



Game Report



Photo by Ranger Lourenco Da Silva

**MalaMala Game Reserve
April 2021**

It's all about the wildlife!

THE MONTH'S WEATHER SUMMARY					
Temperature					
Celsius (°C)			Fahrenheit (°F)		
	Actual	Average		Actual	Average
Maximum	32	28	Maximum	90	83
Minimum	12	16	Minimum	53.6	61
Rainfall					
Millimetres		Inches		Days of rain	
14		0.55		1	

TOTAL SIGHTINGS	
Lion	106
Leopard	88
Elephant	121
Buffalo	45
Cheetah	3
Cape hunting dog	14

Sightings are tallied by day and not by drive. E.g., an individual leopard seen during the morning and afternoon drive on the same day is regarded as a single sighting.

KILL STATS	
Lion	3 impala, 1 buffalo, 1 wildebeest, 1 unknown
Leopard	12 impala
Cheetah	No recorded kills
Cape hunting dog	1 impala

**AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS*

LION PRIDES

THE KAMBULA PRIDE = 19

3 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 1 MONTH
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 7 YEARS 10 MONTHS
6 SUB ADULT FEMALES	± 2 YEARS 8 MONTHS
5 SUB ADULT MALES	± 2 YEARS 8 MONTHS
2 CUBS	1 YEAR 11 MONTHS

MALAMALA & FLOCKFIELD

(55 sightings)

The Kambula pride, like previous months, spent no time together as an entire pride. Rather they were seen in smaller fragments as lionesses spend time alone seeking out surrounding male coalitions to mate with or tend to new cubs we're yet to see. The subadults are spending more time without adult lionesses. Last month we reported the pride was starting to shift into the dry season distribution along the Sand River and east thereof. With sightings up this month from last, this shift is certainly underway, and we can expect to see a lot of this pride in the months to come. Their focus will undoubtedly be along the river, with multiple sightings a day as the pride remains fragmented but showing similar movements.

Key events from the month; a lioness was mating with a Northern Avoca male in Piccadilly Pans on the 2nd when a Gowrie male appeared onto the scene. When the Northern Avoca male chased the Gowrie male, the Kambula lioness moved out of the area. Once the Northern Avoca male returned north, she sought him out and proceeded to 'flirt' with him. She was led north along the Mlowathi River to Senegal Bush while trying to convince the male to come back south. Her attempts were futile as the male led her into the core of his territory and away from the Gowrie males. On the 7th, 14 members of the pride had an impala kill in Matshapiri Open Area, and a lioness was mating with a Gowrie male at Fred's tree. A female has given birth to a new litter of cubs and the first time we have seen her since was on the 24th when she was at the Sausage Spot. Could she have moved her cubs into one of the many possible dens on Campbell Koppies? On the 25th, members of the pride caught an impala ram some ways west of Maurice's Pan, only to have a Gowrie male steal the lions share.

THE NKUHUMA PRIDE = 17

1 ADULT FEMALE	± 8 YEARS 10 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 8 YEARS 1 MONTH
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 4 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 4 YEARS 9 MONTHS
8 CUBS	± 1 YEAR 9 MONTHS
1 CUB	1 YEAR 4 MONTHS

NORTH WESTERN EYREFIELD

(6 sightings)

Three lionesses were south of Mlowathi Dam on the 4th. On the 7th, the same lionesses were with the two Northern Avoca males at Mlowathi Dam. It was a while before lions from this pride were seen again, and on the 20th, we had three separate sightings of members of this pride. One lioness was east of the confluence of the Mlowathi River and the Nwana Nonantshemeni Donga. Two females and eight of the subadults were at Mlowathi Pans with a Northern Avoca male. Two more lionesses were south of the Gowrie Boundary, north of Mlowathi Dam. The following day (21st), most of the pride were with the two Northern Avoca males west of Mlowathi Dam.

THE MARTHLY PRIDE = 2

1 ADULT FEMALE	7 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 CUB	2 YEARS 1 MONTH

MARTHLY

(1 sighting)

With sections of the Manyelethi River and the Sand River still too wet to drive, sightings of this mother and daughter pair are lower than normal. The only sighting of the Marthly pride this month was in the Sand River south of Elephant Rock on the 20th.

THE STYX PRIDE = 6

1 ADULT FEMALE	13 YEARS 3 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	10 YEARS 3 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 2 MONTHS

WESTERN BANK OF CHARLESTON

(1 sighting)

Four members of the Styx pride was seen west of Charleston North crossing on the 26th.

THE TORCHWOOD PRIDE = 17

7 ADULT FEMALES

6 ADULT FEMALES

4 CUBS

NORTH EASTERN EYREFIELD

(5 sightings)

UNKOWN AGES

± 5 YEARS 3 MONTHS

± 8 MONTHS

April saw sightings of these lionesses venturing some ways out of their typical territory. Six adult females and five cubs were on two buffalo kills at Clarendon Dam on the 18th. A couple of days later, five lionesses were with the two unknown males from the Kruger National Park, south of the Split Rock donga along the Matshapiri River. Four females were at Buffalo Bush Dam on the 21st. On the 25th, a lioness was mating with one of the unknown males from the Kruger at Clarendon Dam. Six lionesses were east of Campbell Koppies on the 26th. These lionesses were followed north at dusk, and we watched as they caught an impala south of the Old Borehole in Eyrefield under the full moon.

MALE LIONS

THE 'NORTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES

± 7 YEARS 10 MONTHS

NORTH WESTERN EYREFIELD

DOMINANT OVER THE NKUHUMA PRIDE

First encountered in late 2019.

(15 sightings)

The two Northern Avoca males have been heard roaring a lot along the Mlowathi River in recent times, which adds to their claim to the river and the area west of it. The two males were only seen together in four sightings, and they were with members of the Nkuhuma pride in four of the sightings, two of which both males were present. It was only a matter of time before the coalition had an interaction with the Gowrie males. On the 2nd, a Gowrie male was mating with a lioness from the Kambula pride at Piccadilly Pans. Something was off about their behaviour. It soon became apparent why, there was a second male lion was in the area, a Northern Avoca male male. The Northern Avoca male chased the Gowrie male south before heading back north to Mlowathi Koppies. From here, he roared, and scent marked. The lioness from the Kambula pride sought him out, and they had an exciting interaction as she 'flirted' with him while he led her deeper into his territory, further north along the Mlowathi River past Senegal Bush. The males were mostly seen along the Mlowathi River north of the Tlebe Rocks Donga for the remainder of the month until the 28th, when both males were with two lionesses from the Kambula pride at Mlowathi Koppies.

THE GOWRIE MALES = 2

1 ADULT MALE ± 10 YEARS 4 MONTHS

1 ADULT MALE ± 9 YEARS 4 MONTHS

EYREFIELD, MALAMALA

DOMINANT OVER THE KAMBULA AND MARTHLI PRIDES.

First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve in September 2015.

(27 sightings)

The two brothers were only seen together three times this month, and sightings of these two males were concentrated in the core of their territory between Rattray's Camp and MalaMala Camp. The pressure on the Gowrie males has been mounting over several months now, and this month we witnessed our first interaction between them and another coalition. On the 2nd, the younger of the two Gowrie males was chased by a Northern Avoca male. The Gowrie male was mating with a lioness from the Kambula pride in Piccadilly Triangle when another male lion joined the sighting. The two males watched each other before tensions rose, and both lions stood and ran south, the Northern Avoca male chasing the Gowrie male. All the while, the Northern Avoca male was roaring. The Gowrie male managed to get around a herd of elephants that, distressed by a male lion's presence, prevented the Northern Avoca male from getting around them. The Gowrie male continued south to Sand Pit crossing, where he proceeded to start roaring while the Northern Avoca male moved back north, roaring and scent marking as he went. From this event, it appears the area around Piccadilly pans is now a grey area between the two coalitions territories. The following day the male in question was at Lower Mlowathi Crossing with subadults of the Kambula pride. From here, he roared and proceeded south, linking up with his older brother on the Old Airstrip. The next time both males were together was a couple of days later when they were on the southern parts of the Airstrip with a lioness from the Kambula pride. The following couple of days, a male was mating with the same lioness at Piccadilly pans and on the Airstrip. Both males were seen in multiple sightings with members of the Kambula pride before they were together again at the Old Airstrip on the 15th. The remaining sightings of these males were in the area south of Piccadilly Pans and west of the Sand River around the Old and New Airstrips.

THE TORCHWOOD MALE = 1

1 ADULT MALE ± 5 YEARS 3 MONTHS

NOMADIC

(3 sightings)

The young Torchwood male was viewed on the 21st north of Fourways Open Area, trailing a herd of 250 buffalo in the eastern parts of Eyrefield on the 29th and 30th.

THE 'SOUTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES

± 8 YEARS 2 MONTHS

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

DOMINANT OVER THE EYREFIELD PRIDE

(1 sighting)

The two Southern Avoca males were seen once this month when they were south of F-Bend Open Area with the Sand River pride on the 30th.

Other lions encountered:

- **SAND RIVER PRIDE (4 adult lionesses, 5 cubs)** – on the 4th, the pride was in the Sand River south of Charleston Rock, and on the 30th, they were south of F-Bend Open Area with the two Southern Avoca males.
- **3 LIONESSES** – Mlowathi Koppies (6th).
- The **two UNKNOWN MALES** from the Kruger National Park were seen together with members of the Torchwood pride on the eastern bank of the Matshapiri River south of the Split Rock donga (20th), one of the males was mating with a lioness at Clarendon Dam (25th).
- **FOURWAYS PRIDE** – Borehole in Flockfield on the 18th, five subadults had a wildebeest kill near Zebra Skull on the 24th.
- **Three LIONESSES** – Impala kill north of the Nwana Nonantshemeni Donga 24th
- **Two NDHENG MALES** were west of Charleston North Crossing on the 26th.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LIONS ENCOUNTERED	83 (19 cubs)
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LEOPARDS

FEMALE LEOPARDS:

THE PICCADILLY FEMALE

7 YEARS 4 MONTHS

1 FEMALE CUB

1 YEAR 1 MONTH

WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY

Daughter of the Kikilezi female, independent first quarter of 2016.

(1 sighting of female)

The only sighting of the Piccadilly female was on the 13th when she had an impala ewe kill hoisted in a Tamboti tree south of Kigelia Crossing.

THE ISLAND FEMALE

8 YEARS 4 MONTHS

1 FEMALE CUB

9 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, SOUTHERN MALAMALA

Daughter of the Tamboti female, independent first quarter of 2015

(19 sightings; 5 of female, 12 of female and cub, 2 of the cub)

The Matshapiri River and the area around Drum Crossing remains the area to go when looking for the Island female and her cub. However, unlike last month the Island female has started moving a little further from this "core" area, and as a result, we had fewer sightings of this female and her cub this month. On the 14th, the Island female and cub had an impala kill east of Maurice's Pan. A young male approached the area, which led to the Island female leading her cub away from the kill to safety. The male was nervous of the vehicles, so we did not get an ID but suspect it was the young nervous 2:1 male. Once the male had fed, the Island female approached the area, and the young male moved off. On the 17th, the Island female and cub had an impala kill at the confluence of the Hogvaal Donga and the Matshapiri River. On the 20th, the two leopards had another impala kill at Drum Crossing.

THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE

11 YEARS 4 MONTHS

NORTH/EASTERN MALAMALA AND EYREFIELD

Daughter of the Kikilezi female, independent first quarter of 2012.

Mother of the Ngoboswan and Eyrefield males.

(2 sightings)

The Emsagweni female was first seen east of Campbell Koppies on the 2nd. The second sighting of this female was southwest of Wild Dog Rocks Open Area on the 18th.

THE NKOVENI FEMALE

8 YEARS 8 MONTHS

2 CUBS

3 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA & SOUTHERN MARTHLI

*Daughter of the Mashaba female, independent early 2014.**Mother of the Plaque Rock female.*

(7 sightings, 3 of female, 4 of female and cubs)

Like last month, sightings of the Nkoveni female were all around the Old Airstrip. On the 3rd, she was between the Old and the New Airstrips. We suspected she moved her cubs into the drainage line west of MalaMala Camp. This is the same drainage line system she kept her cub this time last year. Similarly to last year, we could not access the drainage system, and although there were signs of the female walk through the area, we couldn't get our timing right. The second sighting of this female was on the 14th when she had an impala kill on the Old Airstrip. The Plaque Rock female, her daughter, approached the area and attempted to feed off the kill. This only aggravated her mother and the Nkoveni female chased her daughter out of the area. It was a while before we saw this female again. From the 25th until the 28th, the Nkoveni female and her cubs were east of the Old Airstrip south of the Causeway. During these four days she made two impala ram kills, which kept her and her two cubs busy. The final sighting for the month was on the 29th when the female was on the Sand Rivers western bank north of Sand Pit Crossing, alone.

THE LOOKOUT FEMALE

± 11 YEARS 3 MONTHS

MALE CUB

1 YEAR 8 MONTHS

NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

*First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve in late 2015.**Mother of the Kapen female.*

(5 sightings; 1 sighting of female, 1 of both female and cub and 3 of the cub)

The cub of the Lookout female is starting to spend more time on his own and exploring the area that surrounds his mother's territory more. He was seen four times this month, and in only one of these sightings, he was with his mother. The Lookout female was near the Windmill on the 4th. The other sighting of the Lookout female was on the 24th when she was leading her cub into the drainage line north of Styx Rocks. The cub of the lookout female was on the MalaMala/Flockfield boundary east of White Cloth Open Area on the 7th. On the 26th, he was on the eastern bank of the Sand River south of West Street bridge. The last sighting for the month of this young male was on the 29th when he was in more familiar territory at Kapen Rocks.

THE THREE RIVERS FEMALE

5 YEARS 1 MONTH

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALAMALA

Daughter of the Kikilezi female, orphaned on May 22nd 2017.

(5 sightings)

The Three Rivers female was seen five times this month, and in three of the sightings, she was mating with the Maxim's male. On the 2nd, 4th and 6th, the Three Rivers female was mating with the Maxim's male at Flockfield Drift, Flockfield Camp, and on the Sand River's western bank at Old Wildebeest Crossing. On the 6th, they had a kill. On the 7th, this female moved back south and was at West Street Bridge. Two weeks passed before we saw her again, and she was back at West Street Bridge.

THE KAPEN FEMALE

3 YEARS 6 MONTHS

SOUTHERN FLOCKFIELD

Daughter of the Lookout female, independent first quarter of 2019.

(2 sightings)

The Kapen female was first seen on the 22nd when she was north of New Rocks. This young female was hunting impala north of Cuckoo Pan on the 27th. She was unsuccessful, but she stalked and ran in on several herds for the duration of the morning drive.

THE PLAQUE ROCK FEMALE

3 YEARS 1 MONTH

WESTERN MALAMALA

Daughter of the Nkoveni female, independent last quarter of 2019.

(7 sightings)

The Plaque Rock female has been a female leopard that we've seen regularly west of the Sand River on MalaMala over the last year. From here, she's started to venture onto the eastern bank of the Sand River more recently. She appears to have followed her mother, the Nkoveni female, east towards the Sand River and is yet another young leopard we have exploring her options of establishing territory on MalaMala. The first sighting of this female was on the 6th when she was in the Sand River south of the Old Wildebeest Crossing, not far from the Three Rivers female and Maxim's male. On the 9th, she was with the Maxim's male on the Old Airstrip. She spent some time near the Causeway on the 11th and 12th. On the 14th, she had an interesting encounter with her mother, the Nkoveni female. The Plaque Rock female tried to feed off a kill of the Nkoveni females on the Old Airstrip. However, her mother was having none of it and chased her off. She moved north from here and spent some time in Marthly (typically the Piccadilly female's territory). On the 18th, she was near Matumi Rocks and at Elephant rock the following day. She was with the Ngoboswan male on the Sand River's eastern bank south of the Causeway on the 27th.

THE TLEBE ROCKS FEMALE

3 YEARS 3 MONTHS

CENTRAL & WESTERN EYREFIELD

Daughter of the Sibuye Female, independent second quarter 2019.

(11 sightings)

The Tlebe Rocks female appears to have filled the void left by the Piccadilly female around Campbell Koppies and Piccadilly Pans. All 11 sightings of this female were between the Causeway and the Tlebe Rocks donga, with sightings concentrated around the lower reaches of the Mlowathi River. This was the eastern parts of the Piccadilly female's territory until she shifted west to protect her young cub from the Ngoboswan male. The first five sightings of this female were around Mlowathi Koppies between the 2nd and the 10th. During the later end of the month, this young female was back to mating with the Ngoboswan male around Campbell Koppies from the 21st until the 25th. On the 30th, she was in the Mlowathi River just north of its confluence with the Sand River.

THE SIBUYE FEMALE

7 YEARS 4 MONTHS

1 MALE & 1 FEMALE CUB

1 YEAR 8 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

Daughter of the Kikilezi female, independent first quarter of 2016.

(3 sightings; 2 sightings of the female and 1 sighting of male cub)

The Sibuye female was seen twice this month. The first sighting of this female was west of the Mlowathi River, south of Mlowathi Dam, on the 9th. We had to wait until the end of the month to see her again on the 30th around Mlowathi Dam. Her Son was also seen north of the Dam on the last day of the month. However, he was not with his mother.

MALE LEOPARDS

THE ACCIPITER MALE

± 10 YEARS 8 MONTHS

EASTERN & CENTRAL MALAMALA & FLOCKFIELD

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in late 2015.

(2 sightings)

The Accipiter male was first seen on the 5th around the Giraffe Bones. The second sighting was three weeks later, on the 29th, when he was in the Matshapiri River north of Donald's Crossing. It's been a while since we've seen the Accipiter male or followed tracks of this male north of Matshapiri Open Area. It appears as he gets older and starts to receive more pressure from younger males, he is starting to concentrate his territory between the Matshapiri and Kapen Rivers.

THE MAXIM'S MALE

± 6 YEARS 8 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in early 2019.

(5 sightings)

The Maxim's male was viewed five times this month, and in four of those sightings, he was with a female leopard. For the first week of the month, this male was mating with the Three Rivers female. On the 2nd, they were at Flockfield camp, on the 4th, they were in Flockfield Drift and on the 6th, they shared a kill of sorts on the western bank of the Sand River at the Old Wildebeest Crossing. A couple of days later, on the 9th, he was with the younger Plaque Rock female on the Old Airstrip. The final sighting for the month was at Flockfield Boma Crossing, where he had an adult female impala kill on the 17th.

THE EYREFIELD MALE

3 YEARS 5 MONTHS

NOMADIC (southwestern Eyrefield and eastern Marthly)

Son of the Emsagweni female, *independent late 2019.*

(3 sightings)

The Eyrefield male was viewed on three occasions this month. The first sighting in over a month of this male was at Buffalo Bush Dam on the 4th, north of Fourways Open Area on the 20th and 21st.

THE NGOBOSWAN MALE

3 YEARS 5 MONTHS

NOMADIC (Marthly and western Eyrefield)

Son of the Emsagweni female, *independent late 2019.*

(12 sightings)

The Ngoboswan male has fast become one of the most viewed leopards on MalaMala. This is likely due to his proximity to camp, with frequent sightings of this young male around Piccadilly Pans and Campbell Koppies. On the 2nd, he had an impala ram kill hoisted in Piccadilly Pans. On the 17th, there was an interaction between this young male and the older Nanga female some way west of Mlowathi Pans. From the 21st until the 25th, he was mating with the Tlebe Rocks female around Campbell Koppies. The final sighting of the month of this male was on the Sand River's eastern bank south of the Causeway when he was with the Plaque Rock female on the 27th.

THE SPLIT ROCK MALE

6 YEARS 10 MONTHS

CHARLESTON

Son of the Ostrich Koppies female, independent latter half of 2015.

(1 sighting)

The Split Rock male was seen once this month when he was west of Verreaux's Crossing on the 30th. Tracks indicated he'd walked north on the eastern bank of the Sand River from Trollip's Camp to the Rock Drift Donga and then crossed west through the river before walking south on the western bank of the river.

Other Leopards Encountered:

- The **NANGA FEMALE** was seen in Mlowathi Open area with a freshly killed impala ram on the 2nd, west of Mlowathi Dam (17th), interacting with the Ngoboswan Male.
- A **NO ID MALE** was seen briefly on the Gowrie Boundary west of the Matshapiri River (2nd).
- A nervous unknown **ADULT MALE (3:3)** had a kill of sorts midway along Reedbuck road (3rd).
- The **SON OF THE FLOCKFIELD FEMALE** was at Tjellahanga Pans on the 4th.
- The **TENGILE FEMALE** was west of Trollip's camp on the 6th.
- A **NO ID FEMALE** was seen at Bicycle crossing on the 8th.
- The **FLAT ROCK MALE** was north of Stwise on the 8th, Kigelia crossing on the 13th when he had a hyena steal an impala kill from him, Kigelia Crossing (26th).
- A nervous **YOUNG MALE** (potentially the 2:1 YM) fed off an impala kill the Island female had east of Maurice's Pan on the 14th.
- A **NO ID FEMALE** was chased up a Jakkalberry tree by lions at Manyeleti Crossing on the 16th.
- The **N'WETI MALE** was west of Charleston North crossing on the 28th.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED

28 (5 cubs)

CHEETAH

We recorded 3 sightings of cheetah during the month of April. An adult female was seen in Piccadilly Pans on the 16th. The Same female was south of Mlowathi Pans the following day. The third sighting was of an adult female in Mlowathi Open Area on the 27th. This may be the same female.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED	>1
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

A similar pattern to last month played out this month with packs consisting of compositions that we are not accustomed to moving through the property. There were **14 sightings** of Cape Hunting Dogs this month. The first five sightings were of a pack of eight that spent time Around the Airstrip. The Toulon pack came as far north as mamba waterhole where they caught an impala but had it stolen by a hyena. We viewed this pack on four other occasions in Charleston. Another pack spent time west of the Sand River between Princess Alice Pans and Beaumont's Camp.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED	>28
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CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

This month we recorded **121 sightings of elephants**. There is an increase in the movement of elephants to and from the Sand River now that there is very little surface water across the reserve.

There was an increase in sightings of **Cape buffalo** this month with 45. With an increase in sightings of this member of the 'Big 5', we've also seen an increase in the number of herds visiting the reserve. This month we had 15 sightings of herds ranging from 60 to a large herd of 250.

Other sightings of interest

- The **hyena den** site east of Campbell Koppies is active again, with six young hyenas been seen at the den.
- Three **Cape clawless otters** were at the Causeway on the 10th.
- Three **honey badgers** were seen on the 30th. One was west of the Causeway. The other two were together in Mlowathi Open Area, where they interacted with the Son of the Sibuye Female.
- Two **Cape porcupines** were seen on the Airstrip on the 26th.
- **Black-backed jackal** pairs were seen at Clarendon and Mlowathi Open Areas.