

MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – JULY 2012

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

WEATHER SUMMARY

Maximum temperature (°C)	30°C
Minimum temperature (°C)	3°C
Mean maximum (°C)	26.1°C
Mean minimum (°C)	8.6°C
Rainfall (mm)	0 mm
Days of rain	0 Days

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF JULY 2012

LIONS

STYX PRIDE = 9

1 ADULT FEMALE	16 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	10 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 6 MONTHS
2 FEMALE CUBS	1 YEAR 6 MONTHS
2 MALE CUBS	1 YEAR 6 MONTHS
1 CUB	1 YEAR

MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD
(20 sightings)

This month has seen the number of sightings almost triple, after June's mediocre seven sightings. Their curious movements last month raised a few eyebrows, but it's finally back to business as usual for the Styx pride. These lions aren't in the best of conditions - indeed a far cry from a few months back, but this can be attributed to the age of the cubs. As they get older the youngsters start to participate in hunts, especially when smaller prey is being targeted, and with youth comes inexperience and unbridled eagerness. Jumping the gun and breaking formation is now commonplace in hunts for this pride, giving their intended prey the edge. But the mistakes the cubs are making most definitely have their place. It is how they will learn their hunting skills, preparing them for becoming the apex predator of the African bush one day. Lions, unlike most other cats, will rarely bring back small animals for their cubs to chase and kill. Instead their young will learn to hunt by observing the adults. Speaking of cubs and kills, on one morning in the latter half of this month, the Eyrefield pride and one of the Manyelethi males appeared to have caught and killed a large adult buffalo bull. On closer inspection, it was discovered that there were five adult lionesses as well as three young cubs and one older cub. This gathering included not only the Eyrefield pride, but also members of their neighbouring pride, the Styx pride. The lioness from the Styx pride that has been showing signs of having a bad hip for some time, as well as the youngest of the Styx cubs, were among the Eyrefield pride as they all fed on the buffalo carcass. There was a sense of déjà vu among the rangers as they recalled the sighting near the Giraffe bones in May this year, when a hippo died in the Sand River. A few days after being discovered, we witnessed both the entire Styx pride and the single Eyrefield lioness with the three young cubs simultaneously feeding on the large carcass. They stayed together for a few days, and even a few of the Manyelethi males were present on

occasion. Both sets of lions seemed to tolerate one another as competition for food was obviously not the issue given the fact that there was two tones of hippo to go around. This, however, was not the case on this morning when only a few minutes after being discovered, this docile situation erupted into a savage show of the unforgiving nature of the African bush. The young Styx cub began to retreat from the area of the carcass when all four of the Eyrefield lionesses turned on and attacked the poor young cub. They brutally mauled and clawed him as he tried to defend himself, but being just shy of a year old, he was helpless against the four battle-hardened lionesses. After what seemed like an eternity, but was a mere few seconds, the lionesses left the small male and went back to their meal. Being set free from his tormentors, the cub slunk off into the riverbed and ran northwards towards where his mother was calling for him. The wounds inflicted were severe. He had bite marks on his limbs, lower back and head – all the vulnerable places that lions target when fighting other lions. But this wasn't the end of the struggle for the Styx pride. The lioness with the limp was still trapped in among the Eyrefield pride, and every time she moved one of them would pounce on her and all she could do was remain submissive in the hope that they would eventually become bored with her and fall asleep, thus allowing her to escape. As night fell and the hyenas began calling, one of the rangers found the single lioness limping northwards towards to the causeway, away from her fearsome prison of the Eyrefield pride. The injured young cub has beaten the odds before in his life by being the only cub to survive in his aging mother's litter. Although he sustained serious injuries in this attack, he has once again shown his resilience and is making a slow, but steady recovery. One of the older lionesses has been struggling as well and spent some time on her own as she couldn't keep up with the pride. We're not sure exactly how she was injured, but the condition of her legs is not good. And if that wasn't enough, she also has a puncture wound on her neck. As far as the youngest lioness is concerned, we believe she has given birth somewhere around Campbell Koppies.

EYREFIELD PRIDE = 10

1 ADULT FEMALE

2 ADULT FEMALES

1 ADULT FEMALE

3 CUBS

3 CUBS

MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD

(25 sightings)

13 YEARS 9 MONTHS

5 YEARS 1 MONTH

5 YEARS

5 MONTHS

2 MONTHS

What a month it's been for the Eyrefield pride, as they continue with their tradition. Sightings of this pride normally increase in the winter months as they spend more time around the Sand River, and the number of sightings this month have almost doubled from June. These lions have had an extra incentive to frequent the river this month. On the morning of the 11th we found ourselves enjoying a most scenic of sightings in the Sand River, just a stone's throw south of Rattrays Camp. Two lionesses and the three youngest members of the Eyrefield pride were lying on the sandy 'beaches' just east of the main watercourse. The lions had taken shelter from the late morning sun by positioning themselves in the shadows being cast by wild date palms. The cubs were cuddled up next to their mother. It was a peaceful setting, but tranquillity was soon to be replaced with exhilaration...on our part. Two members of the pride were absent from this particular scene; the oldest lioness who was in the company of a Manyelethi male, and one of the youngest lionesses that was heavily pregnant when we saw her over a week ago. It is the latter that next entered the fray. She snuck up on us and then proceeded to walk directly past both us and her fellow pride members. We had no idea where she was going, but the young lioness was moving with purpose and knew exactly where she was headed. We watched her disappear into a thicket roughly ten metres behind the other lions, re-emerging after a few moments. What we witnessed next is something that will remain embedded in our memories forever. A tiny ball of fur was gently wedged inbetween the jaws of the lioness, and what we were seeing was a mother moving her recently-born young from one den to another. We watched in awe as she passed – a mere couple of metres away from us - giving us a close-up of her very young cub. The cub's eyes were still closed, and the tip of its pink tongue was sticking out as it tagged along for the ride – blissfully unaware of its surroundings. It couldn't be much

older than a week. We followed the lioness over vast, open sand banks for a few hundred meters before she entered a spike-thorn thicket, her new den. A series of ‘meows’ could be heard from inside the thicket, leading us to believe that at least one cub was already there. The lioness popped out from the thicket and headed back north, and as we watched she relocated yet another cub. I must add that on both trips she was escorted most of the way by the other young lioness. It’s lucky enough to get just one short glimpse of a sighting such as this... we got a good ten minute look at two cubs being moved over an open sand bank. A true ‘once in lifetime’ sighting! The future does indeed look good for this pride, as the daughter of the oldest lioness is pregnant as well. The oldest lioness continues to mate fruitlessly with the Manyelethi males, but if the oldest lioness from the Styx pride is anything to go by, then this lioness should still have a few cub-bearing years in her. These lionesses are going to have their work cut out with so many little stomachs to feed.

FOURWAYS PRIDE = 5

2 ADULT FEMALES

2 SUB ADULT FEMALES

1 SUB ADULT MALE

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD

(1 sighting)

UNKNOWN AGES

2 YEARS 1 MONTH

2 YEARS 1 MONTH

Again just the one sighting of the Fourways pride this month up at Clarendon in our northeastern corner, and it must be added that they are all in great shape. A bit of fun was had at this sighting, as a fleece blanket happened to fall off one of the Land Rovers – curiosity and uncertainty were the first reactions displayed by the lions, but that was soon put aside as playfulness took over. One of the youngsters charged in, grabbed the blanket, and proceeded to reduce it to shreds with the help of her two siblings!

MARTHLY PRIDE = 12

3 ADULT FEMALES

4 SUB ADULT FEMALES

4 CUBS

1 CUB

MARHTLY

(1 sighting)

UNKNOWN AGES

3 YEARS 3 MONTH

1 YEAR 5 MONTHS

1 YEAR 1 MONTH

It was at Paraffin Drift that we got our only viewing of the Marthly pride this month. Only four members were present at the scene – two of the lionesses, as well as two sub-adults. They all seem to still be in good condition.

MANYELETHI MALES = 4

+/- 7 YEARS 6 MONTHS

MATRHLI, EYREFIELD, MALA MALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

DOMINANT OVER THE STYX, EYREFIELD, FOURWAYS AND MARHTLY PRIDES

(20 sightings)

Sightings of these formidable brothers have increased dramatically this month, by more than double in fact! This could be attributed to the Eyrefield pride spending most of the month in MalaMala. They continue to dominate the northern two-thirds of our property and the surrounds without so much as a hint of competition. Spending the majority of their time separately, and in twos, is a risky, but not uncommon occurrence for male lions of this age. They are at the peak of their territorial prime at between seven and eight years old, and have sired offspring with four different prides of lionesses. With such accomplishment comes the slight hint of arrogance and overconfidence that has been seen to split, and often ruin coalitions in the past. Two male lions

can usually defend themselves against several attackers, but a single male cannot. So the more time these males spend separately, and apart from one another, the greater their risk of falling victim to an up-and-coming younger coalition. So let's hope these boys of MalaMala find some humility in having fathered so many offspring, that they must now defend, and start spending more time together for the good of each other and their progeny.

CHARLESTON PRIDE = 4

1 ADULT FEMALE

7 YEARS 7 MONTHS

3 CUBS

1 YEAR 3 MONTH

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

(2 sightings)

The first sighting of these lions was along our southern boundary as they had some downtime on Flat Rocks. The second sighting took place on the last day of the month on Sibuye Drive in western Charleston. Only the two young males were viewed, in close proximity to a herd a buffalo. The next day all four members were seen together still in the same area, still within sight of the buffalo. All the members seem to be in good shape, and the young males are growing to the extent that their tracks can be easily mistaken for those of a full-grown adult.

SELATI PRIDE = 16

1 ADULT FEMALE

13 YEARS 8 MONTHS

2 ADULT FEMALES

9 YEARS 7 MONTHS

2 ADULT FEMALES

9 YEARS 6 MONTHS

2 SUB ADULTS

4 YEARS 5 MONTHS

4 SUB ADULTS

4 YEARS 4 MONTHS

2 SUB ADULTS

4 YEARS 1 MONTH

3 CUBS

UNKNOWN AGE

WESTERN CHARLESTON

(2 sighting)

We had rare glimpses of this pride on back-to-back mornings this month, and both took place in the same area around the Wild Dog den site in western Charleston. On the one occasion they were literally lying down at the entrance to the den.

SUB ADULT MALES FROM THE EYREFIELD PRIDE = 3

1 MALE

5 YEARS

MARTHLY MALE

7 YEARS

NOMADIC

(3 sightings)

These two nomadic young males continue to wander around the southern parts of MalaMala. This month saw them have a brief reunion with three members of their former pride. It's been over a year since we've seen these animals together. We found the males on the eastern bank of the Sand River, north of Beaumont's hippo pools, where they were staring intently southwards at something in the reeds. A sudden burst of legs and necks revealed several giraffe running eastwards, with three lionesses in hot pursuit. After a brief chase, the lionesses realised they didn't stand a chance with their taller-than-usual prey, and lost interest. At this point we had not identified the three lionesses that the two males we looking at with such curiosity. The lionesses advanced, and the males didn't move. This continued for over an hour and

into the early hours of the evening as darkness fell. Always submissive as they continued moving closer, it became clear that the lionesses were none other than the three young Eyrefield lionesses – the sisters and cousins of the younger of the two males. When the two lions were a mere five metres apart, the male from the Marthly pride stood up and advanced towards them. The sheer size of him and his unfamiliarity due to a few years' of absence, caused the one lioness to lose her nerve, and she retreated. As with any animal, especially males trying to be dominant, when ground is given, ground must be taken. The lionesses increased their speed to a jog and so did the males, who by this stage were approaching River road and still looking to go northwards. Male lions generally tire more easily than females, and the two young brutes soon lost interest just to the north of Charleston North. The the lionesses continued northwards along river road, and the males stood catching their breath after the mere few hundred-metre jog!

TOULON MALES = 3

+/- 9 YEARS

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

NOMADIC

(0 sightings)

There were no sightings during the report period.

Other lions encountered

- Kruger male lions : (2 sightings) These males are now the dominant males in the south and were seen on 2 occasions around the Track between the Camps on western Charleston.

ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIONS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

July	45
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LEOPARDS:

BICYCLE CROSSING MALE

10 YEARS 6 MONTHS

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

We had a brief glimpse of days gone by as the Bicycle Crossing male was viewed on eight occasions this month – up six sightings from June. In recent months the number of sightings of this male has dwindled, largely due to the fact that his son, the Airstrip male, now dominates the northern reaches of what used to be his territory. We viewed this large male mostly between Flockfield Boma Crossing, the Tamboti Thickets as well as around Charleston north. It was one of the sightings around the Tamboti thickets that turned out to be a hot topic as the Bicycle Crossing male bullied the Dudley female and her cub off of an impala kill.

AIRSTRIP MALE

6 YEARS 1 MONTH

WESTERN MALA MALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(13 sightings)

The Airstrip male is quickly being recognised as the next Rock Drift male (Tjololo). He is undoubtedly the most viewed large male leopard on MalaMala, and his territory is huge. This month's biggest bit of news regarding the Airstrip male is that he was seen mating with the Daughter of the Kikilezi female. It appears her feverish efforts to mate with him last month eventually paid off. His only offspring so far, the cub of the Kikilezi female, is doing well. Hopefully in the not so distant future he will be able to extend his bloodline further. We viewed him in all corners of his territory, and on a few of those occasions he was feeding off kills. We also saw him come agonisingly close on a few hunts. He had a brief encounter with the West Street male, but the youngster knew his place and fled the scene at high speed whilst the Airstrip male made a halfhearted attempt to chase the younger male down.

CHARLESTON MALE *(New name)*

6 YEARS 1 MONTH

EASTERN CHARLESTON, NORTHERN TOULON
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings during the report period.

WEST STREET MALE *(New name)*

3 YEARS 3 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(9 sightings)

Down two sightings from June, this has still been a decent month for sightings of this promising young male. There is much talk around camp as to the potential this leopard has to grow into one of our biggest males. He was seen around his usual haunts from Flockfield tower to West Street Bridge, and Flockfield Boma Crossing. The West Street male does appear to be venturing more into the Tamboti Thickets as well. Quite interestingly he was viewed on a few occasions around the quarries next to Flockfield Tower, where we watched him hide in the undergrowth on the banks of these quarries where he'd wait patiently for an unsuspecting animal to wander close enough in its pursuit to quench its thirst. While this male still has to lay low and avoid the bigger, older males in the vicinity, his main competition at present is still the Newington male.

NEWINGTON MALE (*New name*)
WESTERN MALAMALA
(4 sightings)

3 YEARS 9 MONTHS

There were just the four sightings of this young male, as he appears to be spending the majority of his nomadic life in the western parts of MalaMala with the odd foray into western Eyrefield. He has reportedly been mating with the Tamboti female.

HOGVAAL MALE (*New name*)
EASTERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALAMALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD
(2 sighting)

6 YEARS 3 MONTH

This magnificent specimen of a relatively young adult male leopard seems to be doing well for himself as he patrols his very large territory. We believe that he is the father of the Matshipiri females' cubs as the previous male occupier of this land, the late Emsagwen male, died before these cubs came into the world. This month we viewed him in the presence of an unidentified female in the Kapen River. Expectations are high for this male as he is following in the footsteps of one of MalaMala's most loved male leopards.

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

+ - 7 YEARS

There were no sightings during the report period.

PRINCESS ALICE PANS MALE (*New name*)
WESTERN MALAMALA
(1 sightings)

11 YEARS 7 MONTHS

Arguably one of the biggest male leopards in the area, the Princess Alice Pans male was viewed only once this month very close to MalaMala Main Camp.

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

+ - 5 YEARS

There were no sightings during the report period.

KIKILEZI FEMALE
CUB

10 YEARS 10 MONTHS
4 MONTHS

WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY
(3 sightings of female, 6 sightings of female and cub, 0 sighting of cub without female)

Not as good as last month as far as quantity is concerned, but there was plenty of quality. A family reunion

was had on the eastern bank of the Sand River when mother and son were joined by the Airstrip male. The Kikilezi female had killed an impala and led her cub to it before the Airstrip male happened on the scene. Size counts out here, so the large male ensured he got his fill before letting the other two feed. There was very little aggression shown by any of the animals. The cub would play on branches just above his feeding father, curiously watching him. The Kikilezi female and her remaining cub were very active towards the end of the month, and were seen on five occasions during the last week of July. Two of these sightings included a kill – the first was an impala kill in the vicinity of the Eastern Floodplain in the presence of numerous hyenas, and the second was a baboon on Northern Extension Piccadilly. The Kikilezi female continues to live up to her reputation of being a good mother, and with the little guy growing by the day, it is hard not to be optimistic about their future.

TAMBOTI FEMALE

4 YEARS 9 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALA MALA

(5 sightings)

We enjoyed some interesting sightings of the Tamboti female. On the 29th we saw her with a kill near Pete's Bridge. A few days later she was seen mating, once again, with the Airstrip male. This took place around Campbell Koppies, but the romance did not last long. The pair only shared company for one day before the female ventured west where is believed that she was again mating, but this time with the younger Newington male. It is a good strategy for her to mate with the many males that share her territory, as this will confuse the fatherhood of potential cubs and the various male leopards will not pose a threat to them. Furthermore, the Tamboti female has had much difficulty in becoming pregnant and her testing out the various options out there may do the trick.

MLOWATHI FEMALE (*New name*)

5 YEARS 6 MONTHS

NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD

(1 sighting)

This beautiful young female was seen only once this month around the open areas to the east of the northern reaches of the Mlowathi River. Rangers were alerted to her presence by the sound of impalas frantically alarm-calling. It wasn't long before she was spotted dragging a freshly killed impala, but unfortunately for the small leopard she was relieved of her hard earned kill by an ever opportunistic hyena shortly afterwards.

JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE

12 YEARS 8 MONTHS

1 CUB

1 YEAR

CENTRAL & WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER

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

The Jakkalsdraai female and her cub afforded us a lovely sighting this month when we viewed the two of them on a duiker kill in the heart of Charleston. The year-old cub, although still half the size of its mother, is looking less and less like a cub.

CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE

12 YEARS 9 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

(1 sightings)

This mature female was seen once this month at Mlowathi Dam.

OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE
EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

7 YEARS 10 MONTHS

There were no sightings during the report period.

MATSHIPIRI FEMALE
2 CUBS

11 YEARS 9 MONTHS
9 MONTHS

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings of female, 0 sightings of female and cubs, 1 sighting of cubs alone).

Just a single sighting of these two cubs on the very eastern reaches of the property near the Kruger National Park. They were both in good condition, and are growing into large cubs.

DUDLEY FEMALE
1 CUB

13 YEARS 10 MONTHS
4 MONTHS

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

It's been a while since we've had a month of decent sightings of this female. We believe it's largely due to the fact that she's chosen den sites for her cub on our neighbouring properties. However, as the cub gets older, we hope that she will be more inclined to venture more onto the northeastern parts of her territory. The one sighting we had of these two leopards this month was on an impala kill in the Tamboti Thickets. The Bicycle Crossing male – a large, established individual – was soon alerted to the scent of a meal in the area. Despite originally being a little cautious of the possible presence of larger predators, he ran in on the unknowing female and chased her off her cache. There was much snarling, growling and bearing of teeth as she unwillingly had to give up her hard-earned prize. What was to happen next was to further leave the guests in awe! A three to four-month old leopard cub then appeared out of the thick brush, mere metres from the carcass and the Bicycle Crossing male! This was the first-ever sighting of the Dudley females' youngster, and what a special one it was! The mother then recognised the possible danger facing her offspring, and escorted the cub away from the male – who was feeding voraciously on the carcass. The mother and cub set off across the river, the youngster jumping frequently to clear some of the deeper channels, but not always quite making it, and emerging somewhat bedraggled, but safe.

FLOCKFIELD FEMALE
1 CUB

8 YEARS 3 MONTH
1 YEAR 1 MONTH

CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON
(0 sightings of female, 0 sighting 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
(1 sightings)

14 YEARS 6 MONTHS

Seen in central Marthly once during the report period and not for long. It looks as if age has done well for this leopard, and she continues to retain her good health as she approaches 15 years of age.

Other leopards encountered:

- **Daughter of the Kikilezi female:** (6 sightings) This young female leopard is fast becoming a favourite among the rangers, with the relaxed nature of her mother, the Kikilezi female, and her beautiful golden coat, from her grandmother, the Ngoboswan female. She was viewed mainly around the New Firebreak and southern reaches of the Matshipiri, and might look to be setting up a territory here with the Tamboti female shifting westwards and the Matshipiri female shifting back eastwards.
- **Female with the dot in her eye and her 2 cubs:** (2 sightings of female, 3 sightings of female and cubs, 6 sightings of cubs alone) At the beginning of the month this female leopard, who is not regularly seen on MalaMala, wowed us with the arrival of 2 new cubs in western Charleston. They were seen every day for about 10 days on track between the Camps, and the cubs were becoming more and more relaxed with the vehicles. But as mothers do when the cubs are of this age, she moved them eastwards and we were unable to find her new den. The mother was then viewed by herself, but with free suckle marks, going in and out of the reeds south of Charleston north.
- **Son of the Dudley female 2009:** (1 sighting) Still looking to be in good shape although very skinny, this leopard is now sporting the usual build of a 2 to 3 year-old leopard. At this age leopards eat anything and everything they can get their claws and teeth into, as they hone their hunting skills to one day become the king of stealth.
- **Son of the Matshipiri female 2008:** (1 sighting) This male continues to show signs of nervousness that we can only hope will dissipate and be replaced by trust in the years to come.
- **No ID males:** (14 sightings)
- **No ID females:** (4 sightings)

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

July	26
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CHEETAH

The two brothers continue to be our most viewed cheetahs on the property up near the Clarendon dam area, and provide much entertainment in our furthest northeast corner. They were viewed just over 10 times this month, and with the exception of once or twice, were always seen near the corner. They did, on one occasion, venture down towards Fourways open area, where they were able to find another one of their kind – in female form. As male cheetahs do, they chased her, and as female cheetahs do when being chased by male cheetah, she ran. Eventually the novelty of finding another cheetah wore off, and they made their peace and moved apart after some a few heated moments. Unfortunately no mating took place this time, but this could very well be the same female that they were seen with a few months ago at Clarendon dam, and she could very well be pregnant. Time will only tell with this one.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED

July	3
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

A record-breaker of a month with the pack of Cape Hunting dogs – 31 days and 32 sightings! 31 sightings of the pack who are denning on western Charleston, and a single sighting of a single dog near Matshipiri open area. The six pups are growing at an astounding rate, and continuously beg the adults to feed their never-ending appetite for regurgitated meat. Now at about two months old, these pups will begin to “run” with the pack fairly shortly and actively feed on fresh kills, as the impala stock in the immediate area around the den has been somewhat dissipated over the past few months.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED

July	16
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CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

With the hot and dry months of the third quarter of the year approaching, one can see the condition of the buffalo deteriorating as the water in of the Sand River begins to dry up. There are still some large herds of 300-plus buffalo that frequent the banks and water of the Sand River. This month saw a record number of elephant sightings at 248 in total – a clear sign that areas are drying up and conditions are getting tough. Over the next two months or so, before the first spring rains, elephant numbers usually pick up substantially as they all migrate towards the Sand River.

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

There were a few Serval, Civet and honey badger sightings over the report period, as well as many white-tailed mongoose and interesting nocturnal bird sightings. A pair of Saddle Billed Storks are frequenting the Sand and Mlowathi River systems, and there is a Secretary bird that is now residing around the Airstrip and West Street. However, the rare sighting that stole the spotlight this month was that of one of Africa’s most peculiar animals, the Scaly Anteater – more commonly known as the Pangolin. This strange creature was seen around southwestern Flockfield on the night of the 5th July, and was discovered by an Eyrefield lioness who decided to make it her chew toy for a few minutes. After realising that she could not get through the very tough scales, she left it to an audience of amazed guests and rangers!

TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR JULY 2012

Lion:	67
Leopard:	98
Elephant:	248
Buffalo:	90
Cheetah:	14
Cape Hunting Dog:	32