS:

BICYCLE CROSSING MALE

13 YEARS 5 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN CHARLESTON
(3 sightings)

The Bicycle crossing male returned to his usual elusive nature, and was seen on three separate occasions during May. Initially he was found around the entrance of Sibuye drive. The following two sightings of the regal bicycle crossing male leopard, found him looking as good as ever over two consecutive days close to the end of the month. Over the duration of the month he was seen close to the eastern bank of the Sand River, between the central to northern parts of Charleston.

AIRSTRIP MALE

8 YEARS 11 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(15 sightings)

The Airstrip male, had the highest number of sightings of any individual leopard during May. He was seen a total of 15 times, between the eastern bank of the Sand River north of West street bridge and the northern parts of the Mlowathi river. On three of these occasions this male was seen with impala kills, the first of which he shared with one of his daughters, a cub of the Kikilezi female. This couple were seen together for two days, in and around a Jackalberry tree which they had used to cache an impala kill, both taking turns to feed off the carcass.

Two weeks later the Airstrip male was seen around the central parts of New fire break south of Fred's tree, with about a third of the remains of an impala carcass. Not even a week later he was seen north of Mlowathi dam with the remains of an impala carcass yet again. This last carcass was stolen from a younger male leopard, who had killed the impala a few days prior, we are not certain about how he came about the second carcass of the month either - kleptoparasitism does seem to be one of this males favourite traits.

CHARLESTON MALE

8 YEARS 11 MONTHS

EASTERN CHARLESTON, NORTHERN TOULON
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

WEST STREET MALE

6 YEARS 1 MONTH

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

HOGVAAL MALE**7 YEARS 6 MONTHS**EASTERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALAMALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

TREEHOUSE MALE**± 5 YEARS 5 MONTHS**WESTERN MALAMALA
(3 sightings)

This male leopard has made his presence well known on the western bank and was seen between West Street bridge and the northern parts of Kikilezihash during May. During the first sighting of the Treehouse male leopard, he was seen mating with the Dudley female repeatedly on the 9th of May. Over the course of the month he moved further south from this position, with the last sighting of this stately male taking place around the eastern junction of the northern and southern break of West street.

TSLEBE ROCKS MALE**± 8 YEARS 10 MONTHS**NORTHERN EYREFIELD
(1 sighting)

Maintaining his reputation of being seen once a month, around Mlowathi dam - which has been the case for the two months prior to May. The Tslebe rocks male was seen once during the month, at Mlowathi dam crossing on the 11th of the month.

PRINCESS ALICE PANS MALE**15 YEARS 6 MONTHS**WESTERN MALAMALA
(2 sightings)

It was great to see the Princess Alice Pans male in May after an absence of almost two months, although his overall condition in nothing what it used to be. This male was seen twice during the last week of the month between the track which leads from the booms to the causeway and the central parts of the old airstrip.

GOWRIE MALE**± 7 YEARS 9 MONTHS**NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

RIVER ROCKS MALE**5 YEARS 9 MONTHS**

(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

KIKILEZI FEMALE**13 YEARS 8 MONTHS****2 FEMALE CUBS****1 YEAR 6 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALA-MALA, WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY

(5 sightings of female, 3 sightings of female and cub(s), 17 sightings of cub(s) without female)

Of the 31 days of May, the Kikilezi female and/or her cubs were seen 19 times, during 25 different sightings. A majority of these were of either one or both of the cubs, without their mother. Of the eight sightings of the Kikilezi female during May - five were of her alone, while the cub/s were seen elsewhere. Two encounters we had of these females together, included them sharing a kill around Plank's pan.

One of the cubs was additionally seen sharing a kill with her father, the Airstrip male, around the eastern ramp of the causeway. She was seen feeding on the kill for three days, while he was only around for two of these.

TAMBOTI FEMALE**7 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALA MALA

(4 sightings)

During May, the Tamboti female was seen between the western bank of the Sand River and the Airstrip, over a period of ten days. Any evidence of the Tamboti female having cubs, seem to have disappeared - indicating that her cubs are no longer. This was confirmed when we received reports that they had in fact met their demise. Let's hope when she is ready for her third litter, that she will be more successful.

ISLAND FEMALE**2 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALA MALA

(1 sighting)

Over the last few months there has been a very evident decline in the number of sightings of this charismatic female. Eleven during March, eight in April and one during May. This is more than likely attributed to the fact that the Tamboti female is asserting her dominance within her territory, and making it clear that her daughter, the Island female, needs to start exploring elsewhere to establish herself now that she is fully independent.

MLOWATHI FEMALE**8 YEARS 3 MONTH****DAUGHTER OF THE MLOWATHI FEMALE****±1 YEAR 6 MONTHS**

NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD

(1 sighting of the Mlowathi female, 0 sighting of the daughter of the Mlowathi female)

The Mlowathi female was seen on one occasion during May, three days before the month. She was seen in the Mlowathi river, south of the dam.

JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE **15 YEARS 6 MONTHS**
CENTRAL & WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE **10 YEARS 5 MONTHS**
MALE CUB **11 MONTHS**
EYREFIELD
(2 sightings of female, 1 sighting of female and cub, 0 sightings of cub without female)

Buffalo bush dam was the first location where both of these leopards were seen, two days into May. The first sighting of this male cub, was also the last for the month. Four days after this sighting, the Ostrich Koppies female was seen on her own about two kilometres west of her previous position. The westward movement continued, as the following sighting of this female was once again further west from the previous one. However, this time there was a three week gap between sightings.

We look forward to seeing the Ostrich Koppies female's cub next month, as he will be a year of age.

MATSHIPIRI FEMALE **14 YEARS 7 MONTHS**
CUBS OF THE MATSHAPIRI FEMALE **±5 MONTHS**
EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings of the Matshapiri female; 1 sighting of the female and cub/s, 2 sightings of her cub/s)

Similarly to the Ostrich Koppies female and cub, the first sighting of the Matshapiri female was of herself and her cub on the sixth of May. Within a week of this sighting there were two more sightings of this cub, on consecutive days, around the southern parts of Clarendon dam road.

The first sighting we had of the Matshapiri female and her two cubs was in the first half of March. The next time she was seen with her offspring was almost a month later, where the Matshapiri female was seen with one cub. Again in May, only one cub was seen - we are hoping to see both again soon.

DUDLEY FEMALE **16 YEARS 7 MONTHS**
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(1 sighting)

This leopardess continues to surprise us, during her one and only sighting in May he was seen mating with the Treehouse male, north and west of the junction of Kikilezihash and the northern track of the old airstrip.

DAUGHTER OF THE DUDLEY FEMALE **2 YEARS 2 MONTHS**
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

EMSAGWENI FEMALE
MALA-MALA
(1 sighting)

5 YEARS 5 MONTHS

There was one sighting of this female during May, she was not alone and was joined by two other leopards. Her cubs. These three leopards were seen in the Hogvaal donga, between Hogvaal road and Eastern side Matshapiri, amid a granitic outcropping.

FLOCKFIELD FEMALE
CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON
(0 sightings)

11 YEARS 1 MONTH

There were no confirmed sightings during the reported period.

Other leopards encountered:

- **The Marthly male leopard:** (4 sightings)
 - As with April, there were four sightings of this male during May, all within the last ten days of the month. All of these were within 1 kilometre of MalaMala main camp.
- **The West Street male leopard:** (1 sighting)
 - One sighting of this male leopard during the 31 days of May. He was seen just shy of the mid-way mark through the month, in the northern parts of Charleston.
- **No ID males:** (7 sightings)
 - There were seven sightings of five different, unidentified male leopards.
 - One male around Matshapiri open area (this is the same male which was seen four times during April) and another on the central parts of Verreaux's loop.
 - One male east of Mlowathi dam with a fresh male impala kill, he was joined the following day by another unknown male.
 - One male on the western bank, south of the airstrip. This leopard was seen three times, during two of these sightings he was seen with the carcasses of two male impalas - which he was seen feeding off.
- **No ID females:** (5 sightings)
 - Five unidentified female leopards were seen, during the same number of sightings in May.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

May	28
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CHEETAH

Two individuals were seen during May, these are the two brothers which usually spend time around the open area around Clarendon dam, in the north eastern corner of the property. Of the seven sightings we had of these two males, five were around Clarendon open area. The two sightings which caused a bit of a raised eyebrow was the sighting of these two much further south, towards the central parts of the property - around the windmill. These two cheetah were seen in this unexpected location for two consecutive days.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED

May	2
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

Almost three times as many sightings of the cape hunting dogs in May, as there were in April. It is always a highlight when seeing these special canids, seeing them on more than half the days in a month is even more amazing. When examining the month's sightings, two were in the first half of May - fourteen in the second. A majority of these sightings were in a very specific area in western Eyrefield - which was proposed as a suspected den site. We eagerly await the day when this can be confirmed.

The pack which was seen on multiple occasions, is the one which has 13 individuals - and can be easily recognised by the older male with the floppy ears and shorter tail. This pack was successful on three hunting expeditions, in which one adult female bushbuck and two adult male impala fell victim to these tenacious predators between: Bicycle crossing and the northern parts of Gowrie trust road and Old Borehole road, respectively.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

May	13
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CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

May was a busy month with regard to the buffalo and elephant sightings. Sightings of buffalo were 94 in number, this was comprised of 225 bulls, five herds and 17 large herds. The latter almost double the number of large herds seen in April.

Yet again, the number of elephant sightings trumps that of the buffalo - by just shy of double. May had 176 different recorded elephant encounters, 39 bulls were seen. Two very noteworthy individuals spent a few days around West street bridge. In addition to the bulls, 151 herds were viewed - 22 of which contained in excess of 200 individuals. Of these 22 large herds, seven were estimated to have 500 or more

individuals in them.

OTHER INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

May is a month when the rutting season is most common around MalaMala, as a result we usually see quite a sharp increase in male impala fatalities. This was confirmed when looking at the monthly kill statistics for May - of the 19 recorded kills, 14 of which were adult male impala.

During May we were lucky to have a vast array of unusual sightings. Within the first week we had seen: a secretary bird, two ostriches, two honey badgers and three porcupines - two of which were attacked by the members of the Styx pride, one of which fell victim to their attacks. Two adult male impala carcasses were found, presumably having died during rutting - one of these carcasses was found and finished off by five hyena on New firebreak west of Campbell Koppies.

TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR MAY 2015

Lion	189
Leopard	81
Elephant	176
Buffalo	94
Cheetah	7
Cape Hunting Dog	16

MalaMala Big Five monthly analysis:

MAY 2015

	LION		LEOPARD		ELEPHANT		BUFFALO	
	Animals	Sightings	Animals	Sightings	Animals	Sightings	Animals	Sightings
1	7	1	3	3	2LH+3H+2	6	LH+10	5
2	12	2	5	4	LH+6H+1	8	H+13	6
3	2	1	1	1	LH+5H+3	7	LH+2	2
4	14	2	3	3	LH+5H	6	6	2
5	11	4	1	1	LH+8H+1	10	21	7
6	14	2	2	2	LH+4H+1	6	11	5
7	9	2	2	1	6H+1	7	LH+7	3
8	5	2	6	3	4H+1	5	H+5	3
9	2	1	4	2	LH+3H+2	5	LH+6	3
10	8	2	3	3	LH+4	2	14	3
11	0	0	5	5	2H+2	4	9	4
12	0	0	2	2	LH+4H	5	LH+4	3
13	9	2	4	2	H	1	LH+2	2
14	3	1	2	2	5H+1	6	LH	1
15	2	1	1	1	LH+2H	3	LH+H+9	5
16	13	3	4	4	6H+1	7	LH+3	2
17	6	2	4	2	3H+1	4	LH	1
18	3	1	5	3	2LH+2H+1	5	LH+6	2
19	3	1	3	3	8H+4	10	LH+9	4
20	0	0	3	2	LH+8H+3	11	H+4	3
21	7	2	4	2	4LH+5H+2	10	LH+13	5
22	3	1	2	2	LH+9H	10	LH+H+6	4
23	7	1	6	5	8H	8	5	2
24	13	3	1	1	3H+3	5	4	2
25	4	1	3	3	H	1	4	1
26	7	2	4	4	4H+1	4	5	2
27	3	1	4	4	LH+2H+1	4	19	4
28	7	3	3	3	6H+1	7	LH+6	2
29	7	2	6	5	H	1	LH+2	2
30	3	1	1	1	4H+2	5	9	1
31	5	1	2	2	2LH+H	3	LH+11	3
Total	189	48	99	81	22LH+129H +39	176	17LH+5H +225	94

Note: LH of elephant seen 22/05/2015, LH buffalo (seen 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19/05/2015

elephant herds <30 = H, >30 = LH; buffalo herds <200 = H, >200 = LH

MalaMala Kill Analysis**May 2015**

	Lions	Leopards	Cape hunting dog	Cheetah	Total
Impala	5	7	2		14
Duiker					
Klipspringer					
Buffalo					
Bushbuck			1		1
Warthog	1				1
Nyala					
Waterbuck					
Wildebeest					
Kudu	1				1
Giraffe					
Other	1			1	2
Total	8	7	3	1	19