

## MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – NOVEMBER 2011

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

### WEATHER SUMMARY

	November-11
Maximum temperature (°C)	40
Minimum temperature (°C)	16
Mean maximum (°C)	34
Mean minimum (°C)	21
Rainfall (mm)	54
Days of rain	5

\*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF NOVEMBER 2011

## LIONS

### STYX PRIDE = 9

<b>1 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>16 YEARS 2 MONTH</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>9 YEARS 9 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>8 YEARS 1 MONTH</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>3 YEARS 10 MONTHS</b>
<b>4 CUBS</b>	<b>10 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 CUB</b>	<b>4 MONTHS</b>

MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD  
( 26 sightings)

An incredible month for the pride. At the beginning of November the pride was in the far eastern range of their territory, in the Matshipiri River. They spent a day there before slowly making their way back west, moving just a little each day. With their bellies full of buffalo, the pride had no sense of urgency. For the rest of the month they were either at Campbell Koppies or the Mlowathi River, mostly Mlowathi Dam. At one point they did go quite far west, as far as Stwise at least. A ranger taking guests up to the lookout point on Stwise was very surprised to find four cubs peering through the long grass when he summited the small koppie. He hastily made his way back down again, just in case the lionesses were around. Luckily the females had been found elsewhere that morning! The four older cubs continue to grow in size and confidence, and much to everyone's surprise, the youngest one is still alive and doing well. The second eldest lioness has still not conceived. One of the Manyelethi males has shown an interest in mating on more than one occasion, but so far nothing has come of it. The youngest lioness is filling out nicely now, although she still isn't interested in mating.

### EYREFIELD PRIDE = 5

<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>13 YEARS 1 MONTH</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>10 YEARS</b>
<b>2 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>4 YEARS 5 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>4 YEARS 4 MONTHS</b>
<b>2 CUBS</b>	<b>2 MONTHS</b>

MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD  
( 14 sightings)

Our suspicions were finally confirmed when we found two new little cubs on Flockfield in the first half of the month. It is possible that the actual birth place was in the Sand River, around Rattrays Camp, but when we saw the cubs they were close to the Kapen River. After that initial sighting we only spotted them one more time. The lioness with no hair on her tail was thought to have cubs as well, as she was lactating. The cubs must have died unfortunately, as she was seen mating with one of the Manyelethi males at the beginning of the report period. Most of the sightings were around West Street Bridge

**FOURWAYS PRIDE = 5**

**2 ADULT FEMALES**

**3 CUBS**

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD

( 9 sightings)

**UNKNOWN AGES**

**17 MONTHS**

A better than usual month of sightings for this pride. No changes in their movements however, as they continue to hand around the Matshipiri River and eastwards of that towards the Kruger National Park.

**SELATI PRIDE = 13**

**1 ADULT FEMALES**

**2 ADULT FEMALES**

**2 ADULT FEMALES**

**2 SUB ADULTS**

**4 SUB ADULTS**

**2 SUB ADULTS**

WESTERN CHARLESTON

(0 sightings)

**13 YEARS**

**8 YEARS 11 MONTHS**

**8 YEARS 9 MONTHS**

**3 YEARS 9 MONTHS**

**3 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

**3 YEARS 5 MONTHS**

There were no sightings of this pride this month.

**CHARLESTON PRIDE = 7**

**1 ADULT FEMALES**

**1 ADULT FEMALES**

**1 ADULT FEMALE**

**1 SUB ADULT FEMALE**

**3 CUBS**

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

( 0 sightings)

**15 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

**7 YEARS 5 MONTHS**

**6 YEARS 10 MONTHS**

**2 YEARS 1 MONTH**

**7 MONTHS**

There were no sightings of this pride for the month.

**MARTHLY PRIDE = 15**

**3 ADULT FEMALE**

**4 SUB FEMALES**

**4 CUBS**

**4 CUBS**

MARHTLY

(0 sightings)

**UNKNOWN AGES**

**2 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

**10 MONTHS**

**6 MONTHS**

There were no sightings of this pride for the month.

**MANYELETHI MALES = 4**

**+/- 7 YEARS**

MATRHLY, EYREFIELD, MALA MALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

DOMINANT OVER THE STYX, EYREFIELD, FOURWAYS AND MARHTLY PRIDES

( 25 sightings)

A busy month of sightings for the Manyelethi males, probably a record month! They were split up for most of the month, dividing their time mostly between the Styx and Eyrefield prides. They mated with the young lionesses from the Eyrefield pride as well as the older lioness that was thought to have cubs. They've been sticking to their usual haunts, along the western bank, the Mlowathi River system and Marthly. Not much exploration for new territory was done this month.

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

**+/- 7 YEARS 7 MONTH**

There were no sightings of these males during the month.

**SUB ADULT MALES FROM THE EYREFIELD PRIDE = 3**  
**1 MALE** **4 YEARS 5 MONTHS**  
**1 MALE** **4 YEARS 4 MONTH**  
**MARTHLY MALE** **6 YEARS 5 MONTHS**  
NOMADIC  
( 0 sightings)

There were no sightings of these males during the month

### **Other lions encountered during November 2011**

- **Styx male** (1 sighting)  
A return! We saw this young male only once during the report period. He was in the northern reaches of the Matshipiri River when we found him, and from the outset appeared to be very anxious. Calling softly, he kept his nose to the ground as he followed the scent trail of other lions. He eventually ran into the Fourways pride, but they did not take kindly to his presence. The lionesses gave him a few cuffs with their paws and some aggressive bites to the back of his neck. This did not perturb him in the slightest though, as he proceeded to follow the pride for the rest of the morning. This was the only sighting of this youngster for the month.
- **Unidentified pride** (1 sighting)  
Charleston produces once again. This area of the reserve often has new lions coming through. This pride consisted of two lionesses, one of which had a collar on, and four young males. They were on the tracks of a herd of buffalo but were not seen to get within range of the herd. All the lions within the pride were very relaxed in the presence of the Land Rovers.
- **Selati males** (4 sightings)  
These young males seem to have made Charleston their home. The presence of a large herd of buffalo and very little competition from older males in this area has certainly had an influence on their movements during the month. We had a great sighting of them catching a buffalo bull.

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

November	36
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### **LEOPARDS:**

**BICYCLE CROSSING MALE** **9 YEARS 10 MONTHS**  
WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN CHARLESTON  
( 1 sightings)

This large male graced us with his presence on only one occasion this month. He was found on the eastern bank of the Sand River in western MalaMala, and headed northwards from there. A female nyala was in his sights at one stage but the vigilant antelope noticed the predator and made a speedy getaway. The Bicycle Crossing male crossed westwards over the Sand River and continued in that direction, passing Flockfield Tower, and then he walked over our western boundary.

**EMSAGWEN MALE** +/- **8 YEARS 5 MONTHS**  
EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, MARTHLY  
( 0 sightings)

There were no sightings of this male for the month. This leopard has not been seen for over three months now, so we're assuming that he is dead. As such, the Emsagwen male will no longer feature on the monthly game report.

**GOWRIE MALE** **12 YEARS 7 MONTHS**  
NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD  
( 0 sighting)

There were no sightings of this male for the month.

**AIRSTRIP MALE** **5 YEARS 5 MONTHS**  
WESTERN MALA MALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD  
( 15 sightings)

Up by five sightings from last month, the Airstrip male is growing in both confidence and stature. At the start of the month he was found up a Weeping Boerbean tree on the western bank of the Mlowathi River with a sub-adult male impala kill and five hyenas at the base. In past months this leopard has rapidly expanded his territory in the absence of the Emsagwen male, and we've now been seeing him marking and vocalising in Marthly and southwestern Eyrefield. On a couple of occasions this month he was spotted mating with the Kikelezi female, and early on in the month with the Tamboti female. One evening he met up with the Tamboti female, but there appeared to be trouble in paradise. It seemed as though she wasn't all that pleased to see him. Initially she tried to run away from him, but he managed to track her down. Unpleasantries were swapped, including lots of growling and snarling. The Airstrip male ended up chasing her up a tree, and then proceeded to strut his stuff at the base, scent marking and roaring frequently.

**KIKELEZI FEMALE** **10 YEARS 1 MONTH**  
WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY  
( 3 sightings)

Not the best month of sightings for the Kikelezi female. Although the good news is that on two of the three occasions that we did see her, she was mating with the Airstrip male. They seem to have put aside whatever differences they had October. Will she sire the Airstrip male's first offspring? Only time will tell.

**JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE** **12 YEARS**  
**2 CUBS** **4 MONTHS**  
CENTRAL & WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER  
( 1 sighting of female, 2 sightings of female and cub, 1 sightings of cub alone).

Finally, after much anticipation, we got a good look at this female and her two new cubs! They're the main topic of conversation around the rangers room at the moment. We believe the cubs to be around four months old. They are very relaxed around vehicles, both with and without their mother's presence. To be safe we've restricted these sightings to one vehicle at a time. This is because of their age and the fact that we've only seen them three times so far. The future looks promising though. The den site is still at Charleston River Rocks, where one of the cubs was seen for the first time two months ago.

**CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE** **12 YEARS 1 MONTH**  
WESTERN EYREFIELD  
( 1 sightings)

We only had one fairly brief sighting of this aging female. We found her at at Mlowathi Dam with an unidentified and nervous young male. The sighting didn't last long, as the pair soon crossed north over the

Gowrie boundary.

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

**7 YEARS 1 MONTH**  
**1 YEAR 3 MONTHS**

EYREFIELD

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

We had to wait untill halfway through the month to view this leopard and her awesome cub. Regarded by many as one of the most relaxed leopards on earth - the youngster has sniffed at a ranger's shoes and sought cover beneath our Land Rovers. She didn't even bat an eyelid when the ranger started the engine and slowly reversed. On this occasion we found them on eastern side Mlowathi with an impala kill.

**MATSHIPIRI FEMALE**

**11 YEARS 1 MONTH**

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD

( 0 sightings)

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

**DUDLEY FEMALE**

**13 YEARS 2 MONTH**

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

( 0 sightings)

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

**FLOCKFIELD FEMALE**

**7 YEARS 7 MONTHS**

**1 CUBS**

**5 MONTHS**

CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

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

It's become apparent that only one of her cubs has managed to survive, but we're happy to report that the little one is looking healthy. Quality sightings were had of them this month. On one afternoon we watched them strolling through an open area in southern Flockfield. The youngster was filled with youthful exuberance, running ahead of its mother and then waiting in ambush for her to walk by. Just after sunset the Flockfield female noticed a steenbok in the long grass, and after a short stalk and a burst of speed her prey met its end...about 2m away from the vehicle! The cub is still a little bit nervous, especially when its mother isn't around. But hopefully if we give it space it needs, it will relax in time.

**TAMBOTI FEMALE**

**4 YEARS 1 MONTH**

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALA MALA

( 6 sightings)

An average month for what must arguably be MalaMala's favourite female leopard. She was seen often at the beginning of the month, mating with the Airstrip male quite a way north of her territory (+5km)! Later in the month she met up with the Airstrip male again, but this time there was a lot more tension in the air. That being said, it's not unusual for leopards who are at start of the mating cycle, to take a while to warm to one another. She has been mating with the Airstrip male since April, and still no sign of a pregnancy. We're all still holding thumbs though!

**SPARTA FEMALE**

**13 YEARS 11 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALA MALA

( 0 sightings)

## Other leopards encountered during November 2011

- **Son of the Matshipiri female:** (3 years 3 months ) (0 sightings)  
There were no sightings of this leopard for the report period.
- **Daughter of the Kikilezi female:** (1 year 11 months) (2 sightings)  
Both sightings of this newly independent female were around Ostrich Koppies.
- **Son of the Dudley female:** ( 2 years 4 months) (3 sighting)  
It seems this young male is struggling to come to terms with his independence. All three sightings of him this month were in his mother's territory.
- **Son of the Sparta female:** ( 5 years 8 months) (5 sightings)  
When we see this promising young male attempt to set up shop in eastern MalaMala and eastern Flockfield, it's a bittersweet feeling for the rangers. It seems as though one of MalaMala's favourite leopards, the Emsagwen male, is no more. The son of the Sparta female is patrolling and scent marking along some of the Emsagwen male's regular routes, and his territorial rasps are going unchallenged. This young male is an impressive specimen, and had us all gaping in disbelief when he killed a fully grown female kudu in the Kapen River!
- **Large male leopard from Sparta:** (0 sighting)  
There were no sightings of this leopard for the report period.
- **Daughter of the Campbell Koppies female and cub:** (4 sightings)  
This month we actually saw the cub more often than the mother: Twice around Mlowathi Dam and once just north and east of Campbell Koppies themselves. When we did see them together, it was on the Bifurcation of Eastern Side Mlowathi with an adult impala kill.
- **Young female from Sparta:** (1 sightings)  
Seen only once this month on Marthly, she was on the northern bank of the Sand River around the Matumi Rocks.
- **No id leopards:** ( 20 sightings)

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

November	20
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## CHEETAH

A great month of cheetah viewing. Most of the sightings were of the two 'regulars'. These two brothers were seen mostly at Clarendon Dam. Two females were also seen during the month on separate occasions. One was a young female and the other was an adult female. It is possible that these two were the mother and daughter pair that was viewed on the reserve last year and have since split up. Towards the end of the month it was feared that one of the brothers had been killed, as we found just one and it was calling away trying to find its brother. After half an hour it must have heard a response that was inaudible to human ears, because it just ran off and over the boundary. The following day both cheetahs were found.

## **NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED**

November	4
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## **WILD DOGS**

A much better month for Wild dogs. Seen three times as opposed to no sightings at all, which has been the norm for the past while. All three sightings were of the same pack of nine dogs. The three pups have grown quickly, and it is now proving difficult to distinguish them from the adults. One sighting was of the pack hunting, and they were successful in catching some baby impala. Hopefully the upcoming month will hold more sightings of these rare predators

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

November	9
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## **CAPE BUFFALO**

During much of the latter half of the month there has been a herd of buffalo resident on Charleston that would occasionally make forays into southern Flockfield. Lions killed a number of buffalo during the month. No cows have dropped any calves yet, but with the December upon us it will just be a matter of time before the first one is seen. When the calves drop the herds will not only have the lions to worry about, but male leopards will also start hanging looking for unsuspecting youngsters.

## **RHINO**

Many rhino were seen during the month. Some days as many as twenty different rhino were seen. The sightings were not just of single animals either, but often groups of up to five or six together. What is more exciting is that there were also a number of black rhino sightings during the month on Charleston. During the month there were regular sightings of females with very small babies. They're always very nervous, so it's considered a stroke of luck if we get a photograph of a relaxed cow with small calf.

## **ELEPHANTS**

The elephant sightings have been tremendous this month. Even with the rain filling up some of the smaller dams and watering holes, the herds are still congregating along the river to get clean water. Most of the herds have all got small babies, and on a few occasions mating behavior was seen. It is an incredible spectacle to behold, as the whole herd gets very excited about the event. The sound of trumpeting fills the air, as all the herd members run around the mating pair. The Marula trees are starting to bear fruit now. The large pachyderms relish the sweet fruit, and it's quite something to see them congregate under the Marula trees to gorge themselves on their favourite snack.

## **TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR NOVEMBER 2011**

Lions: 78  
Leopards: 78  
Elephant: 101  
Rhino: 122  
Buffalo: 86  
Cheetah: 13  
Wild Dog: 3

## **OTHER SIGHTINGS OF INTEREST FOR NOVEMBER 2011:**

- Black rhino
- Honeybadgers
- Porcupine
- Return of Woodland kingfishers
- Baby impalas and baby wildebeest