



Game Report



Photo of the 3:3 Son of the Emsagweni female by ranger Gareth Nuttall-Smith.

MalaMala Game Reserve April 2020

*"No matter how few possessions you own or how little money you have,
loving wildlife and nature will make you rich beyond measure."*

~ Paul Oxton

It must be noted that the pandemic that wiped over the world at the beginning of 2020 resulted in our camps being closed towards the end of March 2020. Therefore, no camps were open in the Month of April. Consequently, the number of sightings will be lower in this Game Report than typical. In addition, the sightings in this Game Report are animals found by the small ranger team while conducting field work and filming the ranger in isolation series as well life streaming for Kruger latest sightings. If you would like to watch some of these sightings you can find the Rangers in isolation series and the live streams from the listed links:

MalaMala YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCry5EFdbEMavAhQZht_nVbw

Kruger Sightings: <https://www.youtube.com/user/Animatedcams/videos>.

THE MONTH'S WEATHER SUMMARY					
Temperature					
Celsius (°C)			Fahrenheit (°F)		
	Actual	Average		Actual	Average
Maximum	36	27.17	Maximum	96.8	80.91
Minimum	15	19.75	Minimum	59	67.55
Rainfall					
Millimetres		Inches		Days of rain	
35		1.38		7	

TOTAL SIGHTINGS	
Lion	38
Leopard	39
Elephant	68
Buffalo	24
Cheetah	0
Cape hunting dog	7

Sightings are tallied by day and not by drive. Eg: If a leopard was seen by in the morning and that same leopard was viewed again in the afternoon, that counts as 1 sighting.

KILL STATS	
Lion	3 impala.
Leopard	3 impala, 1 waterbuck
Cheetah	No recorded kills
Cape hunting dog	1 impala, 1 common duiker & 1 scrub hare

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS

LIONS:

THE KAMBULA PRIDE = 20

3 ADULT FEMALES	± 7 YEARS 1 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 6 YEARS 10 MONTHS
11 CUBS	1 YEAR 7-10 MONTHS
3 CUBS	11 MONTHS
MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD	
(17 sightings)	

Members of the Kambula Pride were seen on 14 of the 30 days this month. Of the 17 sightings, this pride was accompanied by the Gowrie males in all but two sightings. As was the case in the month of March the female yet to have cubs was again seen mating with the Gowrie males this month. We have good reason to believe she is unable to conceive.

The female without cubs was seen with one of the Gowrie males on the 5th at the Ngoboswan Donga. The entire pride and both males were together on the 6th at drum crossing and then again at the sausage spot the following day. On the 10th, five females, all the cubs and a Gowrie male were seen along the eastern bank of the Matshapiri River south of Matshapiri Open Area. From here the pride moved north without a male and were found near Fred's tree on the 11th. The other lioness and one of the Gowrie males were seen mating on the Airstrip. the following day the pride continued north and were found near Stwise in the presence of a Gowrie male. The mating pair were still around the airstrip. On the 13th the mating pair had crossed east through the Sand River and were found near the remains of an impala ram at Piccadilly Pans. On the 14th the pride was found near the Kapen breakfast spot without a male, while the mating pair were mating south of the causeway.

For the second half of the month the pride continued with the loop moving north from around Charleston north crossing to MalaMala camp. On the 15th they were near the Tamboti Thickets with one of the Gowrie Males. From here the entire pride and both males moved together and were seen at the causeway on the 16th having walked straight through camp that morning! That night and in the early morning of the 17th they covered the western bank in its entirety with tracks of them moving back and forth between Rattrays camp and West Street Bridge. We found them just west of the old Flockfield camp. From here they crossed over west street bridge and settled down for the day in the eastern parts of the Ngoboswan donga. Several days went by with them off the reserve but they must have caught wind of the Nkuhuma pride on the 25th as they were found north of Mlowathi Pans west of the Mlowathi River on the 25th. This is a little north of their typical territory and judging from tracks, the Nkuhuma pride hadn't been much further north of where the Kambula pride settled down. This was the last sighting of the entire pride for the month with only the lioness without cubs and a Gowrie male seen on the 28th at Lion Loop.

THE TORCHWOOD PRIDE = 14

7 ADULT FEMALES

UNKOWN AGES

6 SUB ADULT FEMALES

± 4 YEARS 3 MONTHS

1 SUB ADULT MALE

± 4 YEARS 3 MONTHS

NORTH EASTERN EYREFIELD.

**We believe that the pride is starting to splinter, and a 'breakaway' is in progress.*

(9 sightings)

All members of this pride were viewed this month. However, the entire pride wasn't once seen together. Of the nine sightings of the pride the young adult females and the young male were seen six times and the adult females seen on three occasions.

The four young females and male were joined by another young female near Pat's Drift Koppies on the 2nd. The remaining eight females of the pride were found the following day on the Gowrie Boundary west of the Matshapiri River. It was back to usual with the 'breakaway' youngsters back to four females and male on the 4th at Piccadilly Pans. From here they moved east and spent the 7th and 8th around Pat's Drift Koppies. On the 10th the 'breakaway' pride was seen between Campbell Koppies and Ostrich Koppie. It was awhile before we saw these lions again. Maybe the presence of the Kambula Pride during this period pushed these young lions back east towards their normal territory. We next saw five of the adult females on the 29th near the old borehole and then again, the following day on the Gowrie Boundary west of the Matshapiri River. We also saw the 'breakaway' youngsters on the 30th north of Wild dog Rocks, this time it was three young females and the male.

With winter fast approaching it'll be interesting to see where these young lions end up. Will they stay in the northern parts of our reserve? Or will the return of the Kambula pride to their usual winter hunting grounds push them further north and east out of MalaMala Game Reserve. If they do stay on MalaMala and remain a constant pride on the reserve, we may look at giving them a name when summer next comes around. Only time will tell, and winter may just be the defining season for these young lions.

THE STYX PRIDE = 6

1 ADULT FEMALE

12 YEARS 3 MONTHS

1 ADULT FEMALE

9 YEARS 3 MONTHS

2 SUB ADULTS

3 YEARS 4 MONTHS

1 SUB ADULT

3 YEARS 2 MONTH

1 SUB ADULT

2 YEARS 9 MONTHS

NOMADIC

(0 sightings)

Although referring to a pride of lions as nomadic is not common this appears to be the case with the Styx Pride. The pride currently has no territory and are moving far and wide in the areas surrounding MalaMala Game Reserve.

THE NKUHUMA PRIDE = 17

1 ADULT FEMALE	± 7 YEARS 10 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	± 7 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 7 YEARS 1 MONTHS
3 SUB ADULT FEMALES	± 3 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT FEMALE	± 3 YEARS 9 MONTHS
8 CUBS	8 - 11 MONTHS
1 CUB	4 MONTHS

NORTH WESTERN EYREFIELD
(2 sightings)

Unlike past months with the exception for March we only viewed this pride twice in April. On several occasions we found tracks of lions in the north western parts of our reserve and tracked the lions to the boundary. It seems we were just too late.

It was only towards the end of the month we saw this pride for the first time this month. On the 29th we found five females and all the cubs east of Mlowathi Dam. They hardly moved that night and the next day we found the entire pride at Mlowathi Dam with both Northern Avoca males.

THE MARTHLY PRIDE = 2

1 ADULT FEMALE	6 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 CUB	1 YEAR 1 MONTHS

MARTHLY
(2 sightings)

A quiet month for this much-loved pride of two. Among the rangers many of us a routing for this lone lioness to raise her cub to adulthood and rebuild her pride. A pride that has a long history on the reserve. Thus far she's done a good job, but with two large pride surrounding her territory, winter could be a tough period for this mother - daughter pair.

The Marthly lioness was seen alone near MalaMala Camp on the 8th where she was seen chasing a pack of 17 Cape hunting dogs. The other sighting of the pride was in the Manyelethi River at Paraffin Drift on the 19th.

THE EYREFIELD PRIDE = 2

1 ADULT FEMALE	12 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 CUB	10 MONTHS

CHARLESTON
(0 sightings)

There were no Sightings of this lioness and her cub in the month of April.

THE GOWRIE MALES = 2

1 ADULT MALE ± 9 YEARS 4 MONTHS

1 ADULT MALE ± 8 YEARS 4 MONTHS

EYREFIELD, MALAMALA

DOMINANT OVER THE KAMBULA PRIDE AND MARTHLI PRIDE.

First encounter: September 2015.

(15 sightings)

As is often the case, these two males spent their time with the Kambula Pride. This month the two males were not seen if not following the pride. Both brothers were seen mating with the lioness that has no cubs. For sightings of the Gowrie males please refer to the write up on the Kambula Pride.

THE 'NORTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES ± 6 YEARS 10 MONTHS

NORTH WESTERN EYREFIELD

DOMINANT OVER THE NKUHUMA PRIDE

First encountered:

(2 sightings)

With these two males spending more and more time in the northern parts of Eyrefield mainly along the Mlowathi River we've decided to add them to the list of regularly seen lions. Although these males do have a third brother, we are yet to see him and to our understanding he spends all his time some ways north of your boundary. Therefore, we have not added him to this coalition. Should he come south and join his two brothers we'll add him.

On the 2nd one of the males was seen south of the Gowrie Boundary some ways east of Mlowathi Dam. As was the case with the Nkuhuma pride, it was only at the end of the month we saw them again. On the 30th both males were at Mlowathi Dam with the Nkuhuma pride.

THE 'SOUTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES ± 7 YEARS 2 MONTHS

CHARLESTON

(0 sightings)

Another month goes by with no sightings of these males. We know these males are seen south of Charleston and into the Kruger National Park. Has their territory shifted as they seek out larger prides to conquer with the Eyrefield Pride down to one adult female?

OTHER LIONS ENCOUNTERED:

- **The Fourways Pride** was seen on two occasions. The first sighting was of five cubs on the Kruger National Park boundary at the Split Rock Donga on the 26th. Although only the cubs were seen the mothers could be heard contact calling further east of the boundary. On the 27th we were treated to a clear sighting of the whole pride and two new males at Buffalo Bush Dam. In addition to the two males there were three females and six cubs from two litters. The pride treated us to a master class in hunting rutting impala. A lioness heard the rutting and

flanked the herd to their north. As the male impala chased the herd north, she ran in, scattering the impala straight into the remaining members of the pride. They caught a young male with one of the males enjoying the spoils.

- **Two Males** were seen at Buffalo Bush Dam with the Fourways Pride. The Younger (\pm 8 YEARS) of the males was comfortable with us as time wore on. The elder (\pm 11 YEARS) of the two males was not tolerant of our presence.
- **Sub - Adults from the Plains Camp Pride** were viewed four times this month. At all four sightings there were two males and two females. They were first seen on an impala kill near Tjellahanga Rocks on the 17th. With the excitement of 'new' lions we found them again on the 18th south and east of Jakkalsdraai Open Area. These lions then moved west towards the Sand River as they explore Charleston. They were seen at Charleston North crossing on the 25th and then again on Dudley Lookout on the 26th.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LIONS ENCOUNTERED	72 (30 cubs)
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LEOPARDS:

THE PICCADILLY FEMALE	6 YEARS 4 MONTHS
CUBS (Yet to be seen)	1 MONTH
WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY	
<i>Daughter of the Kikilezi female, independent first quarter of 2016</i>	
(5 sightings)	

The Piccadilly female was the most viewed leopard for the month of April.

On the 1st we saw her briefly near the causeway. Then on the 4th when she was north of Matumi Rocks with little remains of an impala carcass, we noticed she had suckle marks! This is very exciting as it means she has a cub/s hidden away somewhere. Unfortunately, and not from a lack of effort we couldn't find her den site. She is known to den in some inaccessible areas of Marthly. We'll just have to try in May. Even if we did find the den, we would not be able to view the cubs before they turn 6 weeks old. On the 7th she was seen near Small Paraffin drift. A week later (13th) she was at Elephant Rock, where we sat with her for five hours hoping she would lead us to her den, she didn't! The last sighting of this leopardess was opposite MalaMala camp with an impala and young waterbuck kill on the 24th.

THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE	10 YEARS 4 MONTHS
<i>Daughter of the Kikilezi female, independent</i>	
NORTH/EASTERN MALAMALA AND EYREFIELD	
(0 sightings)	

We recorded no sightings of this leopardess this month.

THE ISLAND FEMALE 7 YEARS 2 MONTH
2 CUBS 2 MONTHS
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, SOUTHERN HALF OF MALAMALA
Daughter of the Tamboti female, independent first quarter of 2015
(3 sightings)

It isn't often we have so few sightings of this leopardess. In addition to so few sightings we did not see her cub this month. We first saw the Island female south of our airstrip on the 5th where she was having a territorial dispute with the younger Three Rivers female. Although we didn't see them fighting both leopardesses were roaring and scent marking in close proximity of one another. The next we saw of the Island female was on the 18th at West Street pans. She was watching rutting impala and we suspect waiting for the cover of darkness to hunt. The last sighting of this female was on the 24th at drum crossing.

THE LOOKOUT FEMALE 10 YEARS 2 MONTH
MALE CUB 7 MONTHS
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON
(1 sighting)

As we are more accustomed to, we only had one sighting of this female and did not see her cub this month. As her cub gets older, she spends less time in the same area. Typically, a secretive female it's not unusual to go long periods without seeing her. The only sighting of the Lookout female this month was south of Donald's crossing on the 4th.

THE KAPEN FEMALE 2 YEAR 6 MONTHS
CENTRAL, WESTERN AND NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD
Daughter of the Lookout female, independent first quarter of 2019
(1 sighting)

The only sighting of this young female was early morning on the 14th near Lion Rocks where she dropped into Rock Drift donga and could not be followed.

THE THREE RIVERS FEMALE 4 YEARS 0 MONTHS
WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALAMALA
Daughter of the Kikilezi female, orphaned on May 22nd, 2017
(3 sightings)

The first sighting this month of the Three Rivers female was south of the airstrip with the island female on the 5th. She was very brazen, roaring, scent marking and even approaching the older female to within a few meters. Maybe this is a sign that she's ready to take over the western bank and secure some potential den sites around Rattray's camp for the near future. The other two sightings of this female leopard were both near Rattrays camp on the 6th and the 24th.

THE NKOVENI FEMALE 7 YEARS 9 MONTHS
CUBS (*yet to be seen*) 2 MONTHS
WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN MARTHLY
Daughter of the Mashaba female, independent early 2014.
(2 sightings)

We believe this female is denning in one of the many drainage lines near MalaMala camp. However, we've been unable to find her at a decent time of day to follow her. We only had two confirmed sightings of the Nkoveni female on the 16th and the 27th and both were in the evening near MalaMala camp. On the 27th she walked straight through the centre of camp and scent marking as she went. We had a sighting of an adult female near the Sable Camp rotunda but could not confirm the ID however, we have strong reason to believe it was this female

THE SIBUYE FEMALE 6 YEARS 4 MONTHS
2 CUBS 8 MONTHS
WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY
Daughter of the Kikilezi female, independent first quarter of 2016.
(2 sightings)

We haven't seen the cubs of the Sibuye female for a few months now. Judging from tracks we can confirm that both cubs are still alive. The two sightings of the Sibuye female this month were along the Gowrie Boundary. The first was near the Mlowathi River on the 16th and the second was north of the old borehole on the 29th.

THE FLOCKFIELD FEMALE 16 YEARS 0 MONTHS
MALE CUB 1 YEAR 1 MONTHS
EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, EASTERN CHARLESTON
Daughter of the Jakkalsdraai female
(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of this female or her cub this month. The Flockfield female turned 16 years old this month. That's a ripe old age for a leopard and we are left wondering if we'll see her again...

THE TEARDROP FEMALE 10 YEARS 0 MONTHS
2 CUBS 1 YEAR 5 MONTHS
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON
Daughter of the Jakkalsdraai female, gained independence early 2013.
(3 sightings)

The southern parts of MalaMala are dense during the summer months. Finding leopards isn't so easy at the best of times, but even more so these days and in the south. The teardrop female was seen once with her female cub north of Pumthouse Pans on the 24th. Her male cub was seen on consecutive

days, 24th and 25th near Tjellahanga Rocks in the company of hyenas as he was finishing off the remains of a kill of sorts. With these cubs approaching a year and half of age it won't be long before they'll have to start fending for themselves. This is especially the case for the female cub. Female cubs generally go independent at around a year and a half and males around two years. Will the fact that the Teardrop female is still likely to be providing for her male cub mean we'll see the female cub with her mother for a while longer?

THE XIVINDZI FEMALE

3 YEARS 4 MONTHS

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

Daughter of the Teardrop female. Gained independence in mid-2018.

(0 sightings)

We did not see this female this month.

THE SENEGAL BUSH MALE

7 YEARS 7 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY, WESTERN MALAMALA

Brother of the Quarantine male leopard from the North.

(0 sightings)

We recorded no sightings of this male this month.

THE MAXIM'S MALE

± 5 YEARS 8 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in early 2019.

(1 sighting)

We only had one sighting of the Maxims male this month and that was at west street bridge on the 4th.

THE 3:2 SON OF THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE

2 YEARS 4 MONTHS

NOMADIC (south western Eyrefield and eastern Marthly)

Independent late 2019

(3 sightings)

It isn't often 3:2 gets seen as much as 3:3 but this was the case this month with both of the Emsagweni female's sons being seen three times. On all three occasions we saw this young male leopard at Campbell Koppies with impala kills. On the 10th and 11th he had an impala kill just north of the Sausage Spot and then again on the 28th we found him on top of the Koppie just west of the Sausage Spot. This is the furthest west we've seen this young male. It's possible, like his brother he's taking advantage of there being no dominant male in these parts of the reserve currently.

THE 3:3 SON OF THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE

2 YEARS 4 MONTHS

NOMADIC (eastern Eyrefield)

Independent late 2019

(3 sightings)

This month saw a drastic reduction in leopard sightings as we had fewer Land Rovers on the reserve. The 3:3 Son of the Emsagweni female is often one of the most viewed leopards and we only saw him on three occasions: on the 1st at Piccadilly Pans, the 16th at Mlowathi Koppies and on the 22nd at Kigelia crossing where he was stalking two rutting impala rams.

THE ACCIPITER MALE

± 9 YEARS 8 MONTHS

EASTERN MALAMALA, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in

(2 sightings)

The first sighting we had of the Accipiter male this month was on the 6th in the Kapen River just north of Hyena Waterhole. The second sighting, much to the frustrations of this male an impala gave him away on the northern bank of the Ngoboswan Donga on the 21st. Both sightings were short lived as he moved away from us and into so dense bush, as is typical of this male.

THE SPLIT ROCK MALE

5 YEARS 10 MONTHS

FLOCKFIELD, CHARLESTON

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

(0 sighting)

We recorded no sightings of the Split Rock male this month.

Other leopards encountered:

- **The Plaque Rock Female** was seen only once this month at Maxim's Lookout on the 3rd.
- **The N'weti male** was seen twice this month, the first sighting was north of Charleston North crossing on the 14th. The second sighting on the 17th lasted close to an hour and a half. Rangers followed him as he marked his territory from Charleston North crossing north into the Kapen River just south of the Kapen Breakfast Spot.
- **An adult female** was seen on the 10th at the sable Rotunda, in all likelihood the Nkoveni female.
- **A young male** was seen near Mlowathi Koppies on the 13th. This was more than likely the 3:3 son of the Emsagweni female as we know this is one of his favourite spots currently.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED

17 (2 cubs)

CHEETAH

No sightings of cheetah were recorded this month.

However, a male was captured on a camera trap in Clarendon on the 23rd.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED	0
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

We recorded **seven sightings** of Cape hunting dogs this month. The pack of two (female with one ear) was seen on the 4th and again on the 6th when they caught an impala, but had it stolen by a hyena. The Investec breakaway pack of 7 was seen once on the 18th at drum crossing where they caught a scrub hare and common duiker. The Investec Pack of 17 were seen on the Airstrip on the 7th and again on the 8th at bicycle crossing. We had another two sightings of Cape hunting dogs at Mlowathi Open Area (15th) and Tlebe Rocks (22nd) but we were unable to get a good look at the makeup of the packs before they moved into dense bush where we could not follow.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED	16
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CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

We recorded **68 sightings of elephants**. 47 of those sightings were of herds and the remaining 21 sightings were of bulls. There were **24 buffalo sightings** this month with 7 sightings being of herds and 17 sightings of bulls. As the dryness of winter starts to tighten its grip on the land, we will likely record more sightings of both these species in the months to follow.

OTHER SIGHTINGS OF INTEREST

No sightings of out of the ordinary species were recorded this Month. Having said this, we have set up camera traps in some parts of the reserve and they captured some of the rarer species as well as a new record for MalaMala Game Reserve:

- **Aardwolf** **first confirmed record for the reserve*
- **African Wild Cat**
- **Serval**
- **Honey Badger**