

## MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – March 2011

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

### WEATHER SUMMARY

	March-11
Maximum temperature (°C)	36
Minimum temperature (°C)	17
Mean maximum (°C)	33
Mean minimum (°C)	22
Rainfall (mm)	139
Days of rain	6

\*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF March 2011

### LIONS

**STYX PRIDE = 9**

<b>1 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>15 YEARS 6 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>9 YEARS 1 MONTH</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>7 YEARS 5 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 SUB MALE</b>	<b>3 YEARS</b>
<b>1 SUB FEMALE</b>	<b>2 YEARS 11 MONTHS</b>
<b>4 CUBS</b>	<b>3 MONTHS</b>

MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD  
(20 sightings)

The vast majority of the sightings of the pride consisted of the two separated lioness and the four new cubs. They have seen along the Mlowathi river system and eastwards towards the old bore hole. The cubs are extremely relaxed with the vehicles, even more so than the mothers who are still coming to terms with all that's happened in the last two years to the pride. The other three members of the pride were seen on a couple of occasions and once the entire pride was seen together with the cubs. This was interesting to witness, the irony being the fathers of the cubs are the same males trying to kill the two sub adults yet they played and romped with the new pride members showing ill thought to the cubs. The middle aged lioness was seen mating with all four Manyelethi males this month which is exciting but also disappointing as we had hoped she was already pregnant. But lets hope this time did the trick and we expect more cubs during winter. The pride has settled down into the northern parts of the Mlowathi and slightly east of that, its nice to have them back permanently on the property but they still haven't moved back to their old territory which had Campbell Koppies at its heart. But the future is starting to look bright for this pride and lets hope the males accept the sub adult female and build on what could be a timely comeback for the Styx pride.

**EYREFIELD PRIDE = 10**

<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>17 YEARS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>12 YEARS 5 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>9 YEARS 4 MONTHS</b>
<b>3 SUB ADULTS (1 MALE 2 FEMALE)</b>	<b>3 YEARS 9 MONTHS</b>
<b>3 SUB ADULTS (1 MALE 2 FEMALE)</b>	<b>3 YEARS 8 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT MALE (MARTHLY PRIDE)</b>	<b>5 YEARS 9 MONTHS</b>
MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD	
(5 sightings)	

the five sightings consisted of the two separated females and five members of the large group. Of the sub adults we saw one male, three females and the third adult female. Rumour has been confirmed and the pride has only two sub adult males left and of course the adopted male. With recent interest shown by the Manyelethi males it looks like this pride is in for another tough year which could devastate the pride, but with the sub adults now approaching four years in age the males could finally change their stance and look to take over the pride instead of trying to hunt down and kill the members. But the pride could also keep on the run and with the Marthly male coming into his prime he could look to take over the pride. This winter will be very interesting and could determine the fate of the pride, lets hope it turns out well and no more members get killed.

**SELATI PRIDE = 14**

<b>1 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>12 YEARS 4 MONTHS</b>
<b>2 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>8 YEARS 3 MONTHS</b>
<b>2 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>8 YEARS 1 MONTH</b>
<b>2 CUBS</b>	<b>3 YEARS 2 MONTHS</b>
<b>4 CUBS</b>	<b>3 YEARS</b>
<b>3 CUBS</b>	<b>2 YEAR 9 MONTHS</b>
WESTERN CHARLESTON	
(0 sighting)	

There were no sightings of this pride this month.

**CHARLESTON PRIDE = 4**

<b>1 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>14 YEARS 7 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>6 YEARS 9 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>6 YEARS 2 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 FEMALE CUB</b>	<b>17 MONTHS</b>
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON	
(0 sightings)	

There were no sightings of this pride during the month.

**MARTHLY PRIDE = 6**

<b>3 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>UNKNOWN AGES</b>
<b>4 SUB FEMALES</b>	<b>2 YEARS</b>
MARHTLY	
(0 sightings)	

There were no sightings of this [ride during the month.

**MANYELETHI MALES = 4**  
MATHLY, EYREFIELD, NORTHERN MALA MALA  
DOMINANT OVER THE STYX AND MARTHLY PRIDES  
(14 sightings)

**+/- 6 YEARS 6 MONTHS**

The four males continue to impress, they have cemented their place as the dominant force in the eastern parts of the Sabi Sands with Mala Mala making up the core of their territory. The four brothers are starting to mature now with their manes starting to thicken and darken. During the month the males spent a lot of time roaming the northern reaches of Mala Mala going between the Styx pride and the 2 KNP lionesses. Its nice to know for certain that these males are the fathers of the four cubs from the KNP lionesses and during march we saw the males with the cubs several times. The young Styx cubs have also been introduced to their fathers and the males are uneasy yet calm in their presence. Since some of the males killed the Eyrefield cubs last year they haven't made much of an effort to return to the central parts of Mala Mala but towards the end of March they did so and with interesting results. We found two of the males with a large kudu kill opposite Rattrays camp which judging by the signs they had stolen from the two separated Eyrefield lionesses. And by the end of the month one of the males was mating with the two lionesses. Could they be stretching themselves to far or could they come to dominate yet another pride? Time will tell.

**TOULON MALES = 3**  
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON  
NOMADIC  
(4 sightings)

**+/- 7 YEARS**

These three brother were found for the first time in several month out at the windmill. They look particularly healthy and have matured nicely. On a few occasions they roared but mostly stayed out on the eastern boundary. One interesting sighting had them following a herd of buffalo into the KNP the next morning two of them were found at Clarendon well fed. The next morning they were back at the windmill but still there was only two of them. That night there was roaring coming from the KNP but they didn't respond and the next morning two of the Manyelethi males were having come from the east and looking extremely well fed. The remainder of the sightings of the Toulon males only consisted of the two males, has something happened to the third male? And who was roaring a challenge to them that night?

### **Other lions encountered during March 2011**

- **No ID pride (2 females and 4 cubs):** (6 sightings)  
The small pride continues to live in the Matshipiri rarely moving westwards. We are still not sure who these females belong to but it is likely they are remnants or a breakaway of the windmill pride, but we can't confirm this. As we suspected the cubs are fathered by the Manyelethi males and they spent quite a few days together. The young cubs are now about 9 months in age and are growing fast, and there is one male amongst the four. This pride has made great strides in moving onto Mala Mala and lets hope they continues to use us as their base.

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

March	29
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## **LEOPARDS**

### **BICYCLE CROSSING MALE**

**9 YEARS 1 MONTH**

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

(2 sightings)

This dominant male was only painfully seen twice this month, and both times it was mating with the Shaw's female. Other than that he has been spending a lot of time to our south and west. It looks as if he is shifting his territory away from Mala Mala and the Sand river. Convention states that this doesn't make sense unless he is being pushed out by someone and the only male on the western bank of the sand river is the son of the Dudley female and we have witnessed several meetings of these two, all resulting in the bicycle crossing male giving his offspring a stern clout and warning about poaching his territory. So for some other reason he has decided to shift his territory, this could be in response to no dominant males to his south or perhaps more mating opportunities. Either way we are starting to see less of this male which is a great pity. Let's hope the winter season attracts him back to the river.

### **EMSAGWEN MALE**

**+/- 7 YEARS 9 MONTHS**

EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, MARTHLY

(7 sightings)

In stark contrast to the bicycle crossing male we are seeing this male as much as we usually do even though he is still expanding his empire, and an empire it is. His territory now extends across Marthly the entire Eyrefield and the whole of Mala Mala, and well into our neighbours to the north and east. The contrast between these two males is that one is still on the rise while the other looks to be on the decline but not as a result of each other as we expected. The Emsagwen male will make a push for the river again this winter but how much territory can one male hold and which parts will he give up?

### **GOWRIE MALE**

**11 YEARS 11 MONTHS**

NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD

(1 sighting)

The one sighting we had of this male was when he stole a kill off the ostrich Koppies female. She had managed to kill an impala and her and the cub were feeding on it when the male showed up and made off with the kill with the female and a herd of elephants hot on his tail. Interesting to note during the interaction was that the male didn't show any aggression towards the cub. The Emsagwen male has also come across the cub with the same result so the Ostrich Koppies female has done a wonderful job in making both males believe they are the father. The Gowrie male looked in impressive form even for his advanced age.

### **KIKELEZI FEMALE**

**9 YEARS 5 MONTHS**

### **1 FEMALE CUB**

**15 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY

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

This female pair again provided many highlights during March. They are now basing themselves around Piccadilly and the Ngoboswan donga. The young cub is starting to make some of her own kills with her managing to kill a white faced duck in the middle of the month. She is also being left alone for extended periods of time which is a sure sign mom is starting to sever the ties between them. Perhaps by the end of winter the cub will be forced out, out to start a life of her own. But for now she is still enjoying the success of her mother's amazing ability to catch prey. A true killing machine

**JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE****11 YEARS 4 MONTHS****1 CUB****9 MONTHS**

CENTRAL &amp; 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****11 YEARS 5 MONTHS**

WESTERN EYREFIELD

(1 sighting)

The one sighting of this beautiful female was of her mating with the Emsagwen male. She is still looking fit and healthy, but in recent history she has had very little luck in raising cubs. Perhaps she needs to move back to Mala Mala permanently were we can help keep an eye on her cubs for her.

**OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE****6 YEARS 5 MONTHS****1 CUB****7 MONTHS**

EYREFIELD

(1 sightings of female, 3 sightings of female and cubs, 0 sightings of cub alone)

This young pair have been elusive over the last few month but March was a good month for sightings of the two. The cub is growing at a rapid rate and the death of its sibling hasn't had to much impact on its relaxed nature. The Ostrich Koppies female also looks to be shifting her territory back a little onto Mala Mala which is great news for us and the upcoming winter. Lets hope we get to see her raise this cub up to maturity.

**MATSHIPIRI FEMALE****10 YEARS 5 MONTHS****1 MALE CUB****2 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD

(3sighting of female alone, 1sighting of female with her son, 2 sighting of son alone)

It looks like the bonds between these two have finally been severed. At the beginning of March we spotted them together but after that first sighting they have been separated. The Matshipiri female has been seen around buffalo bush dam and Emsagwen while her son was seen alone twice at Clarendon, once interestingly trying to hunt amongst a large herd of buffalo. Lets hope the bond indeed has been severed and the Matshipiri female can get on with her life and produce yet another successful litter.

**DUDLEY FEMALE****12 YEARS 6 MONTHS****1 MALE CUB****20 MONTHS**

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

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

The Dudley female was spotted twice close to Rattrays camp alone. Her cub is now fast approaching the age of independence and lets hope she can push him out sooner rather than later like the Matshipiri female. The female is in great condition and looked well fed on both occasions.

**FLOCKFIELD FEMALE****6 YEARS 11 MONTHS**

CENTRAL &amp; EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of this female during the month.

**TAMBOTI FEMALE**  
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD  
(9 sightings)

**3 YEARS 5 MONTHS**

This young female has been the stable leopard sighting yet again around west street bridge. She is looking confident and in control of her vast territory which by the look of it now extends all the way down to Charleston north. This southern region should belong to the Flockfield female but she hasn't been seen in ages. One interesting sighting with the Tamboti female came when she and the son of the Dudley female were found together after the male had killed a baboon close to main camp. This is way out of the females territory and her presence was intriguing at first. Then her reason for being there looked to become more clear. Instead of their being hostilities between the two leopards like in the case when one loses a kill to the other she was calm and interested in the male. The Tamboti female approached the tree that the male was in and looked to flirt with him, she rolled around on the floor and made seductive growls towards him. Unfortunately for her the male wasn't receptive and he growls aggressively towards her. She got fed up and moved out of the area. This is a great sign and possibly before the end of the year this young female will be mating.

**Other leopards encountered during March 2011**

- **Son of the Dudley female:** (4 years 9 months)(7 sightings)  
He looks to have either put enough pressure on his father to move out or has been giving a free territory, either way this male is here to stay and is becoming territorial. This new territory is still small but encompasses the land on the western bank between the causeway and west street bridge. But with the coming winter will be able to hold onto this territory as all the big males in the area will be making a push for the river.
- **Shaw's female:** (2 sightings)  
She was seen mating with the bicycle crossing male twice on consecutive days during the month. she is looking healthy for her age and could still raise one more litter but time is running out if she doesn't fall pregnant soon.
- **Son of the female from Sparta:** (2 sighting)  
One of the young twins born in 2008 was found twice close to the main camp booms, he is looking very healthy and is still very relaxed around vehicles. As he moves out of his moms territory we can expect to see him more if he goes east. But going east means into territories belonging to the Emsagwen and bicycle crossing males. Is he brave enough?
- **Old female and son:** (4 sightings)  
An unrecognised female female and her son were seen around main camp four days in a row. The female was old but extremely relaxed, while her son was quite nervous. The young male looked to be about 18 months in age. The female managed to kill an impala in rhino pens one night but the two of them finished it in less than 24 hours.
- **No ID leopards:** (1 sightings)  
There was one sightings of a male leopard walking in front of Main camp during dinner that rangers couldn't identify owing to the fact that we were having dinner at the time. It would have been one of the dominant males in the area.

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

March	17
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## **CHEETAH**

The four brothers provided all of the cheetah sightings this month, they were seen on five separate occasions at Clarendon. For the most part they slowly moved about the open area providing excellent viewing but there was no hunting. One encounter however did stand out and that was when they came up against the Matshipiri female. The four brothers spotted the female leopard as she sat watching them from just inside the bush line. Initially the cheetah got up and made their way over to her looking to chase her away but then they decided against it. After twenty minutes of staring they decided to advance on the leopard again. This time the cheetah got to within fifteen meters before their resolve broke and they stood undecided on what to do. They didn't have to wait long as the Matshipiri female up their minds for them, she came storming out of the long grass at full charge towards them. The cheetah immediately broke ranks and scattered in four different directions. The leopard chased after one of them, then switched her attention to a second cheetah before finally bolting up a giant Marula tree. The four cheetah were left unhurt but embarrassed and they jogged off.

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

March	4
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## **WILD DOGS**

There was only one brief sighting of wild dog this month. Two dogs were spotted running through wild dog rocks open area in the late afternoon. A ranger tried to follow but the bush was too thick and the dogs disappeared.

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

March	2
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## **CAPE BUFFALO**

Buffalo herds were in short supply this month, with all the rain we have had in March the herds are not dependant on the river yet for drinking. We did see buffalo every day of the month but we had to be content with dugga boy sightings for the most part. The Eyrefield pride did manage to kill a young buffalo calf from within a large herd at the beginning of the month which was spectacular to watch. The large herd is moving around the windmill at the moment which also makes it hard to track down as it moves into the KNP a lot.

## **RHINO**

Rhino sightings this month have been excellent once again. There are many crashes around and we have been seeing lots of young calves. With the grass cut in some of the open areas the groups have taken up residency with their movements becoming predictable providing us with great sightings of the great grey beasts.

## **ELEPHANTS**

Herds of elephants have been plentiful and dispersed all over Mala Mala this month. There has been a lot of bull elephant activity this month which must be that at least some of the females are coming into heat. There has also been a lot of young calves amongst the herds which is fantastic to see as they always provide great entertainment as they explore the world around them. With the coming winter we can expect even more herds which will have mixed results, great from a game viewing point of view but possibly very destructive for the environment.

## **TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR MARCH 2011**

Lions: 50

Leopards: 61

Elephant: 136

Rhino: 98

Buffalo: 56

Cheetah: 5

Wild Dog: 1