

**MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – June 2011**

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

**WEATHER SUMMARY**

	<b>June-11</b>
Maximum temperature (°C)	31
Minimum temperature (°C)	2
Mean maximum (°C)	27.23
Mean minimum (°C)	9.03
Rainfall (mm)	5mm
Days of rain	2

\*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF JUNE 2011

**LIONS**

**STYX PRIDE = 9**

<b>1 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>15 YEARS 9 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>9 YEARS 4 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>7 YEARS 8 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 SUB MALE</b>	<b>3 YEARS 3 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 SUB FEMALE</b>	<b>3 YEARS 2 MONTH</b>
<b>4 CUBS</b>	<b>6 MONTHS</b>

*MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD*

*(16 sightings)*

A quieter month of viewing of the Styx pride compared to last month. The cubs were seen frequently in the first half of the report period, but only twice in the second half. The latter half of the month the pride were mainly to the north of our border. On one occasion a ranger heard a zebra being caught by lions just to the north of our border in the Mlowathi River, which could explain their absence. The old lioness is still trying to conceive and she was seen mating several times during the month with various Manyelethi males. It is possible that given her old age she won't be able to have another litter. The two sub-adults weren't seen during the report period and their whereabouts were unknown throughout the month. The

Mlowathi Dam is still full of water, which could be an influencing factor as to the territorial movements of the pride. Hopefully as winter progresses and the dam dries up, the pride will move further south and use the Sand River as their source of water.

**EYREFIELD PRIDE = 8**

<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>12 YEARS 8 MONTHS</b>	
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>9 YEARS 7 MONTHS</b>	
<b>3 SUB ADULTS</b>	<b>(1 MALE 2 FEMALE)</b>	<b>4 YEARS</b>
<b>2 SUB ADULTS</b>	<b>(1 MALE 1 FEMALE)</b>	<b>3 YEARS 11 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT MALE (MARTHLY PRIDE)</b>		<b>6 YEARS</b>

*MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD*

*(21 sightings)*

A big blow to the Eyrefield pride occurred this month when the oldest lioness, the one that stayed with the pride, was killed in a skirmish with the Manyelethi males. At 14 years 8 months of age this female led a successful life and raised a number of cubs to independency. A good month of sightings of the Eyrefield pride though, with numerous sightings of both the main pride and the two lionesses that are on their own. The two lionesses were seen mostly on the western bank, although they occasionally crossed onto the eastern side of the river and went as far east as the White Cloth, and even into the Manyelethi River where they found the Manyelethi males feeding on a buffalo calf. It was at this sighting that the one lioness met up with a Manyelethi male and went off to mate.

The sub-adults in the pride were seen on several occasions pestering a herd of buffalo in order to get a meal. They were successful on two occasions. The first time they caught an sub-adult male buffalo and on the second occasion they snagged a young calf. They caught the sub-adult in the Sand River, and were able to feed on it for a few days. The male from the Marthly pride had a few visibly new wounds: a slash across his face and two puncture wounds on his back. However these wounds don't seem to be hampering him as he is moving around freely with the rest of the herd. The sub-adult male with the half tail is still looking a bit worse for wear however. Perhaps with winter coming he will be able to partake in a few large meals and get himself back on track.

**SELATI PRIDE = 14**

<b>1 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>12 YEARS 7 MONTHS</b>
<b>2 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>8 YEARS 6 MONTHS</b>

**2 ADULT FEMALES**

**8 YEARS 4 MONTHS**

**2 CUBS**

**3 YEARS 4 MONTHS**

**4 CUBS**

**3 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

**3 CUBS**

**3 YEARS**

*WESTERN CHARLESTON*

*(0 sighting)*

*There were no sightings of this pride this month.*

**CHARLESTON PRIDE = 4**

**1 ADULT FEMALES**

**14 YEARS 10 MONTHS**

**1 ADULT FEMALES**

**7 YEARS**

**1 ADULT FEMALE**

**6 YEARS 5 MONTHS**

**1 FEMALE CUB**

**20 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**

**2 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

*MARTHLY*

*(2 sightings)*

There were only two sightings of this pride during the month. It's the first time we've seen them since February, and it's believed they have two sets of cubs. The one sighting was of two lionesses and four of the older cubs, while the second sighting was of one lioness. Both sightings were in the same area around Paraffin Drift. There has been a lot of sign of lion activity in the area with lots of tracks and a carcass of a young adult buffalo, however it was only towards the end of the month that we saw these lions. Perhaps this could herald the start of many more sightings to come.

**MANYELETHI MALES = 4**

**+/- 6 YEARS 9 MONTHS**

*MARTHLY, EYREFIELD, NORTHERN MALA MALA*

*DOMINANT OVER THE STYX AND MARTHLY PRIDES*

*(14 sightings)*

The number of sightings of these males is down somewhat since last month, however there don't seem to be any males in the immediate area to take over. They remain dominant over the Styx and Marthly prided, as well as the two Kruger National Park lionesses and their four cubs. The male with the dark mane was seen limping on his right hind leg for the better part of half the month, but he continues to move around and was successful in stealing an impala kill off a leopard which will no doubt help him to recover faster. The four brothers were not seen together on any occasions this month which is a worrying sign. The brother whose whereabouts we're not sure of is the one with the scar on his left hip. They were seen this last month with three kills: a buffalo calf, a Waterbuck and a large male Impala (which they probably stole from a leopard as she was in a tree very close by). They were seen fairly often in the company of the Styx lionesses and were seen mating with them on five different occasions.

**TOULON MALES = 3**

**+/- 7 YEARS 2 MONTH**

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

NOMADIC

(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of these males during the month.

#### **Other lions encountered during June 2011**

- **No ID pride (2 females and 4 cubs):** ( 7 sightings)

This pride continues to patrol the north eastern sections of the property. As we see them more and more they may well become a permanent fixture on MalaMala, and what a pleasure that will be. The cubs continue to grow in size and confidence, and are becoming very relaxed around the vehicles too. This pride has yet to venture too far west into the property, although they have been seen in a vast area spreading north south. On one occasion this month they were found with a sub-adult Wildebeest kill around Clarendon, and were seen on a few time since that kill hunting zebra and Wildebeest in the same area, although they were unsuccessful on all occasions.

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

<b>June</b>	<b>32</b>
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**LEOPARDS:**

**BICYCLE CROSSING MALE**

**9 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

*WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON*

*(2 sightings)*

With only two sightings in a month it is now a pretty sure thing that this male leopard is making way for the next generation. The attraction of the prime territory along the river including West Street Bridge, which allows intruders to access his territory on either side of the river 365 days of the year, has proved to be too much and he has since moved away to areas where competition is less fierce. He is still seen wandering into his old territory but these sights are very rare.

**EMSAGWEN MALE**

**+/- 8 YEARS**

*EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, MARTHLI*

*(4 sightings)*

This male still holds the largest territory of any leopard on MalaMala, and continues to span the entire width of the reserve. He has been known to traverse great distances, and we've spent many hours following his tracks only to find him much further along. The Gowrie male used to hold territory around Mlowathi Dam, but seems to have moved to greener pastures. This has allowed the Emsagwen male to be the sole visitor to that area abundant with game and water. Most of the sightings of him this month were around the Mlowathi area.

**GOWRIE MALE**

**12 YEARS 2 MONTH**

*NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD*

*(0 sightings)*

*There were no sightings of the male during the month.*

**AIRSTRIP MALE**

**5 YEARS**

*WESTERN MALA MALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD*

*(6 sightings)*

This young male is slowly becoming more and more prominent on the western bank of the Sand River. He was seen on four consecutive occasions during the early parts of this month mating with the Daughter of the Ngoboswan female '98. He has a fairly large scar on his neck, testament no doubt to his struggle to gain dominance over the territory. He continues to patrol his territory with the kind of swagger one can expect from a dominant male. We wait with baited breath for the day that he crosses paths with his father, the Bicycle Crossing male. As the Airstrip male continues to grow and gain experience it should lead to an interesting encounter between the two leopards.

**KIKELEZI FEMALE** **9 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

**1 FEMALE CUB** **18 MONTHS**

*WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY*

*(2 sightings of female, 0 sightings of female and cub, 6 sighting of cub alone)*

In stark contrast to last month the daughter of the Kikilezi female (as she is now known) was seen far more often than her mother. The young leopard was seen moving on her own in the heart of her mother's territory. This perhaps shows that as the young female grows, her mother is happy to leave her alone more and more. The daughter of the Kikilezi female was seen hunting on a few occasions, but on most occasions she was left hungry. She did however manage to catch a couple of birds which is pretty common for a young leopard. It will still be some time before she has the experience to successfully hunt larger prey. That said, we found her one afternoon in possession of a young Waterbuck carcass. From what we could gather it was very unlikely that she killed the antelope, so we suspect that she most probably found it and just tucked into the hearty free meal.

**JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE** **11 YEARS 7 MONTHS**

**1 CUB** **1 YEAR**

*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 the female during the month.*

**CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE** **11 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

*WESTERN EYREFIELD*

*(0 sighting)*

*There were no sightings of the female during the month.*

**OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE**

**6 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

**1 FEMALE CUB**

**10 MONTHS**

*EYREFIELD*

*(5 sightings of female, 1 sighting of female and cub, 3 sightings of cub alone)*

The Ostrich Koppies female continues to control the north western parts of MalaMala, east of the Mlowathi River. Her cub has successfully avoided any near fatal incidents with predators, and is fast growing into a very well liked young leopard. Her confidence around the vehicle is providing guests with some amazing viewing. We have seen the cub by herself on a few occasions, and even when her mother is not around she continues to be very relaxed. There seems to be a special bond between this mother and daughter pair. The playful energy the cub has when with her mother is unbelievable. The Ostrich Koppies female has had her fair share of encounters with lions, and this month proved no different. On two unfortunate occasions she was found high up in a tree with the Manyelethi male lions around the base. On one occasion it appeared as if the male lions had stolen a large impala kill from her, and being a small leopard she was probably unable to heave it up into a tree. On the second occasion she was seen stretched out in a dead tree in the middle of an open area with one of the Manyelethi males lying fast asleep at the base. Fortunately on both occasions she was able to escape unscathed. We hope that she is able to teach her daughter how to evade lions as well as she does, especially as she shares her territory with both the Styx pride and the Manyelethi males.

**MATSHIPIRI FEMALE**

**10 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

*EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD*

*(0 sightings)*

**DUDLEY FEMALE**

**12 YEARS 9 MONTHS**

**1 MALE CUB**

**23 MONTHS**

*WESTERN FLOCKFIELD*

*(1 sighting of female alone, 1 sighting of female with cub, 3 sightings of cub alone)*

No surprise at the low number of sightings of this female again this month (although last month she

wasn't seen at all). The Tamboti female has obviously been a powerful force within the female leopard contentions. What was nice was that she had made a duiker kill at Flockfield Boma Crossing, which gave us a stable sighting for a day. The son that is now nearly two years old was taken to the kill by his mother, so while he is mostly on his own he is still reliant on mom for food.

**FLOCKFIELD FEMALE**

**7 YEARS 2 MONTH**

*CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON*

*(1 sighting)*

A promising sighting in that the one time that she was seen during the month it appeared as though she was lactating. With all the numerous gulleys and rocky outcroppings within her territory, she'll have no problem finding safe den sites. She remains as nervous as ever though.

**TAMBOTI FEMALE**

**3 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

*WESTERN FLOCKFIELD*

*(14 sightings)*

Still holding on as strong as ever to her mother's territory. And for the second month in a row she has been the most viewed leopard on the property. As was the case last month, she performed a most spectacular kill in front of a vehicle. The stalk and a chase went through the Sand River and ended up in with her catching a Monitor lizard. She was viewed three days in a row when she had a Bushbuck kill in the same vicinity that the Eyrefield pride were feeding off a buffalo. She has not mated since her first courtship in April, but in all likelihood she will only get her first chance at been a mother next year.

**Other leopards encountered during June 2011**

- **Son of the Matshipiri female:** (2 years 11 months) (4 sightings)

It seems as though the Matshipiri female may well have finally shaken her son off her tail. All four sightings of him during the month were of him alone. But what is interesting is that he is still within his mother's territory. So it may just be that his mother has left her territory in order to force her son into independence.

- **Daughter of the Ngoboswan female 1998:** (4 Sightings)

Another one of the many leopards in the area born to the Ngoboswan female. She was seen in the

area of the airstrip and was mating with the Airstrip male. It is unlikely that she will set up territory here though. As is often the case with a female in search of a male to mate with, she will wander far away from her home territory and then only return once she has mated.

- **Female leopard from Sparta:** (2 sightings)

Passing briefly through the property, she was not viewed for long on both occasions. With the winter months upon us we may begin to see her more often as the animals are drawn in closer to the river for water.

- **No ID leopards:** ( 18 sightings)

We experienced an unusual amount of unidentified leopards during the month. They are probably leopards that are well known to us, but there are a number of new trainee rangers around that are still familiarising themselves with the leopards on the reserve. On top of which they are also still learning the roads, so while they manage to find these animals they are unable to identify them.

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

<b>June</b>	<b>15</b>
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#### **CHEETAH**

The four males were seen regularly throughout the month up in the Clarendon Dam area as well as a single female who was found up at Clarendon and then made her way west through the course of the day, and by late afternoon was found again in Piccadilly Triangle where she attempted to hunt impala, but was unsuccessful.

#### **NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED**

<b>June</b>	<b>5</b>
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#### **WILD DOGS**

It was a joyful moment when three dogs were spotted by a ranger close to Matshipiri Dam. True to Wild dog form, they ran southwards for several kilometres and chased various prey species along the way, including a young kudu that was very lucky to get away. They were lost in some thick vegetation and unfortunately not seen again.

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

<b>June</b>	<b>3</b>
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## **CAPE BUFFALO**

There were several small herds around at one stage, and then towards the end of the month it seems as though they all banded together as there was one very large herd on Flockfield. Several buffalo were taken during the month by the various lion prides. Times ahead will be difficult for the buffalo as the grasses become less nutritious and water sources start to dwindle.

## **RHINO**

Rhino have been scarce at times throughout the month. But the regulars are still seen in their respective haunting grounds. The female with the exceptionally long horn was seen with a very bad limp. On observation, it appeared that she had a very large wound on her left leg (possibly from a male that got overly aggressive towards her calf). Most nights the rhino seem to head down towards the river for a drink before moving back away towards higher ground for the night.

## **ELEPHANTS**

June is always the month when elephants become abundant. At midday one just has to drive along the course of the Sand River to see all the elephant herds in the river. There is still a fair quantity of water in the river, which should last until the rainy season comes. It is also this time of year that the bulk of the elephants diet switches from grasses to leaves, bark and roots.

## **TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR June 2011**

Lions: 57

Leopards: 72

Elephant: 113

Rhino: 74

Buffalo: 87

Cheetah: 8

Wild Dog: 1