

MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – February 2011

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

WEATHER SUMMARY

	February-11
Maximum temperature (°C)	34
Minimum temperature (°C)	19
Mean maximum (°C)	30
Mean minimum (°C)	21
Rainfall (mm)	25.5
Days of rain	5

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF February 2011

LIONS

STYX PRIDE = 5

1 ADULT FEMALES	15 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS
1 ADULT FEMALE	7 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 SUB MALE	2 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 SUB FEMALE	2 YEARS 10 MONTHS
MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD (25 sightings)	

This report period was another great time for this pride, however not on one occasion were all five members seen together, this may well be due to the fact that one of the adult females had been seen lactating and spent time away from the pride hopefully she has been successful and produced a litter of cubs that will mature and help the prides dwindling numbers. A vast majority of the sightings of this pride were of three members, the sub adult female and male and the oldest lioness. They were seen covering a vast portion of the property including on the western bank of the Sand River on a few occasions. On two occasions one of the lionesses was seen in the company of one and two of the Manyelethi males respectively. On another occasion there were four Manyelethi males in the company of one of the Styx lionesses. The young male seems to be holding on and was seen very often in the company of the young female. The immediate future for this young male is still uncertain as he is going to have to continue avoiding the dominant Manyelethi males while remaining with he pride brings huge advantages when it comes to hunting. This pride is going to be a good one to watch going forward as we wait to see if the lactating female has produced a litter and what fate awaits the young male.

EYREFIELD PRIDE = 11

1 ADULT FEMALE	16 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	12 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 3 MONTHS
3 SUB ADULTS (1 MALE 2 FEMALE)	3 YEARS 8 MONTHS
4 SUB ADULTS (2 MALE 2 FEMALE)	3 YEARS 7 MONTHS
1 ADULT MALE (MARTHLY PRIDE)	5 YEARS 8 MONTHS
MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD (3sightings)	

The Eyrefield pride was only seen on three occasions during this report period. On one occasion there was only one female seen, she was one of the females who was the mother of the young cubs, the last of which is no longer alive. On the other two occasions a bulk of the pride were seen with five and six members respectively. On both occasions the young male from the Marthly pride was present. The relatively few sightings of this pride may well be due

to the fact that the Manyelethi males have been very present on Mala Mala. The Eyrefield pride are most likely trying to avoid the wrath of these four males. Recent trend suggest that the viewing of this pride peaks during the dry winter months, with the pride segmented and the two lionesses now without cubs, reports from our neighbours indicate that the last remaining cub was slain during this last report period, it remains to be seen whether or not they are able to find and reunite successfully with their natal pride. This may be vital for the pride as they will bring with them experience and power. It will also be interesting to watch what happens to the young males and indeed the male from the Marthly pride, as the young males near four years old they may well be ousted from the pride and of course there is the ever present threat of the Manyelethi males which needs to be avoided.

SELATI PRIDE = 14

1 ADULT FEMALES	12 YEARS 3 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	8 YEARS 2 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	8 YEARS
2 CUBS	3 YEARS 1 MONTH
4 CUBS	2 YEAR 11 MONTHS
3 CUBS	2 YEAR 8 MONTHS
WESTERN CHARLESTON (0 sighting)	

There were no sightings of this pride this month.

CHARLESTON PRIDE = 4

1 ADULT FEMALES	14 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALES	6 YEARS 8 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	6 YEARS 1 MONTH
1 FEMALE CUB	16 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	23 MONTHS
MARHTLY (4 sightings)	

Lions from the Marthly pride were only seen on four occasions during this report period. All four occasions had a lioness mating with one of the Manyelethi males. At one sighting there were two lionesses but the second one promptly moved south into the Sand River. The one left behind mated with the present Manyelethi male. We remain hopeful that sightings of this pride will increase during the year as they fully accept the Manyelethi male.

MANYELETHI MALES = 4

MATRHLY, EYREFIELD, NORTHERN MALA MALA
DOMINANT OVER THE STYX AND MARHTLY PRIDES
(19 sightings)

+/- 6 YEARS 8 MONTHS

The number of sightings is consistent with the last report period. This coalition continues to dominate Mala Mala and Eyrefield. Still keeping with the proven method that four are stronger than one they are proving to settle pretty well in the area and are becoming more and more vocal advertising their presence. This is perhaps a contributing factor towards the fewer sightings of the Eyrefield pride, who according to our neighbours have had a few fierce encounters with these dominant males. These males have been seen on eight occasions with females from both the Styx pride and the Marthly pride. On two occasions the males were seen mating with Marthly lionesses. There is hope these males have sired a litter of cubs as one of the Styx lionesses that was seen mating with these males has been lactating and spending time away from her pride. On six occasions all four of the coalition members were

seen together covering central Mala Mala and Eyrefield. They have been seen close to the two unidentified lionesses and their four cubs and on one occasion allowed the lioness and cubs to walk right past them cementing beliefs that they are in fact the fathers. We now wait anxiously to see how successful they will be in defending the territory and raising many litters of cubs.

TOULON MALES = 3
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON
DOMINANT OVER THE CHARLESTON PRIDE
(0 sightings)

+/- 6 YEARS 11 MONTHS

There were no sightings of this coalition during the month.

Other lions encountered during February 2011

- **No ID pride (2 females and 4 cubs):** (12 sightings)
These six lions have provide some very good viewing during this last report period, now being viewed by three vehicles during the day they are continuing to become more and more comfortable. They are at ease and continue to play around with each other while the two females lie fast asleep not even waking up when a vehicle arrives or leaves. These lions have been seen along the Matshipiri river and around the Gowrie boundary. One of the most notable moments for this small pride occurred at Buffalo Bush dam; the lions had been following very closely the paths of the Manyelethi males further enhancing the strong belief that the dominant males are the fathers of these cubs. This belief was confirmed when the four cubs and both females walked past three of the males. Although there was no direct interaction between the males and their offspring the fact that there was not aggressive behaviour towards them indicates that they are indeed the fathers.
- **No ID (4 young males):** (2 sightings)
These four young males were seen on two occasions on eastern Flockfield, we are not yet sure who they are or where they come from. They appear to be between four and five years old and may well become pretty big lions. They were seen twice in three days. They were slightly nervous around the vehicles and so were observed from a distance.
- **No ID (3 males):** (1 Sighting)
These three males were also seen on eastern Flockfield in the same place as the afore mentioned group of unidentified males. However these three males were considerably bigger with far fuller and darker manes. We are still unsure who these males are and continue trying to find out more about them. What is certain is eastern Flockfield appears to be a safe place for new males to come onto the property and an area that will be watched with great interest to see if either of these two groups spend more time on the property.

ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIONS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

February	
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LEOPARDS

BICYCLE CROSSING MALE **9 YEARS**
WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON
(2 sightings)

The Bicycle Crossing male was only seen twice during the report period. On the first occasion he was found with a minor wound to his front right leg on South Western Flockfield sleeping in a large Jackalberry tree before continuing south down the river into Charleston. On the second occasion he was seen in his more usual area around West Street Bridge from where he continued South. Perhaps he is expanding his territory in

different directions which may account for the relatively low number of sightings.

EMSAGWEN MALE

+/- 7 YEARS 8 MONTHS

EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, MARTHLY

(4 sightings)

The Emsagwen Male continues to cover vast distances while patrolling his territory. The sightings of this leopard were spread out over Mala Mala and Eyrefield showing that he is still very much in control of this area. He was seen on one occasion in the company of the Kikilezi female and her cub in the Ngoboswan donga. On this particular occasion the Kikilezi female and her cub began hunting an impala, the Emsagwen male tried to get in on the action but ultimately spoiled the hunt and both parties ended up going their separate ways. He remains the dominant force over the eastern parts of Mala Mala and Eyrefield, coupled with the decreased presence of the Bicycle Crossing male and more sightings of the Gowrie Male in the north it will be interesting to see whether or not he decides to extend his territory further south and indeed stake claim to the western bank of the sand river.

GOWRIE MALE

11 YEARS 10 MONTHS

NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD

(4 sightings)

The Gowrie male has made his presence felt far more this month compared to only being seen once last month. He still roams in the North Western parts of Eyrefield and most of the sightings have been around Mlowathi dam. He was however on one occasion seen further south and east of his usual route. The bulk of his territory continues to be to the North of the property however an increase in sightings may be a sign that he is still a force around the Mlowathi region.

KIKELEZI FEMALE

9 YEARS 4 MONTHS

1 FEMALE CUB

14 MONTHS

WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY

(5 sightings of female, 5 sightings of female and cub, 1 sighting of cub alone)

The Kikilezi female and her cub continue to provide great viewing opportunities for all here at Mala Mala. Continuing to see the Kikilezi female alone on own numerous occasions indicates that she is getting more and more comfortable about leaving the cub alone as she matures. The Kikilezi female and her youngster were seen on one occasion hunting an Egyptian goose in Piccadilly triangle, the hunt was a success and is an indication that the cub is indeed coming of age. The two were seen hunting a variety of antelope on many occasions but none of these were successful. In one of these episodes the Emsagwen male was present, (see Emsagwen Male), however even this proved to be unsuccessful. During the next few months the cubs progression into adulthood will be watched with great interest and we can only hope that she matures successfully. The sightings of the Kikilezi female and her cub were concentrated around Piccadilly triangle while the Kikilezi female was seen roaming from West Street bridge to Senegal bush and west towards Marthly.

JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE

11 YEARS 3 MONTHS

1 CUB

8 MONTHS

CENTRAL & WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER

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

There were no sightings of this female or cub during the month.

CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE

11 YEARS 4 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

(0 sighting)

There were no sightings of this female during the month.

OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE
1 CUB

6 YEARS 4 MONTHS
6 MONTHS

EYREFIELD

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

The Ostrich Koppies female was only seen on one occasion during this report period, she was found moving north through central Eyrefield. It was reported that she came face to face with a larger male warthog and after a lengthy face off she decided discretion was the better part of valour and headed off without any further interaction. There was no sign of her cub and one can only hope that it is still in good health.

MATSHIPIRI FEMALE
1 MALE CUB

10 YEARS 4 MONTHS
2 YEARS 7 MONTHS

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD

(1 sighting of female alone, 1 sighting of female with cub, 1 sighting of cub alone)

This was a very quiet report period of these two leopards with only three sightings compared to last months twelve sightings. They were found on all three occasions along the Matshipiri river between Matshipiri Dam and Buffalo Bush Dam. The fact that they were viewed so few times this month may well be due to the presence of the two No ID lionesses and their four cubs in the vicinity. Leopards will try and avoid lions in order to prevent getting involved in a potentially fatal altercation. These lions seem to have settled along the Matshipiri river and were seen on many occasions at Buffalo Bush Dam, essentially the centre of the Matshipiri females territory. On the one occasion when the Matshipiri female was seen without her son it was clear that she was looking for him as she was constantly calling indicating that he is still dependant on his mother, however these calls were not answered which may suggest that he was some distance away.

DUDLEY FEMALE
1 MALE CUB

12 YEARS 5 MONTHS
19 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

(0 sightings of female alone, 0 sighting of female with cub, 1 sighting of cub alone)

With only one sighting of either of these two there is not much to comment on, the sighting was seen in the usual place for these leopards which suggests that little has changed. With the young male getting older he is likely to be seen on his own more and more often.

FLOCKFIELD FEMALE

6 YEARS 10 MONTHS

CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of this female during the month.

TAMBOTI FEMALE

3 YEARS 4 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

(11 sightings)

Another great month for sightings of the Tamboti female. On most occasions she was seen on and around West Street bridge venturing south down the eastern bank or west from the bridge. As she matures she continues to be relaxed around the vehicles and provides some amazing sightings. She has still yet to be seen in the vicinity of any males which is something we are watching closely. She is approaching the age where producing the next generation will become a major focus in her life, let's hope she can make the transition and become a successful mother.

Other leopards encountered during February 2011

- **Son of the Dudley female:** (4 years 8 months)(6 sightings)
This young male was seen on most occasions around the New Air Strip, possibly where he is trying to build a territory from. With decreased pressure from the Bicycle Crossing male, the Son of the Dudley female has been able to move around the Western bank with relative ease. On more than one occasion he was found under the

cover of darkness trying to stalk one of the numerous herds of impala on the milled of the airstrip showing that he may still have a few things to learn. He may well not be too far from staking claim to a permanent territory around the Air Strip and south towards West Street Bridge.

- **Large male from Sparta:** (1 sighting)
Seen only once this month moving north from the cause way in front of the camp, his presence here seems to be nothing more than brief visits to the extremities of his territory.
- **Female from Sparta:** (1 sighting)
The only sighting of this female was a brief one as she was seen on the Track from Booms to 419 where she disappeared west ward into the bush line to where she was left to herself. She was on this occasion seen in the company of one of her sons.
- **Son of the female from Sparta:** (2 sightings)
This young male was seen on two occasions, once behind camp when he was on his own showing again that he is becoming independent. On the second occasion he was seen with his mother near the camp.
- **No ID leopards:** (6 sightings)

On most of these occasion these leopards which are unidentified were flash sightings and positive identifications could not be achieved due to the briefness of the sighting. One of the 2 of the sightings were around Flockfield tower and another around the new airstrip, both leopards were not particularly nervous but being close to the boundary they disappeared before they could be identified.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

February	21
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CHEETAH

What a prolific month for cheetah sightings at Mala Mala with twenty two different sightings during the report period. Most of these were of the four males seen most often in the north eastern corner around Clarendon Dam, and the female and her large female cub. The pair were seen mostly around Mlowathi dam and Piccadilly triangle. The two females were found on one occasion with a male impala kill in the early hour of the morning. On many other occasions they were seen hunting but to no avail. One sighting round Mlowathi dam provided some comic relief as the same two females were being harassed by a small herd of buffalo.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED

February	6
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WILD DOGS

This month has been a quiet one for the Wild Dogs as there was only one seen on one occasion. The lone Dog was seen on the eastern bank of the Sand River opposite the camp. The sighting was brief as the animal swiftly moved further east where it was lost and unable to be relocated that afternoon.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WILD DOGS ENCOUNTERED

February	1
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CAPE BUFFALO

As the water resources begin to deplete so we have seen a slight increase in the number of herds on the property and so to the number of individuals within the herds. The larger herds of buffalo have been seen throughout Flockfield however there is still enough water around that only on one occasion did any of these herds reach the Sand River. Smaller herds were also recorded up at Clarendon Dam and in the vicinity of Mlowathi dam. Most of the buffalo sightings for the month however have been of the old Dagga Boys, most often seen in or close to the Sand River where they stay close to water in order to satisfy their reliance for water.

RHINO

Rhino sightings continue to be the most prevalent around Flockfield tower, where a crash of about five are still seen regularly. In the same area the cow with her young calf are seen with reasonable consistency, the young calf is growing in confidence and was seen on one occasion moving inquisitively towards a young elephant which took fright at the strange creature and fled. Mlowathi dam has also proved to be a good place for rhino sightings of late, there seem to be three rhino in the area that frequent Mlowathi dam in order to quench their thirst and wallow in the mud. The sightings however are not exclusive to these two areas but rather spread out throughout the entire property.

ELEPHANTS

With the Marula fruits ripening and the warm afternoons there have been many different sightings of elephants along the Sand River and where ever there is a Marula tree. On occasion there were small herds as well as a few bulls seen eating the Marula fruits in front of camp providing some quality lunch time entertainment. With far less rain falling this month the smaller pans have started to dry; this coupled with warm February days has seen the elephants moved towards the river to find reprieve from the heat.

TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR FEBRUARY 2011

Lions: 66

Leopards: 51

Elephant: 105

Rhino: 72

Buffalo: 56

Cheetah: 22

Wild Dog: 1