



# Game Report



Red-billed oxpeckers by Ranger Victoria Craddock

MalaMala Game Reserve  
February 2023

*It's all about the wildlife!*

THE MONTH'S WEATHER SUMMARY					
Temperature					
Celsius (°C)			Fahrenheit (°F)		
	Actual	Average		Actual	Average
Maximum	32	29	Maximum	90	84
Minimum	20	23	Minimum	68	74
Rainfall					
Millimetres		Inches		Days of rain	
352		13.86		16	

TOTAL SIGHTINGS	
Lion	39
Leopard	50
Elephant	89
Buffalo	32
Cheetah	0
Cape Hunting Dog	1

*\*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	1 zebra
Leopard	8 impala, 1 tree squirrel
Cheetah	No recorded kills
Cape Hunting Dog	No recorded kills

*\*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS*

LION PRIDES

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**THE KAMBULA PRIDE = 29**

3 ADULT FEMALES	± 9 YEARS 11 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 9 YEARS 8 MONTHS
6 YOUNG ADULT FEMALES	± 4 YEARS 6 MONTHS
5 YOUNG ADULT MALES	± 4 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT FEMALE	3 YEARS 9 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT MALE	3 YEARS 9 MONTHS
2 CUBS	1 YEAR 11 MONTHS
8 CUBS	0 YEARS 2 MONTHS

*MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON*  
(16 sightings)

Owing to this being the shortest month of the year and a surplus of precipitation, sightings of most of our resident predators dipped this month. In contrast to the 29 sightings we recorded of members of this pride in January, we only recorded 16 sightings this month. While we did not see our most prolific pride as frequently as we usually do, sightings of them were high class, and six of them included the newest additions.

The two older cubs from Kambula Group A were alone on the 1<sup>st</sup> when they were south of Campbell Koppies. No sightings were confirmed with all four lionesses together this month. After observing gradual integrations last month, perhaps the adult lionesses are beginning to reintegrate into the core of the pride.

Kambula Group B was not seen this month; however, a young male lion was around MalaMala Camp on the 9<sup>th</sup>, and while rangers could not confirm the identity of this individual, it was likely one of the young Kambula male lions.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> two lionesses were with two of the Ndhzenga males at Princess Alice Pans. Seven lionesses and one Ndhzenga male crossed west over the Sand River at Confluence Crossing on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Five of these lionesses were lactating.

The morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> revealed one lioness with three small cubs on the Western Bank of the Sand River, south of Flockfield Pools. Later that afternoon, two different lionesses and two small cubs were found in the same area but on the Eastern Bank. One lioness and two of the cubs were in the same area, south of the Treehouse, on the 19<sup>th</sup>. The same two lionesses and two small cubs lazed in the long grass at Kapen Open Area on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, two lionesses were with four of the smallest cubs south of Princess Alice Pans. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, we were met with another surprise when rangers found eight small cubs and two lionesses south of Princess Alice Pans. With at least five lionesses lactating, even more cubs could be concealed on the property.

**THE MARTHLY PRIDE = 1**

1 SUB ADULT FEMALE

3 YEARS 11 MONTHS

*MARTHLY*

(1 sighting)

The only record of the Marthly lioness was on the 5<sup>th</sup>, when she was at Kigelia Crossing in the morning. By that afternoon, she had moved south and was found in the tree that the Nkoveni female had an impala kill. Rangers were surprised to find a lioness in place of the leopard they left there in the morning.

**THE NKUHUMA PRIDE = 18**

1 ADULT FEMALE

9 YEARS 7 MONTHS

3 ADULT FEMALES

± 6 YEARS 8 MONTHS

4 SUB ADULT MALES

± 3 YEARS 8 MONTHS

2 SUB ADULT FEMALES

± 3 YEARS 8 MONTHS

1 SUB ADULT MALE

3 YEARS 2 MONTH

7 CUBS

± 1 YEAR 10 MONTHS

*WESTERN & CENTRAL EYREFIELD*

(9 sightings)

Of the nine sightings of members of this pride, six were of the fragment consisting of one adult female, two sub-adult males and two sub-adult females. This group was first seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> when they were at Senegal Bush. They were dangerously close to the Black Dam males on the 5<sup>th</sup> when both sets of lions were in Piccadilly Triangle. They moved a distance south and were at Buffalo Pans on the 7<sup>th</sup>. On the 8<sup>th</sup>, they were in Matshapiri Open Area. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, they were east of Fred's Tree.

An adult lioness was alone with the Northern Avoca male in Clarendon Open Area on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The next day, one sub-adult male was at Clarendon Dam, but his older relatives had already vacated the area.

**THE SAND RIVER PRIDE = 14**

2 ADULT FEMALES

± 9 YEARS 7 MONTHS

2 ADULT FEMALES

± 4 YEARS 7 MONTHS

1 SUB ADULT FEMALE

3 YEARS 1 MONTH

3 SUB ADULTS (1 FEMALE &amp; 2 MALES)

2 YEARS 6 MONTHS

6 CUBS

1 YEAR 6 MONTHS

*SOUTHERN CHARLESTON*

(0 sightings)

After receiving more the 350mm of rain, all access points to this pride's territory were obstructed by rivers in flood.

**THE TORCHWOOD PRIDE = 20**

7 ADULT FEMALES

6 ADULT FEMALES

7 CUBS

*EASTERN EYREFIELD*

(0 sightings)

UNKOWN AGES

± 7 YEARS 1 MONTH

± 2 YEARS 6 MONTHS

The Torchwood pride were not seen this month.

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**MALE LIONS**

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**THE NDHZENGA MALES = 3**

1 ADULT MALE

± 8 YEARS 0 MONTHS

2 ADULT MALES

± 7 YEARS 7 MONTHS

*WESTERN MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD & CHARLESTON**Dominant over the Kambula and Styx Prides.**First Encountered on MalaMala September 2020*

(7 sightings)

Sadly, but not unsurprisingly, one male from this coalition passed away this month. After nursing injuries sustained in an altercation with the Gijima males in the first quarter of 2022, the male with the club foot could not fight any longer. The last time he was seen alive was on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the 5-Star Junction. The head ranger closed the sighting to allow the male privacy to pass away peacefully. His carcass was found on the 6<sup>th</sup> in the same place he had been left three days prior.

On the 17<sup>th</sup>, the smallest male roared at Hyena Waterhole while the male with the abdominal protrusion moved with seven lionesses of the Kambula pride, south of Donald's Crossing. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, one male was south of Princess Alice Pans, while another was in the Tamboti Thickets. The three surviving males were north of Princess Alice Pans on the 21<sup>st</sup>, three lionesses from the Kambula pride were also in the sighting.

**THE NORTHERN AVOCA MALES = 1**

1 ADULT MALES

± 9 YEARS 8 MONTHS

*WESTERN EYREFIELD*

*Dominant over the Nkuhuma pride.*

*First encountered in late 2019.*

(2 sightings)

We recorded sightings of this male on two days this month. The first time he was seen was further south than we expected, when he was north of West Street with members of the Nkuhuma pride on the 8<sup>th</sup>. This dominant male of the north was with a lioness from the Nkuhuma pride on the 23<sup>rd</sup> in Clarendon Open Area.

**THE SOUTHERN AVOCA MALES = 2**

2 ADULT MALES

± 10 YEARS 0 MONTHS

*SOUTHERN CHARLESTON*

*Dominant over the Sand River Pride.*

*First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve*

(0 sightings)

Surging rivers made their territory inaccessible to us. Thus, no sightings were recorded of these males.

**Other Lions Encountered:**

- The **BLACK DAM MALES** (2 Adult males – 5 YEARS 6 MONTHS) These males were recorded on five occasions this month. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, they were at Mlowathi Dam. They moved south overnight and were at Campbell Koppies on the 4<sup>th</sup>. On the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, they had a zebra kill in Piccadilly Triangle. The last time they were seen was on the 8<sup>th</sup>, when they were at the Mlowathi Spot.
- A **NO ID** young male was around MalaMala Camp on the 9<sup>th</sup>. We presume this to be a young male from the Kambula pride but could not confirm this as the sighting was brief.
- Another **NO ID** young male was at Clarendon Dam on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF LIONS ENCOUNTERED	39 (10 cubs)
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## LEOPARDS

### FEMALE LEOPARDS:

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#### **THE ISLAND FEMALE**

10 YEARS 0 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, SOUTHERN MALAMALA

*Daughter of the Tamboti female, independent first quarter of 2015.*

*Mother of the Drum Crossing female.*

(5 sightings)

The Island female was seen on five days this month.

In the first of the five sightings, she was in the same area as the younger and smaller Stone Drift female. The next day she was found far east when she was east of Paddy's Pools. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, she was east of Sand Pit Crossing. She was at Buffalo Pans on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The last day she was seen this month was on the 22<sup>nd</sup> when she was around the Giraffe Bones. We continue to monitor her for signs of pregnancy.

#### **THE DRUM CROSSING FEMALE**

2 YEARS 6 MONTHS

SOUTHERN MALAMALA

*Daughter of the Island female, independent February 2022.*

(0 sightings)

The more time passes, the more the mysteries of the whereabouts of the Drum Crossing female build.

#### **THE THREE RIVERS FEMALE**

6 YEARS 7 MONTHS

#### **MALE CUB**

1 YEAR 7 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALAMALA

*Daughter of the Kikilezi female, orphaned on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.*

(7 sightings, 3 of female, 1 of female and cub, 3 of the cub)

Times are clearly shifting for this mother and her son.

This month the mother and cub were seen apart on six occasions. The female was at Kikilezihash Crossing on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Her son was in the same sighting of the Maxim's male on the 7<sup>th</sup> when the presumed father and son were at Maxim's Lookout. The Plaque Rock female was also in this sighting. The son was alone around the windsock on the 8<sup>th</sup>, and alone at Kikilezihash Crossing on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Mother and son reunited on the 10<sup>th</sup>, north of Maxim's Lookout. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, the female was contact-calling north of Maxim's Lookout. The last sighting of one of this duo was on the 21<sup>st</sup>, when the female was south of West Street.

**THE NKOVENI FEMALE**

10 YEARS 6 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA &amp; SOUTHERN MARTHLY

*Daughter of the Mashaba female, independent early 2014.**Mother of the Plaque Rock female, Xinkhova female, and Stone Drift female.*

(7 sightings)

The first day this mother of three was seen was on the 4<sup>th</sup>, when she had an impala carcass hoisted north of the Airstrip. On the 5<sup>th</sup>, the female was in the same area, but she had the displeasure of losing her kill to the Marthly lioness, who walked quite a distance before climbing the tree and commandeering the leopard's kill. A ranger reported that she appeared to be pregnant when she was seen at the Windsock on the 16<sup>th</sup>. On the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, she had an impala carcass north of the Airstrip again. The last sighting of this female was on the 27<sup>th</sup>, when she had yet another impala kill north of Maxim's Lookout.

**THE XINKHOVA FEMALE**

2 YEARS 1 MONTH

WESTERN MALAMALA &amp; SOUTHERN MARTHLY

*Daughter of the Nkoveni female, independent last quarter of 2022.*

(12 sightings)

The Xinkhova female was our most-viewed leopard this month. She was on the Eastern Bank of the Sand River between the Causeway and Sand Pit Crossing in all but one sighting. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, she killed a tree squirrel north of Sand Pit Crossing. She was robbed by the Piccadilly female on the 18<sup>th</sup> when she had an impala lamb kill in the northern parts of Piccadilly Triangle.

As the river resides, it will be most fascinating to observe whether this young female crosses back to the western bank of the Sand River or whether her ubiquitous presence on this stretch of the eastern bank is an act of her volition.

**THE STONE DRIFT FEMALE**

2 YEARS 1 MONTH

WESTERN MALAMALA &amp; SOUTHERN MARTHLY

*Daughter of the Nkoveni female, semi-independent.*

(8 sightings)

The first sighting of this young female was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> when she was dangerously close to the Island female, north of West Street Bridge. For a change, this female was not seen with her mother this month. However, she was within 300 metres of her mother on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, when both female leopards had their own impala kills in the area north of the Airstrip. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, she chased dwarf mongooses in the rain, north of the Windsock. This young leopard had a brutal altercation with her older sister, the Plaque Rock female, at the Old Airstrip on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Luckily, she went unscathed.



**THE PICCADILLY FEMALE**

9 YEARS 1 MONTH

WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY

*Daughter of the Kikilezi female, independent first quarter of 2016.**Mother of the Ngungwe female.*

(2 sightings)

The Piccadilly female was seen twice this month. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, she fought with the Xinkhova female, she almost got away with stealing the younger leopard's kill, but a group of spotted hyenas intercepted her and pilfered the bounty. The next, and final, time she was seen was on the 24<sup>th</sup>, when she was east of Stwise.

**THE SIBUYE FEMALE**

9 YEARS 1 MONTH

WESTERN EYREFIELD

*Daughter of the Kikilezi female, independent first quarter of 2016.**Mother of the Tlebe Rocks female, Langa female & Xaxa male.*

(0 sightings)

This leopard was not seen this month.

**THE TLEBE ROCKS FEMALE**

5 YEARS 1 MONTH

CENTRAL &amp; WESTERN EYREFIELD

*Daughter of the Sibuye Female, independent second quarter 2019.*

(2 sightings)

The Tlebe Rocks female waited until the last two days of the month before she graced us with her presence. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, rangers watched as she stalked and killed an impala ram north of Campbell Koppies. She was in the same area on the last day of the month.

**THE PLAQUE ROCK FEMALE**

4 YEARS 11 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(2 sightings)

The eldest daughter of the Nkoveni female was seen twice this month. In both sightings, she had confrontations with other leopards. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, she was at Maxim's Lookout with the Maxim's Male and the son of the Three Rivers female. The next time she was seen was on the 21<sup>st</sup> when she launched an attack on the Stone Drift female. Neither leopard sustained injuries that day, but the Stone Drift female will likely be more cautious around the Plaque Rock female going forward.

**THE LOOKOUT FEMALE  
CUB**

± 13 YEARS 1 MONTH  
10 MONTHS

**NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD**

First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve in late 2015.

*Mother of the Kapen female & the Redhawk male.*

(0 sightings, 0 of female, 0 of female and cub, 0 of the cub only)

No records of the Lookout female nor her cub were gathered this month.

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**MALE LEOPARDS**

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**THE MAXIM'S MALE**

± 8 YEARS 6 MONTHS

**WESTERN FLOCKFIELD & MALAMALA**

*First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in early 2019.*

(6 sightings)

The Maxim's male continues to be the most viewed male leopard on MalaMala Game Reserve. This male's sightings were evenly spaced out and within the areas we expect him, along the Sand River, between Rattray's Camp and MalaMala Camp. Most interestingly, he was with the son of the Three Rivers female around Maxim's Lookout on the 7<sup>th</sup>, without the female.

**THE NGOBOSWAN MALE**

5 YEARS 3 MONTHS

**MARTHLY & WESTERN EYREFIELD**

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

(3 sightings)

This male was at Planks Pan on the 5<sup>th</sup>. He was the only leopard we saw on Valentine's Day when he was east of Piccadilly Triangle. The last sighting of the month was on the 27<sup>th</sup>, when he had an impala lamb in a scotia tree in Piccadilly Triangle.

**THE ACCIPITER MALE**

± 12 YEARS 6 MONTHS

**EASTERN & CENTRAL MALAMALA & FLOCKFIELD**

*First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in late 2015.*

(0 sightings)

Again, the Accipiter male was not seen.

**THE SPLIT ROCK MALE**

8 YEARS 7 MONTHS

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

(1 sighting)

The Split Rock male was found in the Tamboti Thickets on the 20<sup>th</sup>. He moved north, marking his territory as far north as exit Flockfield Lookout. With his consistent presence further north, it will be interesting to see if he attempts to hold his dominance in central Charleston or if he will sacrifice the south in an effort to take territory further north.

**THE FLAT ROCK MALE**

9 YEARS 10 MONTHS

**MARTHLY***Son of the Porcupine female. First seen on MalaMala early 2017.*

(0 sightings)

This male was not seen this month. Typically, we see him in Marthly, an inaccessible property when the rivers flood.

**THE REDHAWK MALE**

3 YEARS 5 MONTHS

**NOMADIC (central MalaMala and central Flockfield)***Son of the Lookout female, independent mid-2021.*

(0 sightings)

We did not see the Redhawk male this month.

**Other Leopards Encountered:**

- A **NO ID** female was seen on the 1<sup>st</sup>, on the Western Ramp of the Causeway. There was not enough time to get any identification, but it is likely the Nkoveni female, or one of her daughters.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED	12 (1 cub)
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**CHEETAH**

No sightings of cheetah were recorded on MalaMala Game Reserve this month

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED	0
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### CAPE HUNTING DOGS

A pack of eight Cape hunting dogs were around the Nwana Nonanshemeni Donga on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED	8
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### CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

34 sightings of Cape buffalo were enjoyed this month. Of these sightings, 11 were of large herds, and 23 were of dagga boys scattered along the length of the Sand River.

Sightings of elephants were most consistent this month, with 84 sightings across the property. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, rangers enjoyed a unique sighting of a leucistic elephant crossing the raging Sand River. The excitement would have been enough were it just a normal calf attempting to face the powerful river, but the unusual pigmentation of the young calf added to the intrigue.

### Other sightings of interest

- An **AFRICAN WILD CAT** was in Wild Dog Rocks Open Area on the 5<sup>th</sup>.
- A relaxed **HONEY BADGER** was east of Piccadilly Triangle on the 16<sup>th</sup>.
- A family of **SIDE-STRIPED JACKALS** were south of Matshapiri Dam on the 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Sightings of **SOUTHERN GROUND HORNBILLS** were recorded on four days this month. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, a flock were around the Mlowathi Spot, where one of the birds was ensconced in a tree cavity. Perhaps this is a new nest site for them.