

**MALAMALA GAME RESERVE GAME REPORT – MARCH 2013**

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

**WEATHER SUMMARY – MARCH**

Maximum temperature (°C)	36
Minimum temperature (°C)	17
Mean maximum (°C)	30
Mean minimum (°C)	22
Rainfall (mm)	5.5
Days of rain	4

\*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS AS AT END OF FEBRUARY 2013

**LIONS**

**STYX PRIDE = 10**

<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>17 YEARS 6 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>10 YEARS 2 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>5 YEARS 2 MONTHS</b>
<b>2 FEMALE SUB ADULTS</b>	<b>2 YEARS 2 MONTHS</b>
<b>2 MALE SUB ADULTS</b>	<b>2 YEARS 2 MONTHS</b>
<b>2 MALE CUBS</b>	<b>8 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 FEMALE CUB</b>	<b>8 MONTHS</b>

MARTHLY, MALAMALA, EYREFIELD  
(17 sightings)

The Styx pride had a slow start to the month but they more than made up for it during the days that followed as they spent most of the month on the property. There is some sad news to be shared about the old lioness that has been struggling with a limp for many moons now. She was last seen in February looking in very poor condition and she was not with the pride. This must have been one of her last sightings and she is believed to have passed away. She will no longer feature on the monthly game report. The oldest lioness of over seventeen years, fondly known as ‘Grandma Styx’ is still hanging in and keeping up with the pride. It certainly is a privilege for guests to be able to view such an old stalwart. She is easily the oldest lioness in the region.

There was an interesting few days when the prides movements were quite unusual and leave us perplexed. The three young cubs had been left in the Mlowathi River while the older lions had ventured off on a hunt. The hunting party was first around the Matshipiri River which is very far south from where they left the cubs. The following day they had opened up even more distance and were further east. On the third morning, the young sub adult males seemed to have abandoned the hunt and were back with the cubs! Meanwhile, their two sisters and the three adult females were trailing a large herd of buffalo. The lions were successful in preying upon a young buffalo calf that had been separated from its mother. It was quite a dramatic scene as the young calf was alive for quite some time while the lions were still feeding from it. The lions then all regrouped at the hiding place of the cubs. We do not know how the young males managed to end up being back with the cubs. Perhaps they lost touch with the other lions and decided to head for the cubs?

**EYREFIELD PRIDE = 11**

<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>14 YEARS 5 MONTHS</b>
<b>2 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>5 YEARS 9 MONTHS</b>

<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>5 YEARS 8 MONTHS</b>
<b>2 MALE CUBS</b>	<b>1 YEAR 1 MONTH</b>
<b>1 FEMALE CUB</b>	<b>1 YEAR 1 MONTH</b>
<b>2 MALE CUBS</b>	<b>10 MONTHS</b>
<b>2 MALE CUBS</b>	<b>8 MONTHS</b>

MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD, EYREFIELD  
(7 sightings)

After a long summer of which the Eyrefield pride were relatively absent, it seems probable they will once again return to their winter hunting grounds around the Sand River. The number of sightings picked up towards the end of the month which contributed to a total of seven sightings during March. It was this time last year that three of the four lionesses chose the Tamboti Thickets of the Sand River to give birth and nurture their newly born cubs. Therefore it was no surprise last month to see the eldest lioness in the same area, heavily pregnant, accompanied by the rest of the pride. The Sand River lends itself to an abundance of prey species visiting the waters to drink. This is a main source of attraction for the pride. Large herds of buffalo zigzag up and down this stretch of the river which will keep the lionesses busy.

Most of the prides' sightings included the presence of the Manyelethi male lions. These males continue to spend a large portion of their time with the Eyrefield pride. The lionesses effective hunting strategies continue to attract these males in terms of the steady food source they offer.

The four lionesses will experience increased pressure to make large kills this winter. Six of their seven cubs are males whose appetites will almost double. Some are just older than a year now. With six young males to feed as well as the 4 Manyelethi males ever present, the lionesses will need to live up to their reputation as 'killing machines'.

**FOURWAYS PRIDE = 5**

<b>2 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>UNKNOWN AGES</b>
<b>1 SUB ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>2 YEARS 9 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 SUB ADULT MALE</b>	<b>2 YEARS 9 MONTHS</b>
<b>1 SUB ADULT MALE</b>	<b>± 3 YEARS</b>

EASTERN MALAMALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD  
(11 sightings)

The Fourways pride were seen consistently during the early stages of the month, following up their record number of sightings last month. Again they covered vast distance, from the very north to the Kapen River and back again. On one occasion the pride was resting in close proximity to the Manyelethi males. It did not appear that they met up. It may be that the females are avoiding the males intentionally so that the sub adult males do not incur their wrath.

**MARTHLY PRIDE = 4**

<b>1 ADULT FEMALE</b>	<b>14 YEARS 7 MONTHS</b>
<b>2 ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>10 YEARS 8 MONTHS</b>
<b>2 SUB ADULT FEMALES</b>	<b>2 YEARS</b>
<b>1 CUB</b>	<b>1 MONTH</b>

MARTHLY  
(0 sightings)

No sightings for the month of March. It is believed that the two sub adults have gone missing. There is some good news that one of the females has given birth to a new cub.

**MANYELETHI MALES = 4**

**± 8 YEARS 2 MONTHS**

MARTHLY, EYREFIELD, MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

**DOMINANT OVER THE STYX, EYREFIELD, FOURWAYS, MARTHLY AND  
BREAKAWAY MARTHLY PRIDES**

(7 sightings)

The Manyelethi males were seen on two occasions where they were all together and on a determined patrol. It is a tremendous sight to see these four kings roaming their territory together. Other sightings were of two of the brothers in the far north east near Clarendon Dam. At least one of the males was always in attendance with the Eyrefield pride, a pride that they seem to enjoy spending their time with. The Manyelethi males made a bold statement when they marched westwards to remind the Selati males (the dominant coalition western Sabi Sands) who is boss.

**CHARLESTON PRIDE = 3**

**1 ADULT FEMALE**

**8 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

**2 SUB ADULT MALES**

**1 YEAR 11 MONTHS**

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

(0 sightings)

No confirmed sightings during the period.

**SELATI PRIDE = 17**

**1 ADULT FEMALE**

**14 YEARS 2 MONTHS**

**3 ADULT FEMALES**

**±10 YEARS 2 MONTHS**

**3 ADULT FEMALES**

**UNKOWN AGES**

**4 SUB ADULT MALES**

**2 YEARS 2 MONTHS**

**2 SUB ADULT FEMALES**

**2 YEARS 2 MONTHS**

**2 CUBS**

**±10 MONTHS**

**2 CUBS**

**6 MONTHS**

WESTERN CHARLESTON

(0 sightings)

No confirmed sightings during the period. Trouble is looming for this pride since the dominant Kruger male is under threat from the males from the Marthly and Eyrefield pride. They have spent most of the month split up, as some of the females try to shield the cubs and sub adults from the new males.

**MALES FROM THE EYREFIELD PRIDE = 2**

**1 MALE**

**5 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

**MARTHLY MALE**

**7 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

NOMADIC

(0 sightings)

Although there were no confirmed sightings of these two males for the month, they have been very active south of our boundary. There are attempting to overthrow the Kruger male lion. By doing this, they will earn his territory and should be able to take over the Selati Pride.

**KRUGER MALE LION = 1**

**± 7 YEARS 5 MONTHS**

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON, WESTERN CHARLESTON

DOMINANT OVER THE SELATI PRIDE

(0 sightings)

See '*males from the Eyrefield pride*' and '*Selati pride*' for more information of this lion.

**Other lions encountered:**

- **Two unidentified males:** (1 sightings). These two males were seen by field workers in Charleston. It could have been that they were the males from the Eyrefield and Marthly prides.

## NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIONS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)

March	32
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### LEOPARDS

#### **BICYCLE CROSSING MALE**

**11 YEARS 2 MONTHS**

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

The Bicycle Crossing male is showing that he is more dominant than ever. Again this month he was seen with female company. The Flockfield female had left her territory to mate with the male and were first found near Rattray's camp. The pair were finishing off an impala kill when the Dudley female and her cub showed up to inspect proceedings. There was no aggression between the leopards but the Dudley female and her cub were quick to move away. It is believed that the cub of the Dudley female is yet another leopard to be sired by the Bicycle Crossing male.

#### **AIRSTRIp MALE**

**6 YEARS 9 MONTHS**

MALAMALA, EYREFIELD, MARTHLy, NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD  
(14 sightings)

The Airstrip male's movements were very centralised during the month due to him mating with the Kikilezi female for a large portion of the period. The two leopards were together for tow spate periods during the month, with each mating session lasting a few days at a time. The Kikilezi female had made an impala kill near Maurice's Pan which the Airstrip male shared with her. The male was also found toward month end with a kill of his own in the northern extremities of his domain.

Although mating for many days in the month, he did still manage to find time to move throughout his territory. He has just about abandoned his territory on the western bank of the Sand River all together and he was not seen there at all. This could be a smart move and make his territory more 'manageable'. It does mean that he loses access to the Tamboti female whose territory is predominantly on the western bank nowadays.

#### **CHARLESTON MALE**

**6 YEARS 9 MONTHS**

EASTERN CHARLESTON, NORTHERN TOULON  
(1 sighting)

It is always good to catch a glimpse of the Charleston male. He was found moving through his territory with confidence and was not nearly as nervous of vehicles like we have seen in the past.

#### **WEST STREET MALE**

**3 YEARS 11 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN FLOCKFIELD  
(7 sightings)

The West Street male enjoyed a good number of sightings. He is still not showing any signs of becoming territorial. He is a fine specimen and is becoming very large. It is still early days but watch out when he does eventually decide to make his move!

#### **NEWINGTON MALE**

**4 YEARS 5 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALAMALA  
(6 sightings)

The Newington male is enjoying his time on the western bank of the Sand River, mostly seen around the Airstrip. He moves through his territory unopposed at this stage. The Airstrip male is happy to relinquish this area where he was once prolific. The Newington male's father, the Princess Alice Pans male, is also

still showing no sign of aggression to his son. It is interesting that the Newington male has not been seen roaring much, although this will come when he becomes more confident in his new territory.

**HOGVAAL MALE**

**6 YEARS 11 MONTHS**

EASTERN EYREFIELD, EASTERN MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD, EASTERN CHARLESTON

(0 sightings)

No confirmed sightings during the period.

**TSLEBE ROCKS MALE**

**± 7 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

NORTHERN EYREFIELD

(1 sighting)

The one sighting of the Tsebe Rocks male was when he was found in the vicinity of the Ostrich Koppies female and an impala that she had killed. The two adults were both seen feeding from the carcass independently and at different times. Her two cubs were also close by. Could this mean that the female has been able to cleverly trick the Airstrip male and Tsebe Rocks male that they are the fathers of the cubs? If so, she will gain tremendously as neither male will be a threat to the cubs. It does mean that we will never be certain of who the father of her cubs is.

**PRINCESS ALICE PANS MALE**

**12 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALAMALA

(5 sightings)

The ageing Princess Alice Pans male seems like he has begun the early stages of retirement. Happy to let his son, the Newington male, take over the reins, he has forfeited a large piece of his territory and will no longer be the dominant force that he once was. All sightings during the month were either around Rattray's Camp or the Airstrip.

**GOWRIE MALE**

**± 6/7 YEARS**

NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD

(0 sightings)

No confirmed sightings during the period.

**KIKILEZI FEMALE**

**11 YEARS 6 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALAMALA, MARTHLY

(14 sightings)

After her recent loss of her male cub, the Kikilezi female is trying to make amends. She was seen mating with the Airstrip male on two separate occasions during the month. Both instances saw the courtship lasting a few days. Her bid to produce a fifth litter is well underway and it will not be a surprise if this successful litter enjoys success at producing another litter during the winter.

**TAMBOTI FEMALE**

**5 YEARS 5 MONTHS**

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALAMALA

(4 sightings)

We were pleased to have four sightings of the Tamboti female in March, which is more than we have had in recent times. The pretty female had killed an impala near Flockfield Tower. She fed from the carcass uninterrupted for a three days. All of her sightings came during the beginning of the month. It is still very evident that the Tamboti female is nursing young cubs, with suckle marks on her nipples being a clear indication. This is the first litter that the female has produced and has been a much anticipated event as she has been trying to fall pregnant for a while. For now, the female is cleverly hiding her cubs and hopefully she will be successful in raising them, and that she will reveal them to us shortly.

**MLOWATHI FEMALE****6 YEARS 1 MONTH**

NORTHWESTERN EYREFIELD

(1 sighting)

Just the one sighting of the Mlowathi female during the period. Rangers at the sighting could see that the female is lactating. Could it be that she too is in the process of raising cubs? Time will tell. It is likely that her choice of den site is to the north of our property.

**JAKKALSDRAAI FEMALE****13 YEARS 4 MONTHS****1 FEMALE CUB****1 YEAR 8 MONTHS**

CENTRAL &amp; WESTERN CHARLESTON, EAST OF THE SAND RIVER

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

There were no sightings during the report period. A young female cub has been seen on two occasions in southern Charleston. We are still waiting to verify if it is indeed the youngest daughter of the Jakkalsdraai female.

**CAMPBELL KOPPIES FEMALE****13 YEARS 5 MONTHS**

WESTERN EYREFIELD

(2 sightings)

Two sightings of this famous MalaMala leopard during March. We can confirm that she is showing signs of pregnancy. This means that she and her two daughters, the Mlowathi and Ostrich Koppies females, are in the process of raising cubs. Exciting times for this families heritage!

**OSTRICH KOPPIES FEMALE****8 YEARS 6 MONTHS****2 CUBS****3 MONTHS**

EYREFIELD

(1 sighting of female, 3 sightings of female and cubs, 0 sightings of cub without female)

The Ostrich Koppies had a quieter month than in February. She is doing an excellent job of keeping her cubs well hidden. We believe that she has moved them to the Tsebe Rocks donga, which is a deep gully covered by thick vegetation. It is an area not navigable by Land Rover and explains the decrease in sightings. The family did provide us with three unbelievable sightings where we could watch the cubs playing about in full confidence with the vehicle present. The most memorable sighting was when the mother was moving the cubs to a new den. With both cubs in tow, and having to bounce along at a fast trot to keep up with their mother, we followed them until they disappeared into the cover of the above mentioned gully.

See the *'Tsebe Rocks male'* for information on how she shared a kill with this male.

**MATSHIPIRI FEMALE****12 YEARS 5 MONTHS****1 FEMALE CUB****1 YEAR 5 MONTHS**

EASTERN MALA MALA, EASTERN EYREFIELD

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

There were no sightings during the report period.

**DUDLEY FEMALE****14 YEARS 5 MONTHS****1 FEMALE CUB****11 MONTHS**

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

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

Just the one sighting of this duo and it was not one to forget. The Dudley female and her cub wandered across the Bicycle Crossing male and Flockfield female that were finishing off an impala kill and mating. After inspecting the scene, the Dudley female took her cub away from the action without too much fuss. This meant that no less than four leopards were seen at one sighting!

**FLOCKFIELD FEMALE  
1 CUB**

**8 YEARS 11 MONTHS  
1 YEAR 9 MONTHS**

CENTRAL & EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

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

The Flockfield female had a tremendous month considering that she often goes through large periods of time without being seen. Toward the beginning of the month, she was near Styx Crossing. The other two sightings of her were when she was mating with the Bicycle Crossing male. First around the Rattray's Camp, then at the Tamboti Thickets, the pair mated with high frequency and it was likely that their time together was already coming to an end by the time we found them. The status of the Flockfield females most recent offspring is unknown. The fact that the female is mating again is a clear indication that her cub is now independent, or that it has passed away.

**THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE**

**3 YEARS 3 MONTHS**

WESTERN MALAMALA

(5 sightings)

The Emsagweni female continues to move throughout her territory with energy and confidence. With her skill as a hunter combined with her beauty, she is a fine prize to be viewed and the rangers and always pleased to come across her. She bears a striking resemblance to the Tamboti female leopard.

**CALABASH FEMALE**

**± 6 YEARS**

WESTERN CHARLESTON

(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of the Calabash female. It has been sometime since she last mated with the Bicycle Crossing male and she should be in the late stages of pregnancy if the mating was successful.

**Other leopards encountered:**

- **Son of the Dudley female 2009:** (6 sightings).
- **No ID females:** (9 sightings).
- **No ID males:** (5 sightings).
- **No ID (gender and identity unconfirmed):** (3 sightings).
- **NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)**

March	32
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**CHEETAH**

It is a dangerous existence for cheetah who choose to explore Malamala. Their vulnerability is known by the other predators and therefore they need to be very careful. Five sightings for the month is below average. However this month's cheetah sightings furthered our interest to the cheetah population dynamics.

Two young unidentified males were tracked and located around Dudley Lookout. This dense area must have been a nervous experience for, what we think are two brothers, and the next day they were found on the open areas at Lion Rocks. Vehicles remained with them for the day while they continued east. The two brothers were left to themselves south of the Windmill. They were briefly followed up upon the next morning but were nowhere to be found. We presume they continued east into the KNP which is where they probably came from. Let us hope that the two young males seen in Flockfield on two occasions will mature into a successful hunting coalition, who occupy the open areas in eastern regions of flockfield. The area is there for the taking.

For the mother and now, 2 cubs, life in the Northern parts of Malamala has not been easy. In the core of the Styx prides territory, the third cub was supposedly killed by these lions. Tracks indicate the same. This female cheetah was seen twice in the month. Earlier on during the month she still had 3 cubs, but after the reported incident involving the Styx pride, she was seen again with only 2 of the cubs remaining. Since she has not been seen, we presume she has moved elsewhere. What was once four young cubs is now only two, a true reflection of the harshness of the African bush.

What was still a mystery last month is now more factual. The cheetah brother coalition most commonly found around Clarendon has been reduced to one member. March went by where only the same member was sighted. In both instances he was found on the wall of Clarendon dam, on his own, looking over the plains. We have no factual evidence to say that he is dead or that he was killed, but it will be a huge surprise if he is ever seen again.

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

<b>March</b>	<b>7</b>
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#### **CAPE HUNTING DOGS**

Four sightings of wild dogs during the period. All sightings were of many dogs together. A pack of no less than seventeen came through and spent a few days on the property. They caused havoc among the impala population and even a young buffalo was on the receiving end of their supreme hunting skill. On another occasion fourteen dogs were seen. We believe they are affiliated to the same large pack. This group of dogs must have come in from the Kruger National Park. It is rare to see a pack so large in number and the occasion was richly enjoyed.

#### **NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED (approximate)**

<b>March</b>	<b>20</b>
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#### **CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS**

Elephants were frequently seen this month however numbers were less compared to March 2012. The abundance of water in large pans and waterholes after heavy rains in January and February could be a reason for fewer sightings during certain periods during the month. Elephants require many litres of water each day and if it is available in other areas they have no need to visit the Sand River to drink.

Bulls were common and were often seen moving along the Sand River. Large herds provided fantastic entertainment. It was fun to watch the aimless playfulness of many young calves scattered around the property. One evening sparked a burst of laughter as a one year old calf accidentally separated from the mother. The calf realised the situation and launched into a fifty meter dash of panic across an open sand bank after his mother.

The dry season will cause an influx of elephants of all shapes and sizes to come and drink from the river.

Dagha boys were commonly seen. There seem to be 5 large bulls who lurk between the Airstrip and the Sand River. They tend to spend their lunch hours wallowing in the Sand River opposite the main camp which made for easy and fun viewing from the pool area. The large herds consisted of numbers just over 300 buffalo and evidence proves there are 3 of these herds all similar numbers and many young calves due to the time of year. The Styx, Eyrefield, and Fourways pride were seen following these herds often eying out the youngsters. On the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> March, rangers witnessed a few members of the Styx pride killing new born buffalo calf at West Street. This was difficult to watch as the young calf was being devoured while still alive and the wails resounded through the bush. It was especially difficult since during the same morning, a cow was seen giving birth. Perhaps it was the same calf that was siezed. It emphasised the harsh reality of life in the bush.

#### **OTHER INTERESTING SIGHTINGS**

Two sightings of a pair of Honey Badgers excited us as well as an appearance of the odd ostrich at Clarendon Dam.

#### **TOTAL SIGHTINGS FOR FEBRUARY 2013**

Lion:	41
Leopard:	85
Elephant:	118
Buffalo:	85
Cheetah:	5
Cape Hunting Dog:	4