

MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – April 2011

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

WEATHER SUMMARY

	April-11
Maximum temperature (°C)	
Minimum temperature (°C)	
Mean maximum (°C)	
Mean minimum (°C)	
Rainfall (mm)	
Days of rain	

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF April 2011

LIONS

STYX PRIDE = 9

1 ADULT FEMALES	15 YEARS 7 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 2 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	7 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 SUB MALE	3 YEARS 1 MONTH
1 SUB FEMALE	3 YEARS
4 CUBS	4 MONTHS
MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD (24 sightings)	

The Styx pride continues to be the pride that we see the most on MalaMala. With the young cubs now 4 months old, they are getting bolder and bolder each day. There were many sightings this month when all 4 of the Styx lionesses were present, as were the cubs. The younger lioness took some time before getting used to the young lions, but now appears to have settled down. During the last month the Styx pride was seen in the company of at least one Manyeathi male on 14 occasions, while the cubs were seen 13 times. With the young lions reacting very well towards the vehicles, the sighting has now been opened to 3 vehicles and we are also viewing them at night. This can often be a nervous time for both rangers and lions, as we wait to see how they react. These young lions have shown no negative behaviour which is a very good sign as we look forward to many more hours of quality sightings with this pride. One of the aspects which will be watched closely with this pride is the development of the sub-adult male. We did not see him at all during this month and reports from our neighbours suggest that he was last seen being chased around by the Manyeathi males. One can only hope that he managed to survive, however the future for the young male is not a particularly rosy one.

EYREFIELD PRIDE = 10

1 ADULT FEMALE	14 YEARS 1 MONTH
1 ADULT FEMALE	12 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 5 MONTHS
3 SUB ADULTS (1 MALE 2 FEMALE)	3 YEARS 10 MONTHS
3 SUB ADULTS (1 MALE 2 FEMALE)	3 YEARS 9 MONTHS
1 ADULT MALE (MARTHLY PRIDE)	5 YEARS 10 MONTHS

MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD
(12 sightings)

All sightings of the Eyrefield pride this month were of two of the adult lionesses that broke away from the rest of the pride. They were seen in the Sand River just north of West Street Bridge for about a week. They were successful in killing a female Water buck close to the river, and then a few days later were able to overpower a male kudu. The availability of food, coupled with the proximity to water and dense cover, allowed the lionesses to remain in the area relatively unchallenged. On 3 occasions during this last month they were seen in the company of the Manyelethi males, a sign that they have accepted them as the dominant coalition in the area. They were seen mostly on the Western Bank, bar for the week they spent around the aforementioned kills. We wait anxiously to see when, and indeed if, the rest of the pride joins up with these two lionesses. As the water dries up and the buffalo herds tend towards the Sand River, it will be interesting to watch the movements and developments of the Eyrefield, as last year they proved to be very effective hunters of the big bovines.

SELATI PRIDE = 14

1 ADULT FEMALES	12 YEARS 5 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	8 YEARS 4 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	8 YEARS 2 MONTHS
2 CUBS	3 YEARS 2 MONTHS
4 CUBS	3 YEARS 1 MONTH
3 CUBS	2 YEAR 10 MONTHS
WESTERN CHARLESTON (0 sighting)	

There were no sightings of this pride this month.

CHARLESTON PRIDE = 4

1 ADULT FEMALES	14 YEARS 8 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALES	6 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	6 YEARS 3 MONTHS
1 FEMALE CUB	18 MONTHS
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON (0 sightings)	

There were no sightings of this pride during the month.

MARTHLY PRIDE = 6

3 ADULT FEMALE	UNKNOWN AGES
4 SUB FEMALES	2 YEARS 1 MONTH
MARHTLY (0 sightings)	

There were no sightings of this pride during the month.

MANYELETHI MALES = 4	+/- 6 YEARS 7 MONTHS
MATRHLY, EYREFIELD, NORTHERN MALA MALA DOMINANT OVER THE STYX AND MARTHLY PRIDES (19 sightings)	

These 4 male lions continue to dominate the Northern territories of MalaMala. These males continue to spend most of the month apart, and only all joined up on a handful of occasions. On one such occasion the Styx lionesses had pulled down an adult male wildebeest near the Mlowathi Dam. The next morning there were 10 lions in the area, all 4 Manyelethi males, 4 Styx cubs and 2 lionesses, all taking their turn to feed on the carcass. A well documented hatred between 2 species is that between lions and hyenas, this dislike was displayed one night when all 4 of the dominant males were together. One of the males began flanking something which could not be seen, he then ran off through some thick bush and a yelp was heard. A few seconds later we found one of the male lions with a hyena he had caught. The lion was wasting no time in crushing the hyena's neck and throat. Having killed it, the other males came in and took a turn to thrash the dead hyena around. The Styx pride is not the only pride that have accepted these males. They were seen in the presence of the 2 Eyrefield lionesses on 4 different occasions as well. This is a development which will be worth watching as we wait and see to what extent those lionesses will fall under the Manyelethi male's dominance.

TOULON MALES = 3
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON
NOMADIC

+/- 7 YEARS

(3 sightings)

All 3 sighting of these males took place on Northern Charleston within a week of each other. Under pressure from two larger males that have come in from the Kruger National Park, they seem to be moving further north towards Flockfield. The 3 sightings were only of one male lion, so it remains to be seen what has happened to the other brothers. One sighting consisted of the male lion happening upon a female cheetah that had killed an impala, unfortunately for the poor cheetah the Toulon male chased her off and enjoyed a free meal.

Other lions encountered during April 2011

- **No ID pride (2 females and 4 cubs):** (10 sightings)
This pride continues to move around the Western parts of MalaMala. The young cubs are growing fast and have become relaxed around the vehicles. This month was a very good month as far as number and quality of sightings of this pride. They were seen on 4 more occasions than last month. They were seen hunting and eating on an adult warthog. It was apparent that the young lions had not fed for some time prior, as they were looking a bit thin, as with most predators they move between phases of feast and famine. The feeding on the warthog was particularly fierce, although the adults seemed content to let the youngsters feed. A few days later the pride was found around Clarendon Dam, where they had killed a young buffalo cow. All the lions fed well and eventually left the carcass with very little meat for the scavengers.
- **2 Male lions**
Possibly the 2 males that have come in from the south and are putting pressure on the Toulon males. These males are full grown and pretty big. Both of these males have beautiful black manes. We only had one sighting of them. We followed them the entire width of the property along the Charleston/Flockfield boundary before they disappeared into The Kruger National Park.
- **2 Female lions**
These lionesses were seen on one occasion around Charleston Koppies in the south-eastern part of the reserve. As they were seen from quite a distance, it was difficult to

obtain a positive identification.

- **2 Male lions**

2 younger males were seen on one occasion around the windmill. Not much is known about these young lions, other than as with all young males, they are trying to avoid any conflict with the big dominant males in the area. Also only seen on one occasion, the lions began to vocalise, which in itself is a peculiar thing for young males to do, as it advertises their presence to other larger males. These two males were also left moving east into the Kruger National Park.

ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIONS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

April	23
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LEOPARDS:

BICYCLE CROSSING MALE

9 YEARS 2 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON
(2 sightings)

The Bicycle Crossing male was again seen only twice this month, which is consistent with the number of sightings from last month. On both occasions he was seen on the Western bank and the very western parts of it. It seems as if he has relinquished his prime territory to one of his offspring. As he is now getting older and less powerful, he will look to inhabit territories where the competition is not quite as strong. He used to be seen regularly on the Eastern Bank of the Sand River going south from West Street Bridge, however it appears as if he has given up this area and moved further south and indeed west. It remains to be seen which young male leopard will step into the prime territory, but there certainly are some tough contenders.

EMSAGWEN MALE

+/- 7 YEARS 10 MONTHS

EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, MARTHLY
(6 sightings)

The Emsagwen male continues to control one of the larger leopard territories on MalaMala. In his prime as a leopard, he spends a lot of time moving around this vast territory ensuring there are no others staking claim on 'his' land. He is seen less on the Western bank of the Sand River and now patrols the eastern bank as far south as the MalaMala/Flockfield boundary, and all the way west to the Kruger National Park. All the sightings of him this month were of him on the move. He's still as relaxed as always, and provides visitors with many great photographs.

GOWRIE MALE

12 YEARS

NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

AIRSTRIP MALE

4 YEARS 10 MONTHS

WESTERN MALA MALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(4 sightings)

The newly named Airstrip male used to be known as the Son of the Dudley female. Having matured into a strong young adult leopard, he holds dominance over the Western Bank. As with all the cats on the property, he was named after his first territory. As he is most often seen on and around the airstrip, it is fitting that he be known as the Airstrip male. He was seen mating on 2 occasions this month, again further evidence of his dominance. On one occasion it was with the Tamboti female, and on another occasion it was with an older female we don't see very often, the daughter of the

Ngoboswan female, born in 1998. These are exciting times for the young Airstrip male as the Bicycle Crossing male appears to have left a prime territory open for the taking. One can only assume that the Airstrip male will move into that area in the next short while.

KIKELEZI FEMALE

9 YEARS 6 MONTHS

1 FEMALE CUB

16 MONTHS

WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY

(6 sightings of female, 3 sightings of female and cub, 3 sighting of cub alone)

This female and her cub continue to patrol the areas around Marthly and the western parts of MalaMala. Seen on a few occasions by herself, it has become evident that the young cub is growing in confidence as she explores the areas where her mother leaves her while out hunting. The young female appears to be a little nervous when she is found, but settles down shortly after. Her mother continues to be the great attraction she's always been. Seen on many occasions hunting impala, with the vehicles hardly causing her to miss a beat. On one occasion she was hunting and getting very close, before being left to herself. When rangers found her the next morning she'd fetched her cub and returned to a large adult male impala she had killed the evening before. The cub then began to feed, after which the Kikilezi female dragged the carcass under some thick bush.

JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE

11 YEARS 5 MONTHS

1 CUB

10 MONTHS

CENTRAL & WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER

(1 sightings of female, 0 sightings of female and cub; 0 sightings of cub alone)

Finally! The one sighting we had of this female leopard is the first since November 2010. It has been a long while since we have seen this leopard and everyone was particularly relieved when she was seen. However she was not seen with her cub. The cub, now approaching a year old, may well have been left behind while the mother went out hunting. However, hope remains slim that the young leopard is still alive. As winter approaches we certainly hope that this female will be seen on a more regular basis.

CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE

11 YEARS 6 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

(0 sighting)

There were no sightings of the female during the month.

OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE

6 YEARS 6 MONTHS

1 FEMALE CUB

8 MONTHS

EYREFIELD

(6 sightings of female, 2 sightings of female and cubs, 0 sightings of cub alone)

This female continues to hide her cub very well in some very thick bush. Most of the sightings are of the female alone, the fact that there were no sightings of the cub by itself is testament to how well she hides her cub. She remains a very successful leopard, dominating the north western parts of MalaMala. She remains confident around the vehicles and this relaxed nature has rubbed off on her cub. On the occasions when the pair has been seen together, the cub has paid little attention to the vehicles, choosing instead to spend its time attacking and playing with its mum. No one ever wants to see young leopards not make it through to adulthood, but support for this young cub to survive is particularly high as the Ostrich Koppies female has already lost 3 out of 4 cubs. If she keeps on mothering the way she is now though, we have high hopes for the little one.

MATSHIPIRI FEMALE **10 YEARS 6 MONTHS**
EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of the female during the month.

DUDLEY FEMALE **12 YEARS 7 MONTHS**
1 MALE CUB **21 MONTHS**
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

(3 sightings of female alone, 4 sighting of female with cub, 4 sighting of cub alone)

This pair was seen relatively often during this last month, with the young male now towering over his mother. They are still found on the Western bank as this is the eastern part of her territory. Most of the sightings have been around Flockfield tower, where the young male was seen on many occasions trying his hand at hunting Franklin. However, his inexperience has come to the fore on more than one occasion as he tends to leave his tail sticking out well above the grass, giving his position away. Now approaching 2 years old, he has been seen more and more on his own. One would suspect that in the near future he will leave the comfort of his mother's care and face the reality of the bush.

FLOCKFIELD FEMALE **7 YEARS**
CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of the female during the month.

TAMBOTI FEMALE **3 YEARS 6 MONTHS**
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(7 sightings)

This beautiful young female continues to patrol the western bank, and was seen mating for the first time this month. As she approaches 4 years old, we are expecting her to produce her first litter sometime this year. This young leopard continues to be a successful hunter. On one occasion after about 30 minutes of stalking, she was able to catch a very large male impala. Unfortunately for her there was a hyena in the area, and no tree in the vicinity, whether or not she would have been strong enough to tree her kill is another matter. She dragged the kill into an area where she was protected by some Raisin bushes. However with a keen sense of smell the hyena smelt the kill and chased her off after only having only fed briefly.

Other leopards encountered during April 2011

- **Son of the Matshipiri female:** (2 years 9 months) (4 sightings)
He has finally left his mother and seems to be living around the Emsagwen waterhole area. Funnily enough he has relaxed down a bit more. Hopefully as his confidence grows with his independence, so too will his confidence with vehicles.
- **Son of the Dudley female:** (less common)
This is the twin brother to the newly named Airstrip male. He was seen once on south eastern Charleston. It looks like he is trying to move into the old territory of the Tjellahanga male, but there is stiff competition from a number of young males. It will be really interesting to see what unfolds this winter on southern Charleston.
- **Daughter of the Ngoboswan female 1998:**
This female lives to our west. She was born to the Ngoboswan female in late 1998 and was seen once around the new airstrip mating with the Airstrip male. Very relaxed in nature, she is

a large golden coloured female. Perhaps with the coming winter we might see more of her.

- **Female leopard from Sparta:**

She was seen just once, scent marking around the old airstrip. She doesn't look to be pregnant or lactating, so we must assume that the mating with the Airstrip male a few months ago wasn't successful.

- **No ID leopards:** (9 sightings)

There were nine different sightings of leopards during the month. It looks to be at least three never before seen leopards, and the rest are probably known leopards but no ID was given. The three new leopards were all nervous and disappeared into thick bush as the vehicles approached.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

April	24
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CHEETAH

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED

April	6
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This month was another good month of viewing cheetah, as we were privileged to 10 sightings of these majestic cats. Unlike last month, the 4 males did not provide the bulk of our cheetah viewing this month, but rather it was the female that used to have the female cub. This female moved the entire length of the property this month, with sightings in the north as well as right down in Jakkalsdraai open area, where she killed an impala only to be chased off by the Toulon male lion. She was seen by rangers and guests to be successful in hunting twice this last month, with impala being caught on both occasions. The first occasion she was able to feed on the entire antelope herself, while the second kill was stolen by the Toulon male. The four males were seen on 3 occasions, and always around Clarendon dam.

WILD DOGS

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WILD DOGS ENCOUNTERED

April	0
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There were no sightings of Wild Dogs during this month.

CAPE BUFFALO

Due to the late rains and the bush still being very lush with water all over our viewing of buffalo continues to consist mainly of the single or small group of males. However we did see 5 different herds of buffalo during the course of this month. The arrival of these herds was well spread out with 2 at the beginning of the month and two at the end with a herd moving through the property during the middle of the month. Moving towards winter now we expect the rains to cease and the area to dry up which means the herds of buffalo will move towards the river.

RHINO

The rhino sightings were once again brilliant this month with many different rhino being seen on every day. The viewing on the western bank of the Sand River as well as around the airstrip remains the most successful areas particularly in the early morning. Flockfield has also proved to be a very good area for rhino viewing over the past month. As the morning air continues to cool one often comes across them sleeping in the road which provides great viewing for everyone.

ELEPHANTS

Elephant herds continue to litter the Sand River, the temperatures have remained warm which is what attracts them to the water. As the water resources in the surrounding areas begins to dry up we anticipate even more elephant activity in and around the river. On many occasions this month we have been able to watch these large herbivores play around in the river from the deck while enjoying lunch. We have been fortunate enough this month to be treated to many sightings of some very big bulls whose displays of power are incredible.

TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR April 2011

Lions: 72

Leopards: 73

Elephant: 154

Rhino: 106

Buffalo: 70

Cheetah: 10

Wild Dog: 0