

# MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – January 2011

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

## WEATHER SUMMARY

	January- 11
Maximum temperature (°C)	37
Minimum temperature (°C)	20
Mean maximum (°C)	30.64
Mean minimum (°C)	22.54
Rainfall (mm)	160.5
Days of rain	18

\*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF January 2011

## LIONS

### STYX PRIDE = 5

1 ADULT FEMALES	15 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	8 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	7 YEARS 3 MONTHS
1 SUB MALE	2 YEAR 10 MONTHS
1 SUB FEMALE	2 YEAR 9 MONTHS
MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD (24 sightings)	

Compared to last month it has been an absolute whopper in terms of numbers of sightings. There were not many times however when all five of the pride members were seen together. Most of the sightings were just of individuals or pairs and there were a number of days when one of the lionesses was mating with a Manyelethi male lion. The sub- adult male has been seen frequently with the lionesses but there were a few sightings of him on his own. Still having to avoid the wrath of the Manyelethi males he has covered some vast distances this past month. One night he was seen in the very north and west of the reserve and then the following day been found in the very north and east. Been on his own means he has had to provide for himself and on one occasion he managed to kill an adult female buffalo on his own, granted though that the buffalo was injured and would probably have been dead at the end of the day from its own injuries. Two of the lionesses, the oldest one and the youngest one look to be heavily pregnant still and so it is hoped that they will give birth on the property and add much needed numbers into the pride.

### EYREFIELD PRIDE = 12

1 ADULT FEMALE	16 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	12 YEARS 3 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 2 MONTH
3 SUB ADULTS (1 MALE 2 FEMALE)	3 YEARS 7 MONTHS
4 SUB ADULTS (2 MALE 2 FEMALE)	3 YEAR 6 MONTHS
1 ADULT MALE (MARTHLY PRIDE)	5 YEARS 7 MONTHS
1 CUB	9 MONTHS
MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD ( 8 sightings)	

Only eight sightings for the report period of this pride, which is consistent compared to past years. It seems to be a definite pattern that during the summer months they are seen less and then during the drier wetter months sightings are more prolific. The dynamics have changed a little bit more in this pride with the bulk of the pride now just been the younger lion. Most of the sightings have just been of five or six lions together, three of those been young lionesses, the Marthly male and two of the young males. A report from the west has said that one of the young males was killed by a buffalo but this has yet to be verified. There was one sighting of

one of the older lionesses by herself but the lioness with the remaining cub has still not been seen for many weeks now. The Marthly male has grown in stature and it still remains to be seen what will happen to him. This year should be an interesting year to follow the pride as the young males reach that age where they have to leave the pride and become nomads, whether the Marthly male leaves with these young males or stays with the young females is anyone's guess.

**SELATI PRIDE = 14**

<b>1 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>12 YEARS 1 MONTH</b>
<b>2 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>8 YEARS 1 MONTH</b>
<b>2 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>8 YEARS 11 MONTH</b>
<b>2 CUBS</b>	<b>3 YEAR 1 MONTH</b>
<b>4 CUBS</b>	<b>3 YEAR 10 MONTHS</b>
<b>3 CUBS</b>	<b>3 YEAR 7 MONTHS</b>
WESTERN CHARLESTON	
(0 sightings)	

There were no sightings of this pride this month.

**CHARLESTON PRIDE = 4**

<b>1 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>14 YEARS 5 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>6 YEARS 8 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>5 YEARS 12 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 FEMALE CUB</b>	<b>15 MONTHS</b>
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON	
(0 sightings)	

There were no sightings of this pride during the month.

**MARTHLY PRIDE = 8**

<b>3 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>UNKNOWN AGES</b>
<b>4 SUB ADULTS</b>	<b>22 MONTHS</b>
MARTHLY	
(8 sightings)	

There was one single sighting of one of the Marthly lionesses with two small cubs in the rocky area south of Stwise. It was very far off and an approach was deemed impossible as the terrain is very tough there. The sighting was at the beginning of the report period and for the remainder of the month there was no further sign of them. One of the other lionesses in the pride was seen mating with the Manyelethi males on several occasions. Otherwise the surviving cubs from the Mlowathi males tenure were not seen during the report period.

**MANYELETHI MALES = 4**

**+/- 6 YEARS 7 MONTHS**

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

A superb month of sightings for this powerful coalition. From last month's total of just eight sightings to this month's twenty two sightings has given everyone plenty of male lion viewing. It was not often that we would see all four of them together though and mostly it was in pairs that they were seen. It was just on one occasion that all four were seen together with one Styx lioness at Mlowathi dam. Most of the sightings throughout the month were when one of the males would be mating with either a Marthly lioness or a Styx lioness. Once one of the males went as far south as the confluence of the Matshipiri and Sand Rivers where they fed off a buffalo kill but otherwise their movements are still in the northern parts of the reserve. One of the reasons why it may have been a very good month for us as far as sightings for this coalition was because the Sand River was at a very high level for most of the month and so intimidated the lions from crossing over to their territory in the west. There have been reports lately from the north of a new younger coalition of four males moving around. It will

be interesting to see what this year will hold for the Manyelethi males with some new boys on the block.

**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 January 2011**

- **No ID pride (2 females and 4 cubs):** (10 sighting)

What an amazing change this month has brought around for this small group of lions. From been nervous and even charging vehicles on occasion last year they have settled down nicely. Only two vehicles can view them at a time and only during the day. If approached too closely they still look a little bit nervous but if viewed from a comfortable distance they are very relaxed and go about their activities normally. They have been seen throughout the length and breadth of the Matshipiri River but seem to focus around Buffalo Bush Dam. It is assumed that the Manyelethi males are the fathers of the cubs seeing as though the mothers are very relaxed while been in the territory of the Manyelethi males.

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

January	26
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### **LEOPARDS**

**BICYCLE CROSSING MALE**

**8 YEARS 11 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON  
(5 sightings)

A few less sightings this month of the Bicycle Crossing male than last month. All the sightings were on the western bank, mostly in the vicinity of Princess Alice pan. Although sightings have been few and far between of this male they were exceptionally exciting. At the beginning of the month an interaction was seen involving this male and his son the cub of the Dudley female. The cub had been found first and was attracted to the Bicycle Crossing male after the latter had roared. After greeting and walking together for a short while the two split up and the youngster then joined up with his mother who took him to a kill. The Bicycle Crossing male was then seen again later when he found mother and son with the impala kill, which he then stole from the two. Some lucky viewers were also incredibly lucky to see him catch a young male impala at night time. What will happen this year as far as his territorial movements go will be interesting to see.

**EMSAGWEN MALE**

**+/- 7 YEARS 7 MONTHS**

EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, MARTHLY  
(8 sightings)

Roaming far and wide this month, sightings of him were recorded from Mlowathi Dam all the way down to the Mala Mala Flockfield boundary. Once he was seen to cross the causeway and go west behind the main camp but otherwise he seems to still be very much in control of the eastern bank of the Sand River. Most of the sightings were of him walking while scent marking and roaring. A few times he was seen to stalk impala but was always unsuccessful. For the time been all the male leopards seem to be content with one another and their territories, but who knows what this year will hold for the leopard viewing.

**GOWRIE MALE**  
NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD  
(1sighting)

**11 YEARS 9 MONTHS**

Seen only the once this past report period up close to Mlowathi Dam. It was a very exciting sighting as guests were able to watch him chase after two cheetah. The smaller cats proved too wise for him and agile and after been tired out he left them alone but then went on to catch a baby impala. Sightings of this male will probably always be few and far between as the area where he is viewed is out of the core of his territory.

**KIKELEZI FEMALE**  
**1 FEMALE CUB**

**9 YEARS 3 MONTHS**  
**13 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY  
(5 sightings of female, 6 sightings of female and cub, 4 sighting of cub alone)

Over one year old now the cub is now been seen more by itself as her mother leaves her for longer periods of time. Been a young cat she has an unbelievably amount of inquisitiveness. Of the few times the cub was seen by herself she was looking curiously across at a herd of impala. Once spotted by the impala she would go bounding off into the thick bush to conceal herself. Still very much reliant on her mother for food though and so the majority of the sightings where the two were seen together was when they were in the area of a kill. For most of the month the movement of these two leopards have been between Campbell Koppies and West Street Bridge. Hopefully the two will stay in this area for longer and not go back to the land around Stwise where it was always very difficult to follow due to the difficulty of the terrain.

**JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE**  
**1 CUB**

**11 YEARS 2 MONTH**  
**7 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**  
WESTERN EYREFIELD  
(0 sightings)

**11 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

There were no sightings of this female during the month.

**OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE**  
**1 CUB**

**6 YEARS 3 MONTHS**  
**5 MONTHS**

EYREFIELD  
( 1 sighting of female, 2 sightings of female and cubs, 0 sightings of cubs alone)

The two sightings of the mother and cub were two days in a row. The pair had been found on Matshipiri Dam road with a freshly killed impala. It was a rainy day but it did not stop anyone from watching the two feed and play. Although the cub has not been viewed that much it is very relaxed and curious about the Land Rovers and will venture away from its mother to have a closer look. At this stage it is thought that the little one is a female. Perhaps the mother will have a better chance of raising a female cub to independency. The second day the leopards were found in the same area but this time they were up in the trees because of a pair of mating lions in the area. They had to spend the entire day up in the tree and were eventually left to themselves at night time. The following day the lions were still in the area but the leopards had disappeared and were not seen again for the rest of the report period. Hopefully the mother will continue to bring her cub further south and give us more sightings of them.

**MATSHIPIRI FEMALE****10 YEARS 3 MONTHS****1 MALE CUB****2 YEARS 6 MONTHS**

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD

( 2 sightings of female alone, 5 sighting of female with cub, 5 sightings of cub alone)

A good month of sightings again for this pair and no surprises this month as the young male is still very reliant of month and does not seem to have the usual genetic code other males have, which causes them to disperse away from their natal range. The young male still shows signs of nervousness around the Land Rovers. An amazing sighting of these two leopards were seen after the mother had caught an African Rock Python, which the two proceeded to then have a tug of war with it.

**DUDLEY FEMALE****12 YEARS 4 MONTHS****1 MALE CUB****18 MONTHS**

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

(0 sightings of female alone, 2 sighting of female with cub, 0 sighting of cub alone)

No change in the movements of these two leopards with the two sightings been in close proximity to Rattray's camp. The exceptional sighting of these two leopards was with the Bicycle Crossing male (read under Bicycle Crossing male).

**FLOCKFIELD FEMALE****6 YEARS 9 MONTHS**

CENTRAL &amp; EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

(1sighting)

A usual sighting of this female. As she was spotted and identified she fled the scene. The sighting was in the Mamba waterhole region. And female leopard tracks in the Kapen River indicate that she is still territorial on Flockfield.

**TAMBOTI FEMALE****3 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

(5 sightings)

Well and truly independent now. The five sightings of her for the month were mostly all on the western bank but she did venture across to her territory on the eastern bank of the Sand River on occasion by using West Street Bridge. Once she was seen catching a scrub hare. She was not seen in the vicinity of any males but she will be turning four this year and so it is possible by the end of the year that she will have her first litter of cubs.

**Other leopards encountered during January 2011**

- **Son of the Dudley female:** (4 years 7 months)( 9 sightings)

A better month of sightings for this youngster. Seen mostly in his usual haunt on the western bank but also twice on the eastern bank. He did however have a run in with the large male leopard from Sparta. He roared quickly but then scampered away from the larger leopard. By the end of this year it will be clearer whether he will be territorial on the reserve or migrate elsewhere, but for now he seems to still be just testing the waters.

- **No id male:** (no age)( 3sighting)

A young male whom we think is one of the newly independent sons of the female leopard from Sparta has been seen around the area of the new airstrip and also once on the eastern bank around the Mlowathi River.

- **Large male from Sparta:** (2 sightings)

Seen only twice during the month. This is surely just an outlying post in his vast territory and so does not frequent it often. The one sighting with the Son of the Dudley female was noteworthy.

- **Female from Sparta:** (3 sightings)

Twice seen in the vicinity of camp and once close to the airstrip with a female impala kill. She seems to have rid herself of her two sons and so one can expect her to have a new litter sometime this year.

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

January	19
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### **CHEETAH**

A reasonably good month for Cheetah sightings. The beginning of the report period there were a few sightings of the female with large female cub. They were found with two impala kills suggesting that the youngster is now catching prey as well, they were however chased off their kills by a single Styx lioness. A few days later they were seen catching a juvenile impala. With the youngster now catching prey it will only be a matter of time before she gains her independency. Other cheetah sightings included the several sightings of the four males up at Clarendon dam.

## **NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED**

December	6
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### **WILD DOGS**

Only one sighting for the report period of these elusive canids. Seen once again on the airstrip in the evening in fading light so therefore the sighting did not last long before the pack had to be abandoned. Hopefully the year ahead will be better than 2010 and the pack will be seen more often.

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

December	7
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### **CAPE BUFFALO**

Most days there have been buffalo encountered but just old dagga boys. The herds have been scarce this month with only occasional sightings of a herd at Clarendon Dam and the Windmill areas. The dagga boys seen are usually around the airstrip and old airstrip areas. With so much water around it is easy going for the herds and so they have not been drawn down towards the Sand River. Once winter comes and the pans dry up so the sightings of large herds will increase but for the next few months the dagga boys will have to do.

### **RHINO**

A very easy month of sightings as far as rhino's went. In the afternoon all one had to do was drive out towards the area around Flockfield tower and would find a crash of five and most often a cow with a very small calf. Due to the exposure the calf has had to the Land Rovers it has become very relaxed and often wonders close to the vehicles to have a good inspection before running back to mom.

### **ELEPHANTS**

With the hot days of January some fantastic elephant viewing has been had. There is nothing an elephant loves more than having a swim. With the level that the river has been in one can watch a large bull elephant wander into the river and get completely submerged with just its trunk sticking out. An interesting sighting developed one day when a herd of elephants was looking to cross through the river. Present in the herd was a very young calf, which unfortunately on stepping into the swift current was swept off its feet. The mother and half the herd were very quick to chase after and catch up, but for a good hundred meters the small little calf was swept downstream but it did very well to keep its trunk above water. Towards the end of the report period the marula fruits ripened to which the elephants responded by spending hours beneath the trees picking the

delicious fruits up off the ground.

**TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR JANUARY 2011**

Lions: 71

Leopards: 67

Elephant: 98

Rhino: 81

Buffalo: 52

Cheetah: 8

Wild Dog: 1