

MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – JANUARY 2012

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

WEATHER SUMMARY

	January-2012
Maximum temperature (°C)	35
Minimum temperature (°C)	20
Mean maximum (°C)	31
Mean minimum (°C)	22
Rainfall (mm)	404
Days of rain	5

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF JANUARY 2012

Due to the severe floods we experienced in the second half of January, we were forced to close the camp, as we were unable to provide our guests with the quality game viewing that MalaMala is renowned for. In just two days we had a massive 340mm of rain, which washed out most of our roads and made driving off-road impossible. The adverse environmental impact we would have had on the land was too large to ignore, which made the decision to close the camp for two weeks the only feasible option. Therefore this game report only covers the first 17 days of January.

LIONS

STYX PRIDE = 9

1 ADULT FEMALES	16 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS
4 CUBS	1 YEAR
1 CUB	6 MONTHS

MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD
(12 sightings)

Sightings for this pride increased by 13% this month. The majority of the sightings were around the Mlowathi River and Campbell Koppies areas, and on two occasions in the eastern reaches of their territory along the Matshipiri River. The 'dark maned' Manyelethi male was with the pride at the beginning of the month. He was then joined by his three brothers on the 10th. The lions were viewed for four consecutive days on an adult bull giraffe kill. It's the first time in a while that we've seen them target these animals. With the cubs growing in stature and appetite, this was a valuable achievement for them.

EYREFIELD PRIDE = 10

1 ADULT FEMALE	13 YEARS 3 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	10 YEARS 2 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 7 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 6 MONTHS
2 CUBS	4 MONTHS
3 CUBS	2 MONTHS

MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD
(10 sightings)

The Eyrefield pride couldn't have wished for a better start to the year. On the morning of the 1st they were found on the New Airstrip, along with three Manyelethi males, with a large male buffalo kill. One of the younger females was conspicuously absent, but unbeknown to us she wasn't far away. Two days later we discovered that the pride had three new members! She later moved them into the Sand River under West Street Bridge. On the evening of the 5th the pride struck again, inadvertently chasing a herd of wildebeest into two unsuspecting Manyelethi males. They reacted swiftly however, and managed to bring down an adult each. A promising start to 2012! Unfortunately we are currently unaware of the whereabouts of the three new cubs since the floods.

FOURWAYS PRIDE = 5

2 ADULT FEMALES	UNKNOWN AGES
2 SUB ADULT FEMALES	1 YEAR 7 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT MALE	1 YEAR 7 MONTHS

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD
(1 sightings)

Only one sighting of this pride during the first half of this month. They were seen in the eastern parts of MalaMala around Paddy's Pools, and all looked to be in excellent condition.

SELATI PRIDE = 13

1 ADULT FEMALES	13 YEARS 2 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	9 YEARS 1 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	8 YEARS 11 MONTHS
2 SUB ADULTS	3 YEARS 11 MONTHS
4 SUB ADULTS	3 YEARS 10 MONTHS
2 SUB ADULTS	3 YEARS 7 MONTHS

WESTERN CHARLESTON
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of this pride for the month.

CHARLESTON PRIDE = 7

1 ADULT FEMALES	15 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALES	7 YEARS 7 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	7 YEARS
1 SUB ADULT FEMALE	2 YEARS 3 MONTHS
3 CUBS	9 MONTHS

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of this pride for the month, although we've heard reports that three lionesses have been killed by members of the Selati pride.

MARTHLY PRIDE = 12

3 ADULT FEMALE	UNKNOWN AGES
4 SUB FEMALES	2 YEARS 10 MONTHS
4 CUBS	1 YEAR
1 CUBS	8 MONTHS

MARTHLY
(1 sighting)

The Marthly pride was seen only once this month. Two days into the New Year they were located around Track to Matumi Rocks, on western Marthly.

MANYELETHI MALES = 4**+/- 7 YEARS**

MATRHLY, EYREFIELD, MALA MALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD
 DOMINANT OVER THE STYX, EYREFIELD, FOURWAYS AND MARTHLY PRIDES
 (11 sightings)

The Manyelethi males started the New Year off very successfully when they killed a large buffalo bull on the new airstrip, followed by two wildebeest a few days later. The four brothers were only seen together on four occasions. They were found on Eastern side Mlowathi on the 10th of the month, and two days later we located them on Zebra Skull north. This could indicate that they perhaps caught wind of the the Selati males and felt the need to head south and investigate. The Selati males were found around the windmill on the 11th and rangers tracked the Manyelethi males past this position on the 12th until they located the coalition further south. After venturing down south, the four brother then returned north the following day. They appeared to be well-fed when we saw them around Buffalo pans, after which they continued heading north. They were last seen in the vicinity of the new airstrip.

TOULON MALES = 3**+/- 7 YEARS 9 MONTHS**

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 7 MONTHS****1 MALE****4 YEARS 6 MONTHS****MARTHLY MALE****6 YEARS 7 MONTHS**

NOMADIC

(1 sighting)

Only two of the sub-adult males from the Eyrefield pride were seen this month, and they were in the company was the single Marthly male when we found them. They were all located on Western Charleston around the shortcut between first and second turning Jakkalsdraai.

Other lions encountered during January 2012

- **Selati males** (5 sightings)

These buffalo hunting specialists yet again took down an impressive buffalo cow around the Sand River and Rock Drift Donga. They spent at least three days there polishing off the carcass. The Selati males did venture north again this month, and attracted the attention of the Manyelethi males around the Windmill. There was no evidence of the two prides interacting however.

- **Two Kruger National Park males** (0 sightings)

There were no sightings of these males during this month.

ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIONS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

January	40
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LEOPARDS:

BICYCLE CROSSING MALE

10 YEARS

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN CHARLESTON
(1 sighting)

This magnificent male leopard was seen mating with a female leopard that seems to wander onto the property from the west, somewhere around Rattrays on MalaMala. She has a unique eye with a spot in her iris, which makes her easy to identify. The Bicycle Crossing male and this female were seen mating in the morning as well as in the afternoon around western Flockfield.

GOWRIE MALE

12 YEARS 9 MONTHS

NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD
DECEASED

During December we had several sightings of this male looking extremely emaciated. Then reports this month came in from our northern neighbours of his passing. His body was not found but he was seen on his "last legs". Good bye to another great male leopard of MalaMala.

The Gowrie male was born in April of 1998 to the Paradise Valley female. He had a male sibling who also made it to independence, but quickly moved off MalaMala. The future Gowrie male however, stuck around for quite a bit. In the early parts of the 21st century he was often seen around Piccadilly Triangle, before the Rock Drift male and the up and coming Newington male chased him off. He was pushed north off MalaMala, where he established himself as the dominant male in Gowrie. Several years went by, with only very intermittent sightings of him until he started expanding his territorial back southwards. This was due to the death of the Rock Drift male and the sudden downfall of the Newington male due to pressure from the new Bicycle Crossing male. The Gowrie Male was then named and became a regular feature in the northern parts of the Mlowathi River system. Then in 2009 a new threat arrived in the form of the massive Emsagwen male, and again the Gowrie male was forced to move north. As fortune would have it, the Emsagwen male met with an untimely death, probably due to lions. The Mlowathi was once again in the hands of the Gowrie male. In 2011 time started catching up on the Gowrie male. He had survived threats from some of the most celebrated male leopards ever to have lived on MalaMala, but this new threat was one he could not escape from. By the end of 2011 he was reduced to skin and bone. Not known as a very large male, he was able to keep his territory for many more years than anyone could have guessed, and as mentioned above surpassed most of his biggest enemies. As they say, dynamite comes in small packages, and watching YouTube clips of this male defending his territory, you would have to agree. R.I.P the Gowrie male.

AIRSTRIPE MALE

5 YEARS 7 MONTHS

WESTERN MALA MALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(8 sightings)

It has been a fairly uneventful month for the Airstrip male, as he has only been seen eight times. The positions he was located throughout the month indicate that he was marking his territory and wandering about. We found the Airstrip male around lower Mlowathi Crossing with a Klipspringer kill around the middle of the month. This area is known for a good concentration of Klipspringers due to the rocky outcrops.

KIKELEZI FEMALE

10 YEARS 3 MONTHS

WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY
(5 sightings)

The Kikilezi female was seen three times this month, either around Piccadilly Triangle or just passing through. With the grass growing in length and the pans all full of water, it is a haven for small creatures, as well as many impala, obviously attracting the Kikilezi female to this area. She has wandered from West Street Bridge to Bicycle Crossing Hippos this month, sticking to her usual routine of marking her territory.

JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE
1 CUB

12 YEARS 2 MONTHS
6 MONTHS

CENTRAL & WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER

(0 sighting of female, 2 sightings of female and cub, 0 sighting of cub alone).

The Jakkalsdraai female and her cub are both in fantastic condition and thriving down on the Western portion of Charleston. They were both located twice this month, once around River Road, River Rocks Road, and once along Calabash Drive on the eastern bank of the Sand River.

CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE
WESTERN EYREFIELD
(3 sightings)

12 YEARS 3 MONTHS

Sightings of this female took place along the banks of the Mlowathi River, as well as around Campbell Koppies. The most recent sighting was around the northern reaches of the Mlowathi River, where she was seen sharing a duiker kill with an unidentified male.

OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE
1 FEMALE CUB
EYREFIELD

7 YEARS 3 MONTHS
1 YEAR 5 MONTHS

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

The two sightings of this female leopard were relatively far apart. The first one was on our northern boundary around the Mlowathi River, and the second was on the very eastern parts of her territory at Matshipiri Dam. Yet again she was viewed without her daughter who is verging on independence.

MATSHIPIRI FEMALE
2 CUBS

11 YEARS 3 MONTHS
AGE?

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD

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

Still no sign of her two cubs as she seems to have moved them to a new den site. The one sighting of her around Paddy's Pools could be seen as a good sign, as it is not far from her original den site.

DUDLEY FEMALE
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(0 sighting)

13 YEARS 4 MONTHS

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

FLOCKFIELD FEMALE
1 CUBS

7 YEARS 9 MONTHS
7 MONTHS

CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

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

The only sighting of this female and her cub was near the Windmill in eastern Flockfield. They both appeared healthy, and slowly but surely the cub is becoming more accustomed to having a vehicle around.

TAMBOTI FEMALE**4 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALA MALA

(1 sightings)

Yet another disappointing month for the Tamboti female. Seen only once just south and east of the New Airstrip. Still no signs of pregnancy yet, but she has recovered well from last year's horrific wounds.

SPARTA FEMALE**14 YEARS 1 MONTH**

WESTERN MALA MALA

(0 sightings)

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

Other leopards encountered during January 2012

- **Son of the Matshipiri female:** (3 years 5 months) (1 sightings)
He hasn't relaxed down at all since the last sighting, but we'll continue trying.
- **Son of the Dudley female 2009)** (1 sighting)
It's been a while since this male was seen, so we were pleasantly surprised to find him on the Charleston/Toulon Boundary.
- **Daughter of the Campbell Koppies female and cub:** (0 sightings)
- **No id leopards:** (8 sightings)

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

January	17
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CHEETAH

The regular two brothers were seen on three occasions near the Clarendon area. They continue to do very well for themselves, and were seen with an impala kill on Fourways Open Area. During the month we also saw a female cheetah in the eastern parts of Mala Mala.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED

January	3
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

There were no sightings during the report period.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WILD DOGS ENCOUNTERED

January	0
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CAPE BUFFALO

Not the greatest start to 2012 if you're a buffalo, with three different kills on January 1st. Sightings have been good however, with at least one herd of buffalo seen on all but one of the 17 days of this report period. Quite remarkable for this time of year!

ELEPHANTS

Nothing out the ordinary for this record period, with good quality sightings day in and day out. It will be interesting to see if and how the floods will affect these animals.

RHINOS

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

TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR JANUARY 2012

Lions: 43
Leopards: 32
Elephant: 68
Buffalo: 46
Rhinos: n/a
Cheetah: 5
Wild Dog: 0