

## MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – APRIL 2012

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

### WEATHER SUMMARY

	April-2012
Maximum temperature (°C)	34°C
Minimum temperature (°C)	10°C
Mean maximum (°C)	28°C
Mean minimum (°C)	16°C
Rainfall (mm)	7mm
Days of rain	1 Day

\*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF APRIL 2012

### LIONS

#### STYX PRIDE = 9

1 ADULT FEMALE	16 YEARS 7 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	10 YEARS 2 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 3 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 3 MONTHS
2 FEMALE CUBS	1 YEAR 3 MONTHS
2 MALE CUBS	1 YEAR 3 MONTHS
1 CUB	9 MONTHS

MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD  
(18 sightings)

The members of this pride were viewed on 18 occasions this month and these sightings were generally concentrated around the northern reaches of the Mlowathi River but they were also seen around Piccadilly Triangle, Rhino Pens, Gowrie Trust Road and Emsagweni with single lionesses being viewed around the lower reaches of the Mlowathi and Matshipiri rivers and as far south as Styx Crossing. The 10 year old lioness was seen mating with the dark maned Manyelethi male on several occasions this month. She is still limping quite badly and often falls behind the rest of the pride. When the pride were in the south eastern parts of their territory, an unknown occurrence led to the oldest lioness (the mother of the youngest cub) getting separated from the rest of the pride. She was viewed on her own and was sporting quite a bad limp. We'd go on to view her on her own for the next few days as she slowly moved north nursing her injury. The rest of the pride including her cub had already made their way up to our northern boundary. She now appears to have made a full recovery and was seen at Mlowathi Dam at the end of the month. We saw these lions hunt on a number of occasions this month and we were also treated to some interaction with leopards as they chased the Airstrip male on two occasions treeing him once in the middle of an impala hunt.

#### EYREFIELD PRIDE = 10

1 ADULT FEMALE	13 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	10 YEARS 5 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	4 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 9 MONTHS
2 CUBS	7 MONTHS
3 CUBS	2 MONTHS

MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD

(28 sightings)

A whopping 28 sightings this month! A sure-fire, tell-tale sign that winter is beckoning. As the water level of our perennial river drops so the lions find it easier as well as safer to cross. It's a trend that has been in place for many a year, as we enter the colder months these lions will move into the heart of Flockfield on a more regular basis. Areas like Styx Crossing and Tjololo Road are some of their favourites. The dry season attracts more animals (buffalo in particular) to the banks of our 23km stretch of the Sand River. Perhaps the pride's reasoning for preferring the eastern side of the river during winter is that the vast majority of buffalo attracted to its banks are coming in from the Kruger National Park. Buffalo normally drink twice a day and during winter, when they are extracting even less water from their food, these trips to a water source become even more important. Towards months end we viewed these lions (barring the lioness with the two older cubs) in the company of all four Manyelethi males on the New Airstrip. What a treat it must have been for the three little cubs to have the rest of their family around...more things to play with! And one can only imagine what went through their minds when all the adults around them started roaring. During their time on the airstrip the oldest lioness was seen mating with the dark maned male first and then the male with the missing canine a couple days later. On a few occasions this month we viewed both the lionesses with their respective cubs at different points along the Sand River and let us tell you that viewing young cubs on wide open sand banks is quite special. The cubs also experienced their first river crossing under watchful eyes. Quite an interesting observation has been made with regards to the three youngest cubs and is one that will be worth monitoring... the darkest of the three cubs seems to be more reluctant to leave its mother's side as well as being very demanding constantly demanding milk and quite often getting its way! We are curious to see how this trait will mould its development.

**FOURWAYS PRIDE = 5**

**2 ADULT FEMALES**  
**2 SUB ADULT FEMALES**  
**1 SUB ADULT MALE**

**UNKNOWN AGES**  
**1 YEAR 10 MONTHS**  
**1 YEAR 10 MONTHS**

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD  
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings during the report period.

**SELATI PRIDE = 13**

**1 ADULT FEMALE**  
**2 ADULT FEMALES**  
**2 ADULT FEMALES**  
**2 SUB ADULTS**  
**4 SUB ADULTS**  
**2 SUB ADULTS**

**13 YEARS 5 MONTHS**  
**9 YEARS 4 MONTHS**  
**9 YEARS 2 MONTHS**  
**4 YEARS 2 MONTHS**  
**4 YEARS 1 MONTH**  
**3 YEARS 10 MONTHS**

WESTERN CHARLESTON  
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings during the report period.

**CHARLESTON PRIDE = 7**

**1 ADULT FEMALE**  
**3 CUBS**  
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON  
(0 sightings)

**7 YEARS 3 MONTHS**  
**1 YEAR**

There were no sightings during the report period.

**MARTHLY PRIDE = 12**

**3 ADULT FEMALES**  
**4 SUB ADULT FEMALES**  
**4 CUBS**  
**1 CUB**  
MARTHLY  
(0 sightings)

**UNKNOWN AGES**  
**3 YEARS**  
**1 YEAR 2 MONTHS**  
**10 MONTHS**

There were no sightings during the report period.

**MANYELETHI MALES = 4**

**+/- 7 YEARS**

MARTHLY, EYREFIELD, MALA MALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD  
DOMINANT OVER THE STYX, EYREFIELD, FOURWAYS AND MARTHLY PRIDES  
(22 sightings)

The past four weeks saw this coalition of brothers patrol their territory like never before. They covered a lot of ground and did so quickly, even heading as far south as Sibuye Drive in Charleston which incidentally is only the third time we've had them on our southern most farm. A lot of mating took place as well, seventeen sightings to be exact. They lionesses who they were seen mating with most are the oldest Eyrefield lioness and the young Styx lioness with the limp. Yet again it was the male with the dark mane who we saw mating most often with the black nose male coming in second. A memorable sighting of these males was had at Matshipiri Dam where they caught a male impala and proceeded to quite aggressively fight each other for it reducing the antelope to scraps in no time. As for the rest of the lions under their protection, they all seem to be in good health especially the newest three additions to their ever growing list of offspring.

**TOULON MALES = 3**

**+/- 8 YEARS**

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON  
NOMADIC  
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings during the report period.

**SUB ADULT MALES FROM THE EYREFIELD PRIDE = 3**

**1 MALE 4 YEARS 9 MONTHS**  
**1 MALE 4 YEARS 8 MONTHS**  
**MARTHLY MALE 6 YEARS 9 MONTHS**  
NOMADIC  
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings during the report period.

**Other lions encountered during April 2012**

- **Young Styx Male** (1 sighting): This young male was seen from a distance near Clarendon dam and looks to be in good condition.
- **Kruger males** (0 sightings)
- **Young No ID males** (1 Sighting): Around the 13<sup>th</sup> of the month two young unidentified male lions were seen near Ostrich Koppies on a buffalo kill. They were not relaxed at first which could be an indication of them coming from outside of the Sabi Sands area.

**ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIONS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)**

April	29
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## **LEOPARDS:**

### **BICYCLE CROSSING MALE**

**10 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN CHARLESTON

(1 sightings)

This large leopard was only seen once during the period. He was seen very briefly close to our western boundary. Once one of the Princes of MalaMala, he continues to push his territory further south and westwards with the increasing pressure from his son the Airstrip male.

### **AIRSTRIP MALE**

**5 YEARS 10 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALA MALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

(12 sightings)

We are still anxiously waiting for the Kikilezi female to reveal if she is hiding some new arrivals from us. Surely there is none more anxious than the Airstrip male who may enter the realms of fatherhood for the first time. His romance with the Tamboti female was briefly reignited when they were seen mating on the 25<sup>th</sup>. True to his nature this leopard continued to patrol vast distances throughout his large territory. As would be expected, when traversing these expanses he is likely to have some encounters of note. He had a run-in with lions on two occasions, both times managing to easily out manoeuvre any danger. The first event was when he was closing in on an impala during a hunt. A lioness from the Styx pride was also hunting in the same area near the Mlowathi Koppies. In a remarkable circumstance, both felids had set their sights on the very same impala! The impala can count its lucky stars that the lion spotted the leopard and decided to give up on the potential meal and teach the leopard a lesson. The next encounter was when he was on patrol around the Matshipiri river and stumbled upon the Eyrefield pride with a few Manyelethi males in attendance.

### **KIKILEZI FEMALE**

**10 YEARS 7 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY

(3 sightings)

All sightings of the Kikilezi female were in close proximity to the Main Camp around the Sand River. We are almost sure that she has given birth to yet another litter of cubs, but where she is hiding them remains a mystery at this stage. On each occasion that she has been found, rangers have tried their best to keep up and see if she may lead us back to her chosen den site. Thus far she has managed to elude us and she was lost moving through difficult terrain. We will be monitoring her movements closely in the weeks to come.

### **JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE**

**12 YEARS 5 MONTHS**

**1 CUB**

**9 MONTHS**

CENTRAL & WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER

(4 sighting of female, 1 sighting of female and cub, 0 sighting of cub alone).

What a great month for the Jakkalsdraai female! Who will ever forget the spectacle she gave us when she pounced onto two impala rams that were sparring and tried to bring them both down. It certainly is a circumstance that we can find no record of occurring before. It was during the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> when we found her hunting around her usual haunts of the Jakkalsdraai open area on Charleston. She executed all of her skills to have both rams in a deadlock for a few minutes before they all tumbled down and one of the rams got away. It was only a few days later when we got a chance to see her with her surviving cub, which we can now confirm, is a female. They were found in the Ingwe donga on the southern parts of her territory and we were treated to another special sighting as they both wrestled together on the open sands of the dry riverbed. The mother then left the cub behind as she went on a hunt.

### **CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE**

**12 YEARS 6 MONTHS**



who is still very playful. Each time he was seen around the Flockfield tower and gave us a fine display as he ventured about, enhancing his skills by scaling some trees.

- **Daughter of the Campbell Koppies female:** (1 sightings)

During the one occasion when we viewed this leopard, we watched her stalking and killing a female duiker around Mlowathi dam.

- **Male with the yellow eyes from the Mlowathi** (6 sightings)

This young and newly territorial male looks like he is going to grow to be a large male. He has impressive shoulders to match his build and is no doubt already a force to be reckoned with. He had a good month of sightings and we are seeing him more often. During each of the six occasions when he was viewed, he was scent marking and roaring intermittently which is a great sign. On the 21<sup>st</sup> he was found with a carcass of an adult male impala that he had killed.

- **Daughter of the Kikilezi female:** (2 sightings)

We are hoping that this young female manages to find a niche where she can establish a territory for herself in the coming months. She was seen hunting around the Two Toes open area and although she was not successful this time, it appears she is more than capable of taking care of herself as she still looks to be in excellent health.

- **Young male leopard:** (10 sightings)

As with last month, we again had some great views of this leopard who is fast becoming a favourite of rangers and guests alike. He did start to show some signs of establishing a more solid territory last month when he roared and sent another young male running, although since then he has not been seen roaring or scent marking at all. At this stage it is perhaps a wise decision to bid his time.

- **Son of the Sparta female 2006:** (1 sighting)

He was seen under superb circumstances, patrolling his territory and roaring under bright moonlight. He moved from the Matshipiri open area toward Buffalo Bush dam. He passed by numerous hunting opportunities as he went, but clearly had a different agenda as he showed no interest. He is just one of the male leopards that is cashing in on the disappearance of the Emsagwen male and picking up on the fragments of his large territory that are left behind.

- **Large Male leopard from Gowrie** (1 sighting)

Yet another male leopard that has extended his territory in the absence of the Emsagwen male. He has ventured farther south than we have ever seen and was viewed around Matshipiri dam. This is setting up for some interesting confrontations with the Son of the Sparta female 2006 and the Son of the Matshipiri female who are all competitors for that area.

- **Large Male leopard from Sparta:** (5 sightings)

A good month of viewing was enjoyed for this huge specimen. Each time he was seen around the Airstrip and in no way was he looking to venture eastwards to add some Sand River real estate to his portfolio.

- **No ID leopards:** (10 sightings)

#### **NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)**

April	20
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#### **CHEETAH**

There were four sightings of cheetah this month, each time being the coalition of the two brothers around Clarendon Dam.

#### **NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED**

April	2
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### **CAPE HUNTING DOGS**

Two sightings of these rare and elusive animals during the period. A pack of nine dogs were the subject of our delight and seen hunting and killing an impala at Mlowathi Dam. The same pack was seen later on around the Matshipiri River. Both were excellent sightings and we were lucky that they could be viewed in open terrain.

### **NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WILD DOGS ENCOUNTERED**

April	9
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### **CAPE BUFFALO and ELEPHANTS**

With winter approaching, we are seeing a steady increase in the number of sightings of the large buffalo and elephant herds. As all other water sources begin to dry so these large gregarious mammals start to seek the reprieve of the perennial Sand River. In the coming months we will be seeing even more of them. It will be fascinating to watch as the smaller herds band together to relish the diminishing resources of food and water upon which they so heavily rely.

### **RHINOS**

Due to the recent increase in rhino poaching we have decided not to include statistics for these animals.

### **TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR April 2012**

Lions:	73
Leopards:	67
Elephant:	157
Buffalo:	85
Rhinos:	n/a
Cheetah:	4
Wild Dog:	2