



# Game Report



Photo by Ranger Lourenco Da Silva

MalaMala Game Reserve  
May 2021

*It's all about the wildlife!*

THE MONTH'S WEATHER SUMMARY					
Temperature					
Celsius (°C)			Fahrenheit (°F)		
	Actual	Average		Actual	Average
Maximum	32	27	Maximum	90	80
Minimum	10	13	Minimum	50	56
Rainfall					
Millimetres		Inches		Days of rain	
1		0.04		1	

TOTAL SIGHTINGS	
Lion	74
Leopard	94
Elephant	190
Buffalo	61
Cheetah	5
Cape hunting dog	12

*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	2 buffalo, 6 impala, 1 warthog, 1 scub hare
Leopard	11 impala, 1 nyala
Cheetah	1 impala
Cape hunting dog	1 impala

*\*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS*

## **LION PRIDES**

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### **THE KAMBULA PRIDE = 19**

3 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 2 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 7 YEARS 11 MONTHS
6 SUB ADULT FEMALES	± 2 YEARS 9 MONTHS
5 SUB ADULT MALES	± 2 YEARS 9 MONTHS
2 SUB ADULTS	2 YEARS 0 MONTHS
5 CUBS	3 MONTHS

*MALAMALA & FLOCKFIELD*

(45 sightings)

The Kambula pride, like in previous months, spent no time together as an entire pride. Rather, they have been seen in smaller fragments as lionesses spend time together tending to the new cubs in the pride. It appears three lionesses are spending more time together, and two lionesses accompany the sub-adults. The pride has shifted into their dry season distribution along the Sand River and east thereof. There has been an increase in sightings of the lionesses and the five young cubs as they spend time in the Sand River between MalaMala and Rattray's camps. The lionesses who spend time with the mother of the five cubs, appear to be heavily pregnant, and as a result, we expect more litters of cubs next month. The sub-adults are moving with less predictability and are covering large areas of the territory.

Previously we have mentioned that power shifts are looming, and the fate of the Gowrie males hangs in the balance as other male coalitions begin to close in. This month saw an unlikely shift in these dynamics as the Ottawa male lion was killed. The details of what unfolded are unknown and shall remain that way, but timelines and the lions in the area could give us an idea. Sporting minor battle wounds around the same time of the Ottawa males death, the Gowrie males do seem likely culprits. Yet neither Gowrie male showed clear signs of a fight gruesome enough to result in the death of a competitor. Based on sightings of the lions in the area, we believe that the Gowrie males, along with members of the Kambula pride, came into contact with an Ottawa male after he wandered into their territory around the Airstrip roaring and on a warpath (reports from Londolozzi guides). It's likely he came across the 14 members of the Kambula pride who were in that area. The way the Ottawa male was roaring likely attracted the Gowrie males attention. The Ottawa male, though as impressive as he was, would have been no match for the combination of lionesses, 7 sub-adult males and two Gowrie males.

Other noteworthy events:

On the 8<sup>th</sup>, three lionesses killed two rutting impala rams at Mlowathi Koppies. 8 of the sub-adults caught an impala at west street pans on the 21<sup>st</sup>. On the 27<sup>th</sup> the lioness with the five youngest cubs stole an impala kill from three cheetahs on the Airstrip. She chased the same cheetah on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, four lionesses killed a young impala ram east of the Ngoboswan donga.

**THE NKUHUMA PRIDE = 17**

1 ADULT FEMALE	± 8 YEARS 11 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 8 YEARS 2 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 5 YEARS 0 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 4 YEARS 10 MONTHS
8 CUBS	± 1 YEAR 10 MONTHS
1 CUB	1 YEAR 5 MONTHS

*NORTH WESTERN EYREFIELD*

(10 sightings)

The bulk of the sightings of members from this pride were during the first half of the month, with eight sightings recorded before the 15<sup>th</sup>. The entire pride were not seen together once. This is due to some of the lionesses having new cubs, which we are yet to see. The two Northern Avoca males were seen with the pride in five of the ten sightings. On the 1<sup>st</sup>, three lionesses were with the two northern Avoca males at Mlowathi Dam. The following day these lions had been joined by a lioness and the nine cubs when they had a buffalo kill at the same dam. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the cubs had been left at the dam while the lionesses and males moved further west, having finished the kill. On the 8<sup>th</sup>, three lionesses made a warthog kill on the Gowrie Boundary along the banks of the Mlowathi River. A few days later (12<sup>th</sup>), two lionesses and a Northern Avoca male were seen in Mlowathi Open Area. The two lionesses moved south overnight and were at Mlowathi Pans the following day. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, a lioness was mating with one of the Northern Avoca males southeast of Mlowathi Dam. The last two sightings of this pride were on the 22<sup>nd</sup> when two lionesses stole a scrub hare kill from a Verreaux's eagle-owl north of Mlowathi Dam. While they were here, three lionesses and the nine cubs were north of the old borehole in Eyrefield. \*\*\*

**THE MARTHLY PRIDE = 2**

1 ADULT FEMALE	7 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 CUB	2 YEARS 2 MONTHS
<i>MARTHLY</i>	
(0 sightings)	

We did not see this pride this month despite being able to access Marthly since the Manyelethi River has subsided. It is unusual to not have any sightings of this mother-daughter pair. I'm purely speculating, but it seems possible that they have been forced to shift their territory due to pressure from both the Kambula and Nkuhuma prides.

**THE STYX PRIDE = 6**

1 ADULT FEMALE	13 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	10 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 3 MONTHS
<i>WESTERN BANK OF CHARLESTON</i>	
(0 sighting)	

We recorded no sightings of this pride this month.

**THE TORCHWOOD PRIDE = 17**

7 ADULT FEMALES	UNKOWN AGES
6 ADULT FEMALES	± 5 YEARS 4 MONTHS
4 CUBS	± 9 MONTHS
<i>NORTH EASTERN EYREFIELD</i>	
(4 sightings)	

Sightings of the Torchwood pride were in their typical areas this month, bar one sighting. On the 1<sup>st</sup>, six lionesses and 9 cubs were north of Four Ways crossing. The following day three lionesses and five cubs were north of Pat's Drift Koppies while three of the younger lionesses and the young torchwood male were at Fred's tree. Two weeks went by without sighting these lions before two lionesses, and four cubs were seen at Clarendon Dam on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

## MALE LIONS

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### THE 'NORTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES

± 7 YEARS 11 MONTHS

NORTH WESTERN EYREFIELD

*DOMINANT OVER THE NKUHUMA PRIDE*

*First encountered in late 2019.*

(9 sightings)

The two Northern Avoca males continue to spend the majority of their time along the Mlowathi River. After last month's interaction between the one male and the younger Gowrie male, we have not seen an interaction between the two coalitions again. Both males were only seen together in three of the sightings and were in the presence of members of the Nkuhuma pride in five of the nine sightings. The first sighting was on the 1<sup>st</sup> when both males were with three lionesses from the Nkuhuma pride at Mlowathi Dam. The following day they were on a buffalo kill with the bulk of the Nkuhuma pride west of Mlowathi dam. The lions finished off the kill during the day, and both males were with three lionesses (Nkuhuma) west of Mlowathi Dam on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. A few days later, one male was at Mlowathi Dam (6<sup>th</sup>). On the 9<sup>th</sup>, a male was at Mlowathi Pans. The same male was with two lionesses from the Nkuhuma pride in Mlowathi open area on the 12<sup>th</sup>. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, one male was mating with a lioness from the Nkuhuma pride southeast of Mlowathi dam while his brother was west of them. The last sighting of the month was on the 22<sup>nd</sup> when a male was in the Mlowathi River south of Mlowathi Pans.

### THE GOWRIE MALES = 2

1 ADULT MALE

± 10 YEARS 5 MONTHS

1 ADULT MALE

± 9 YEARS 5 MONTHS

EYREFIELD, MALAMALA

*DOMINANT OVER THE KAMBULA AND MARTHLI PRIDES.*

*First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve in September 2015.*

(13 sightings)

Both males were only seen together in three of the thirteen sightings and were in the presence of members of the Kambula pride in six of the thirteen sightings. The first sighting of the month was only after a week when one of the males was north of Rattray's camp on the 7<sup>th</sup>. On the 9<sup>th</sup>, one of the males was with members of the Kambula pride at Piccadilly pans. The following day the same male was on the Airstrip. On the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, a male was with members of the Kambula pride at Planks pans. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, a male was with a lioness and two subadults from the Kambula pride on the Airstrip. One male was at Piccadilly pans on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. The first time both males were seen together

was on the 21<sup>st</sup> when they were south of the Airstrip. A few days later (25<sup>th</sup>), they were around the Parking Bay. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, the younger male was trailing four lionesses from the Kambula pride that were hunting impala east of the Ngoboswan breakfast spot. We'd lost the lionesses and suck with the male. All of a sudden, he stopped walking, held his head high and set off at a pace no one was able to keep up with him. The lionesses had killed an impala, and by the time he got to them, there was nothing for him to steal off of them. One male was with two lionesses from the Kambula pride around Princess Alice pans on the 30<sup>th</sup>. The last sighting of the month was of both males together at Charleston North crossing on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

**THE TORCHWOOD MALE = 1**

1 ADULT MALE ± 5 YEARS 4 MONTHS  
NOMADIC  
(2 sightings)

The young Torchwood male was seen twice this month. The first sighting was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> when he was with three of his sisters at Freds Tree. The second sighting was only at the end of the month on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, when he was alone at Matshapiri Dam.

**THE 'SOUTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2**

2 ADULT MALES ± 8 YEARS 3 MONTHS  
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON  
*DOMINANT OVER THE EYREFIELD PRIDE*  
(1 sighting)

The two Southern Avoca males had a buffalo kill in the Tjellehanga River west of Tjellehanga pans on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Other lions encountered:**

- **SAND RIVER PRIDE (4 adult lionesses, 5 cubs)** – the first sighting of this pride was at Flat Rocks on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and the second was on the 14<sup>th</sup> when they had a young impala kill in the Sand River at Island crossing.
- **NDHZENGA MALES (4 adult males)** – 2 males were at Charleston north crossing on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LIONS ENCOUNTERED	<b>59 (19 cubs)</b>
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## LEOPARDS

### **FEMALE LEOPARDS:**

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#### **THE PICCADILLY FEMALE**

7 YEARS 5 MONTHS

#### **1 FEMALE CUB**

1 YEAR 2 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY

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

(4 sightings; 2 of female, 1 of female and cub, 1 of cub)

The first sighting of the Piccadilly female was on the 6<sup>th</sup> when she was scent marking and roaring around Lower Mlowathi Crossing. On the same day, her cub was seen north of Matumi Rocks. Is this a sign that with her cub getting closer to independence, she will return to her "territory" around Piccadilly pans and Campbell Koppies? This is an area that the younger Tlebe Rocks female has started to establish herself in. The second sighting of this female was on the 18<sup>th</sup> when she and her cub had an impala kill north of Matumi Rocks. The last sighting of the Piccadilly female was on the 26<sup>th</sup> when she was around Matumi Rocks alone.

#### **THE ISLAND FEMALE**

8 YEARS 5 MONTHS

#### **1 FEMALE CUB**

10 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, SOUTHERN MALAMALA

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

(19 sightings; 3 of female, 16 of female and cub, 1 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. As 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. Noteworthy sightings of this female and cub:

On the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, they had an impala kill east of Maurice's pan. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, the Accipiter male joined, which has become an almost "normal" event. This interaction was an unusual one where the Accipiter male called the cub out of the tree with the carcass in before he ascended the tree and proceeded to feed. On the 24<sup>th</sup>, the Island female led her cub to an impala kill north of Drum crossing. The following day the Accipiter male again joined the two at the kill. In a risky move, the Island female led her cub to an impala kill east of West Street pans on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Risky because this is the core of the Maxim's male territory. He was also seen not too far south of where they were on this day. Judging by the relaxed nature of the Accipiter male when he's around the cub, if the Maxim's male came across the cub, he'd likely kill it.

**THE NKOVENI FEMALE****2 CUBS**

8 YEARS 9 MONTHS

4 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA &amp; SOUTHERN MARTHLI

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

(14 sightings, 5 of female, 8 of female and cubs)

All 14 sightings of this female were in the vicinity of MalaMala camp and the Old Airstrip. Both of her cubs are growing quickly, and we are able to confirm the sexes of the cubs, one male and one female. Even at the young age of 4 months, you can tell the difference in the size of the two. Noteworthy sightings of this female were: on the 11<sup>th</sup>, female and cubs had an impala kill west of the Booms. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, we watched as a pack of Cape hunting dogs chased a herd of impala straight into the Nkoveni female who, in a spectacular show of agility, caught an adult ram to only have the Cape hunting dogs run in and chase the leopard and freeing the lucky impala. This would not be the end of the excitement for the morning. Soon after "freeing" the impala, the Cape hunting dogs continued their pursuit of the herd, and the Nkoveni female soon after caught a young nyala. All of this took place on the Old Airstrip. A couple of days later, the Nkoveni female and both cubs had an impala kill at the Broken dam on Jerrimahs loop. Over the course of the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, they fed on the impala and were joined on the 29<sup>th</sup> by the Maxim's male. In all likelihood, he is the father of the two cubs. This female provided another spectacular sighting on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Impala alarm calls alerted a hyena and us to the presence of a large cat. On investigation, the Nkoveni female was found in the process of suffocating a young ram. With a hyena quick onto the scene, she dragged the still kicking impala to a jackal berry and, just in the nick of time, hoisted the still alive impala into the tree and out of reach of the hyena.

**THE LOOKOUT FEMALE****MALE CUB**

± 11 YEARS 4 MONTHS

1 YEAR 9 MONTHS

NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

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

(2 sightings; 1 sighting of female, 1 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 once this month when he was south of Donald's crossing on the 8<sup>th</sup>. The only sighting of his mother was on the same day when she was west of Styx Rocks.

**THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE**

11 YEARS 5 MONTHS

NORTH/EASTERN MALAMALA AND EYREFIELD

*Daughter of the Kikilezi female<sup>†</sup>, independent first quarter of 2012.**Mother of the Ngoboswan and Eyrefield males.*

(0 sightings)

The Emsagweni female was not seen this month.

**THE THREE RIVERS FEMALE**

5 YEARS 2 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(8 sightings)

The Three Rivers female was seen eight times this month, mostly around the Airstrip. The first sighting of this female was on the 6<sup>th</sup> when she was south of the Airstrip. On the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, she was on an impala kill south of the Airstrip. A few days later, she was in the Sand River north of Maxim's Lookout. We had received reports that she'd had cubs, but we can confirm that this is not the case from this sighting. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, she was at the Windsock. A week later, she was patrolling territory at Pete's bridge. The final sight of the month was on the 31<sup>st</sup> when she was at the Windsock again.

**THE KAPEN FEMALE**

3 YEARS 7 MONTHS

SOUTHERN FLOCKFIELD

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

(1 sighting)

The only sighting of this female was on the 16<sup>th</sup> when she was at the confluence of the Rock Drift donga and the Sand River.

**THE PLAQUE ROCK FEMALE**

3 YEARS 2 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(2 sightings)

Last month saw multiple sightings of this young female and interaction with her mother. We speculated that the Nkoveni female might become less tolerant of her daughter in her territory along the Sand River with her new litter. This appears to be the case with a drastic reduction in sightings of the Plaque Rock female this month. Both sightings of this female were in the Sand River west of Bicycle crossing, where she was mating with the Maxim's male on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

**THE TLEBE ROCKS FEMALE**

3 YEARS 4 MONTHS

CENTRAL &amp; WESTERN EYREFIELD

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

(9 sightings)

The Tlebe Rocks female appears to have filled the void left by the Piccadilly female around Campbell Koppies and Piccadilly Pans. Like last month all sightings of this female were in this area again. In five of the nine sightings, she was seen with the Ngoboswan male. The first sighting of this female was on the 7<sup>th</sup> when she was "sharing" an impala kill with the Ngoboswan male south of Plank's Pan. The following day she was going north at Mlowathi Koppies. From the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>, she was mating with the Ngoboswan male in and around the lower reaches of the Mlowathi River. After a week of mating, she moved north and was next seen at Senegal Bush on the 20<sup>th</sup>. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, she was in the Mlowathi River north of the Sand River. The last sighting of this female was on the 25<sup>th</sup> when she was moving through Piccadilly Pans.

**THE SIBUYE FEMALE**

7 YEARS 5 MONTHS

**1 MALE & 1 FEMALE CUB**

1 YEAR 9 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

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

(0 sightings)

The Sibuye female and her two cubs were not seen during the month of May.

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**MALE LEOPARDS**

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**THE ACCIPITER MALE**

± 10 YEARS 9 MONTHS

EASTERN &amp; CENTRAL MALAMALA &amp; FLOCKFIELD

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

(2 sightings)

The first sighting of the Accipiter male was on the 7<sup>th</sup> when he joined the Island female, and her cub on an impala kill east of Maurcies pan. The second sighting of this male was on the 25<sup>th</sup> when he again joined the Island female and her cub on a kill, this time north of Drum crossing.

**THE MAXIM'S MALE**

± 6 YEARS 9 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

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

(6 sightings)

The Maxim's male was viewed six times this month. The first two sightings of this male were in the Sand River, west of Bicycle crossing, where he was mating with the Plaque Rock female on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. On the 11<sup>th</sup>, he was in the core of his expanding territory at Kikilezihash crossing. It was two weeks before this dominant male was seen again, this time at Flockfield camp on the 27<sup>th</sup>. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, he was seen with the Nkoveni female and her two cubs on an impala kill at the Broken dam on Jerrimah's loop. This could be a good sign that he is the father of the Nkoveni female two cubs and not the Flat Rock male. We have also seen an expansion of this male's territory along the Sand River north of MalaMala camp. Could this be in an effort to safeguard these two cubs? The final sighting of this male was on the 30<sup>th</sup> when he was at Donald's crossing. To say the Maxim's male is expanding his territory would be an understatement. His expansion is under way, and it'll be interesting to see what happens to the older Accipiter male to his east and the younger Ngoboswan male to his north.

**THE EYREFIELD MALE**

3 YEARS 6 MONTHS

NOMADIC (southwestern Eyrefield and eastern Marthly)

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

(0 sightings)

The Eyrefield male was not seen this month.

**THE NGOBOSWAN MALE**

3 YEARS 6 MONTHS

NOMADIC (Marthly and western Eyrefield)

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

(16 sightings)

With only three fewer sightings than the Island female, the Ngoboswan male continues to be one of the most viewed leopards on MalaMala. This young male is coming into his own and appears to have secured the area around Campbell Koppies and Piccadilly Pans. The only foreseeable threat to him would be the older and larger Maxim's male. If we use the Split Rock male as a comparative, he established himself in the south at a similar age and is now dominant over the largest territory for male leopards on MalaMala. The Ngoboswan male may be following a similar path to dominance. All 16 sightings of this male for the month were between Stwise Campbell Koppies, and Piccadilly pans bar one, where he was northwest of Mlowathi Pans. Noteworthy sightings were; on the 7<sup>th</sup>, he had an impala kill with the Tlebe Rocks female south of Plank's Pan. From the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>, he was mating

with the same female in and around the Lower reaches of the Mlowathi River. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, he had an impala kill on the Mlowathi Rivers western bank north of the Sand River.

**THE SPLIT ROCK MALE**

6 YEARS 11 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 had an impala kill in the central parts of his territory on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Other Leopards Encountered:**

- The **NANGA FEMALE** was seen at Mlowathi pans on the 7<sup>th</sup>, Mlowathi River south Tlebe Rocks donga (12<sup>th</sup>), Senegal Bush (21<sup>st</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>)
- A **NO ID MALE** was interacting with the Ngoboswan male east of Campbell Koppies (3<sup>rd</sup>). The following day he was seen north of Campbell Koppies. South of Campbell Koppies (25<sup>th</sup>).
- A **NO ID MALE** was seen north of the Ngoboswan donga on the 5<sup>th</sup>.
- An **UNKNOWN MALE** was at West Street Pans on the 6<sup>th</sup>.
- The **NDZUTINI FEMALE** was in the Mlowathi River South of Mlowathi Pans on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. The next sighting of this female was on the 18<sup>th</sup> when she was around Piccadilly Pans.
- A **NO ID FEMALE** was at Matshapiri Dam on the 13<sup>th</sup>.
- The **N'WETI MALE** was north of Beaumont's camp on the 14<sup>th</sup>.
- The **FLAT ROCK MALE** was at Kigelia crossing on the 15<sup>th</sup>.
- A **NO ID FEMALE** was seen north of Pat's Drift Koppies on the 17<sup>th</sup>. It is more than likely this was the Emsagweni female, but the sighting was fleeting.
- The **SON OF THE KUCHAVA FEMALE** was seen briefly at Tlebe Rocks on the 18<sup>th</sup>. This is the first time we have seen him without his mother, and he was nervous of the vehicles. Possibly because he was in unfamiliar territory and without his mother, will he be a leopard we see more of in the months to come as he goes independent and explores the surrounding areas?
- A **NO ID FEMALE** was at Tlebe Rocks on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- A **NO ID FEMALE** was on Dudley Lookout on the 26<sup>th</sup>. It is more than likely this was the Kapen female.
- **NO ID FEMALE** – south of the booms, likely the Nkoveni female, but the sighting was short-lived.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED
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<b>24 (5 cubs)</b>
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## CHEETAH

We had **five sightings** of cheetah this month. The first sighting was of a young male at Buffalo Bush dam on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The female and her two sub-adult male cubs were seen on the Airstrip again on the 27<sup>th</sup>. They made an impala kill to only have it stolen from them by a lioness from the Kambula pride. The following day they were chased by the same lionesses and split up in the process. On the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, the two sub-adult males were on the Airstrip contact calling for their mother.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED	4
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## CAPE HUNTING DOGS

There were **12 sightings** of Cape Hunting Dogs this month. The majority of these sightings were of the pack of 15 that seem to be settling down in the north, and we are hoping they den on MalaMala this year. They have been spending a lot of time north of Gowrie Boom, where the pack of four denned last year. Four sightings were of the Toulon Pack in Charleston.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED	≥ 36
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## CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

This month we recorded **190 sightings of elephants**. This is 50 more than last month and a sure indication that water availability is decreasing. 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. Daily there are herds drinking from the Sand River in front of MalaMala, Sable and Rattray camps.

There was an increase in sightings of **Cape buffalo** this month with **61**. Like last month we had 15 sightings of herds and an increase in sightings of bulls in the Sand River. With less surface water for these bulls the wallow in, they spend more time in the river, simply lying in the watercourse.

## Other sightings of interest

- The **hyena den** site east of Campbell Koppies is active again, with four young hyenas.
- **Honey badgers** are regularly seen now that we are in the winter months.
- Two **Cape porcupines** are seen on a regular basis near the Airstrip
- **Black-backed jackal** pairs were seen at Clarendon and Mlowathi Open Areas.
- We have recorded several sightings of **side-striped jackals** at the Airstrip and near Emsagwen Crossing.
- We recorded several sightings of **African civets** this month.
- A large **African rock python** was seen on the eastern ramp of the Causeway on the 7th.