



Game Report



A hamerkop watches a sub-adult male lion cross the Sand River by Ranger Pieter van Wyk

MalaMala Game Reserve
October 2021

It's all about the wildlife!

THE MONTH'S WEATHER SUMMARY					
Temperature					
Celsius (°C)			Fahrenheit (°F)		
	Actual	Average		Actual	Average
Maximum	38	27	Maximum	100	81
Minimum	12	18	Minimum	53	65
Rainfall					
Millimetres		Inches		Days of rain	
18.5		0.73		4	

TOTAL SIGHTINGS	
Lion	95
Leopard	107
Elephant	174
Buffalo	51
Cheetah	0
Cape Hunting Dog	13

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	5 buffalo
Leopard	14 impala, 1 cane rat, 3 bushbuck, 3 vervet monkey, 2 duiker, 1 warthog, 1 buffalo calf
Cheetah	No recorded kills
Cape Hunting Dog	2 impala

**AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS*

LION PRIDES

THE KAMBULA PRIDE = 30

3 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 7 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 4 MONTHS
6 SUB ADULT FEMALES	± 3 YEARS 2 MONTH
5 SUB ADULT MALES	± 3 YEARS 2 MONTH
1 SUB ADULT FEMALE	2 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT MALE	2 YEARS 5 MONTHS
3 CUBS	7 MONTHS
4 CUBS	5 MONTHS
4 CUBS	3 MONTHS

MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

(63 sightings)

The Kambula pride is becoming a challenge to keep track of. As the pride expands, different groupings of members of this pride have been seen spending time together. The most stable grouping of this pride is the three lionesses and their 11 cubs. This month saw this fragment of the pride spend the first week at Styx Rocks before they spent time along the Sand River's eastern bank between Confluence Crossing and Elephant Slide Crossing. Then, they moved back to Styx Rocks on the 17th, where they spent the following ten days before the cubs were moved to the rocks midway along Baby Elephant Walk.

The grouping that includes the subadults and the mother of the two younger sub-adults do not often move as one cluster. Different members of this grouping are found in different groups across their territory regularly. The most noteworthy series of events this month involved members of this fragment of the pride. The pride's sub-adults and lionesses were found on buffalo kills on two occasions, both times a Northern Avoca male joined them.

The third constant 'split' of the pride is the two lionesses who spend the bulk of their time in the area of Marthly and around MalaMala Camp. They continue to spend time with the Northern Avoca males, and like last month, they were mating with these two males again. These two lionesses and the two Northern Avoca males had an impala kill east of Elephant Rock Lookout on the 10th. In addition, the two lionesses stole an impala kill from the Piccadilly female and her cub on the 16th, west of Bicycle Crossing.

THE NKUHUMA PRIDE = 23

1 ADULT FEMALE	± 9 YEARS 4 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 8 YEARS 7 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 5 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 5 YEARS 3 MONTHS
2 SUB ADULT FEMALES	± 2 YEARS 3 MONTHS
5 SUB ADULT MALES	± 2 YEARS 3 MONTHS
1 MALE CUB	1 YEAR 10 MONTHS
7 CUBS	± 6 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

(2 sightings)

October saw a drastic reduction in the sightings of this pride of lions, more specifically, the three lionesses and seven cubs who were regularly seen in September. The bulk of the pride was on two buffalo calf kills with a Northern Avoca male at Matshapiri Dam on the 6th. On the 23rd, the three lionesses and seven cubs were at Mlowathi Dam.

THE MARTHLY PRIDE = 2

1 ADULT FEMALE	8 YEARS 4 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT FEMALE	2 YEARS 7 MONTHS

MARTHLY

(2 sightings)

This mother-daughter duo made two appearances in Marthly this month after an absence of nearly six months. The last sighting of this pride was on the 20th of April when they were at Elephant Rock. The first sighting of them this month was on the 10th when they were at Kigelia Crossing. The second sighting of these two lionesses was on the 22nd at Paraffin Drift. The sub-adult female is now almost as big as her mother, boding well for the future of this prides.

THE TORCHWOOD PRIDE = 20

7 ADULT FEMALES	UNKOWN AGES
6 ADULT FEMALES	± 5 YEARS 9 MONTHS
7 CUBS	± 1 YEAR 2 MONTH

EASTERN EYREFIELD

(1 sighting)

Two lionesses were at Matshapiri Dam on the 31st.

THE SAND RIVER PRIDE = 14

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

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

(3 sightings)

The Sand River pride was viewed on three occasions this month. The first sighting of these lions was at Trollips hippo pools on the 17th. On the 30th, one of the females was south of Charleston Rock. The last sighting for the month was of a female and the six youngest cubs of the pride southeast of Rocky Crossing on the 31st.

MALE LIONS

THE GOWRIE MALES = 2

1 ADULT MALE	± 10 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 ADULT MALE	± 9 YEARS 10 MONTHS

MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD & NORTHERN CHARLESTON

Dominant over the Kambula and Marthly prides.

First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve in September 2015.

(18 sightings)

The Gowrie males were seen 18 times in October. Both males were at Confluence Crossing on the 1st. On the 3rd, both males were with the three lactating lionesses and cubs at Styx Rocks. The following day the males were together at the Airstrip. Both males were with the three lionesses and cubs at Confluence Crossing on the 6th. The following day the males had moved north together and were around West Street. On the 12th, both males were in the eastern extremities of their territory, north of the Windmill. A male was at Flockfield Camp on the 15th. Both of the males were west of the Old Airstrip on the 16th, and at the confluence of the three rivers on the buffalo kill on the 17th. On the 19th, one of the males was at Confluence Crossing while his brother was with the three lionesses and 11 cubs of the Kambula pride at Styx Rocks. Both males were in front of Rattray's camp on the 20th. One male was at Princess Alice pans on the 21st. Both males were at Styx rocks on the 23rd with the lionesses and cubs of the Kambula pride. The males were together east of Lion Rocks on the 26th. On the last two days of the month, one male was with members of the Kambula pride on a buffalo bull kill south of the Windmill.

THE NORTHERN AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES

± 8 YEARS 4 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

Dominant over the Nkuhuma pride.

First encountered in late 2019.

(19 sightings)

The Northern Avoca males continue to make their presence known throughout Eyrefield and northern MalaMala. This month, these males were at the forefront of a few interesting interactions with members of the Kambula pride.

A few significant sightings include:

One of the males was with 13 members of the Nkuhuma pride who had two buffalo calf kills at Matsapiri Dam on the 6th. Both of the males were together at Matshapiri Dam the following day, though the pride had moved off after finishing the two kills. One of the males was south of Mlowathi Dam on the 9th. On the 10th, both males were at Mlowathi Pans with a lioness from the Kambula pride. Both males were north of Mlowathi Pans on the 15th. On the 17th, one male was with members of the Kambula pride on a buffalo bull kill north of the confluence of the three rivers. In a bewildering sighting, the male chased off some of the Kambula sub-adult males while allowing others to feed. Possibly the urge to feed outweighed the danger posed to both the sub-adults and the single Northern Avoca male (see more on this in a recent blog posted on the MalaMala website). A male was with the three lionesses and seven cubs of the Nkuhuma pride north of Mlowathi springs (17th), while the other male was at the confluence of the three rivers with members of the Kambula pride. A male was north of Stwise on the 18th, while the second male was south of Mlowathi Pans. One male moved south overnight and was found the following day midway along Emsagwen. From there, the male moved east towards a buffalo kill that members of the Kambula pride had made south of Paddy's pool, where he spent two days feeding amongst the members of the Kambula pride for the second time in as many days. A male was with two lionesses south of Mlowathi Pans on the 22nd. A male was north of Stwise on the 24th. Both males were east of Mlowathi Dam on the 25th. Both males were north of Stwise on the 26th and west of Mlowathi Dam on the 28th.

THE SOUTHERN AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES

± 8 YEARS 8 MONTHS

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

Dominant over the Sand River Pride.

(1 sighting)

The two Southern Avoca males were seen once this month at Charleston Rock on the 30th.

Other Lions Encountered:

- No other lions were viewed this month.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF LIONS ENCOUNTERED	77 (28 cubs)
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LEOPARDS

FEMALE LEOPARDS:

THE ISLAND FEMALE

8 YEARS 10 MONTHS

FEMALE CUB

1 YEAR 3 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, SOUTHERN MALAMALA

Daughter of the Tamboti female^t, independent first quarter of 2015

(23 sightings; 7 of female, 11 of female and cub, 5 of the cub)

The Island female and her cub continue to spend the bulk of their time in the vicinity of Drum Crossing and Buffalo Pans. Although the cub is only a year and three months old, it is noticeable that the Island female is starting to spend less time with her and is less tolerant of the cub when they are together. Typically female leopards will reach independence at the age of a year and a half. If this is the case in this situation, the cub will likely be independent in the first quarter of 2022. However, with the rainy season on the horizon and impala lambs imminent, hunting opportunities will be plentiful and her learning curve steep. Could this fast track the cub of the Island female into independence?

Noteworthy sightings for the month:

They had a cane rate kill around the prominent rocks south of West Street on the 1st. Impala kill at West Street on the 3rd and 4th. They had a bushbuck kill north of Flockfield Camp on the 5th. The Island female had a vervet monkey kill northeast of West Street on the 22nd. The Island female and her cub were on an impala ram kill for three days from the 25th, east of the Matshapiri River north of the Hogvaal Donga. The month ended with the two of them on an impala kill east of Drum Crossing on the 31st.

**THE PICCADILLY FEMALE
FEMALE CUB**

7 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 YEAR 7 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY

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

(5 sighting, 3 of female 1 of female and cub, 1 of cub)

The cub of the Piccadilly female is not a leopard that we have seen much in her adolescence, and she is now at the age when she'll likely be independent soon. It'll be interesting to see whether the Piccadilly female will start to spend more time in Marthly or if her cub will be seen frequently in Marthly as the two spend less time together and the cub goes independent. On the 1st, the cub of the Piccadilly female was without her mother north of Matumi Rocks. The Piccadilly female was south of Kigelia Crossing on the 3rd and west of Matumi Rocks on the 9th. The Piccadilly female was interacting with the Flat Rock male north of Matumi Rocks on the 20th. The final sighting for the month was on the 24th when mother and daughter were on an impala kill east of Small Paraffin Drift.

**THE NKOVENI FEMALE
2 CUBS**

9 YEARS 2 MONTHS
9 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA & SOUTHERN MARTHLY

Daughter of the Mashaba female, independent early 2014.

Mother of the Plaque Rock female.

(16 sightings, 3 of female, 10 of female and cubs, 3 of cubs)

The two cubs of the Nkoveni female are providing us with some of the best leopard viewing currently. They are at an age where they are energetic, inquisitive, and growing in confidence. Both cubs were without their mother at Marthly Crossing on the 1st and 2nd. The Nkoveni female and her two cubs were on an impala kill southeast of MalaMala Stones on the 3rd. Kills don't last long when there are three mouths to feed, and all three leopards were at Stone drift the following day. The Nkoveni female moved south and spent time around the Island South of the Causeway for a few days. On the 10th, the female and both cubs were at the Broken Dam. All three leopards were at Stone Drift on the 12th, 13th and 14th, with the Maxim's male joining the trio on the 13th. One of the cubs was alone west of the Old Airstrip on the 15th. The female and both cubs were south of Sable Camp on the 22nd and midway along Ambush Alley on the 28th. The last two sightings of these three leopards were over the days of the 29th and 30th when they had an impala kill west of the old Airstrip.

THE THREE RIVERS FEMALE

5 YEARS 7 MONTHS

2 CUBS

3 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(18 sightings, 11 of female, 7 of female and cubs)

October was a good month for viewing the Three Rivers female and was a month where we got to see more of her two cubs. Viewing of the cubs was slow in the first half of the month but increased considerably, and by the end of the month, the majority of the sightings of the Three Rivers female included cubs. In the last sighting of the mother and offspring, only one of the cubs was seen. We will have to wait to confirm whether or not this first time mother has lost a cub.

September ended with the Three Rivers female having an impala ram kill at Kikilezihash crossing. This month started with her finishing off this kill on the 1st. On the 2nd, the Three Rivers female and her two cubs were at Princess Alice Pans. The female was at Kikilezihash Crossing on the 4th and overnight made an impala kill west of Kikilezihash Crossing. Over the following three days, we had good viewing of the female and her two young cubs. On the 10th, mother and cubs were joined by the Maxim's male on an impala kill at Kikilezihash Crossing. Once the kill was finished, the female and cubs spent a few days in the general area where the cubs were 'dened' in a fallen over Jakkalberry tree. During the following week, the Three Rivers Female was seen in the area south of the Airstrip. On the 22nd, she made two vervet monkey kills at the white stones and took them to the cubs. However, she lost one of the kills to a hyena. On the 23rd, 24th and 25th, the female and cub/s were seen at Princess Alice Pans. With only one cub being seen on the 24th and the 25th. The month ended with the Three Rivers female being seen at West Street and Maxim's Lookout on the 28th and 29th.

THE LOOKOUT FEMALE

± 11 YEARS 9 MONTHS

NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve in late 2015.

Mother of the Kapen female & Son of the Lookout female.

(2 sightings)

The Lookout female was seen twice this month. On the 23rd, she was north of Kapen Rocks, and on the 31st, she was with her son northwest of Styx Crossing with very little remains of an impala kill hoisted in a marula tree.

THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE

11 YEARS 10 MONTHS

NORTH/EASTERN MALAMALA AND EYREFIELD

Daughter of the Kikilezi female, independent first quarter of 2012.**Mother of the Ngoboswan and Eyrefield Males.*

(1 sighting)

The only sighting of this female was on the 25th when she was at Emsagwen Waterhole in the company of the Accipiter male.

THE PLAQUE ROCK FEMALE

3 YEARS 7 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of this young female this month.

THE KAPEN FEMALE

3 YEARS 6 MONTHS

SOUTHERN FLOCKFIELD

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

(1 sighting)

The only sighting of the Kapen female this month was when she was in the Kapen River north of Hyena Waterhole on the 23rd.

THE TLEBE ROCKS FEMALE

3 YEARS 9 MONTHS

CENTRAL & WESTERN EYREFIELD

Daughter of the Sibuye Female, independent second quarter 2019.

(0 sightings)

There were no sightings of the Tlebe Rocks female this month. With the injury to her back leg still at the forefront of our minds, her health and general wellbeing remain a concern.

THE SIBUYE FEMALE

7 YEARS 10 MONTHS

2 CUBS

4 MONTHS

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 month, there was no sighting of this female leopard.

MALE LEOPARDS

THE MAXIM'S MALE

± 7 YEARS 2 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD & MALAMALA

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in early 2019.

(11 sightings)

The Maxim's male was first viewed at the Causeway on the 5th. Five days later, he joined up with the Three Rivers female and her two cubs on an impala kill at Kikilezihash Crossing. This suggests that he is under the impression that he is the father of these cubs as he showed no aggression towards them. A few days later, on the 13th, he linked up with the Nkoveni female and her cubs at Stone Drift. On the 14th, he was at Elephant Slide Crossing and was moving south. The following day he had moved south along the Sand River and was north of Maxim's Lookout. Overnight he patrolled back north and was in the Sand River west of Bicycle Crossing on the 16th. From here, he moved back south and as with the Three Rivers, female was West Street Pans on the 17th. On the 20th, he was at Maxim's Lookout. Almost a week later, on the 26th, he was at West Street. The final sighting of the Maxims male for the month was at the Causeway on the 28th, where he was seen with a small puncture wound at the base of his tail, but otherwise in good condition.

THE ACCIPITER MALE

± 11 YEARS 2 MONTHS

EASTERN & CENTRAL MALAMALA & FLOCKFIELD

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in late 2015.

(2 sightings)

The first sighting of this male was on the Kapen River's eastern bank, north of Hyena Waterhole on the 18th. The second sighting of this male was at Emsagwen Waterhole on the 25th when he was with the Emsagweni female.

THE NGOBOSWAN MALE

3 YEARS 11 MONTHS

NOMADIC (Marthly and western Eyrefield)

Son of the Emsagweni female, independent late 2019.

(3 sightings)

October saw an uncharacteristically low sightings tally for this young male, with only three sightings. On the 1st, this male was finishing off the remains of an impala kill at Lower Mlowathi Crossing. More than two weeks passed before he was seen south of Kigelia Crossing on the 17th. The third and last sighting for the month was on the 18th when he was north of Lower Mlowathi Crossing.

THE EYREFIELD MALE

3 YEARS 11 MONTHS

NOMADIC (Eastern Eyrefield and eastern MalaMala)

Son of the Emsagweni female, independent late 2019.

(1 sighting)

The only sighting of this male was on the 31st when he was viewed at Matshapiri Dam, where he had the undesired company of two lionesses from the Torchwood pride.

THE SPLIT ROCK MALE

7 YEARS 4 MONTHS

CHARLESTON

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

(3 sightings)

The dominant male of Charleston appears to be making a northward movement into the southern sections of Flockfield. The first sighting for October of this male was north of Zebra Skull on the 20th. He was at Charleston North Crossing on the 24th. The furthest north this male has been seen since he took over Chalreaton was on the 26th when he was on New Rocks.

Other Leopards Encountered:

- The **TENGILE FEMALE** was at Calabash Crossing on the 2nd.
- The **HANYILE MALE** was at Flat Rocks on the 2nd.
- The **FLAT ROCK MALE** was east of Matumi Rock on the 3rd. South of Stwise on the 18th. He was interacting with the Piccadilly female north of Matumi Rocks on the 20th.
- A male leopard that we were unable to identify was north of Drum Crossin on the 4th.
- The **INYATHINI MALE** was at the old Dudley Crossing on the 6th. Hyeana Waterhole on the 11th. In the Sand River opposite Rattray's Camp on the 12th. Flockfield Pools on the 14th. Had an impala kill on Flockfield Lookout on the 15th. 16th, he was in the Tamboti Thickets. On the 20th, he had a bushbuck kill in the Tamboti Thickets.
- The **SON OF THE LOOKOUT FEMALE** was at Emsagwen Waterhole on the 16th. Styx Crossing on the 17th. North of Kapen Rocks on the 25th.
- The **SON OF THE XIMUNGWE FEMALE** was in the Manyelethi River east of Kigelia Crossing on the 16th.
- The **NTSUMI FEMALE** and her **CUB** were on a bushbuck kill on the Sand River's western bank south of Charleston North Crossing on the 19th. The female had a duiker kill north of Beaumont's Camp on the 25th.
- A male with a **2:2** spot pattern was at Matshapiri Dam on the 22nd.
- The **2:1 NERVOUS YOUNG MALE** was at Emsagwen Waterhole on the 22nd.
- An **UNKNOWN FEMALE** was south of the Windmill on the 30th.
- The **XIVINDZI FEMALE** had a duiker kill north of Flat Rocks on the 31st.
- The **N'WETI MALE** had a warthog and buffalo calf kill in the Sand River, south of Verreaux's Crossing on the 31st.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED

31 (7 cubs)

CHEETAH

No sightings of cheetah were recorded this month.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED	0
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

This month we enjoyed **13 sightings** of Cape Hunting dogs, with the bulk of these sightings being of the same two packs as last month. The Toulon pack were seen in Charleston and as far north as Emsagwen Crossing. On the 2nd, they killed an impala near Jakkalsdraai Open Area, and on the 22nd, they caught an impala in the loop in Emsagwen. The pack of 12 were seen five times this month, and sightings were between West Street and Mlowathi Dam. There was one sighting of one Cape Hunting Dog alone at Matshapiri Dam on the 5th.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED	42 (14 pups)
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CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

This month we recorded **174 sightings of elephants** and **51 sightings of Cape buffalo**. With the dry season coming close to an end with rain expected next month, the landscape is becoming a dust bowl. Sightings of these two water dependant species are concentrated around the Sand River. The large herd of Cape buffalo that's spent time in northeastern Eyrefield have started to drink from the Sand River now that there isn't much water in the dams in the east of the reserve.

Other sightings of interest

A clan of hyenas chased down and killed a kudu cow in the Sand River south of Charleston North Crossing on the 5th. In the process of bringing down the kudu, a second clan joined the scene, and a scuffle between the two clans over the kudu kill transpired.

Other species of interest seen were **Honey Badges**, **African Civets**, and **Meller's Mongoose**.