

MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – AUGUST 2012

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

WEATHER SUMMARY

Maximum temperature (°C)	34°C
Minimum temperature (°C)	5°C
Mean maximum (°C)	28.9°C
Mean minimum (°C)	10°C
Rainfall (mm)	0 mm
Days of rain	0 Days

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF AUGUST 2012

LIONS

STYX PRIDE = 8

1 ADULT FEMALE	16 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	10 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 7 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 7 MONTHS
2 FEMALE SUB ADULTS	1 YEAR 7 MONTHS
2 MALE SUB ADULTS	1 YEAR 7 MONTHS
UNKNOWN NUMBER OF CUBS	± 1 MONTH

MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD
(18 sightings)

The youngest lioness is still showing signs that she is hiding some young cubs. She is heavily lactating and the pride is often found without this lioness as company. We are yet to establish the location of her den, but are working hard to find out soon enough. We believe the place of hiding is around Campbell Koppies, where the granitic outcrops provide a perfect den and is an area that the pride has used for dening purposes.

There is also some sad news for the pride. It is assumed that the youngest member of the pride is now dead. The male cub of one year old has had a difficult time of late. After the pride clashed with the Eyrefield Pride last month, the cub sustained a deep gash to his flank. The injury did not look good and it was a struggle for him to keep up with the pride. The plucky male, affectionately known as 'Junior', then made an incredible comeback and must have been close to full strength. Then disaster struck. It was around Stwise where we indentified from tracks that lions had been fighting. The tracks of the lions then veered in two directions. One set of tracks led us to the Styx Pride resting in the Mlowathi River. The other set of tracks revealed the Marthly Pride at Paraffin Drift. Both prides were well fed, and the conditions of some of their coats would suggest that there had been some conflict. This occurred on the 19th and we have not seen the young cub since. This month the eldest lioness of the pride is potentially the grandmother of some new cubs, but she has lost two of her sons. See 'other lions encountered' for information on the nomadic male from the Styx Pride who has also died.

EYREFIELD PRIDE = 11

1 ADULT FEMALE	13 YEARS 10 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	5 YEARS 2 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	5 YEARS 1 MONTH
3 CUBS	6 MONTHS
2 CUBS	3 MONTHS
2 CUBS	1 MONTH

MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD
(40 sightings)

The month of August got off to a fruitful start for the Eyrefield pride as we can now confirm that the large, pale, young lioness has given birth to two cubs. On the third day of the month we got our first look at the two newest additions as we viewed all twelve pride members together in the Tamboti Thickets area. The next day saw all four lionesses in the company of two Manyelethi males (hip scar and missing canine) around West Street. The oldest lioness and the male with the scar on his hip took off where they had left matters last month... hopefully August will be a rewarding month for the old lioness. What a treat it will be to have all four lionesses with cubs. Unbeknown to us on that day, or perhaps it was that evening, the lionesses moved their den-sites northwards choosing the numerous clumps of flood debris at the confluence of the Matshipiri River and Sand River as the new safe havens for their offspring. However, somewhere in that time frame, a young life was lost. The litter of three month old cubs is down to two. But this new den-site area must've been held in high regard by the lionesses as they kept their cubs there for most of the month, in fact the youngest litter is still in the area whereas the slightly older litter have recently become mobile, walking with the pride. The lioness with the youngest litter has been denning in the Matshipiri River, midway between its confluence with the Sand River and Donald's Crossing and she's had her work cut out for her since the other lioness upped and left with her cubs. We viewed her with a bushbuck kill a few hundred meters upriver from her cubs. More impressively and equally as close to her den site she managed to bring down a fairly large sub-adult buffalo. She'd feed on this bounty for three days, leaving it on the odd occasion to go back to her cubs. The lioness did not enjoy her meal un-pestered as two different leopards made rather brave attempts at getting at least a bite out of the carcass, they were both unsuccessful. The oldest three cubs are doing well, not surprisingly really as they now have three different lionesses to suckle from and being the biggest cubs they are able to bully their way into getting to a lactating nipple.

FOURWAYS PRIDE = 5

2 ADULT FEMALES	UNKNOWN AGES
2 SUB ADULT FEMALES	2 YEARS 2 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT MALE	2 YEARS 2 MONTHS

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD
(3 sightings)

Seen twice around Clarendon this month we also viewed these lions at Matshipiri Dam where they had company in the form of a rather impressive sub-adult male. We're not sure if we have seen this male before. Although they all seemed to be very tolerant of his presence he was not with the pride when we next viewed them.

MARTHLY PRIDE = 6

1 ADULT FEMALE	14 YEARS
2 ADULT FEMALES	10 YEARS 2 MONTHS
2 CUBS	1 YEAR 6 MONTHS
1 CUB	1 MONTH

MARHTLY
(0 sightings)

BREAKAWAY MARTHLY PRIDE = 4

4 ADULT FEMALES

3 YEARS 8 MONTHS

MARTHLY

(2 sightings)

These four females have been separated from the Marthly Pride for quite some time now. As youngsters they abandoned the pride to avoid the wrath of the Manyelethi males. That was then. Now they are mature females and have all been mating with the members of the powerful coalition. Apparently all are showing signs of being pregnant. This is good news. Since they have now been accepted by the Manyelethi males, perhaps these young lionesses will reunite with their original pride. Another possibility is that they will stay on their own and form a new pride. This breakaway group has not been seen on MalaMala as of yet. To the north, they have been dubbed the 'Gowrie Pride'.

MANYELETHI MALES = 4

± 7 YEARS 7 MONTHS

MATRHLI, EYREFIELD, MALA MALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

DOMINANT OVER THE STYX, EYREFIELD, FOURWAYS AND MARTHLY PRIDES

(7 sightings)

A rather poor number of sightings were recorded this month of the four brothers. We only really saw them early on in the month and then sightings picked up again towards the end of the month where we viewed all four coalition members on a kudu kill in the Styx donga with an Eyrefield lioness. This month saw these males lose two of their offspring, the youngest member of the Styx pride as well as a young Eyrefield cub both fell victim to the harsh realities of Mother Nature.

CHARLESTON PRIDE = 3

1 ADULT FEMALE

7 YEARS 8 MONTHS

2 SUB ADULTS

1 YEAR 4 MONTHS

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

(3 sightings)

The Charleston Pride enjoyed a relatively good month of sightings. Throughout the winter, they have been spending more time to the north of the Sand River. It is likely that we would enjoy even more sightings of them, although their domain is in an area not often travelled. This pride has been devastated by bad luck in recent times, and this month was no different. The sub adult female has been missing since around the 16th of August and is now presumed dead. It is believed that the pride had a confrontation with the Selati Pride and the young female was on the wrong end of the battle. This is a terrible blow to the pride whose numbers were already depleted. At least the adult female is an experienced hunter and assistance from the young males is mounting daily as they mature. As with last month, these lions were seen on occasion trailing the large herd of buffalo which has been passing through that area. Although the lions made a few attempts, the sub adults will need to gain more experience before they will be able to execute a kill of this nature.

SELATI PRIDE = 16

1 ADULT FEMALE

13 YEARS 9 MONTHS

2 ADULT FEMALES

9 YEARS 8 MONTHS

2 ADULT FEMALES

9 YEARS 7 MONTHS

2 SUB ADULTS

4 YEARS 6 MONTHS

4 SUB ADULTS

4 YEARS 5 MONTHS

2 SUB ADULTS

4 YEARS 2 MONTHS

3 CUBS
WESTERN CHARLESTON
(4 sightings)

UNKNOWN AGE

The only time we viewed the full complement of this pride was on the penultimate day of this report period. All sixteen members were in the Sand River and had the two Kruger males in their company. A total of eighteen lions... what a sight! And it only got better as those present at the sighting got to watch one of the sub-adults bring down an adult male Kudu in the middle of the river after a high speed chase across the open sand banks. The rest of the pride quickly joined in and the large antelope was reduced to scraps in no time.

SUB ADULT MALES FROM THE EYREFIELD PRIDE = 2

1 MALE
MARTHLY MALE
NOMADIC
(4 sightings)

5 YEARS 1 MONTH
7 YEARS 1 MONTH

The movements of these two males was similar to what we have seen over the past few months. They have been spending most of their time following a large herd of buffalo throughout Charleston. The male from the Marthly Pride has had difficulty hunting since he has had a limp. This has no doubt limited their hunting success and we are not certain that they managed to kill any buffalo this month. There are some interesting lion politics at play in southern Charleston. One of the KNP male lions is missing, and these two boys have been spending more time in that area, even roaring on occasion! Who knows how things might unfold. Is it a possibility that this duo could compete against the remaining KNP male and take-over the Charleston and Selati Prides?

TOULON MALES = 3
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON
(0 sightings)

± 9 YEARS

These three brothers were first viewed on MalaMala in May 2009. By September 2009, they had successfully taken over the Charleston Pride which had been abandoned by the Golf Course males. The remaining sub adults of the Charleston Pride are sired by this coalition. They then executed a successful takeover of the Selati Pride in September 2010, ousting the very same Golf Course males. It was not long after this take-over that pressure was placed upon them in the form of two male lions from the Kruger National Park. By February 2011, the Toulon males had been stripped of their territory and both prides. Since then the brothers have been living as nomads. We enjoyed the last sighting of the coalition in July 2011. After this they disappeared, which made way for the (then) five Selati males who are now dominant in the western sector of the Sabi Sands. There have been confirmed sightings of the Toulon males in the Kruger National Park in the vicinity of Skukuza where they seem to be faring well.

This coalition will no longer feature on the game report.

KRUGER MALE LIONS = 2
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON, WESTERN CHARLESTON
(3 sightings)

± 7 YEARS

This coalition is dominant over the Charleston and Selati Prides. They were first seen on the property in August 2011. Recent sightings have been of one of the brothers which has been with the Selati Pride. News from our neighbours suggests that the other brother, who has had a limp for some time, is missing and has not been viewed for the past few months. If he has passed on, it is a possibility that the remaining male may prefer to spend his time with the Selati Pride and potentially abandon the Charleston Pride. We will monitor progress with the lions in the south with interest.

Other lions encountered

- Unidentified male lion: (sightings)

This young male was seen in the presence of the Fourways Pride. We are not sure of his history or where he has come from. For now, it looks like he may have joined the pride as a pride member and non-dominant male. He will need to be watchful of the Manyelethi males, although we have not seen any of the Manyelethi males in the company of this pride since the winter of 2011.

- Obituary to the nomadic male lion from the Styx Pride:

Approaching five years of age, this male died in the early stages of this month. He had sustained a serious injury to his hind leg and was unable to hunt. The injury was believed to be caused in a failed attempt to hunt buffalo. This male was born in the same litter as the youngest adult lioness in the Styx Pride. Their mother is the eldest member of the pride, who also lost her youngest cub this month. He has been nomadic ever since the Manyelethi males have been in control of his native pride. Over the past year, we have had sporadic sightings of him around our northern boundary where he has been careful to avoid conflict with the Manyelethi males from the south, and another coalition of males further north. He had gained exceptional skills as a hunter and was famous for his ability to execute buffalo kills on his own. It is a sad death but the reality is that this lion had little chance of being able to ascertain a territory of his own and become dominant over a pride. It is a tall order for a single male attempting to establish dominance and their chances are slim.

ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIONS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

August	58
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LEOPARDS:

BICYCLE CROSSING MALE

10 YEARS 7 MONTHS

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

The sightings of this male were recorded at the beginning and the end of the month. Early on we viewed him walking through Flockfield Boma Crossing. A few days later we followed him on a hunt in the Kapen. It was the sightings towards the end of the month that proved to be more of a talking point. The large male killed an adult female warthog at Charleston North and dragged it all the way to the Rock Drift Donga. Two hyenas made an attempt at stealing the carcass... an attempt they would regret as they ended up on the receiving end of a hiding from the Bicycle Crossing male. The following day we found an untouched duiker kill just north of where he had the warthog as well as tracks of a female leopard in the area.

AIRSTRIP MALE

6 YEARS 2 MONTHS

WESTERN MALA MALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(15 sightings)

Some fantastic sightings were had of the Airstrip male this month. We watched him lose his cool around the Quarry after picking up the scent of another male in the area. The territorial male started grunting, salivating, jogging around and climbing up trees as he tried to locate the intruder. The young male leopard that was in the

area managed to successfully avoid detection. However, the Tamboti female did not but she managed to eventually scamper out of the male's war path. A similar scene occurred towards the end of the month where there was action packed interaction spanning over two days. It all went down around Bicycle Crossing and the interaction was between four different leopards; a female from the west who we do not have a name for, the Tamboti female, a large unidentified male and the Airstrip male. There were two kills in the area as well so one can just imagine the quality of interaction that we viewed.

CHARLESTON MALE (*New name*) **6 YEARS 2 MONTHS**
EASTERN CHARLESTON, NORTHERN TOULON
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings during the report period.

WEST STREET MALE (*New name*) **3 YEARS 4 MONTHS**
WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(9 sightings)

A relatively uneventful month for the West Street male but he continues to grow in size and stature. The most noteworthy sighting of this male was when he made a half-hearted attempt at getting a bite of an Eyrefield lioness' buffalo carcass.

NEWINGTON MALE (*New name*) **3 YEARS 10 MONTHS**
WESTERN MALAMALA
(2 sightings)

Just the two sightings of this young male this month and both were around the New Airstrip.

HOGVAAL MALE (*New name*) **6 YEARS 4 MONTHS**
EASTERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALAMALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings during the report period.

TSLEBE ROCKS MALE (*New name*) **± 7 YEARS**
NORTHERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings during the report period.

PRINCESS ALICE PANS MALE (*New name*) **11 YEARS 8 MONTHS**
WESTERN MALAMALA
(6 sightings)

An average number of sightings were recorded of this large male. Towards months end the Princess Alice Pans male raised a few eyebrows when he crossed east across the Sand River. We've hardly ever seen him in the river, never mind actually crossing it. He then appeared to be following a scent trail eastwards towards Planks Plan... where the Kikilezi female has been keeping her cub. Luckily for the mother and cub the large male didn't manage to locate them.

GOWRIE MALE (*New name*)
NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD
(4 sightings)

± 5 YEARS

The Gowrie male was seen walking his usual haunts around the Mlowathi. Towards the end of the month we viewed him with the Ostrich Koppies female. The female leopard was throwing herself at the Gowrie male but he wasn't in the mood at all, rejecting her advances with a baring of teeth and a series of snarls and growls.

KIKILEZI FEMALE
1 MALE CUB

10 YEARS 11 MONTHS
5 MONTHS

WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY

(4 sightings of female, 11 sightings of female and cub, 0 sighting of cub without female)

We had eleven sightings of both leopards together this month which is a fairly respectable number. What made these sightings even more special is that it was hardly ever just the two of them at these sightings, from being surrounded by elephants to being treed by hyenas to being chased by lions this mother/cub combination had an eventful August. The Kikilezi has continued to show what a good mother she is by keeping her cub safe and by providing for it. We viewed the two on several different kills this month.

TAMBOTI FEMALE

4 YEARS 10 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALA MALA

(8 sightings)

Since the middle parts of the month, the much loved Tamboti female has been sporting a serious gash to her right thigh. We are not certain what may have caused the injury. It is a deep laceration that is hindering her hunting ability to some extent. This is very evident from her thin appearance. She was seen with a young Nyala that she managed to kill around the Old Airstrip which was a great indication that she is on the road to recovery. Toward month end, the wound was still looking rather serious, though far better than what we had previously seen. These animals have incredible healing power and we hope that she will be back to full strength soon.

MLOWATHI FEMALE (*New name*)
NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

5 YEARS 7 MONTHS

There were no sightings during the report period.

JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE
1 MALE CUB

12 YEARS 9 MONTHS
1 YEAR 1 MONTH

CENTRAL & WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER

(4 sightings of female, 0 sightings of female and cub, 1 sighting of cub without female)

On the 15th we found this female happily resting on the branch of a Jakkalberry Tree around Calabash Crossing. Later that evening, we were pleased to have a confirmed sighting of her surviving male cub. Even without his mother, the cub was completely relaxed in the presence of the vehicles and appears to be doing well. She was then viewed around the Sibuye drive area in Western Charleston. This female, who only has one cub, usually does very well by making non-ambitious kills such as duiker and steenbok which are easy to hoist into trees, and are not often lost to other predators due to their small size. On the afternoon of the 6th she made what could be her least ambitious kill to date – a greater Cane Rat.

CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE
WESTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

12 YEARS 10 MONTHS

There were no sightings during the report period.

OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE
EYREFIELD
(5 sightings)

7 YEARS 11 MONTHS

The Ostrich Koppies had a busier month than what we have been used to in recent times. There are indications that she has started to venture further south into what was previously her core territory. This is certainly great news. Her mating with the Airstrip male a few months ago is not showing any signs of bearing fruit at this stage. The large gash on her back left leg is a fairly open wound that looks to have been caused by something as large as a lion. She was seen twice around her usual jaunts, on the 7th and 10th, near Rhino Walk and the Thlebe Rocks donga respectively. At both sightings it seemed that the wound was in no way hindering her movements, and she seemed preoccupied with only one thing – where to find her next meal!

MATSHIPIRI FEMALE
1 FEMALE CUB
1 MALE CUB

11 YEARS 10 MONTHS
10 MONTHS
10 MONTHS

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD

(2 sightings of female, 1 sightings of female and cubs, 1 sighting of cubs alone).

The return of the Matshipiri Female's two young cubs, estimated to be about nine months old, was a great relief, and both cubs are in fantastic shape. The cubs were found late in the evening in the tributary from which their devoted mother claims her name, the Matshipiri River. When we followed up the next day we were fortunate to witness their mothers' return. Sharing a similar light complexion with her mother, the White cloth female, the Matshipiri female jubilantly greeted her cubs and then set off with purpose. It became clear after a short while that this mother was taking her cubs to either a new location, or a stashed kill. Food was however on the cub's minds, regardless of their destination, as one of the cubs rushed and caught a scrub hair. Immediately racing off to find shelter, and killing its prey within the minute, the young cub showed great form and followed up by snarling at its approaching family! The Matshipiri female, born in October 2000, has matured into an extremely well established and successful mother, as both cubs show already practiced hunting techniques that will bring them a fruitful life.

DUDLEY FEMALE
1 CUB

13 YEARS 11 MONTHS
5 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

(1 sighting of female, 1 sighting of female and cub, 0 sightings of cubs alone)

Just one sighting a piece of these two leopards this month and both were around Dudley Dam on the western most boundary of our property.

FLOCKFIELD FEMALE
1 CUB

8 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 YEAR 2 MONTHS

CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

(0 sightings of female, 0 sightings of female and cub, 0 sightings of cub alone).

These leopards were not viewed during the report period.

WESTERN FEMALE (*New name*)
WESTERN MALA MALA
(0 sightings)

14 YEARS 7 MONTHS

There were no sightings during the report period.

Other leopards encountered:

- **Daughter of the Kikilezi female 2010:** (sightings)
- **Female with the dot in her eye and her 1 cub:** (sightings of female, sightings of female and cubs, sightings of cubs alone) . All sightings of this female this month would suggest that one of her cubs has died and she is now left with the, perhaps easier task, of raising her remaining cub. This female has been sighted in the Sabi Sands throughout the past year, however we are still working on gaining more information as to where she was born. We can confirm that it is the same female that was mating with the Bicycle Crossing male toward the end of 2011.
- **Son of the Dudley female 2009:** (sighting)
- **Son of the Matshipiri female 2008:** (sighting)
- **No ID males:** (sightings)
- **No ID females:** (sightings)

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

August	23
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CHEETAH

We only viewed the two brothers on one occasion this month which is well below par, however two females provided us with some quality sightings. The same nervous female who was seen in the company of the two brothers was seen three times this month around the Mlowathi. Midway this report period provided us with an action-packed sighting of a young female cheetah. Although we are still to verify her identity, we believe that she is the same animal that we viewed quite frequently about a year-and-a-half ago with her mother around the Mlowathi. This elegant and relaxed young female was found catching a cat-nap on the fire break of Matshipiri Dam Road, just north of Wild Dog Rocks Open Area. During the course of the day she moved north-westwards towards the open areas of Rhino Walk. Along the way she successfully flushed out a number of duiker and steenbok, but her attempts to catch them were not successful. As the sun was setting she had her sights on a herd of impala that were blissfully unaware of her presence. She showed great patience as she lay low and waited as the herd slowly grazed towards her. A lone wildebeest that was among the impala very nearly spoiled the hunt by revealing the cheetah's hiding place, as he started to move in her direction. The cheetah saw this as the perfect moment to make her move, and ran in, sending the impala in all directions. After a brief chase the hunt was over, and unfortunately the cheetah had no luck. We hope to see more of this beautiful female in the future.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED

August	4
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

Just the one lone dog was viewed this month, the animal was found fast asleep on New Firebreak. We ended up following it through Matshipiri Open Area during the course of which it made a few attempts to catch a meal. We lost it heading north and east along the Matshipiri River.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED

August	1
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CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

Buffalo and elephant sightings have been a dime a dozen this month. Elephants in particular have been plentiful to say the least. A drive along the Sand River at any time of day would guarantee numerous sightings of these pachyderms as they seek the river's forgiving nature during these hot and dry days. Large herds of buffalo have mostly been viewed in the southern half of Mala Mala.

TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR AUGUST 2012

Lion: 85

Leopard: 82

Elephant: 171

Buffalo: 49

Cheetah: 5

Cape Hunting Dog: 1