

MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – November 2012

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

WEATHER SUMMARY - NOVEMBER

Maximum temperature (°C)	28.8
Minimum temperature (°C)	19.4
Mean maximum (°C)	35
Mean minimum (°C)	14
Rainfall (mm)	27
Days of rain	6

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF NOVEMBER 2012

LIONS

STYX PRIDE = 11

1 ADULT FEMALE	17 YEARS 2 MONTH
1 ADULT FEMALE	10 YEARS 9 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 10 MONTHS
2 FEMALE SUB ADULTS	1 YEAR 10 MONTHS
2 MALE SUB ADULTS	1 YEAR 10 MONTHS
2 MALE CUBS	4 MONTHS
1 FEMALE CUB	4 MONTHS

MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD
(14 sightings)

Viewed on fourteen occasions in November, which is consistent to what we have recorded of them over the past few months. We saw them successfully hunt two impala lambs during the period, and it seems the pride is still struggling to bring down larger prey species. This can be attributed to only two adult lionesses being fully fit and the majority on the hunting is left to them. The ten year old lioness is still struggling with a substantial limp which she has been carrying for over a year now. Her broken leg/thigh is a major setback for her and it seems she will never fully recover. Once the most dominant female of the pride, she now battles to keep up and is often found trailing behind by some distance. The oldest lioness is also losing condition and her contributions to hunts are minimal. It remains to be seen how much time the old stalwart has left. She has now lost a chunk of skin below her nose, revealing severely worn teeth. She has enjoyed an amazing career and it will be sad when she leaves us. The four sub-adult lions are in good condition and the pride is going to benefit in the coming months when they should start playing more prominent roles in hunts. The young males are now larger than the lionesses and their manes are developing slowly. We are pleased to report that the three young cubs are doing well and that their first time mother is doing an excellent job of raising them. We were able to observe this month that one of the cubs is a female, and she has two brothers. There was not a single sighting of any of the Manyeleti males with the pride. This was an interesting observation and a plausible reason is that none of the females are in oestrus. With the two lionesses having cubs, and the oldest lioness not likely to breed again, it only leaves the lioness with the limp that could potentially become receptive again soon to attract the attention of the males.

EYREFIELD PRIDE = 11

1 ADULT FEMALE	14 YEARS 1 MONTH
2 ADULT FEMALES	5 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	5 YEARS 4 MONTHS
2 MALE CUBS	9 MONTHS
1 FEMALE CUB	9 MONTHS
2 CUBS	6 MONTHS
2 MALE CUBS	4 MONTHS
MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD (3 sightings)	

Down thirteen sightings from October, the Eyrefield pride spent most of their time off of the property. This is not unusual for the this time of year although we would have liked to see more of these lions during the period. We do not have much to report except for the lions being in good condition. All of the cubs are still surviving which is good news for the pride and we can hope that a high number of them will reach adulthood.

FOURWAYS PRIDE = 5

2 ADULT FEMALES	UNKNOWN AGES
2 SUB ADULT FEMALES	2 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT MALE	2 YEARS 5 MONTHS
EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD (5 sightings)	

Up three sightings from October, this pride was seen five times. We have become accustomed to seeing this pride travel long distances and this month was no different. They were viewed in the most north-western sector at Clarendon Dam, and the southernmost landmark reached was the Windmill. We also recorded a sighting of them at the Styx Rocks which is an area where they have not visited before. They had been attracted to that region by a large herd of buffalo.

MARTHLY PRIDE = 5

1 ADULT FEMALE	14 YEARS 3 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	10 YEARS 4 MONTHS
2 SUB ADULT FEMALES	1 YEAR 8 MONTHS
1 CUB	DECEASED
MARTHLY (0 sightings)	

There were no sightings of this pride in November. Reports suggest that the youngest cub belonging to the old tailless lioness has gone missing and can be presumed dead. This is a tragic loss for the pride and it remains to be seen if she will be able to produce another litter at her age.

BREAKAWAY MARTHLY PRIDE = 4

4 ADULT FEMALES	3 YEARS 10 MONTHS
MARTHLY (0 sightings)	

No confirmed sightings of this pride for the period.

MANYELETHI MALES = 4

	± 7 YEARS 10 MONTHS
MATRHLY, EYREFIELD, MALA MALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD	

**DOMINANT OVER THE STYX, EYREFIELD, FOURWAYS AND MARTHLY AND
BREAKAWAY MARTHLY PRIDES**
(6 sightings)

The kings of MalaMala had a relatively quiet month and were only viewed half as many times as last month. This can largely be explained by the absence of the Eyrefield pride and the fact that these males seem to spend much of their time with that pride. Only once were all four brothers seen together, which is always tremendous to see the force of this magnificent coalition in action. Despite viewing the Styx pride on 14 occasions this month, we did not record a member of the coalition being with them. It is likely that at least one of the males visited the pride during the period. The Manyeathi males seem to have reigned in their wanderings that saw them traverse to new regions during the past few months. There was one incident where the male with the missing canine and with the scarred hip literally took turns to mount the male with the dark mane! It is well known that males of social species will mount one another, often to reinforce social hierarchy. This was interesting to observe since the male with the dark mane male is the most dominant in the coalition and did not show much discontent about being mounted. We have researched that these mountings among male lions are relatively insignificant and can only be explained by the males being a little frisky and did not have access to oestrus females (*information adopted from Africa Geographic, May 2012*).

CHARLESTON PRIDE = 3

1 ADULT FEMALE
2 SUB ADULT MALES
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON
(3 sightings)

7 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 YEAR 7 MONTHS

A good month of sightings after last month when they were not viewed at all. They were seen only during the early stages of the month. What the future holds for this depleted pride is an interesting issue. Could it happen that the young males will remain with the female, potentially breeding with her and bringing the pride back to what it was? This is not an unheard of arrangement and it is a possible outcome. With no male lions currently dominant over the pride, it is unlikely that they are going to be ejected, and the experienced female should be able to avoid new male lions and prevent a takeover. We will monitor developments but this should still take some time to unfold. For now, we can hope that they all stay healthy and are able to avoid any drama as another loss would be a severe blow. They need to stay clear of Selati pride who share the same territory.

SELATI PRIDE = 17

1 ADULT FEMALE
3 ADULT FEMALES
3 ADULT FEMALES
4 SUB ADULT MALES
2 SUB ADULT FEMALES
2 CUBS
2 CUBS
WESTERN CHARLESTON
(1 sighting)

13 YEARS 10 MONTHS
±9 YEARS 10 MONTHS
UNKOWN AGES
1 YEAR 10 MONTHS
1 YEAR 10 MONTHS
±6 MONTHS
2 MONTHS

This mega pride was seen on one occasion during the period. The last time they were viewed was a few months ago and it is always a treat to see one of the largest pride in the Sabi Sands region. The incumbent Kruger male lion was not in attendance and we believe that he has been absent from the pride for some time but has since managed to relocate his pride. There is good news for the pride with two new cubs that have been introduced to the pride. The status of a few of the cubs from previous litters is unknown and we

believe that a few of them have unfortunately passed on.

SUB ADULT MALES FROM THE EYREFIELD PRIDE = 2

1 MALE	5 YEARS 4 MONTHS
MARTHLY MALE	7 YEARS 4 MONTHS
NOMADIC	
(3 sightings)	

These nomadic males were seen on three occasions this month, all in the southern reaches of the property. They are in good condition which is good news, and both look fully fit which has not always been the case. The male from the Marthly pride looks as magnificent as ever and is surely in his prime by now. The chances of these males ever becoming dominant over a pride do not look promising and they may have to disperse to new areas should they ever wish to do so.

KRUGER MALE LION = 1	± 7 YEARS 1 MONTH
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON, WESTERN CHARLESTON	
(0 sightings)	

No confirmed sightings of this male lion who is dominant over the Selati pride.

Other lions encountered

- **Two unidentified male lions:** (1 sighting)

ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIONS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

November	54
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LEOPARDS:

BICYCLE CROSSING MALE	10 YEARS 10 MONTHS
WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN CHARLESTON	
(3 sightings)	

The most significant sighting of this powerful male was toward the end of the month when he was seen with female company. He was mating with the same unknown female from a few months ago whose identity remains unconfirmed. It is great to see that females still recognize the Bicycle Crossing male as a dominant force and are actively seeking him out as a mate. We hope he will be able to successfully sire more cubs to add to his impressive tally. Some of his offspring that can be currently viewed on the property include the Airstrip male, Charleston male, the son of the Dudley female and the daughter of the Kikilezi female and the Tamboti female.

AIRSTRIP MALE	6 YEARS 5 MONTHS
WESTERN MALA MALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD	
(8 sightings)	

The Airstrip male has added a few battle scars to his collection after yet another encounter with a male leopard. This time it was a clash with the Gowrie male and we were surprised that the Gowrie male might have had the upper hand (see the section on the Gowrie male for more details of the interaction). The Airstrip male is starting to show the effects of his abrasive lifestyle and has aged immensely since he first began his aggressive campaign of establishing a territory. His plucky character was on full display when

he tried to defend his impala kill against three hyenas. Where other leopards would usually succumb to the hyenas, especially three of them, the Airstrip male was determined to reclaim his kill after it was initially stolen. This he eventually managed to do and he hoisted the carcass into a tree, snatching it from the scavengers showing good execution of skill and tactics. The Airstrip male was able to score a few free meals that he stole from the Kikilezi female.

CHARLESTON MALE **6 YEARS 5 MONTHS**
EASTERN CHARLESTON, NORTHERN TOULON
(3 sightings)

The twin brother of the Airstrip male had a reasonably good month. Even better was that he was mating with the Kwela Kwela female. We also have reports that he has been mating with the Jakkalsdraai female. This underlines how well the male is faring and indicates that he is well and truly dominating the south.

WEST STREET MALE **3 YEARS 7 MONTHS**
WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(7 sightings)

The handsome West Street male had still made no further progression in earning himself a territory. His movements this month were no different to what we have seen previously, slinking around the confines of West Street Bridge, Buffalo Pans, White Cloth and Flockfield Tower. His hunting ability has again been brought into question as we have seen him again foil numerous hunting opportunities. This leopard has not yet blossomed but it is still early stages for the male and he has plenty of time to organize himself.

NEWINGTON MALE **4 YEARS 1 MONTH**
WESTERN MALAMALA
(3 sightings)

A good sighting of this male was had around Flockfield Tower when his father, the Princess Alice Pans male stole his recently killed impala lamb. The Newington male was unable to defend his meal although he did not back down without showing resentment. The leopards exchanged growls before the Newington male went on his way. This was moments before the Princess Alice Pans male was almost ambushed by one of the Manyelethi males. Amazingly there was a third leopard in the area. The West Street male was watching this action from a few hundred metres away and was quick to move away when he noticed the other male leopards. The Newington male has now started to scent mark! This is a huge step for the leopard and trouble is on the horizon as he is doing so within the territories of the Bicycle Crossing and Airstrip males. He is lucky that his father is fairly tolerant of his presence but the other male leopards are not going to be pleased with his antics. Having already dominated the West Street male in previous encounters, we will follow closely to see how this leopard fares.

HOGVAAL MALE **6 YEARS 7 MONTHS**
EASTERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALAMALA, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD
(0 sightings)

No confirmed sightings of the Hogvaal male for the report period.

TSLEBE ROCKS MALE **± 7 YEARS**
NORTHERN EYREFIELD
(1 sighting)

This large male was seen partolling right on our northern boundary. In the period we also had a sighting

of an unknown young male leopard, and we were pleased to positively identify him as one of the sons of the Tsebe Rocks male, born to a female known as 'Inkhanyeni' in the north.

PRINCESS ALICE PANS MALE
WESTERN MALAMALA
(3 sightings)

11 YEARS 11 MONTHS

We had an amazing sighting of this powerful male when he killed a large African Rock Python and dragged it into a tree. The python had a full belly and once his stomach was opened by the leopard, a young impala lamb fell to the ground which was hastily fed upon by some hyenas lurking around the base of the tree. The leopard had a close call with one of the Manyelethi male lions that was able to stalk upon the leopard unnoticed. The lion pounced upon the Princess Alice Pans male who was feeding on the remains of a kill stolen from one of his sons, the Newington male. Luckily, the leopard was able to react with lightning speed and avoid the lion by climbing up a tree.

GOWRIE MALE
NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD
(1 sighting)

± 5/6 YEARS

Just the one sighting of this athletic male for the month, and it was a interesting one at that. The male was found around the Mlowathi River which is a usual area for him to be seen. It soon materialized that the Airstrip male was also in the area and that the two leopards were in the process of having a territorial scrap. We have anticipated this event for a while now. Considering their territories overlap to a large degree in this region, conflict would be unavoidable. The leopards were not seen coming to blows although both were sporting some blood stains around the neck which suggests that they did actually fight. Surprisingly, the ever so dominant Airstrip male was looking worse off, with a large scar to his neck and a ear which was damaged and hanging uncharacteristically low. We followed the two leopards as they walked side-by-side, exchanging vicious growls and snarls. Interaction of this nature is often recorded and serves the purpose of establishing dominance and boundaries of territories.

KIKILEZI FEMALE
1 MALE CUB
WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY
(3 sightings of female, 15 sightings of female and cub, 1 sighting of cub without female)

11 YEARS 2 MONTH
8 MONTHS

This duo had a great month. The Kikilezi female has been cashing in on the many newly born impala lambs, and she was seen with six of them hoisted in trees littered about the property during the period! The Airstrip male benefitted by stealing three of these kills from the Kikilezi female. The female was obviously not happy with her meals being stolen but she was very tolerant of the male, understanding the important role he plays in securing her territory from other males who would be a threat for her cub. One of the best sightings of these leopards was when we followed the Kikilezi female to the southern parts of her territory on a territorial patrol. She was close to stumbling upon her daughter who was also in the area. The Kikilezi female then started to make her way back north toward where her cub had been left but along the way she killed an impala lamb and hoisted it into a tree! She left the kill and continued on her way to collect her cub. It was only late evening when the pair arrived back where the carcass had been hidden. Meanwhile, the Airstrip male was being followed as he was on a patrol of his own. By now, we are well familiarised with the routes he likes to make use of and we anticipated what might unfold. As predicted, he headed straight along toward where the Kikilezi female and her cub were. The Kikilezi

female had only just arrived back at the carcass with her cub when the male showed up to bully them from yet another meal. It is great to watch the cub as he cautiously moves about his father and tries to steal a few scraps when he can. The cub is by all accounts faring really well and has provided some spectacular viewing in his short life so far.

TAMBOTI FEMALE **5 YEARS 1 MONTH**
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALA MALA
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of one of MalaMala's favourite daughters this month. This must be the first time throughout her life that she has not been seen. Even more surprising is that she had a good deal of sightings in October with eleven in total.

MLOWATHI FEMALE **5 YEARS 10 MONTHS**
NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

There were no confirmed sightings during the report period.

JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE **13 YEARS**
1 MALE CUB **1 YEAR 4 MONTHS**
CENTRAL & WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER
(1 sighting of female, 0 sightings of female and cub, 1 sighting of cub without female)

Found in the early stages of the month, the Jakkalsdraai female was seen around her usual haunts near Charleston River Rocks. There was a young male leopard in the vicinity who was confirmed to be her surviving male cub. The two leopards did not interact which would have been nice to observe as we have not viewed the pair together since April. Toward the end of the period we believe that the Jakkalsdraai female has been mating with the Charleston male to the south of MalaMala. This is an exciting prospect indicating that the female is in the process of forcing her son into independence and is now having yet another attempt at producing more cubs. She is one of our most loved leopards and it would be a fantastic occasion should she be able to have more cubs soon.

CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE **13 YEARS 1 MONTH**
WESTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings during the report period.

OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE **8 YEARS 2 MONTHS**
EYREFIELD
(2 sightings)

This well-known leopard is still not showing signs of lactating despite her recent mating with the Airstrip male. We hope that she has some success when the time comes for her to have her third litter. Her first litter produced in 2009 had two cubs that died at a young age. Her next litter the following year saw a female cub reach independence age but her status is unconfirmed. This cub had a littermate that was killed by the Styx pride of lions, which have been a menace to the Ostrich Koppies female throughout her career.

MATSHIPIRI FEMALE
1 FEMALE CUB

12 YEARS 1 MONTH
1 YEAR 1 MONTH

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD

(2 sightings of female, 0 sightings of female and cub, 1 sighting of cub without female)

Although only viewed three times collectively, both females are doing well. The young cub followed up on the spectacular sighting we had of her last month with another 'corker' in November. We had found a pack of Cape Hunting Dogs at Buffalo Bush Dam and were following them as they made their way east toward the Kruger National Park. The animals were only a few hundred metres from running off MalaMala when something caught their attention and they darted off northwards. We saw them charge towards the base of a Marula Tree and immediately a flurry of spots ascended the tree from its base - it was a young leopard which was confirmed to be the cub of the Matshipiri female. The dogs had bullied the juvenile leopard off an impala kill and proceeded to gorge themselves. The leopard showed great composure under stressful circumstances. It is not uncommon for leopards (even adults) to panic in these situations and try and 'gap' it. But the youngster just spread herself across a branch and looked on what was taking place beneath her. It took about fifteen minutes for the dogs to satisfy themselves before moving off east again and as they departed the leopard darted down the tree to feed on the remains. Out of nowhere another dog appeared and like a bullet the cub shot back up the tree.

DUDLEY FEMALE
1 CUB

14 YEARS 2 MONTHS
7 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

(0 sightings of female, 0 sightings of female and cub, 0 sightings of cub without female)

No confirmed sightings of these leopards for the period.

FLOCKFIELD FEMALE
1 CUB

8 YEARS 7 MONTHS
1 YEAR 5 MONTHS

CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

(0 sighting of female, 0 sightings of female and cub, 0 sightings of cub without female)

No confirmed sightings of these leopards for the period.

WESTERN FEMALE
WESTERN MALA MALA
(0 sightings)

14 YEARS 10 MONTHS

There were no sightings during the report period.

Other leopards encountered:

- **Daughter of the Kikilezi female 2009:** (8 sightings) She had yet another good month and we are pleased to report that she has started to actively scent mark around the lower reaches of the Matshipiri River. This is great news and shows that she is in the early stages of establishing a territory. She is setting up shop on the southern most boundary of her mother's territory and it is likely that these two leopards are going to clash again at some stage. It will not be long before this female is going to earn herself a name and a spot in the heritage of the leopards of MalaMala. The daughter of the Kikilezi female has been able to adopt some of the territory once belonging to the Tamboti female, who has abandoned her territory east of the Sand River since the West Street bridge was destroyed in the floods of January. It will be interesting to see how the Tamboti female reacts when the bridge is completed in 2013. Could it be that she will once again visit the

eastern bank and reclaim her territory? If so then then she will have to compete with the daughter of the Kikilezi female who is the Tamboti female's aunt, despite being two years younger than the latter! The two leopards are also half sisters having the same father, the Bicycle Crossing male.

- **Son of the Dudley female 2009:** (2 sightings) This young male is still seen within the confines of his parents territories. It is a wise tactic for him to remain in this area until he develops and has the confidence to try and earn a territory of his own. For this to become a reality he is more than likely going to have to disperse to other areas. He showed skill beyond his years, and gave us a sighting to remember, when he was able to kill a full sized porcupine! We were following the porcupine as it moved down the road, when the leopard appeared from nowhere. Without fuss the leopard flipped over the large rodent and suffocated it. Killing a porcupine is no easy task and it can easily go wrong for the leopard. How could we forget that this was how the Rock Drift male ended his spectacular life.
- **Female leopard with the blemish in eye:** (0 sightings) There were unfortunately no sightings of this female in November. The status of her remaining cub is unknown and we hope it is still surviving.
- **Kwela Kwela female:** (3 sightings) We were excited have three confirmed sightings of this six year old female. She is a daughter of the Rollercoaster female and has not been sighted for many moons now. She was seen mating with the Charleston male in the southern reaches of the property.
- **No ID males:** (3 sightings)
- **No ID females:** (2 sightings)
- **No ID (gender and identity unconfirmed):** (1 sighting)
- **Son of 'Inkhanyeni' female leopard:** (1 sighting) This young male leopard is believed to be a son of the Tsebe Rocks male. He was seen around the Mlowathi River which is the same area where he was seen a few months ago. We hope to see more of this male in the future although there is not much space for him at the moment with well established male leopards in the region.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

November	26
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CHEETAH

The two cheetah brothers were seen twelve times this month which is a good month for them. Most of the sightings recorded were around the Clarendon Dam area. We had a particularly good sighting of them when they were found with the remains of an adult impala kill. Although they had tried to conceal the carcass in a small gully, the vultures still managed to spot the meal and they started to gather in their hundreds. The cheetah fed quickly and were soon overwhelmed by the vultures that had become too numerous for the cheetah to compete with. This is not uncommon for cheetah to surrender kills to other animals (even vultures) as any risk of injury is far greater than benefit of defending a kill. There was another instance when they were seen feeding on a young wildebeest calf. There are many of these young calves running around the Clarendon open areas and is perhaps why we have seen more of the cheetah this month than in previous months. Many hours were spent watching the cheetah lazing on termite mounds as they gazed toward the wildebeest herds. Without fail, as the afternoons began to cool, the cheetah would become active and we had some great views of them chasing the wildebeest. It is truly a privilege to see the world's fastest mammal in action.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED

November	2
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

We had six sightings of the cape hunting dogs this month which is considered a good month. This especially considering the rarity of the species, the large areas that they traverse and the sheer speed at which they cover ground. All sightings were of the familiar pack that were denning on the property throughout winter. We have previously recorded that all six puppies were faring well which is unfortunately not accurate. Only four puppies are now seen and the others must have passed on. Any sighting of this canids is always associated with plenty of entertainment but there were a few sightings this month that were really spectacular. One such occasion was when we were following the dogs when they came across the cub of the Matshipiri female with an impala kill which they promptly stole and chased the leopard into a tree. They also had an encounter with the three other leopards where they also tried to steal an impala kill, but this time they would have no luck as the kill was in a high tree. The impala had been killed by the Kikilezi female and her cub was in the area to enjoy the meal which was then stolen by the Airstrip male. The male was in the tree feeding whilst the mother and cub were resting on the ground below. The dogs then appeared and the two leopards had to scamper up a low Guarri Bush (*Guarri Bush*). The tree was hardly ideal to support the weight of the leopards and there were some tense moments as they were only just out of reach of the dogs that were trying their best to get to the leopards.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

November	11
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CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

Although numerous elephants were seen on everyday of the report period the average number of herds seen was down. Many of the herds now have young calves in abundance, which is to be expected at this time of year and provides entertaining viewing. Some very large bull elephants were seen throughout the property during November, one of which had very large and impressive tusks. This large tusker has also been seen during the past few months. The impressive specimen must rank among the largest of bulls in the entire region and it is a pleasure to see such a beast from a bygone era.

Groups of buffalo bulls or ‘Dagha boys’ were sighted frequently around waterholes and the Sand River. We also enjoyed numerous views of the large herd numbering around six hundred animals that spent almost the entire winter period frequenting the river. These large herds can disperse in the wet season when they are not as reliant on the river as a water source. With only 27mm of rain in November combined with some hot weather, many of the pans and waterholes have been reduced to mud, which sees the large herd’s movements being restricted to the confines of the river once more. This is not only good for viewing but provides for entertaining sightings when the herd passes through lion territory and the cats actively pursue the buffalo.

OTHER INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

This month we enjoyed a high number of honey badger sightings. These amazing creatures were seen on five occasions. One pair in particular is very relaxed in the presence of vehicles and provides for such interesting viewing. Porcupines were also seen scurrying across the roads throughout the month. Evidence of these rodents is overwhelming, and we often find quills in the road as well as freshly chewed bark around the bases of trees. They are difficult to spot if they are not on the road and sightings of them are richly enjoyed. One sighting of a Serval was also recorded.

TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR NOVEMBER 2012

Lion:	36	
Leopard:	67	
Elephant:	191	
Buffalo:	105	
Cheetah:		12
Cape Hunting Dog:		6