

## MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – August 2011

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

### WEATHER SUMMARY

	August-11
Maximum temperature (°C)	32
Minimum temperature (°C)	5
Mean maximum (°C)	26
Mean minimum (°C)	11
Rainfall (mm)	11mm
Days of rain	1

\*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF AUGUST 2011

## LIONS

### STYX PRIDE = 10

1 ADULT FEMALES	15 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	7 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 SUB FEMALE	3 YEARS 7 MONTHS
4 CUBS	7 MONTHS
2 CUBS	1 MONTH

MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD (24 sightings)

The pride had an excellent month in August. The four cubs are doing very well and growing up quickly. Their mother is in great condition and managing to feed the cubs, and the pride as a whole is also doing exceptionally well. We saw the pride on many different kills throughout the month, and all substantial ones at that. We found them with two adult male waterbuck and two male kudu kills, and even witnessed them make some impala kills as well. The highlight of the month was definitely when one of the rangers spotted the oldest lioness high up on Campbell Koppies. What initially looked like sleeping lions turned out to be a den site. The old female had given birth around the beginning of the month and this was where she was hiding them. Then nothing..... the female left the den site and seemingly never returned. She was spotted with the pride all day everyday and we assumed that she'd abandoned her cubs. This is not entirely unusual in old or severely stressed lions, so we thought she'd given them up in order to survive. At the end of the month we found the pride on a waterbuck kill, and from within the long grass we heard some squealing, and lo and behold two tiny cubs came stumbling out. The wily old female had not only managed to keep them alive, but had also succeeded in pulling the wool over our eyes for almost a month. The cubs were introduced to the pride and immediately accepted by everyone. Let's hope they make it to maturity, as this pride is in dire need of some good luck.

### EYREFIELD PRIDE = 5

1 ADULT FEMALE	12 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 9 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 2 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 1 MONTH

MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD (12 sightings)

At the beginning of the month we had many sightings of all five lionesses together. But as the month progressed we saw all of them, but they were often split up. Most of the month the younger three females were seen mating with the Manyelethi males, which is excellent news. By the end of the month the two

older females looked to be pregnant, again, very good news. All five females are happily living under the rule of the Manyeleti males, and the fortunes of the pride look to have changed. During the month the pride was seen on several buffalo kills, which were also attended by the Manyeleti males. There was no aggression outside of the feeding frenzy between the two groups, so it looks like the pride has a very bright future. And if the males manage to stay for a few more years, the Eyrefield pride could grow back into the super power it once was.

#### **FOURWAYS PRIDE = 5**

**2 ADULT FEMALES  
3 CUBS**

**UNKNOWN AGES  
14 MONTHS**

EASTERN MALA MALA, ESATERN EYREFIELD (4 sightings)

The small pride suffered a major setback last month when one of the female cubs was killed. It seems like they have taken to the road, moving often and spending little time on our property. There were two sightings towards the end of the month when the pride was being trailed by a young sub-adult male lion. He looked to know the females, and even though he kept his distance the atmosphere was very calm. At the beginning of the year we saw four sub-adult lions close to the pride, and they too walked past without so much as a snarl. And now this young male. This confirms our suspicions that these two females are a breakaway from a larger pride in the Kruger National Park. Perhaps even the old Windmill pride.

#### **SELATI PRIDE = 13**

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

**12 YEARS 9 MONTHS  
8 YEARS 8 MONTHS  
8 YEARS 6 MONTHS  
3 YEARS 6 MONTHS  
3 YEARS 5 MONTHS  
3 YEARS 2 MONTHS**

WESTERN CHARLESTON (0 sighting)

There were no sightings of this pride this month.

#### **CHARLESTON PRIDE = 7**

**1 ADULT FEMALES  
1 ADULT FEMALES  
1 ADULT FEMALE  
1 SUB ADULT FEMALE  
3 CUBS**

**15 YEARS  
7 YEARS 2 MONTHS  
6 YEARS 7 MONTHS  
1 YEAR 10 MONTHS  
4 MONTHS**

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON (3 sightings)

After not being seen for many many months, the pride showed themselves again in August. They were found on a large buffalo kill that they reportedly stole from the three sub-adult Eyrefield males. Never the less, the entire pride showed up to feed and we got to see the cubs for the first time. This pride has been taken over by the two Kruger males, who are also the cubs' fathers. Interesting to note was that the sub-adult female who is not yet two years old, is still with the pride and has been fully accepted by the two large males. Unlike when the Manyeleti males took over in the north, there was no bloodshed and she has lived a relatively peaceful life so far. The pride fed on the buffalo for two days, and then rested on the eastern bank of Calabash crossing on the third, before moving off MalaMala once again. Hopefully we will get to see more of this pride in the future, as the two males seem keen on moving more into central Charleston.

**MARTHLY PRIDE = 15****3 ADULT FEMALE****4 SUB FEMALES****4 CUBS****4 CUBS****UNKNOWN AGES****2 YEARS 5 MONTHS****7 MONTHS****3 MONTHS**

MARHTLY (1 sightings)

There was only one sighting of some of the pride members this month. The two separated females were seen with some of the Manyelethi males at Paraffin drift one morning. They looked to be fit and healthy and reports are that the cubs are doing very well too.

**MANYELETHI MALES = 4****+/- 6 YEARS 10 MONTHS**

MATRHLY, EYREFIELD, MALA MALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

DOMINANT OVER THE STYX, EYREFIELD, FOURWAYS AND MARHTLY PRIDES (17 sightings)

The four males continue to control and dominate all they see. They spent most of the month with the Eyrefield pride, and only occasionally would one or two of them head back to the Styx pride. The four were seen together on a few occasions, but for the most part they were competing for the young females in the Eyrefield pride. When the two newest members of the Styx pride were introduced for the first time, two of the males were there and one briefly interacted with them. They have been spending less and less time in the northern parts of the Mlowathi, which at the beginning of the year was where we'd always find them. This could be due to them spending most of the month with the Eyrefield pride, but it's more likely due to pressure coming from the north in the form of six young males. Reports are that these males are about 18 months younger and looking for territory. There have been a few skirmishes between the two coalitions already, and it looks like the lines have been drawn along our northern boundary. It is going to be interesting to see what happens in the next few months, and where that is going to leave the prides.

**TOULON MALES = 3****+/- 7 YEARS 3 MONTH**

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

NOMADIC (0 sightings)

There were no sightings of these males during the month.

**SUB-ADULT MALES FROM THE EYREFIELD PRIDE = 3****1 MALE****4 YEARS 2 MONTHS****1 MALE****4 YEARS 1 MONTH****MARTHLY MALE****6 YEARS 2 MONTHS**

NOMADIC (2 sightings)

These three young males have been separated for about three months now, and are managing to survive just fine. The Marthly male has recovered from his wounds and is looking enormous, the healthy young Eyrefield male is also in great condition and looking very powerful. The male with the half tail is still skin and bones, but somehow is managing to stay alive. I'm sure the other two males are keeping him alive, although he seems to be able to keep up with them. If his condition doesn't improve though, we might have to consider that he has a disease that is attacking him. Hopefully this isn't the case and that the coalition continues to survive.

**Other lions encountered during August 2011**



**AIRSTRIP MALE****5 YEARS 2 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALA MALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD (14 sightings)

By far the most active male, he was seen mating with both the Sparta and Tamboti females this month. This young male continues to take over, and is stamping his mark along the river between Main and Rattray camps. Then one afternoon we found him bloodied and bruised, with huge gashes along his legs, and his top lip split from tip to inside his nostril. He had been in a serious fight and from the look of things was lucky to have walked away from the incident in one piece. We found out later that it was a male in the north called the Marthly that he'd come to blows with. For the rest of the month the Airstrip male smiled through his top lip, but by the end of the month he was well on his way to recovering. The healing powers of these animals never ceases to amaze. Right at the end of the month we found him well out of his normal territory at Matumi rocks. We discovered the Marthly male leopard (the one who had given him the split lip) lying close by in the reeds. This male took one look at his opponent and moved off. Will he ever be taken seriously? And can he become the next big thing?

**KIKELEZI FEMAE****9 YEARS 10 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY (10 sightings)

For many months she has been elusive, but once again she has come back to her core territory in the lower Mlowathi. She was seen with a variety of kills, including a young kudu kill that was so big she had to leave it in the middle of the river where it was eventually stolen by hyenas. We saw her mating with the Emsagwen male at the beginning of the month, which is exciting news indeed. Hopefully this means that her fourth litter isn't far off.

**JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE****11 YEARS 9 MONTHS**

CENTRAL &amp; WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER ( 2 sightings)

Finally another sighting of the Jakkalsdraai female. Two times in fact. The most exciting news though, is that she is lactating. The first sighting we had of her was around Sibuye Drive, but then rangers lost her in some thick bush. The second was when we found her at Flat Rocks. That day we managed to spend 11 hours with her as she hunted and traversed many rocky outcrops. But again she didn't lead us to her cub(s). Where are they? And how many are there? These are unfortunately questions that will have to be answered another time. But the female herself is in top condition, so let's hope this generation is raised successfully.

**CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE****11 YEARS 10 MONTHS**

WESTERN EYREFIELD (0 sighting)

There were no sightings of the female during the month.

**OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE****6 YEARS 10 MONTHS****1 FEMALE CUB****1 YEAR**

EYREFIELD (5 sightings of female, 2 sighting of female and cub, 3 sightings of cub alone).

The female has been making more and more appearances with each passing month. Whether it's due to water shortage or because there are better hunting opportunities, she has been living along the northern stretches of the Mlowathi River. She made several kills this month, and each time she brought her cub to

join her. The cub is incredibly relaxed, and even took shelter from the fierce sun under a Land Rover at one sighting. She is playful and competent, and is being well taken care of. The Ostrich Koppies female looked to have a nasty cut on her foot after an interaction with the son of the Matshipiri female, but by the end of the month she was fit and healthy again. Let's hope this pair remains safe, so the legacy of the Ngoboswan female can continue to flow into more adult female leopards at MalaMala.

**MATSHIPIRI FEMALE**

**10 YEARS 10 MONTHS**

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD (3 sightings)

Every time this female falls pregnant she becomes elusive. Over the last few weeks we have suspected her to be pregnant, and accordingly, sightings of her have dropped. We did manage to get three looks at her this month, although none of them could confirm if she was either pregnant or lactating. Let's hope that if she does give birth soon it's at least in a location where we can see the cubs. Not only from a unique game viewing perspective, but also so the cubs can grow up in a relaxed environment where they are not afraid of the vehicles.

**DUDLEY FEMALE**

**12 YEARS 11 MONTHS**

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD (1 sightings)

She was spotted once with the remains of a Guinea fowl kill close to Rattrays Camp. From what we could tell she looked healthy and in good condition.

**FLOCKFIELD FEMALE**

**7 YEARS 4 MONTH**

CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON (1 sighting)

She was found at Cheetah Pan this month. Initially she was slightly nervous, but settled down as the Land Rovers followed her. What's exciting is that she is also lactating. Her cubs are probably stashed in the Kapen River somewhere, and try as we might we couldn't follow her long enough to find them. She looks to be healthy though, so let's hope she can raise them to adulthood without too much trouble.

**TAMBOTI FEMALE**

**3 YEARS 10 MONTHS**

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD (11 sightings)

The ever present Tamboti female stole the lime light on many drives this month. She was seen mating with the Airstrip male, fighting with a new young male, and killing impala and bushbuck. She loves the spotlight and is at her best when she's being viewed. She continues to mature nicely, and hopefully one day soon she'll produce her first litter of cubs. For now however, she continues to electrify the game viewing with her beauty.

**SPARTA FEMALE**

**13 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALA MALA (2 sightings)

She was seen mating with the Airstrip male on two consecutive days. The second day was particularly interesting because halfway through the mating session she spotted some impala and went off to hunt them. She managed to snatch a young male impala, only to have it stolen by a nearby hyena. While the hyena sat eating, the Airstrip male charged in and stole the kill back. After he treed it the pair then fed off the kill for the remainder of the day, and mated in-between feeding sessions.

## Other leopards encountered during August 2011

- **Son of the Matshipiri female:** (3 years ) ( 6 sightings)  
He continues to maintain an elusive presence. We often catch a glimpse of him, but as soon as we reverse to take a better look he dashes off. He was found in many interesting situations this month, one of them involving the Styx pride. They had killed a waterbuck, and while the pride was fat and asleep he snuck in to steal some food. The lions noticed him and charged. Luckily he managed to scale a nearby in the nick of time. Another sighting involved him chasing the Kikilezi female off an already finished waterbuck kill, only to discover there was nothing left.
- **Daughter of the Kikilezi female:** (1 year 8 months) ( 3 sightings)  
Proudly independent, this young female unfortunately wasn't seen that much this month. When we did find her she was usually around the Ngoboswan donga and the Sand River. This is the very southern extent of her mother's territory, and perhaps this is the piece of land she has been left to claim as her own. If so that's excellent news for us, as she will surely take after her mother and grandmother and become one of the best hunters and mothers ever.
- **Son of the Dudley female:** ( 2 years 1 month) ( 1 sightings)  
This young male was seen once with a severe injury. He looked in good enough condition, but at the time wasn't able to put much weight on his back leg.
- **Son of the Sparta female:** ( 5 years 5 months) ( 1 sightings)  
Another young male we haven't seen in ages. We found him at Hyena waterhole and followed him until he came to a rest at Buffalo pans. He scent marked along the route, looking very confident as he strode through new territory.
- **Young male leopard:** ( 13 sightings)  
This is the relaxed young male that has been seen many times around West Street bridge. He continues to spend much of his time in that area, although there were a few occasions when he was spotted in the Tamboti thickets. Once when he got treed by the Bicycle Crossing male. He continues to develop though, and has yet to take a serious beating from a large male.
- **Vomba female:** ( 1 sighting)  
She was found once crossing south over the Sand River at Matumi rocks.
- **Marthly male:** ( 2 sightings)  
This male was seen for the very first time on four years at Matumi rocks. He became territorial to our north and hasn't been seen again. On the two days that he was seen he was on a dead buffalo carcass. On the first day he successfully defended it from the Airstrip male, but on the second he lost it to the Styx pride. But not before he copped a beating from the lionesses.
- **Large male leopard from Sparta:** ( 2 sightings)  
He was seen in the area of a bushbuck kill that he had stolen from a young male leopard. He remained in the area until the kill was finished then moved west again off the property.
- **Discoloured iris female:** ( 1 sightings)  
She was seen only once to the north of Beaumont's camp. She looked in excellent condition and was well fed at the time.
- **Daughter of the Campbell Koppies female and cub:** ( 1 sighting)  
Last month we had a sighting of a female leopard with a young cub crossing our northern boundary. This month we were lucky enough to see her again and get a photo. It turned out to be

none other than the daughter of the Campbell Koppies female (born Jan 2007). This must be her first litter. She looks to have become territorial just to our north which is a pity, but it's still fantastic to know that yet another female has made it to motherhood.

- **No id leopards:** ( 7 sightings)

We had four unidentified leopards this month in seven sightings. There was one very nervous male, two relaxed males, and a slightly nervous young female.

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

August	28
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### **CHEETAH**

The four male coalition looks to have become three. We saw them just once this month, and the fourth brother was still missing. We are not sure if he has been killed or is simply lost, but either way it's a great pity that he's not around. The three remaining brothers looked in excellent condition and were well fed . The fourth cheetah seen this month was the young sub-adult female that split from her mother last year. She was found hunting around Wild Dog rocks open area. She was very lean, but out of the blue grabbed a female steenbok and enjoyed a filling meal. She looks to be surviving very well on her own.

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

August	4
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### **CAPE HUNTING DOGS**

There were no sightings this month.

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

August	0
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### **CAPE BUFFALO**

Buffalo have been seen everyday this month, although the herds have been slightly scarce. The herd in the north does come onto the property most days, but moves off again at night. The central herd has been stuck in the south due to the large patch of burnt area on Charleston, and so haven't been seen that frequently. We did have big groups of "dugga boys" from time to time, and in general the old males were frequent and often seen.

### **RHINO**

Rhino groups have been a bit thin on the ground this month, although they have been seen. We had mating rhino this month as well as an epic battle between two males. There were some smallish calves seen too, but for the most part the mothers were nervous and moved away from the vehicles as soon as they saw us.

## **ELEPHANTS**

We saw lots of elephants this month, literally hundreds every day. They come down to the river in their droves to drink before moving back to feed along the riverine bush. Many of the herds had calves of all ages in their midst, a sure sign that the populations are increasing. One sighting this month was particularly special, as we were fortunate enough to witness the first steps of a newborn calf. He wobbled, fumbled, stumbled and sputtered to his feet, before eventually joining the herd for his first feed. Another interesting sighting was of an albino elephant calf. The little guy had pure white hair and a reddish colour around his eyes. His eyesight didn't seem that great however. Three sub-adults were in constant attendance, helping him manoeuvre through the bush and over obstacles. His mother was very relaxed in our presence, and the calf seemed healthy otherwise.

## **TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR AUGUST 2011**

Lions: 64  
Leopards: 95  
Elephant: 146  
Rhino: 87  
Buffalo: 63  
Cheetah: 2  
Wild Dog: 0

## **OTHER SIGHTINGS OF INTEREST FOR AUGUST 2011**

- Black rhino
- Pangolin.
- Almost daily Honey badger sightings
- Many Serval sightings
- Cape clawless otter
- Yellow-billed kites returning