

MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – OCTOBER 2011

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

WEATHER SUMMARY

	October-11
Maximum temperature (°C)	40
Minimum temperature (°C)	11
Mean maximum (°C)	18.3
Mean minimum (°C)	30.1
Rainfall (mm)	35.5 mm
Days of rain	6

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF OCTOBER 2011

LIONS

STYX PRIDE = 9

1 ADULT FEMALES	16 YEARS 1 MONTH
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 8 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	8 YEARS
1 ADULT FEMALE	3 YEARS 9 MONTHS
4 CUBS	9 MONTHS
1 CUB	3 MONTHS

MARTHLY, MALA MALA, EYREFIELD
(25 sightings)

Up by one sighting from last month's 24. The pride has had another successful month, with many kills, including buffalo, being taken down. The smallest cub is now three months old, and has begun eating meat. Many thought the cub would not reach this age, but it did. If makes it all the way to adulthood, it will most certainly be a force to be reckoned with. Being 6 months younger, its nothing more than a play toy for its older cousins. The next few months will be crucial for this youngster. As the buffalo herds begin to move further and further from the river, food will be harder to come by. The pride's movements were centred around the Mlowathi River, Piccadilly Triangle, and the Campbell Koppies area. On one occasion they moved eastwards across to the Matshipiri River to catch a female buffalo, but as soon as they'd finished it they made their way back to the Mlowathi River. The young Styx male made a brief return this month. He managed to kill an adult buffalo cow by himself at Clarendon Dam. He fed on it for two days until an older male lion chased him off. After that we didn't see him again. As the rains come and the watering holes are replenished, the buffalo herds will begin to move around more. One can only hope that the Styx pride will choose to remain here at MalaMala and find other sources of food to keep themselves fed.

EYREFIELD PRIDE = 5

1 ADULT FEMALE	13 YEARS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 11 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 3 MONTHS

MALA MALA, FLOCKFIELD
(11 sightings)

The pride has been fairly split up during October. On most occasions we saw only two or three lionesses together at a time. In the previous report we mentioned that one of the old lionesses was lactating. We still haven't seen them, but it's clear that there are cubs suckling off her teats. The second eldest lioness also had suckle marks, and we've had no sign of her cubs either. The pride is spending much of its time around West Street and Rattrays Camp, so we can only speculate that they have stashed the babies somewhere in the river. The three young lionesses spent the majority of their time together, although we also saw them with the young males from the Selati pride, with whom they mated on several occasions during the month. They have also been seen to mate with two of the Manyelethi males a few times, so we'll have to wait and see which of these males accepts the cubs as their own. If their mating efforts prove successful, it will also be the first litter that any of these three lionesses produces. Fortunately they have great teachers in their mothers to ensure the success of their future generation.

FOURWAYS PRIDE = 5

2 ADULT FEMALES

3 CUBS

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD

(9 sightings)

UNKNOWN AGES

16 MONTHS

A very good month of sightings for this pride, with more sightings being had than usual. With a large herd of buffalo on the property, they have been enticed to come across from their usual haunts in the Kruger National Park. The three cubs are developing well and look to be in good condition. We can only hope that they continue to thrive, and somehow manage to avoid the same fate that caused the disappearance of their sibling a few months ago. We had one particularly interesting sighting of the pride. They made a buffalo kill in the Hogvaal Donga, which they then happily shared with one of the Eyrefield lionesses! Three of the Manyelethi males also fed on the same buffalo over the following few days. This was good to see as their presence with the pride has been rare of late.

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)

12 YEARS 11 MONTHS

8 YEARS 10 MONTHS

8 YEARS 8 MONTHS

3 YEARS 8 MONTHS

3 YEARS 7 MONTHS

3 YEARS 4 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 2 MONTHS

7 YEARS 4 MONTHS

6 YEARS 9 MONTHS

2 YEARS

6 MONTHS

There were no sightings of this pride for the month.

MARTHLY PRIDE = 15

3 ADULT FEMALE

UNKNOWN AGES

4 SUB FEMALES
4 CUBS
4 CUBS
MARHTLY
(0 sightings)

2 YEARS 7 MONTHS
9 MONTHS
5 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 MARTHLY PRIDES
(19 sightings)

The Manyelethi males have had a great month. We viewed them the same number of times as the last report period, and saw them all over the property. From the northern parts of the Mlowathi and Matshipiri, all the way down south to the Charleston Flockfield boundary, where they chased one of the young Eyrefield males off a buffalo kill. They have all been mating with all the young lionesses from both the Eyrefield and Styx prides, and will hopefully help them raise their first litters. With the constant threat of new males coming in from all over, we can only hope that these four males will stick around and hold this impressive coalition together for the sake of their new offspring, and offspring to come.

TOULON MALES = 3

+/- 7 YEARS 6 MONTH

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON
NOMADIC
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of these males during the month.

SUB-ADULT MALES FROM THE EYREFIELD PRIDE = 3

1 MALE

4 YEARS 4 MONTHS

1 MALE

4 YEARS 3 MONTH

MARTHLY MALE

6 YEARS 4 MONTHS

NOMADIC

(1 sightings)

There was a single sighting of one of the young nomadic males around the Charleston Flockfield boundary, but he was swiftly chased off his hard-earned buffalo kill by two of the Manyelethi males.

Other lions encountered during October 2011

- **Unidentified Male lion:** (1 Sighting)
A large unidentified male lion was seen chasing the young Styx male off his buffalo kill near Clarendon Dam. He stuck around for a few days until the carcass was finished, before heading back north.
- **Young Styx Male lion:** (1 Sighting)
This young male is in fair condition in spite of having lost some of his mane and acquiring a few new scars on his face. This is a good indication that he's standing his ground with the older males. One can only hope for the best for this young male in the upcoming months.

ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIONS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

October	26
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LEOPARDS:

BICYCLE CROSSING MALE

9 YEARS 9 MONTHS

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

A return to his former glory in his northern territories perhaps? If this male keeps up his presence here, the Airstrip male - who has fought so hard to gain this territory from his father - may once again come under pressure from the Bicycle Crossing male. The furthest north we saw him was around Dudley Corner. The other times were mostly around the Tamboti thickets and Charleston north.

EMSAGWEN MALE

+/- 8 YEARS 4 MONTHS

EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, MARTHLY
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of this male for the month.

GOWRIE MALE

12 YEARS 6 MONTHS

NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD
(3 sightings)

We saw the Gowrie male twice at the Old Borehole, and then once at Mlowathi Dam. With the Emsagwen male out of the picture, we fully expected this male to encroach further south in the Mlowathi River, claiming what was once the Emsagwen male's territory there. This has not been the case though, as he seems to have kept the same territory he has had for the past few years.

AIRSTRIP MALE

5 YEARS 4 MONTHS

WESTERN MALA MALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(10 sightings)

It was a quieter month for the Airstrip male, but still very exciting. The beginning of the month saw the Airstrip male mating with the Tamboti female close to Main Camp. On the second day that they were mating, the daughter of the Kikilezi female arrived on the scene. As inquisitive as always, she then spent the day some distance off from the mating pair. The Airstrip male had interactions with female leopards on another two occasions during the month. Once was with the Kikilezi female, when he stole a bushbuck kill from her in the Mlowathi River, and the other was when he came across a young female leopard with an impala kill on Euphorbia Drive. He didn't find the kill, but that didn't stop him from aggressively chasing the female up a tree. For now at least, he is the dominant male leopard force on the reserve. How long he'll be able to keep it up for remains to be seen.

KIKELEZI FEMAE

10 YEARS

WESTERN MALA MALA, MARTHLY
(8 sightings)

Everyone is watching closely to see when this leopard will fall pregnant again. Her record as a mother has been very good, and she's always managed to raise at least one cub to independency. With a total of eight sightings, this month proved to be a better one for the Kikilezi female. It is possible that we will see more of her now that her daughter is being seen less and less. She had a brief encounter with the Airstrip male in the Mlowathi River, before she ran off, leaving him to steal her bushbuck kill.

JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE **11 YEARS 11 MONTHS**
CENTRAL & WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER
(0 sighting of female, 0 sightings of female and cub, 0 sightings of cub alone).

CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE **12 YEARS**
WESTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE **7 YEARS**
1 FEMALE CUB **1 YEAR 2 MONTHS**
EYREFIELD
(3 sighting of female, 0 sightings of female and cub, 1 sightings of cub alone).

The mother and daughter were not seen together once during the month. The last few sightings we've had of daughter, who is now more than a year old, have been of her alone waiting patiently for mom to come back and lead her to a kill. The Ostrich Koppies female was seen only three times during the month. As usual she was in her usual haunts around the northern parts of the Mlowathi River.

MATSHIPIRI FEMALE **11 YEARS**
EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD
(0 sightings)

DUDLEY FEMALE **13 YEARS 1 MONTH**
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(0 sightings)

FLOCKFIELD FEMALE **7 YEARS 6 MONTHS**
2 CUBS **4 MOTNHS**
CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON
(0 sighting of female, 0 sightings of female and cub, 0 sightings of cub alone).

TAMBOTI FEMALE **4 YEARS**
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD
(11 sightings)

Once again the most viewed leopard for the month, even though she was seen only 11 times. Most of the sightings were at the beginning of the month, when she was mating with the Airstrip male. Her movements seemed to be more north than usual, mostly on the western bank of the Sand River and around the old airstrip, although we did once see her as far south as Styx Crossing. Towards the end of the month this leopard had a very narrow shave with death. We were following her one night, when all of a sudden the four Styx lionesses and a Manyelethi male came out of nowhere and chased after her. The Tamboti female was too quick for the lions however, and made it to the safety of a large tree.

SPARTA FEMALE **13 YEARS 10 MONTHS**
WESTERN MALA MALA
(0 sightings)

Other leopards encountered during October 2011

- **Son of the Matshipiri female:** (3 years 2 months) (0 sightings)
- **Daughter of the Kikilezi female:** (1 year 10 months) (3 sightings)

There were two days in a row where she was seen. This was when she was following the Airstrip male and Tamboti female while they were mating. She was very interested in the proceedings, and it could be that the activity aroused her motherly instincts. The following day we found her close to

Drum Crossing. That was at the beginning of the month, and after that she was not seen again.

- **Son of the Dudley female:** (2 years 3 months) (1 sighting)
Seen just once during the report period at Princess Alice Pans
- **Son of the Sparta female:** (5 years 7 months) (2 sightings)
Seen twice during the month. The first time was in the Matshipiri River. We managed to follow him for a short bit, but then lost him going through some thick vegetation. The second time was when a buffalo had died of unknown causes in Matshipiri River. The vultures had already eaten away at what they could get at when he arrived. He then fed off the carcass for a full day before moving on.
- **Large male leopard from Sparta:** (1 sighting)
The one time that he was seen during the month was when he chased the Tamboti female up a tree at the old airstrip. After chasing her into the tree, he then walked off roaring and scent marking.
- **Daughter of the Campbell Koppies female and cub:** (4 sightings)
A good month of sightings for these two. The female was even seen to kill an adult Steenbok during the day. The pair is still only being seen in the northern reaches of the Mlowathi River.
- **Young female from Sparta:** (2 sightings)
This female managed to kill a male impala on Marthly. She successfully treed the kill, albeit in a very small one, but later when she tried to move it she got the head stuck in a branch fork.
- **No id leopards:** (16 sightings)

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

October	15
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CHEETAH

The two male cheetah brothers continue to do well over the north eastern parts of the property near Clarendon Dam. There is still no water in Clarendon, so when the rains finally fill it up we can only hope they will continue to stick around as the other predators move further from the river. There is still no further sign of the third and fourth brothers. We have no idea what happened to them, but we suspect that they have succumbed to another predator.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED

October	2
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

There was only a single Cape hunting dog sighting during the reported period. Unfortunately it was at night, and our viewing policies don't allow us to follow these diurnal hunters in the dark. It was near our western boundary, and tracks were found of a large pack in the same area the following day. We can only hope for more sightings of these elusive animals as we come into impala lambing season.

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WILD DOGS ENCOUNTERED

October	1
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CAPE BUFFALO

As the river has become more and more dry, the buffalo flocked in their droves to the Sand River during spring. With the onset of rain the pans are now starting to fill up again, so the buffalo are beginning to move further from the river to enjoy the new harvest of fresh green grass in the recently burned areas. They have taken a knock over the past month, being the number one prey species for our lions. As the next few months unfold, we'll see them regain some condition and become a more formidable prey.

RHINO

As with the buffalo, the onset of the spring rains has brought with it the new grass the rhino love so much. And with large areas of the property being burnt, it is an early Christmas for these bulk grazers. There's was an increase of almost twenty sightings of these herbivores this month. We've had many new additions to MalaMala's rhino population as well, with at least two very young calves being viewed in both the Matshipiri and Mlowathi River systems.

ELEPHANTS

With the hot and dry winter finally behind them, these friendly giants are revelling in the spring rains. The pans are filling up nicely, and there is an abundance of grass and browse shoots around, all of which make for very happy elephants. There've been many young calves seen across the property, and herds of fifty plus animals even being viewed on occasion.

TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR OCTOBER 2011

Lions: 82
Leopards: 67
Elephant: 143
Rhino: 117
Buffalo: 91
Cheetah: 5
Wild Dog: 1

OTHER SIGHTINGS OF INTEREST FOR OCTOBER 2011:

- Black rhino
- Serval
- Tortoises and snakes
- Honey badger
- Ostrich and chicks
- Sable