

MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – FEBRUARY 2012

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

WEATHER SUMMARY

	February-2012
Maximum temperature (°C)	36
Minimum temperature (°C)	20
Mean maximum (°C)	32
Mean minimum (°C)	23
Rainfall (mm)	35
Days of rain	2

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF FEBRUARY 2012

LIONS

STYX PRIDE = 9

1 ADULT FEMALES	16 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	10 YEARS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 1 MONTH
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 1 MONTH
4 CUBS	1 YEAR 1 MONTH
1 CUB	7 MONTHS

MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD
(19 sightings)

The first sighting of the Styx pride this month had all the elements one could hope for. Firstly, all 9 members were present. The dominant Manyelethi male with the dark mane was with them, and he was mating with one of the younger lionesses. There was a young male impala kill nearby, and when the lions started feeding on the animal it was done in a particularly aggressive manner. Sightings of this pride were good this month as we saw them with kills on three occasions. On another occasion, we followed them on a hunt and they made a kill just out of eyeshot. Most of the sightings were along the Mlowathi River and at Campbell Koppies, with rest of the sightings being around the Nwana Nonantshemeni donga and Pat's Drift Koppies. Age is slowly beginning to take its toll on the oldest lioness, but her cub is in tip top shape and punching above his weight with the other four older cubs.

EYREFIELD PRIDE = 10

1 ADULT FEMALE	13 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	10 YEARS 3 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 8 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 7 MONTHS
2 CUBS	5 MONTHS

MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD
(9 sightings)

The month started poorly with no sightings of this pride for the first two weeks. However, the following two weeks proved to be much more successful. All sightings took place west of the Sand River, and mostly concentrated around the New Airstrip and Flockfield Tower. The two 5-month old cub,s along with their mother, offered us our first sighting of the month when they were found lying on the parking bay at the airstrip. The two youngsters –bubbling with youthful exuberance – always put on a show, as they both seem to be in good health and they are growing by the day. There is still no sign of the youngest three cubs, and unfortunately we will now be removing them from the game reports as it can only be assumed that the floods cost them their lives. Despite the sadness of realising the three little ones had perished, the last sighting of the pride in this report period left us in good spirits. All the pride members, including three

Manyelethi males, were viewed together at Pete's Bridge and the male with the black nose was seen mating with one of the lionesses.

FOURWAYS PRIDE = 5

2 ADULT FEMALES

2 SUB ADULT FEMALES

1 SUB ADULT MALE

UNKNOWN AGES

1 YEAR 8 MONTHS

1 YEAR 8 MONTHS

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD

(3 sightings)

Three scattered sightings of this pride had them in the southern parts of Flockfield, halfway up the Matshipiri River, as well as in western MalaMala. The latter being a particularly interesting sighting as they had a late morning altercation with a herd of buffalo. Upon returning to the area in the afternoon, there were vultures scattered in the trees, and tracks showed that there had been further interaction – but there was no sign of the lions. If they had managed to kill a buffalo we could only assume that they dragged the carcass into the impenetrable Ngoboswaan donga. The four Manyelethi male lions were also close by, leading to a second possibility that the lionesses had moved off on account of their presence.

SELATI PRIDE = 13

1 ADULT FEMALES

2 ADULT FEMALES

2 ADULT FEMALES

2 SUB ADULTS

4 SUB ADULTS

2 SUB ADULTS

WESTERN CHARLESTON

(0 sightings)

13 YEARS 3 MONTHS

9 YEARS 2 MONTHS

9 YEARS

4 YEARS

3 YEARS 11 MONTHS

3 YEARS 8 MONTHS

There were no sightings during the report period.

CHARLESTON PRIDE = 7

1 ADULT FEMALES

1 ADULT FEMALES

1 ADULT FEMALE

1 SUB ADULT FEMALE

3 CUBS

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

(0 sightings)

15 YEARS 6 MONTHS

7 YEARS 8 MONTHS

7 YEARS 1 MONTH

2 YEARS 4 MONTHS

10 MONTHS

There were no sightings during the report period.

MARTHLY PRIDE = 12

3 ADULT FEMALE

4 SUB FEMALES

4 CUBS

1 CUBS

MARHTLY

(0 sighting)

UNKNOWN AGES

2 YEARS 10 MONTHS

1 YEAR

8 MONTHS

There were no sightings during the report period.

MANYELETHI MALES = 4

+/- 7 YEARS

MATRHLTY, EYREFIELD, MALA MALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

DOMINANT OVER THE STYX, EYREFIELD, FOURWAYS AND MARHTLY PRIDES

(14 sightings)

These males continue being the dominant force in the northern two-thirds of our reserve, their kingdom being under no immediate threat. The four young Selati males have moved further west for the time being, rather fancying their chances against the older Mlowathi males. The six young males that the four brothers had a run in with last year haven't tried to venture in from the north again since

their last failed attempt. These are promising signs for all of the Manyelethi male's young offspring. Hopefully our lion prides will see growth in strength and numbers over the year, under the protection of these formidable males. The four brothers were seen on a number of occasions with the Styx and Eyrefield prides, where we saw the dark mane male and the male with the black nose mating with some of their lionesses.

TOULON MALES = 3

+/- 7 YEARS 10 MONTHS

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 7 MONTHS

1 MALE

4 YEARS 6 MONTHS

MARTHLY MALE

6 YEARS 7 MONTHS

NOMADIC

(1 sighting)

Only the one sighting of these males this month and it was at Ridge Rocks in the most south eastern corner of Charleston. The one young Eyrefield male is still in poor shape but he continues to march on to everyone's amazement. The Marthly male on the other hand is in prime condition, a more beautiful lion you will not see.

Other lions encountered during January 2012

- **Young Styx Male** (1 sightings)
- **Unidentified young male** (1 sighting)

ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIONS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

January	33
---------	----

LEOPARDS:

BICYCLE CROSSING MALE

10 YEARS 1 MONTH

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN CHARLESTON

(0 sighting)

There were no sightings of this leopard during the report period..

AIRSTRIPE MALE

5 YEARS 8 MONTHS

WESTERN MALA MALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

(7 sightings)

The Airstrip male was seen around his usual haunts this month. No visible scars have been added to his collection perhaps implying that he is, for the time being, satisfied with the territory he has conquered. We viewed him on two occasions with kills: a duiker around the lower reaches of the Mlowathi River, as well as a young male impala around Maurice's Pan where he earned much respect from all of us here as he killed the impala within a couple meters of some rather large baboons. The Airstrip male is yet to father any offspring that we are aware of. It is surely only a matter of time.

KIKELEZI FEMALE

10 YEARS 5 MONTHS

WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY

(2 sightings)

The Kikilezi female had a quieter month than normal, having only been viewed twice around the core

of her territory – the Piccadilly and New Fire Break areas. The one sighting was however a great one, with her being in the middle of 2 herds of buffalo with the 4 Manyelethi male lions to the south and the Fourways pride to the east. After having mated with the Airstrip male in December, we can only hope to see her bring to life another litter of small spotted babies in the next few months.

JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE
1 CUB

12 YEARS 3 MONTHS
7 MONTHS

CENTRAL & WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER

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

There were no sightings of this leopard during the report period.

CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE
WESTERN EYREFIELD

12 YEARS 4 MONTHS

(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of this leopard during the report period

OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE
1 FEMALE CUB

7 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 YEAR 6 MONTHS

EYREFIELD

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

Sightings of these two leopards placed them rather far apart. The Ostrich Koppies female was seen west of the Mlowathi River whilst her daughter was seen along the Matshipiri River. Looks like the youngster is getting ready to be totally independent of her mother.

MATSHIPIRI FEMALE
2 CUBS

11 YEARS 4 MONTHS
4 MONTHS

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD

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

Only one sighting of this female and her cubs this month, but what a fantastic sighting it was as it involved a kill and some interaction with the three leopards and hyenas! The cubs seem to be doing well, and are surprisingly relaxed around the Land Rovers given the limited exposure they've had with vehicles. Hopefully sightings of these animals will increase next month.

DUDLEY FEMALE
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

13 YEARS 5 MONTHS

(0 sighting)

There were no sightings of this leopard during the report period.

FLOCKFIELD FEMALE
1 CUB

7 YEARS 10 MONTHS
8 MONTHS

CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

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

The sighting of this female and her cub was a brief one, but both are looking in good condition. The cub has relaxed significantly, even in the absence of vehicles, which is a sign of good mothering and the trust in which she places in us.

TAMBOTI FEMALE
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALA MALA

4 YEARS 4 MONTHS

(4 sightings)

All sightings of the Tamboti female this month took place west of the Sand River, between Main Camp and Flockfield Tower. The small matter of West Street Bridge being no more is perhaps affecting her movements, as female leopards are a bit more averse to crossing rivers and getting wet than their male counterparts. She is looking in great condition, and we're still eagerly waiting for her to one day become a mother for the first time.

SPARTA FEMALE
WESTERN MALA MALA

14 YEARS 2 MONTH

(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of this leopard during the report period.

Other leopards encountered during February 2012

- **Son of the Matshipiri female:** (3 years 5 months) (3 sightings)
- **Son of the Dudley female 2009** (1 sighting)
- **Daughter of the Campbell Koppies female:** (1 sightings)
- **No ID female leopards:** (4 sightings)
- **No ID male leopards:** (2 sightings)
- **No ID leopards:** (2 sightings)
- **Daughter of the Kikilezi female:** (2 sightings)
- **Young male from West Street:** (3 sightings)
- **Son of the Sparta female:** (1 sighting)
- **Large Male leopard from Sparta:** (2 sightings)

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

February	17
----------	----

CHEETAH

This month was an amazing month for cheetah, and one that could shape the rest of this year and more significantly our winter. The 2 brothers have continued to move around the north eastern parts of the property, and do very well up near Clarendon dam. On the afternoon of the 10th of February, rangers were following the 2 brothers up near Clarendon dam when they both began to call. All of a sudden the young female cheetah we have been seeing near our eastern boundary popped out of nowhere, and chaos broke out. It was can only be described as a mess of spots, ranger and guest alike were dumbstruck as they witnessed what is truly one of Africa's rarest sightings – mating cheetahs. It was over as quickly as it began, and the three were separated by the female escaping and bolting off northwards, the 2 brothers in hot pursuit calling as they ran. If conception occurs we just might catch a glimpse of a few little spotted fur balls in the next few months!

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED

January	3
---------	---

CAPE HUNTING DOGS

As great a month as the Cheetah had, the Cape Hunting dogs were equally incredible this month. With 2 new sets of dogs being sighted, a pack of 13, made up of 3 adults and 10 pups, as well as a nomadic male and female pair, we can only hope that at least some of them decide to settle. The number of dogs and sightings of dogs this month have almost been more than we have had in the past 18 months before. This increase in sightings has however taken its toll on some of the impala herds, because baby impala are easy prey for these veteran hunters. This being said, the impala population is at a very good and healthy number. Let us see what the next few months bring us.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WILD DOGS ENCOUNTERED

January	24
---------	----

CAPE BUFFALO

With the onset of the grass growth after the huge amount of rainfall in January, the buffalo did exceedingly well in the last month. Herds of 400-500 animals were seen on many occasions, and many calves have been born during this period and are doing well. With as much water as they could dream of drinking and an abundance of food, these buffalo are getting into great condition for the upcoming winter months. Winter is typically the period that takes it a heavy toll on these huge beasts, both in losing condition and numbers to lions.

ELEPHANTS

Like the buffalo, these huge pachyderms have been almost euphoric the past month with all the fresh emerald grass to eat, and so much water to drink, play and swim in. Massive herds of up to 50 individuals have been seen on a number of occasions. There are also many large and impressive bulls following the herds around in the hope of sharing their genetic code, and therefore fulfilling their purpose! With the females in such great condition, it is a good time to conceive. Here's looking forward to another generation of these marvelous animals.

RHINOS

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

TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR JANUARY 2012

Lions: 44
Leopards: 36
Elephant: 73
Buffalo: 61
Rhinos: n/a
Cheetah: 8
Wild Dog: 8